The Brethren

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CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Hassan was dead, at a sign from Saladin a captain of the mamelukes named Abdullah unfastened the jewel from the emir's turban and handed it to Wulf. It was a glorious star shaped thing, made of great emeralds set around with diamonds, and the captain looked at it greedily and muttered:

"Alas, that an unbeliever should wear the enchanted star, the ancient luck of the house of Hassan!" a saying that Wulf remembered.

He took the jewel, then turned to Saladin and said:

"Have I your peace, sultan, after such a deed?"

"Whoever dies, you are safe," said Saladin. "There is but one sin which I will not pardon you—you know what it is," and he looked at them. "As for Hassan, he was my beloved friend and servant, but you slew him in fair fight, and his soul is now in paradise."

Then dismissing the matter with a wave of his hand he turned to receive a great body of Christian prisoners that, panting and stumbling like over-driven sheep, were being thrust on toward the camp.

Among them the brethren rejoiced to see Egbert; also, wounded in many places, there was the black browed master of the Templars, who even now could be fierce and insolent.

"So I was right," he mocked in a husky voice, "and here you are, safe with your friends the Saracens, Sir Knights of the visions."

"All the vision is not done," said Godwin sadly, and, turning, he looked toward a blazoned tent which with the sultan's great pavilion, and not far behind it, was being pitched by the Arab camp setters. The master saw and remembered Godwin's vision of the dead Templars.

"Is it there that you mean to murder me, traitor and wizard?" he asked.

Then rage took hold of Godwin, and he answered him:

"Were it not for your plight, here and now I would thrust those words down your throat, as, should we both live, I yet shall hope to do. You call us traitors. Is it the work of traitors to have charged alone through all this host until our horses died beneath us"—he pointed to where Smoke and Flame lay with glazing eyes—"to have unhorsed Saladin and to have slain this prince in single combat?" And he turned to the body of the emir Hassan.

"You speak of me as wizard and murderer," he went on, "because some angel brought me a vision which, had you believed it, Templar, would have saved tens of thousands from a bloody death, the Christian kingdom from destruction and yonder holy thing from mockery." And, with a shudder, he glanced at the rood, which its captors had set up upon a rock not far away with a dead knight tied to its black arms. "You, Sir Templar, are the murderer who by your madness and ambition have brought ruin on the cause of Christ."

Then Saracen guards dragged the Templar away, and they were parted.

By now the pavilion was up, and Saladin entered it, saying:

"Bring before me the king of the Franks and Prince Arnat, he who is called Reginald of Chatillon."

Then a thought struck him, and he called to Godwin and Wulf, saying:

"Sir Knights, you know our tongue. Give up your swords to the officer—they shall be returned to you—and come, be my interpreters."

So the brethren followed him into the tent, where presently were brought the wretched king and the gray haired Reginald de Chatillon, and with them a few other great knights who, even in the midst of their misery, stared at Godwin and Wulf in wonderment. Saladin read the look and explained lest their presence should be misunderstood:

"King and nobles, be not mistaken. These knights are my prisoners, as you are, and none have shown themselves braver today or done me and mine more damage. Indeed, had it not been for my guards, within the hour I should have fallen beneath the sword of Sir Godwin. But as they know Arabic, I have asked them to render my words into your tongue. Do you accept them as interpreters? If not, others must be found."

When they had translated this, the king said that he accepted them.

The sultan bade his captains be seated and, seeing their terrible thirst, commanded slaves to bring a great bowl of sherbet made of rose water cooled with snow, and with his own hand gave it to King Guy. He drank in great gulps, then passed the bowl to Reginald de Chatillon, whereon Saladin cried out to Godwin:

"Say to the king it is he and not I who gives this man to drink. There is no bond of salt between me and the Prince Arnat."

Godwin translated, sorrowfully enough, and Reginald, who knew the habits of the Saracens, answered:

"No need to explain, Sir Knight. Those words are my death wagrant. Well, I never expected less."

Then Saladin spoke again.

