

A TWILIGHT GALE.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

"Sweet Lily Bell, come near me now;  
The perfumed air of the flowers  
Is haunted with my early love.  
And so from yonder lonely bowers,  
The spirit of my youth glides forth  
All wreathed with myrtle, scattering round  
White roses and young passion-blossoms,  
And singing songs of sighing sound.  
Now, while the baby-birds are dreaming  
With vales of moonlight o'er them gleaming,  
Mid lullabies of angel seeming,  
I'll tell thee an old story.

"Sweet Lily Bell, there was a time  
In the dim years of long ago  
When, looking through my lattice vines,  
O'er yon dusk hills where violets blow,  
I saw a stranger young and fair—  
So fair—so like some shape of light—  
In hunter's garb, who came and craved  
A shelter from the stormy night.  
He lingered long—and I, forgetting  
Even my God, when suns were setting  
Would gaze on him without regretting  
My blind and daring worship.

"Sweet Lily Bell, he left me lone—  
He left me—but who could forget?  
Who was he like? I'll tell thee now;  
Come closer, darling, closer yet—  
Thy baby brother Charlie wears  
The beauty of my early love—  
The lip, the brow, the same blue eyes—  
For this, his cradled smiles above,  
Thou'st seen my frenzied tears come gushing,  
While thy young mother's voice was hushing  
Her child amid the eve's last blushing,  
Beneath thy father's glances.

"Sweet Lily Bell, what was his fate?  
He wedded a fair bride, who smiled  
To hear this story from his lip."  
"And she?"—"She is thy mother's child,  
And he, the man whose name I bear,  
Was her first—Idol! this is strange—  
Yet, such is life! Now, Lily Bell,  
My simple story's done—so range  
Among the purple shadows lying  
In yon green grove where winds are sighing,  
And hear the wild-wood music dying—  
I cannot meet thy gazes."

RICHARD HOFFMAN

OR,

THE PEASANT AND THE NOBLEMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE STRUGGLE FOR A LIFE.

On the arrival of Sir Charles Fourreau, with Jack Manders, at the house of our hero, Hassan, the khandamah, received them with the usual obsequious salutation, then stood with his arms folded over his breast to await his questions or orders.

"How is your master?" demanded the baronet.

"He sleeps."

"Thank Heaven!"

The Hindoo secretly smiled.

"Prepare a bed instantly for this poor fellow," said the baronet; "I expect Dr. Burke, the physician of my regiment, in a few minutes."

"The hakims of Europe are wise," observed Hassan, with a covert sneer; "doubtless, the danger will fly at his approach."

"I trust so," answered the unsuspecting colonel.

After seeing Jack, who prayed to be carried into the same room where his master was lying, removed from the palanquin, he made the best of his way to the saloon where Richard was still sleeping, and Fred Wharton watching by his side.

The two officers exchanged a silent pressure of the hand.

"You may speak," said the youngest; "his slumber appears to be almost lethargic; see how heavily he breathes!"

The baronet approached, and gazed with deep emotion on the pale, wan features which he had so lately beheld beaming with health and animation; the change shocked him greatly.

"There has been treachery," he said, "infernal treachery. Burke declares that our friend is poisoned."

At this confirmation of his suspicions, Fred Wharton started from his seat, and began pacing the room in violent agitation.

"Monstrous!" he resumed; "whom has he ever wronged? I cannot point out one single enemy."

The baronet shook his head mournfully.

"It cannot have been for plunder."

"No."

"What then?"

"Either revenge or jealousy," answered the colonel; "but this is not the moment to investigate the truth. Our first care must be to cure him. Burke has gone to fetch the native physician, Mirza Alge, the hakim most skilled in the poisons of the East."

"Will it be safe to trust him?"

"We must trust him—it is our last hope."

Several of the servants, including the sycees, now entered the saloon, bearing Jack between them. Hassan followed. On seeing the latter, the suspicions of Wharton returned with additional force.

"Rascal!" he exclaimed, "if anything fatal occurs, you shall swing for it."

The Hindoo looked up with well-acted surprise.

"What said the sahib?"

The words were repeated.

The khandamah answered them by a cold, disdainful smile.

"Speak," said the baronet; "what is the meaning of this desolation?"

He pointed as he spoke to Jack and Richard, as they lay each extended and unable to speak upon a sofa.

"Is thy servant a hakim," replied the man, "that he should explain these things! The flower fades, while the root is still within the earth, and who can tell the reason why? It is *Kismet!*"

Sir Charles was sufficiently an oriental to know the meaning of the word.

