

CORALINN, A PERSIAN TALE.

CHAPTER IX.

And to avoid the lion's pursuit, With spurring put their cattle to, And till all that were out of wind, And danger too, ne'er look'd behind."

Hamors: "Speed! Malise, speed! such cause of haste, These active sinews never break!"

Hamors.

SCOTT.

Coralinn had scarcely taken her place amidst the mango trees, when she heard footsteps near her, and looking, she saw that Hamors was there, followed by three or four powerful looking men, who from their appearance and armour she at once recognized as Kurds, or natives of the mountains.

"Allah be praised that you are here!" said Hamors in a whisper: "Is the sentinel asleep?"

"He is not," replied Coralinn; "you may now see him walking on the bank."

"It would be better for him if he was," said Hamors; "for now he must die."

"Remain where you are until I come for you," continued he addressing Coralinn, and speaking a few words in an undertone to his followers, they descended the bank and were soon out of sight beneath the acacias and myrtle that hung over the banks.

Soon a dark figure was seen to emerge from a cluster of shrubbery, near the sentinel who stood with his back towards the spot. The twinkling of a star revealed the glittering cimeter, and in a moment the deep and hollow groan showed that the silent but fatal blow had been struck.

The others now sprang forward, the dead body was trampled into the river—the covering of the boat was, in a few minutes, tossed from its fastenings—and the halcyon Everington delivered from his horrid abode. But his limbs were useless, he was unable to stand or walk, and had not the revolting spectacle he exhibited been covered by the mantle of the night, his preservers must have shrunk from the attempt of delivering and keeping him alive.

After a speedy ablution in the river, and while the other attendants were putting some garments upon him, Hamors flew to Coralinn.

"He lives," said the faithful servant, as he led her to the spot where the attendants were placing Everington in a litter which he had prepared for that purpose. A moment was allowed for Coralinn to assure Everington that she was to accompany him; and then the party with Everington borne on the shoulders of the four mountaineers, left the banks of the Bendemir.

After following the direction in which they started for a few minutes, Hamors took from a thicket of shrubbery, a fine horse, and mounting Coralinn beheld him, the whole party proceeded at a rapid rate towards the ruins of Persopolis.

"You must consent to be governed implicitly by me for a short time," said Hamors; "and if your residence for a few days is not agreeable as you could wish, we hope it will be a prelude to many days of a more interrupted happiness."

"Hamors, any place will be a paradise where I can enjoy liberty, and the company of my Everington," replied Coralinn, in accents of gratitude to her conductor.

In two hours they found themselves amid the ruins. Columns lay scattered around them, and blocked up their path. Leaving their horses, the party plunged deeper into the recess, and while the jackall bled affrighted, and the owl hooted over them, led by Hamors, they fearlessly advanced.

"This strong wind," said Hamors to Coralinn, as she hung upon his arm; "will not pass without contributing to our success, as it will obliterate any footsteps we may have made over the plain."

Suddenly he halted where the immense pile denoted that some magnificent palace or temple had formerly stood; and removing a large stone slab which required the united efforts of the party, a circular opening was discovered, which opened on the unknown and unseen regions below. A rope was made fast to a fallen column, and two of the company quickly descended out of sight, leaving Hamors with the others on the surface. A rope was then fastened around Everington, and he was lowered into the abyss.

"You must now descend," said Hamors to Coralinn; and it was not without a feeling of horror, that she found herself descending, she knew not where, and into the company of she knew not whom.

