THE HERALD.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1890.

THE YOUNG VIRGINIAN'S BRIDE.

From New York Weekly:

Immediately before the opening of hostilities, Juan Novalese, prompted by the deep affection which he bore his sister, conveyed her to the shelter of an adjacent convent, to which refuge a number of ladies had also betaken themselves for safety. Here, gathered around the altar of the convent chapal, they listened with trembling limbs and ashy faces to the horrid din without. And they had cause for trembling—those terror-stricken women, for every ball that sped through the town carried away the life of some beloved relative or friend.

Juan Novales felt no fear. Boy as he was, he possessed the heart of a lion, and seemed, in truth, to be imbued with a passion for the strife which rendered him regardless of personal risk. He had already sustained a conspicuous part in the various stories which had been made from the gates, not only against the land forces hurled against them, but in the teeth of a raking fire from the ships, which swept the causeway forming the approach to the castle; and yet, while round him his comrades were falling fast in all directions, he had escaped the slightest injury, although in the very midst of the battle.

Unable longer to make head against opposing odds, the heroic commander, in the person of the elder Novales himself, reluctantly gave orders for the evacuation of the city. His son Juan, agonized at the bare thought, and half disposed, in his shame, to cast himself upon the weapons of the enemy, was recalled to a sense of his situation by the recollection of his sister.

Prompted by the thought, he made his way, as rapidly as the condition of the streets—clogged with the dead and the dying, and crowded with fugitives—would permit, in the direction of the convent where he had left her.

A terrible thought assailed him as he traversed its gloomy cloisters, which were rendered almost impassable by the debris of the mutilated edifice. What if she should have been slain.

He penetrated to the chapel, and there encountered a sight which for an instant rooted him to the ground with horror; and he was a man rarely to be so moved. Around the altar of the chapel lay a heap of mangled female forms, many of them mutilated as to be hardly recognizable.

He raised his eyes to ascertain the cause, and all doubt was dispelled by the shattered appearance of the dome, the glass casings of which had been shattered to atoms, and the walls and decorations similarly dimolished, while the state of the altar itself showed that all this devastation had been occasioned by the entrance of a bomb.

While thus employed, a low moan attracted his attention. He recognizen the voice. It was that of his sister, and, springing toward the altar, he raised in his arms a senseless figure, and was rejoiced to find it Inez, although stunned by the shock, alive and providentially uninjured.

"Revive, my sweet sister, and let us abandon this scene of ruin," he hurriedly exclaimed, as he found that she was gradually returning to the possession of her senses.

"Whither have I been taken, and what is all this I see around me?" she questioned, faintly. "Ah! I recollect—the bomb. Oh, heaven, what a scene of horror!"

"Come the moments fly, even now we may be too late."

"Ah! we are conquered, then?"

"Yes, surely it is destiny. The streets are crowded with flying multitudes—our greatest leaders are slain. I know not if our own father lives. Our generals who survive are already beyond the limits."

"Our father—yes, our dear father. Have you left his fate unconcerned to come to me?"

"I have not seen him."

"But does he survive?"

"I know not."

"Then let me stay and perish. Death were preferable to such base desertion."

"Nay, nay, sister, do you hear? They are approaching; the sounds of pursuit are momentarily increasing. They assail the outer doors—the panels yield. Ah! too late, too late; they are here!" he added, as the portals flew open and the corporal's guard of soldiers, flushed and mad with conquest, rushed toward them with a shout.

The death of both appeared inevitable; but at this instant, as Juan, clasping his sister, with a defiant air bade them come on, a young man, whose garments were torn almost in tatters and soiled with blood, from the part he had sustained in the conflict, rushed in between, and in English commanded the assailants to desist.

"Away to the hills!" he cried, almost breathlessly. "I have horses and trusty followers, who will convey you to freedom."

It was John Waltham, the fugitive Virginian, a former companion of Admiral Drake, whom he had deserted from conscientious scruples to serve with the Spaniards in more peaceful pursuits upon shore, and who, having on occasion preserved the life of her brother, had won the heart of the fair Inez, and been promised her hand.