"I will tell you what your destiny shall be," he muttered, sternly, "if it be proved that you have tampered in this deed."

Hassan regarded him calmly.

"A rope, and a felon's grave."

"Be it as you have said," answered the man.

"The innocent are strong, and there is justice in Calcutta for the Hindoo, as well as the fringes."

At this moment, Dr. Burke made his appearance. On seeing him, the khandamah only smiled; when he saw the native physician, Mirza Alge, following him with his box of drugs, his countenance underwent so palpable a change, that it was impossible to mistake his emotion.

He would have quitted the room, but Fred Wharton sprang between him and the door.

"Murderer," he said, "I arrest you."

"I am innocent."

"That remains to be seen."

Sir Charles was so convinced of the fellow's guilt, that, calling to his palanquin bearers, he gave him in charge to two of the strongest, and directed one of the others to go for a party of the po-

lice, into whose custody he was ultimately consigned.

The hakim advanced to the couch on which his patient was reposing, and felt first his chest and then his pulse.

"The root," he slowly pronounced.

"I thought so," exclaimed Dr. Burke, who, with all his skill, found himself, in this peculiar case, reduced to act the part of a spectator.

"His sleep does not seem natural," observed Sir Charles.

"What have you given him?" demanded Mirza, addressing the young officer, whom he had found watching the sufferer.

Fred Wharton pointed to the liquor stand.

A grim smile passed over the features of the Hindoo.

"Good," he said; "ignorance, in this instance, has performed the work of knowledge." He next advanced to one of the side tables, and examined the draught which Hassan had pressed upon the lips of the sufferer, and which still remained untasted. Wharton had resisted the attempt made by the assassin to remove it.

Fred explained why he had prevented his friend from taking it.

"Good," repeated the hakim. "Had he but swallowed a single mouthful, not all the science of India could have saved him: it is the *Keranus* water, which promotes the growth of the root."

"The villain!" exclaimed all present, struck with horror at the infernal malice of the khandamah.

The old man opened the box, which he had never for an instant permitted to quit his grasp, and taking from it what appeared like a piece of pumice-stone, began rasping it rapidly. Doctor Burke regarded it curiously, and with such evident desire to examine it, that the hakim motioned him to a distance.

"The West has its secrets," he exclaimed, "and I seek not to penetrate them; let my brother in knowledge respect the wisdom of the East."

This was a plain intimation that no examination of his specific would be permitted.

what? the tremendous sacrifice which has too long been neglected."

"She may escape."

"Impossible!" replied the former. "She is at the chief temple of the offended goddess. Maritelete watches over her."

"The wretched groom, too," muttered the banker.

"He is faithful."

Al Moorad made a gesture of incredulity.

"He would not sacrifice his faith, even to the love of his master," added the speaker. "He must live."

"And yet it would be more prudent to—"

"He shall live!" interrupted the Brahmin, in a tone which admitted of no reply; for the wealthy Hindoo banker was wholly in his power. "And now, urge me no more upon the subject. Although the death of every son and daughter of the Christian race has been decreed, have we not, in pity to thy weakness, consented to spare this Lillian?"

The Hindoo bowed his head, to conceal the mortification he felt at the dictatorial air and words of the speaker.

The servant of the temple entered the hall, and, after inclining with profound respect before the Brahmin, stood, with his arms folded over his chest, waiting until he should question him.

"Now, is the Christian dead?" demanded Al Moorad, hastily.

The man made no reply.

"It is permitted thee to speak," said his superior.

"The sahib Tyrrell has escaped."

"Impossible!" exclaimed both the conspirators.

"The English hakim and the officer came to the house," resumed the messenger, "and brought with them the father of knowledge—Mirza Alge, at whose presence the angel of death fled. He administered the antidote, known only to the sacred race."

"Curse him!" muttered the banker.

"It is like the feringses," calmly observed the Brahmin, who, apart from the general hatred he felt to all of European blood and the desire of obliging his confederate, had no particular motive in wishing for the death of our hero; "it was not his destiny to die."

"Father," exclaimed the Hindoo, with a sudden burst of passion, "you have never loved, never felt the gnawing pang of jealousy, the agony of knowing that a rival—a successful, happy rival—is by the side of her you worship, the companion of her walks, the sharer of her thoughts and smiles."

The Brahmin eyed him with a look of cold disdain, as if such feelings were far beneath one of his sacred caste, and yet a keen observer might have detected a latent expression on his features, indicating that the frost of age, which rested on his wrinkled brow, had not yet stifled every emotion of the heart; for if love were extinct, ambition still reigned there.