No sooner was she in the subterranean apartment than the others descended, and while a light had been struck up, were soon collected below. Preceded by Hamors Everington was borne through several turnings and windings, until they came to a wall in which was an opening, similar to that through which they had descended.—This was passed, and the light of the lamp showed to Coralinn, a number of apartments, connected with each other, gloomy indeed, but apparently dry and comfortable. In one of these a mattress was placed, upon which Everington, weak and exhausted, was laid; while some wine and provisions were produced for him and the rest of the party. The opening through which they had

passed, was the only one that could be discovered leading to the subterranean chambers they occupied, and however doubtful the purposes for which they were erected might be—the huge blocks of stone which formed the walls and the covering of these rooms showed that they had been built for eternity. Some pieces of carpeting were brought and spread over the stone floor; and in one of the rooms a number of skins of water and wine, with a variety of fruits and provisions were pointed out to Coralinn by Hamors. To the enquiry of Coralinn, whether he was going to leave them, he replied that he was:—

"By remaining with you," said he; "I could not add to your safety or comfort, and might perhaps endanger all; my master is now unable to fly, he must be restored, and as whose hands could I trust him, if not in yours? Ten days from this time I shall come provided with every thing for a successful flight."

"But if our retreat should be discovered by the prince, and we should again fall into his hands," interrupted Coralinn.

"You have nothing to fear from him, or any one else," replied Hamors; "keep up your spirits, and may Allah protect and bless you."

So saying, Hamors kissed the hand of his mistress, which she had extended to him, and pressing that of Everington assured him of his fidelity, and then with his followers, left the cell, carefully closing the opening through which they had entered.

The time piece with which Coralinn was furnished, marked the lapse of time; but in every other respect time was to them as if it had ceased to exist. From the world they were completely shut out; not a single sound which showed that any other beings were in existence reached them; day and night were unknown; the lamp alone shed its light on the dim walls, and the lovely Coralinn shuddered when she reflected that by the capture or death of Hamors, they might be there immured for ever.

The pleasure, however, she took in administering to the wants of Everington—of witnessing the rapid recovery of his strength and sight—in listening to his warm expressions of gratitude and affection—and in indulging the sweet visions of fancy, which his restoration to health and their escape from bondage and death, pointed out, caused the hours to pass rapidly and delightfully away.

Everington on the third day with the aid of his amiable nurse was able to rise, and leaning on the beautiful girl, he repeatedly traversed the room with a feeling of satisfaction at being able to walk, almost equal to that which would have been felt by the bestowment of a new sense. Blisters as his face and eyelids had been by long exposure to the sun, the skin came off in large pieces; and while the inflammation in his eyes gradually subsided, he reflected on the good fortune that had prevented his eyelids from being fastened open, since, in that case, his eyes, even while life lasted, would have been devoted to their very sockets.

The singular appearance of his countenance, while it was undergoing this process of renovation, was the subject of much mirth between them.

"Ah, my dear Coralinn," Everington would say, as he revenged himself for her raillery by clasping the fair girl to his bosom, and tenderly kissing her—"you are welcome to laugh at me; you have indeed earned the privilege; to you I owe every thing—life, hope and love."

"Everington, you must not be displeas'd," said the blushing girl; "for you well know that you are all the world now to me."

"And shall I not always be so? May I not always be so?" said Everington with a smile.

"O yes, that I am not afraid to promise," she hastily replied, and hid her blushing face in his bosom, while he gazed on the lovely girl, with feeling of un-mixed tenderness and admiration.

The time allotted for the absence of Hamors hastened away. Nothing had occurred to disturb them in their subterranean abode, until the day before Hamors returned, which the howling of the jackall, and the shrill cry of the hyena showed not only that their retreat had been discovered by these animals, but also from the cries in various directions, that the earth around them was hollowed out into apartments similar to that they occupied; and once Coralinn was alarmed by one of these prowlers who allured by the hope of blood, endeavored to force his way through the opening by which they had entered, but which the vigilant precautions of Hamors had rendered it impracticable.

The time which they awaited with so much anxiety, at last came. There was a sound of voices in the outer apartment—the blocks of stone which closed the communication between them was removed, and Hamors accompanied by some of his happy and hardy mountaineers, entered the dungeon. Their joy at meeting was mutual, for the unwavering faithfulness of Hamors had endeared him to both Everington and Coralinn.