"Prince Arnat, you strove to take the holy city of Mecca and to desecrate the tomb of the prophet, and then I swore to kill you. Again, when in a time of peace a caravan came from Egypt and passed by Esh-Shobek, where you were, forgetting your oath, you fell upon them and slew them. Then for the second time I swore to kill you. Yet I give you one more chance. Will you subscribe the Koran and embrace the faith of Islam or will you die?"

Now the lips of Reginald turned pale, and for a moment he swayed upon his seat. Then his courage came back to him, and he answered in a strong voice:

"Sultan, I will have none of your mercy at such a price, nor do I bow the knee to your dog of a false prophet."

Saladin sprang to his feet, his very beard bristling with wrath, and, drawing his saber, shouted aloud:

"You scorn Mohammed! Behold! I avenge Mohammed upon you! Take him away!" and he struck him with the flat of his scimiter.

Then mamelukes leaped upon the prince. Dragging him to the entrance of the tent they forced him to his knees and there beheaded him.

In the hush that followed this terrible deed King Guy said to Godwin:

"Ask the sultan if it is my turn next."

"Nay," answered Saladin. "Kings do not kill kings, but that truce breaker has met with no more than his deserts."

Then came a scene still more dreadful. Saladin went to the door of his tent and, standing over the body of Reginald, bade them parade the captive Templars and Hospitalers before him.

"These also are faith breakers," he shouted, "and of their unclean tribes will I rid the world. Ho, my emirs and doctors of the law"—and he turned to the great crowd of his captains about him—"take each of you one of them and kill him!"

Now the emirs hung back, for, though fanatics, they were brave and loved not this slaughter of defenseless men, and even the mamelukes murmured aloud.

But Saladin cried again:

"They are worthy of death, and he who disobeys my command shall himself be slain."

"Sultan," said Godwin, "we cannot witness such a crime. We ask that we may die with them."

"Nay," he answered; "you have eaten of my salt, and to kill you would be murder. Get you to the tent of the Princess of Baalbec yonder, for there you will see nothing of the death of these Franks, your fellow worshipers."

So the brethren turned and, led by a mameluke, fled aghast for the first time in their lives past the long lines of Templars and Hospitalers, who in the last red light of the dying day knelt upon the sand and prayed, while the emirs came up to kill them.

They entered the tent, none forbidding them, and at the end of it saw two women crouched together on some cushions, who arose, clinging to each other. Then the women saw also and sprang forward with a cry of joy, saying:

"So you live—you live!"

"Aye, Rosamund," answered Godwin, "to see this shame—would God that we did not—while others die. They murder the knights of the holy orders. To your knees and pray for their passing souls."

So they knelt down and prayed till the tumult died away and they knew that all was done.

Rosamund had little to tell, except that she had been well treated and always kept by the person of the sultan, marching to and fro with his army, for he awaited the fulfillment of his dream concerning her. Then they told her all that had chanced to them; also of the vision of Godwin and its dreadful accomplishment and of the death of Hassan beneath the sword of Wulf. At that story Rosamund wept and shrank from him a little, for though it was this prince who had stolen her from her home she loved Hassan. Yet when Wulf said humbly: "The fault is not mine; it was so fated. Would that I had died instead of this Saracen!" Rosamund answered: "No, no. I am proud that you should have conquered."

But Wulf shook his head and said:

"I am not proud. Although weary with that awful battle, I was still the younger and stronger man, though at first he well nigh mastered me by his skill and quickness. At least we parted friends. Look, he gave me this," and he showed her the great emerald badge which the dying prince had given him.

"Do you know," asked Masouda, "that this jewel is very famous, not only for its value, but because it is said to have belonged to one of the children of the prophet, and to bring good fortune to its owner? There is scarce a soldier in the sultan's army who would not give all he has for yonder trinket, which is known throughout the land as the star of Hassan. So beware, Sir Wulf, lest you be robbed or murdered, although you have eaten the salt of Salah-ed-din."