"And Hassan!" he exclaimed, suddenly struck by the danger of discovery to his project.

"Is in prison."

The priest clasped his hands thrice, and several attendants entered. Hastily writing a few lines upon his tablet, he gave it to one of them.

"To the Arad, the moonshce," he said, "who resides near the prison."

The man withdrew.

"There is danger," whispered Al Moorad.

"I have guarded against it," replied the old man, with a cynical smile. "Before the dawn, Hassan will be beyond the reach of his enemies."

"Free?"

"The freedom of death," answered the Brahmin, in a tone of indifference; for, like most Asiatics, he recked but little of human life. "You may withdraw," he added, waving his hand to the spy.

The man, instead of obeying him, folded his arms and remained motionless—a sign that he had something further to communicate.

"Speak."

"In passing through the wood in front of the temple, I saw that I was watched."

"By whom?"

"A Christian of the servants of the sahib Tyrrell. I took upon myself to order his arrest."

A grim smile of satisfaction rested on the features of the aged bigot; he had now a Christian in his power.

Caleb was brought into his presence, bound with cords, and the ends of a shawl thrust into his mouth to prevent the possibility of an alarm. The banker laid his hand upon the weapon he wore in his girdle, and, doubtless, would have made short work with the helpless captive had not his companion restrained him.

"Blood must not be shed within these walls," he said; "to Bramah will I offer him. A Christian and a renegade from our holy faith are now within my power—the sacrifice will be complete."

"Should he escape?"

"Fear not. Long before the dawn of another day he shall be far from Calcutta, on his way to the great temple of Maritelete."

Al Moorad disliked the delay, but circumstances compelled him to submit.

The precaution taken by the cunning priest to prevent his secret being betrayed proved an effectual one, for on the following morning when Sir Charles Fourreau visited the police court to prefer a charge of attempted assassination against the khandamah Hassan, human justice had been forestalled; the ruffian had been found dead in his cell.

A serpent of a peculiarly venomous kind had stung him, though how it came there no one could explain.

It was not generally found in that part of India.



CALEB A PRISONER IN THE HINDOO TEMPLE.

When he had grated about as much as would cover the surface of a shilling, he called for a glass of milk.

One of the native servants brought it.

The Hindoo examined it carefully, and, satisfied that it was unadulterated, he slowly dropped the powder into it, muttering, at the same time, words in an unknown tongue.

The English physician smiled; he fully comprehended that the verse, or whatever the old man might be reciting, could only be by way of blind—that the real virtue of the remedy lay in the powder.

"Now raise him up," said the hakim.

Sir Charles and Fred did as he directed.

"Hold back his head."

It was done.

"Grasp him firmly," added Mirza, "as you would cling to life. Violent convulsions will follow. Let not feeling or the sight of his sufferings unnerve you. Should you release him, the consequences will be fatal."

His patient was placed exactly in the position he required, yet still the physician paused. The friends of the sufferer began to grow impatient—they could not understand why he delayed to administer the remedy.

"Patience," observed the old man, "is the mother of wisdom."

Gradually the milk in the glass began to effervesce. Mirza approached it to the lips of our hero, and despite his struggles, forced the contents down the throat of the youth, who made violent efforts to reject it.

It was well that he had informed those who witnessed them of the consequences of the draught, or the fatal effects he had predicted in all probability would have ensued. A violent convulsion took place—the eyeballs of the patient appeared distended with agony.

Even Burke, who had watched the proceedings with all the curiosity natural to his profession, could scarcely endure to look upon him. Sir Charles and Fred were terribly agitated.

"Has the dose been sufficient?" demanded the former.

"A grain more or less were death."

Still the convulsions continued; they had lasted now several minutes, and so intense was their violence, that fatal effects were anticipated.

"Poor Lilly!" thought the baronet, who fully expected to see our hero expire under the violence of his sufferings, "this will be a sad blow to thy young and loving heart."

At last a deep groan broke from the patient, whose limbs writhed in agony.

"Hold him fast," added the hakim, sternly.

A second groan followed.

"Be not surprised," he added, "at what I am about to do."

Clenching his long, meager hand, he struck the patient a violent blow upon the chest.

"Monster!" exclaimed Fred, "you have destroyed him!"

"I have saved him," replied Mirza, calmly.

A violent fit of vomiting followed the action.

For nearly a quarter of an hour the sickness continued. Strange to say, the matter ejected consisted of long fibrous threads, green, resembling in everything save color, the seaweed cast upon the beach. The quantity was enormous.

At the expiration of a quarter of an hour the sufferer appeared to breathe more freely, and he asked to be laid back upon the couch.