"We have outwitted the tyrant this time," said Hamors, exultingly; "after every exertion which power or ingenuity

could devise he has been completely baffled. The mystery of your escape he has never been able to unravel—the largest rewards have proved ineffectual to discover your retreat, and the pursuit has been given over as hopeless.—Once again on the Hetzerdera and we are safe."

Preparations were immediately commenced for a removal from the retreat which had so long afforded them security and shelter, in which the most efficient and cheerful aid was rendered by the mountain associates of Hamors.

Soon they emerged from the subterranean well-like opening into the upper air, and never with such feelings of emotion had Everington and Coralinn beheld the bright stars as they rolled along through the heavens over spotless azure—gazed on the silver tips of Diana's crescent, as it sunk behind the mountains—breathed the pure air which was filled with the incense of numberless flowers—or listened to the hum which animated nature sends forth even in the most quiet and secluded retreats Hamors led the way through the ruins, and when they emerged from them into the plain, they found themselves at once in the midst of a dozen of the mountaineers, who, with high spirited steeds, ready for them to mount, awaited their arrival.—Not a moment was lost in continuing their flight across the plain. Coralinn was mounted on a beautiful Arabian, and Everington felt as if he had commenced a new existence, when he found himself by her side, and rapidly leaving the crumbling fragments of ancient Persian greatness far behind them.

Long before morning they found themselves among the hills, which marked the commencement of the mountainous regions; and when day dawned, they were safe from pursuit amidst its deep and inaccessible fastness and defiles.—They had left Schuras and the dominions of Abbas Mirza for ever, and the brave and hospitable children of the mountain, welcomed them with patriarchal simplicity and affection to their rude mansions. Notwithstanding the affectionate kindness of Everington, it was impossible for Coralinn at once to break, without emotions of regret, the strong ties of affection which bound her to her father; and when she remembered that she had deserted home and friends for a stranger, she felt that she was encountering a fearful hazard, and dear as Everington was to her, she sometimes caught the tear swelling in her dark eye, and these recollections came over her young and innocent bosom.

Skilled in reading the heart, Everington at once perceived the source of her regrets, and sympathizing her grief, he kissed away her tears, and banished her fears by assurance of never failing love and protection. Among the kind inhabitants of the mountains, Everington thought it prudent to remain but a short time; for though the country to the west of the Hetzerdera, scarcely owned allegiance to the Persian crown, and the brave Kurds still maintained a tacit independence; yet his fears added to the council of Hamors, induced him to place himself and his beautiful Coralinn, as soon as possible, beyond the reach of Abbas Mirza.

As soon, therefore, as Everington found himself completely restored, disguising himself as much as possible with Hamors as their servant, he and the fair Coralinn, accompanied by several of the natives of the mountains, proceeded by the circuitous route of the Tigris, and Bagdad, to Bussorah; where they arrived without molestation, and in safety.—Here Everington found himself in possession of funds, with which he compensated his kind companions from the Hetzerdera, to the extent of their wishes, and laden with every expression of his, and Coralinn's gratitude, saw them depart for their native homes. At Bussorah, he found the chaplain of the English establishment at the Gulf of Persia, and was united by the tenderest ties, to the blushing and beautiful girl, who had consented to unite her fortunes with his. A vessel was on the point of sailing for India where they arrived and embracing the favorable moment, Everington and Coralinn soon found themselves at Bombay, where the flag of Britain assured him of protection. After the residence of Bombay for three years he was called to Calcutta; and as his intimate acquaintance with the Persian language added to his knowledge of Indian affairs, rendered him a proper person to receive such an appointment; on the recommendation of several officers of the government, he was appointed by the Marquis of Wellesley, then Governor General of India, to the government of Agra, a post of great importance on the Upper Ganges, whither he immediately repaired accompanied by his admired and lovely bride.

[CONCLUSION IN OUR NEXT.]

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