"I remember the captain Abdullah looking at it greedily and lamenting that the luck of the house of Hassan should pass to an unbeliever," said Wulf. "Well, enough of this jewel and its dangers; I think Godwin has words to say."

"Yes," said Godwin. "We are here in your tent through the kindness of Saladin, who did not wish us to witness the death of our comrades, but tomorrow we shall be separated again. Now, if you are to escape"—

"I will escape! I must escape, even if I am recaptured and die for it," broke in Rosamund passionately.

"Speak low," said Masouda. "I saw the eunuch Mesrour pass the door of the tent, and he is a spy—they all are spies."

Suddenly a shadow fell upon them. It was that of the head eunuch, Mesrour, a fat, cunning faced man, with a cringing air. Low he bowed before them, saying:

"Your pardon, O princess. A messenger has come from Salah-ed-din demanding the presence of these knights at the banquet that he has made ready for his noble prisoners."

"We obey," said Godwin, and, rising, they bowed to Rosamund and to Masouda, then turned to go, leaving the star jewel where they had been seated.

Very skillfully Mesrour covered it with a fold of his robe and under shelter of the fold slipped down his hand and grasped it, not knowing that, although she seemed to be turned away, Masouda was watching him out of the corner of her eye. Waiting till the brethren reached the tent door, she called out:

"Sir Wulf, are you already weary of the enchanted star of fortune, or would you bequeath it to us?"

Now Wulf came back, saying heavily:

"I forgot the thing. Who would not at such a time? Where is it? I left it on the cushion."

"Try the hand of Mesrour," said Masouda, whereat with a very crooked smile the eunuch produced it and said:

"I wished to show you, Sir Knight, that you must be careful with such

The eunuch produced the gem.

gems as these, especially in a camp where there are many dishonest persons."

"I thank you," answered Wulf as he took it. "You have shown me." Then, followed by the sound of Masouda's mocking laughter, they left the tent.

Of all the strange feasts that they ever ate the brethren found this the strangest and the most sad. Saladin was seated at the head of the table with guards and officers standing behind him. Not far from him sat the king of Jerusalem and his brother and all down the board great captive nobles, to the number of fifty or more.

Sorry spectacles were these gallant knights in their hewn and blood stained armor, pale faced, too, with eyes set wide in horror at the dread deeds they had just seen done. Yet they ate, and ate ravenously, for now that their thirst was satisfied they were mad with hunger. Thirty thousand Christians lay dead on the horn and plain of Hattin; the kingdom of Jerusalem was destroyed and its king a prisoner. The holy rood was taken as a trophy. Defeated, shamed, bereaved—yet they ate, and, being human, could take comfort from the thought that having eaten, by the law of the Arabs, at least their lives were safe.

Saladin called Godwin and Wulf to him that they might interpret for him, and gave them food, and they also ate who were compelled to it by hunger.

"Have you seen your cousin, the princess?" he said. "And how found you her?" he asked presently.

"Sire," said Godwin, "we found her sick with the sights and sounds of war and murder; shamed to know also that her uncle, the conquering sovereign of the east, had slaughtered 200 unarmed men."

"Wulf trembled at his words, but Saladin listened and showed no anger.

"Doubtless," he answered, "she thinks me cruel, and you also think me cruel—a despot who delights in the death of his enemies. Yet it is not so, for I desire peace and to save life, not to destroy it. It is you Christians who for hard upon a hundred years have drenched these sands with blood because you say that you wish to possess the land where your prophet lived and died more than eleven centuries ago. How many Saracens have you slain? Hundreds of thousands of them. Moreover, with you peace is no peace. Those orders that I destroyed tonight have broken it a score of times. Well, I will bear no more. Allah has given me and my army the victory, and I will take your cities and drive the Franks back into the sea. Let them seek their own lands and worship God there after their own fashion and leave the east in quiet.

"Now, Sir Godwin, tell these captives for me that tomorrow I send those of them who are unwounded to Damascus, there to await ransom while I besiege Jerusalem and the other Christian cities."

So Godwin rose and told them; afterward he asked whether he and his brother were also to be sent to Damascus.