"Hold him up," repeated the hakim; "if he reposes he dies."

As a matter of course, after such a caution, the entreaty of our hero to be permitted to recline back upon the sofa was unheeded—Fred and Sir Charles continued to support him.

Dr. Burke observed with intense interest that the ends of the last fibres were tinged with blood, and he pointed out the fact to the hakim, who nodded his head.

"Aye," he said, "they were already rooted on the lungs; it is five days, at least, since he took the poison."

When the sickness had entirely subsided, the old man prepared a draught in which he mingled various drugs and simples. His patient swallowed it with far less difficulty than the first.

Mirza anxiously watched its effects.

"Allah kumar!" he exclaimed, after a pause; "the last fibre is removed, and the youth is saved."

A sigh of relief broke from all present.

"Lay him down."

They did as he directed.

"He will sleep for hours, but his slumbers must be watched."

Sir Charles and Wharton both declared their intention of passing the night by the sufferer.

"It is well," said the old man. "Should he wake, give him stimulants, but beware how you break his sleep—leave nature to herself."

The same process had now to be gone through with Jack Manders, whose sufferings were far less acute than Tyrrell's, for he had not taken the fatal root till several days after him.

The hakim having completed his task, was about to depart.

"Stay," said the baronet; "you have saved a life that is very dear to me, and to all who know him."

"Thy star has been fortunate."

"Let this speak the gratitude of his friends."

He placed in the shriveled hand of the Hindoo a purse filled with gold, and drawing from his finger a valuable diamond ring, added it to the gift.

Mirza Alge raised the sparkling gem to his head, after the manner of orientals, and then kissed it.

"May your shadow be never the less!" he exclaimed.

Sir Charles thanked him for his wishes.

"And health and wealth attend you."

"Should the former fail," observed the baronet, who really felt impressed with his skill, "I shall send for the hakim Mirza."

"Who will be at the sahib's disposal, though the angel of death stood at his side."

"I have said it," he added, emphatically.

"Brother," said Dr. Burke, "would you have any objection to give or sell me a portion of that peculiar-looking stone?"

This was in allusion to the one he had rasped and put into the draught which saved the life of our hero.

"It is not a stone," replied the old man, drily.

"Root, then?"

"It is not a root."

"Perhaps you will term it a fungus?"

The hakim seemed highly annoyed, for the English physician had hit upon the truth; the remedy was a peculiar species of fungi, found only in the remotest province of India, and which, when dried in the sun, became so hard, and so closely resembled pumice-stone, that the first error of the speaker was easily accounted for.

"I may neither sell it nor give it," replied the old man; "I can only administer it to those who suffer."

"But why keep such a secret to yourself?"

"Knowledge is a pearl more precious than gold. Farewell."

So saying, the hakim quitted the house.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE REASON FOR THE ASSASSINATION.

Our readers will doubtless wonder why, after the scene which Jack Manders, Caleb, and the sycees had witnessed in the garden of the temple, precautions had not been taken to prevent the perpetration of the crime which so nearly succeeded in depriving its victim of existence, and that the intention which the former expressed, of bringing his master on a future occasion to the spot, had not been carried out.

It would have been so, had not the deadly root been administered by Hassan the very next day; the languor which immediately ensued rendered the victim incapable of exertion, added to which the groom had disappeared.

The adventure, therefore, had been dismissed from the minds of all but Caleb, who felt that natural impatience which the grateful heart experiences to prove its devotion to its benefactor. Night after night he had returned to the spot, without success; no second interview had taken place between the Brahmin and Al Moorad; or, if it had, it must have been held in the recesses of the temple, where he was unable to penetrate.

The illness of Richard and Jack, from its very nature, appeared to him as the natural effects of the climate—nothing more. He readily believed the assurance which the former gave him, that the next day he should be better.

On the night which followed the detection of the assassin, Caleb was at his post as usual, crouching beneath the thick flowering shrubs in front of the temple. One of those vague presentiments of ill, which most of us in our lives have received without ever being able to account for, weighed upon his spirits; he felt dull and wretched—as if he had

once more found himself on board the Caradoo, subject to the tyranny of Captain Gall.

He had been more than an hour on his post when the sound of a footstep startled him, and, unfortunately, he raised his head before the intruder, who proved to be one of the servants of the temple, had passed him. The action was but momentary, for the sense of his imprudence struck him, and he concealed himself again: trusting that he had not been seen. But the quick eye of the Hindoo had marked him; and although, with that self-possession and cunning so peculiar to the Hindoo character, he betrayed neither surprise nor fear, and passed on without interrupting the low, monotonous chant he had been singing.