"Avaunt, traitor and coward!" cried Inez, shrinking back in disgust, and placing her hand instinctively upon her silver hilted poniard. "Dare not pollute me with the touch of a palm that has been reddened with the blood of my countrymen."

"It is false, whoever may have said it," replied the young colonist, sturdily. "Your own soldiers will bear witness to the assistance I have rendered your countrymen. I am of colonial birth, and had no hesitation in taking up arms against a rabble of pirates from every clime, whose only object was plunder, even although it must be attained at the purchase of blood."

"Yet, senor, you coldly resigned your hopes for me, and abandoned my father, when a word from you would have given you wealth and honor, and me a husband whom I could have devotedly loved."

"You wrong me again—by my soul, you do," said Waltham, earnestly, with his hand upon his heart. "Your father owes the preservation from death to my hand."

"Oh, words of cheer and hope! Do I hear aright?"

"By heaven, sweetest of women, I tell you the truth, which your own father will corroborate. A hireling Portuguese, at the head of a file of sailors, had struck him down at a moment when in the confusion of the fight he had become separated from his command, and another instant must assuredly have finished him, when I darted forward, and making a signal which was recognized by the men, some of whom knew me, succeeded in rescuing him from further outrage."

"We shall see him, then—we shall rejoin our father, Juan," she exclaimed, clasping her hands and twining two soft white arms about the neck of the preserver. "Dearest senor! how long will you continue to make us your debtors?"

"One word from you will discharge the obligation and cancel all debt," said the frank-hearted Virginian, "but I will not ask my Inez to resay that here. Let us now rather look to a reunion with the friends from whom we have been separated. We have performed our part and there is no longer use in remaining."

"I am still more eager than yourself, my more than brother," replied Juan Novales, as yielding to the ardent impulse of his generous nature, he embraced his friend. "How often must I be indebted to you for a life that has grown to be a burden to me. And—yet, a few hours since I almost cursed you for a traitor, and swore to slay my sister if she espoused you. Am I doomed to be always the recipient and not the bestower of favors?"

"Speak not of that," said John Waltham; "I should be rejoiced that it is in my power, a poor outcast, to confer favors at all. As for the rest, a time may yet come when I may need not only your sympathies, but your assistance."

"Both are at your service, and I await with impatience the hour when I may be called upon to bestow them. Inez, sister, have you nothing to say in gratitude for your deliverance?"

Inez started and gave John Waltham her hand; then as impulsively withdrew it, and averted her head with a blush.

"Is this all?"

"I thank your friend for both our lives and that of our father," she answered, trembling violently.

"And nothing more?" asked John Waltham, pressing her hand with a gentle pressure that spoke more eloquenly than could words.

"And nothing more," she rejoined with a sigh. Then, turning to Juan with clasped hands and beseeching air, she added:

"Oh, Juan, thou hadst always an influence over our father's sternness. Go to him. Tell him I repent the oath I took, in a fit of mistaken spleen against the senor here, whom I can only love—an oath which gave my hand to the Colonel Iturbide, his rival—and ask, for my sake, that the unconsecrated bond, which there is not even friendship to sanction, be dissolved, and that his consent be given to my union with the senor."

"That he must do, or I am an exile forever," replied Juan, warmly.

The soldiers whom Waltham had interrupted so opportunely, having long withdrawn, and all sounds of tumult having subsided, the former looked forth, and was rejoiced to find that the buccaneers, having reaped all the plunder they could bear with them, had re-embarked, satisfied with the success of their expedition, and were sailing off through the strait with colors flying.

Rejoicing, though sorrowing, they picked their way carefully out of the gloomy place and across the deserted cloisters of the convent. On reaching the street the sight proved too much for Inez, and John Waltham was obliged to throw her light shawl across her face, and, lifting her in his muscular arms, to select his way as cautiously as he might over the successive piles of fallen bodies, until they came again to the dwelling of the elder Novales—or what had been such.

Here they found the old don, completely resuscitated, who, the dreaded rival having been slain in the fight, no longer witheld his consent, and the Senorita Inez was speedily converted into Mrs. Jack Waltham.

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