Saladin replied that he would keep them for awhile to interpret, then they might go their ways without ransom.

On the morrow, accordingly, the captives were sent to Damascus, and that day Saladin took the castle of Tiberias. Then he moved on to Acre, which he took, relieving 4,000 Moslem captives, and so on to other towns, all of which fell before him, till at length he came to Ascalon, which he besieged.

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The night was dark outside of Ascalon save when the flashes of lightning in the storm that rolled down from the mountains to the sea lit it up. In a little open space of the garden of an empty house that stood without the walls a man and a woman were talking, both of them wrapped in dark cloaks. They were Godwin and Masouda.

"Well," said Godwin eagerly, "is all ready?"

She nodded and answered:

"At length, all. Tomorrow afternoon an assault will be made upon Ascalon, but even if it is taken the camp will not be moved that night. There will be a great confusion, and Abdullah, who is somewhat sick, will be the captain of the guard over the princess' tent. He will allow the soldiers to slip away to assist in the sack of the city, nor will they betray him. At sunset but one eunuch will be on watch—Mesrour—and I will find means to put him to sleep. Abdullah will bring the princess to this garden disguised as his young son, and there you two and I shall meet them."

"What then?" asked Godwin.

"Do you remember the old Arab who brought you the horses Flame and Smoke and took no payment for them, he who was named Son of the Sand? Well, as you know, he is my uncle, and he has more horses of that breed. At the foot of this garden is a cave, which was once a sepulcher. There we shall find the horses—four of them—and with them my uncle, Son of the Sand, and by the morning light we will be a hundred miles away and lie hid with his tribe until we can slip to the coast and board a Christian ship. Does it please you?"

"Very well, but what is Abdullah's price?"

"One only—the enchanted star, the luck of the house of Hassan; for nothing else will he take such risks. Will Sir Wulf give it?"

"Surely," answered Godwin, with a laugh.

"Good. Then it must be done tonight. When I return I will send Abdullah to your tent. Fear not; if he takes the jewel he will give the price, since otherwise he thinks it will bring him ill fortune."

"Does the lady Rosamund know?" asked Godwin again.

She shook her head.

"Nay; the fewer in such a plot the better, and if anything goes wrong it is well she should be innocent, for then"—

"Then death and farewell to all things," said Godwin; "nor indeed should I grieve to say them goodby. But, Masouda, you run great peril. Tell me now honestly, why do you do this?"

As he spoke the lightning flashed and showed her face as she stood there against a background of green leaves and red lily flowers. There was a strange look upon it—a look that made Godwin feel afraid, he knew not of what.

"Masouda," he said in a whisper, "oh, think me no vain fool, but since it is best perhaps that both should know full surely, tell me is it as I have sometimes"—

"Feared?" broke in Masouda, with her little mocking laugh. "Sir Godwin, it is so. What does your faith teach—the faith in which I was bred and lost, but that now is mine again—because it is yours? That men and women are free, or so some read it. Well, it or they are wrong. We are not free. Was I free when first I saw your eyes in Beirut, the eyes for which I had been watching all my life, and something came from you to me, and I, the cast-off plaything of Sinan, loved you, loved you, loved you, to my own doom? Yes, and rejoiced that it was so, and still rejoice that it is so, and would choose no other fate, because in that love I learned that there is a meaning in this life and that there is an answer to it in lives to be, otherwhere if not here. Nay, speak not. I know your oath, nor would I tempt you to its breaking. But, Sir Godwin, a woman such as the lady Rosamund cannot love two men." And as she spoke Masouda strove to search his face while the shaft went home.

But Godwin showed neither surprise nor pain.

"So you know what I have known for long," he said, "so long that my sorrow is lost in the hope of my brother's joy. Moreover, it is well that she should have chosen the better knight."

"Sometimes," said Masouda reflectively, "sometimes I have watched the lady Rosamund and said to myself: 'What do you lack? You are beautiful, you are highborn, you are learned, you are brave and you are good.' Then I have answered, 'You lack wisdom and true sight, else you would not have chosen Wulf when you might have taken Godwin.'"