"A lucky escape!" mentally ejaculated Caleb, as the object of his fear disappeared beneath the archway of the temple. "I wish I could have seen the fellow's face," he added, "for I feel certain that he is not unknown to me."

He was right; the man had long been employed as a spy about the residence of our hero. Hassan had engaged him in the ostensible capacity of a *bhacchi*, or water-carrier, and he was now on his way to inform Al Moorad and the chief Brahmin of the detection of their scheme, and the imprisonment of their agent.

We must leave poor Caleb for awhile and follow the native into the interior of the idol's temple.

The hall in which the banker and his confederate were seated was one of the most elaborately-decorated in the edifice, the walls painted with representations of the incarnations of Vishnu, and the emblem of Bramah, the supreme deity of the Hindoos. Of the latter deity, singular to say, they have no idol; and the reason assigned for it in the "Veda," or sacred book, is as follows:—

"Of him whose glory is so great there is no image. He is the incomprehensible being who illumines all, delights all, and from whom all proceeds; that by which we live when born, and that to which all must return."

The residence of Bramah is supposed to be in the triangle of Quivelinga, in the center of a rose.

Had we space, and did not fear to tire our readers by digressions which, however interesting to the antiquarian, or in a literary point, would be foreign to the progress of our tale, we should feel disposed to pursue the reflections which the peculiarity of the symbol of the supreme god of India has awakened. As it is, we must give up the task, merely observing that the uncleaned plains of Hindoo literature are rich in truths, disjointed relics of the past, shreds from the many-colored garment of old Time—worthless to the ignorant or thoughtless, but to the patient and learned hieroglyphic keys to the past—spells by which investigation separates truth from fiction.

There is little doubt but the compilers of the Bhagavat had a knowledge of the sacred writings. One expression, in particular, recalls the tremendous I AM of Scripture. As the work is not generally known, we will quote it, before resuming the thread of our narrative:—

"Even I was at first; not any other thing—that which exists, unperceived, supreme."

"I am the creation and dissolution of the whole universe; there is nothing greater than I, and all things hang upon me, even as precious gems on a string."

"I am moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, sound in the firmament, human nature in mankind, sweet-smelling savor in the earth, glory in the source of life."

"In all things I am life; and in animals I am desire, regulated by moral fitness."

We have indulged in these extracts from the sacred writings of the Hindoos, to show that, however debased the latter have become through the craft and ambition of their priesthood, there was nothing originally in their faith to render them incapable of receiving the great truths of Christianity.

Al Moorad was in high spirits. The last report he had received represented his successful rival at the point of death, the next one he doubted not would confirm it.

"Father," he exclaimed, addressing the Brahmin, who was seated by his side, "the work goes bravely on. One of the hated race of our oppressors, by this time, stands before the judgment seat of Yamen."

The old man faintly smiled.

"Still, I could have wished," continued the speaker, "that you had not spared Kehoda."

"Spared her?" repeated the aged bigot; "for

CHAPTER LXV.

LOVERS' CONFIDENCES.

The cause of the march of the gallant 01st to Delhi soon became apparent. The government had taken alarm at the spirit of insubordination manifested by the native troops, the forces on which, with a blindness partaking of faulty, England had hitherto confided the stability of her dominions in the East.

When the news first began to be whispered in Calcutta, the young officers and many civilians merely laughed at it. Nothing could shake their faith in the adherence of the native army. They regarded it as a mere passing ebullition, arising from some caprice of caste, or an attempt to avail themselves of the absence of the larger portion of the Queen's troops in Persia, to extort an augmentation of pay or batta. The greased cartridges they looked upon as the pretext.

In the last opinion, most probably, they were not far wrong, for the Hindoo, like the European, seldom gives the reason for his act, it is generally veiled by the excuse.

Old residents in India viewed the affair in a widely different light. They had long been aware of the spirit of disaffection which, like the smoldering fire, was only waiting a favorable occasion to burst forth, and spread destruction around; but even they were far from imagining the horrors which were soon to be perpetrated—horrors destined to desolate many an English home, and leave an in-

Towards A Twilight Kiss. This song is by Night In Gales and appears on the album Towards the Twilight (1997). From worlds beyond worlds within worlds they came, These thorns, merging into blossoms of agonizing light... Never to burst into flower, for those who know are the bearers of fury, So storm through my flaming balls, lord of all pain! Forever in warfare is the passionate flesh, Yet it colours my darkened path so silently... It is in its eyes that I drown as they reflect myriads of sunsets, Rushing