"Masouda," went on Godwin, taking no note of her words, "although we may guess her mind, our lady has said nothing yet. Also Wulf may fall, and then I fill his place as best I can. I am no free man, Masouda."

"She has not declared that she loves your brother; we may guess wrongly in this matter."

"And we may guess rightly. What then?"

"Then," answered Masouda, "there are many knightly orders or monasteries for those who desire such places—as you do in your heart. Back to your tent, Sir Godwin, where I will send Abdullah to you to receive the jewel. So, farewell, farewell."

CHAPTER XX.

AN hour later the captain Abdullah might have been seen walking carelessly toward the tent where the brethren slept. Also had there been any who cared to watch something else might have been seen in that low moonlight, for now the storm and the heavy rain which followed it had passed—namely, the fat shape of the eunuch Mesrour, slipping after him wrapped in a dark camel hair cloak. Hidden among some picketed dromedaries, he saw Abdullah enter the tent of the brethren, then, waiting till a cloud crossed the moon, Mesrour ran to it unseen and, throwing himself down on its shadowed side, lay there like a drunken man and listened with all his ears. But those within spoke low, and he could only hear single words, such as "garden," "the star," "princess."

So important did these seem to him, however, that at length Mesrour crept forward and with the sharp point of his knife cut a little slit in the taut canvas. To this he set his eye, only to find that it served him nothing, for there was no light in the tent. Still men were there who talked in the darkness.

"Good," said a voice—it was that of one of the brethren, but which he could not tell, for even to those who knew them best they seemed to be the same. "Good. Then it is settled. Tomorrow at the hour arranged you bring the princess to the place agreed upon, disguised as you have said. In payment for this service I hand you the luck of Hassan, which you covet. Take it, here it is, and swear to do your part, since otherwise it will bring no luck to you, for I will kill you the first time we meet—yes, and the other also."

"I swear it by Allah and his prophet."

"It is enough. See that you keep the oath. And now away. It is not safe that you should tarry here."

Then came the sound of a man leaving the tent. Passing round it cautiously he halted and, opening his hand, looked at its contents to make sure that no trick had been played upon him in the darkness. Mesrour screwed his head round to look also. In so doing his foot struck a stone and instantly Abdullah glanced down to see a dead or drunken man lying almost at his feet. With a swift movement, he hid the jewel and started to walk away. Then, bethinking that it would be well to make sure that this fellow was dead or sleeping, he turned and thrice kicked the prostrate Mesrour upon the back, and with all his strength.

"I thought I saw him move," Abdullah muttered after the third kick. "It is best to make sure," and he drew his knife.

Now, had not terror paralyzed him Mesrour would have cried out, but fortunately for himself before he found his voice Abdullah had buried the knife three inches deep in his fat thigh. With an effort, Mesrour bore this also, knowing that if he showed signs of life the next stroke would be in his heart. Then, satisfied that this fellow, whoever he might be, was either a corpse or insensible, Abdullah drew out the knife, wiped it on his victim's robe and departed.

Not long afterward Mesrour departed also toward the sultan's house, bellowing with rage and pain and vowing vengeance.

That very night Abdullah was seized and put to the question. In his suffering he confessed that he had been to the tent of the brethren and received from one of them the jewel which was found upon him as a bribe to bring the princess to a certain garden outside the camp. But he named the wrong garden. Further, when they asked which of the brethren it was who bribed him he said he did not know, as their voices were alike and their tent was in darkness. Moreover, that he believed there was only one man in it—at least he heard or saw no other. He added that he was summoned to the tent by an Arab man whom he had never seen before, but who told him that if he wished for what he most desired and good fortune he was to be there at a certain hour after sunset. Then he fainted and was put back in prison till the morning by the command of Saladin.

When the morning came Abdullah was dead, who desired no more torments with doom at the end of them, having made shift to strangle himself with his robe. Thus died Abdullah, as faithful as he could be in such sore straits, since he had betrayed neither Masouda nor his son, both of whom were in the plot, and said that only one of the brethren was present in the tent, whereas he knew well that the two of them were there and which of these spoke and gave him the jewel.

Very early that morning the brethren, who were lying wakeful, heard sounds without their tent and, looking out, saw that it was surrounded by mamelukes.

"The plot is discovered," said Godwin to Wulf quietly, but with despair in his face.

"Shall we fight?" asked Wulf as they threw on their mail. But Godwin answered:

"Nay; it would serve us nothing to kill a few brave men."

Then an officer entered the tent and commanded them to give up their swords and to follow him to Saladin to answer a charge that had been laid against them both; nor would he say any more. So they went as prisoners and after waiting awhile were ushered into a large room of the house where Saladin lodged, which was arranged as a court, with a dais at one end. Before this they were stood, till presently the sultan entered through the farther door and with him certain of his emirs and secretaries. Also Rosamund, who looked very pale, was brought there, and in attendance on her Masouda, calm faced as ever.

The brethren bowed to them, but Saladin, whose eyes were full of rage, took no notice of their salutation. For a moment there was silence, then Saladin bade a secretary read the charge, which was brief. It was that they had conspired to steal away the Princess of Baalbec.

"Where is the evidence against us?" asked Godwin boldly. "The sultan is just and convicts no man save on testimony."

Again Saladin motioned to the secretary, who read the words that had been taken down from the lips of the captain Abdullah. They demanded to be allowed to examine the captain Abdullah and learned that he was already dead. Then the eunuch Mesrour was carried forward, for walk he could not, owing to the wound that Abdullah had given him, and told all his tale, how he had suspected Abdullah and, following him, had heard him and one of the brethren speaking in the tent and the words that passed and afterward seen Abdullah with the jewel in his hand.

When he had finished, Godwin asked which of them he had heard speaking with Abdullah, and he answered that he could not say, as their voices were so alike, but one voice only had spoken.

Then Rosamund was ordered to give her testimony and said, truly enough, that she knew nothing of the plot and had not thought of this flight. Masouda also swore that she now heard of it for the first time. After this the secretary announced that there was no more evidence and prayed of the sultan to give judgment in the matter.

"Against which of us," asked Godwin, "seeing that both the dead and the living witness declared they heard but one voice, and whose that voice was they did not know? According to your own law, you cannot condemn a man against whom there is no good testimony."

"There is testimony against one of you," answered Saladin sternly, "that of two witnesses, as is required, and, as I have warned you long ago, that man shall die. Indeed, both of you should die, for I am sure that both are guilty. Still, you have been put upon your trial according to the law, and as a just judge I will not strain the law against you. Let the guilty one die by beheading at sundown, the hour at which he planned to commit his crime. The other may go free with the citizens of Jerusalem, who depart tonight, bearing my message to the Frankish leaders in that holy town."

"We admit nothing," said Godwin. "Yet, if one of us must die, I as the elder claim that right."

"And I claim it as the younger. The jewel was Hassan's gift to me. Who else could give it to Abdullah?" added Wulf.

"Well spoken, both of you. So it seems that both must die."

Then Rosamund stepped forward and threw herself upon her knees before him, exclaiming:

"Sire, my uncle, such is not your justice, that two should be slain for the offense of one, if offense there be. If you know not which is guilty, spare them both, I beseech you."

He stretched out his hand and raised her from her knees.

"Nay, plead not with me, for however much you love him the guilty man must suffer as he deserves, but of this matter Allah alone knows the truth."

Now, behind Saladin stood that old and famous imaum who had been with him and Hassan when he commanded the brethren to depart from Damascus. Leaning forward, he whispered in his master's ear, who considered a moment, then answered him:

"It is good. Do so."

So the imaum left the court and returned presently carrying two small boxes of sandalwood tied with silk and sealed, so like each other that none could tell them apart, which boxes he gave to Saladin.

"In one of these," said the sultan, "is that jewel known as the enchanted star and the luck of the house of Hassan. In the other is a pebble of the same weight. Come, my niece, take these boxes and give them to your kinsmen, to each the box you will. The jewel that is called the star of Hassan is magical and has virtue, so they say. Let it choose, therefore, which of these knights is ripe for death, and let him perish in whose box the star is found."

"Now," muttered the imaum into the ear of his master, "now at length we shall learn which it is of these two men that the lady loves."

"That is what I seek to know," answered Saladin in the same low voice.

As she heard this decree Rosamund looked round wildly and pleaded:

"Oh, be not so cruel! I beseech you spare me this task. Let it be another hand that is chosen to deal death to one of those of my own blood with whom I have dwelt since childhood."

But Saladin looked at her very sternly and answered:

"Princess, I am sure that you desire to escape, and plots are made to take you from me, though of these plots

"Not Wulf! Not Wulf!" she wailed.

you say that you and your woman"—and he looked darkly at Masouda—"know nothing. But these men know, and it is right that you, for whose sake if not by whose command the thing was done, should mete out its reward and do my bidding."

For a moment Rosamund stared at the boxes, then suddenly she closed her eyes and, taking them up at hazard, stretched out her arms, leaning forward over the edge of the dais. Thereon calmly enough the brethren took, each of them, the box that was nearest to him, that in Rosamund's left hand falling to Godwin and that in her right to Wulf. Then she opened her eyes again, stood still and watched.

"Cousin," said Godwin, "before we break this cord that is our chain of doom know well that, whatever chances, we blame you not at all."

Then he began to unknot the silk which was bound about his box. Wulf, knowing that it would tell all the tale, did not trouble himself as yet, but looked around the room, thinking that, whether he lived or died, never would he see a stranger sight. Every eye in it was fixed upon the box in Godwin's hand. Even Saladin stared as though it held his own destiny. No, not every one, for those of the old imaum were fixed upon the face of Rosamund, which was piteous to see, for all its beauty had left it, and even her parted lips were ashy. Masouda alone still stood upright and unmoved, as though she watched some play, but he noted that her rich hued cheek grew pale and that beneath her robe her hand was pressed upon her heart. The silence was intense.

"Trouble enough about one man's life in a land where lives are cheap!" exclaimed Wulf, thinking aloud, and at the sound of his voice all men started as though it had thundered suddenly in a summer sky. Then with a laugh he tore the silk about his box asunder with his strong fingers and, breaking the seal, shook out its contents. Lo, there on the floor lay the enchanted star of Hassan.

Masouda saw, and the color crept back to her cheek. Rosamund saw also, and nature was too strong for her, for in one bitter cry the truth broke from her lips at last:

"Not Wulf! Not Wulf!" she wailed, and sank back senseless into Masouda's arms.

"Now, sire," said the old imaum with a chuckle, "you know which of those two the lady loves."

"Yes, I know now," said Saladin, "and I am glad to know, for the matter has vexed me much."

But Wulf, who had paled for a moment, flushed with joy as the truth came home to him.

"This star is well named 'The Luck,'" he said as, bending down, he took it from the floor and fastened it to his cloak above his heart, "nor do I hold it dearly earned."

So that strange scene ended.

The afternoon drew toward evenin and Godwin stood before Saladin in h private chamber.

"What seek you now?" said the su tan sternly.

"A boon," answered Godwin. "M brother is doomed to die before nigh fall. I ask to die instead of him."

"Why, Sir Godwin?"

"For two reasons, sire. As you lear ed today, at length the riddle is a swered. It is Wulf who is beloved the lady Rosamund, and therefore kill him would be a crime. Further, is I and not he whom the eunuch hea bargaining with the captain Abdull in the tent. I swear it."

Saladin pulled at his beard, th answered:

"If this is to be so, time is short, S Godwin. What farewells have you make? You say that you would spe with my niece Rosamund? Nay, t princess you shall not see, and inde cannot, for she lies swooning in h chamber. Do you desire to meet yo brother for the last time?"

"No, sire, for then he might learn t truth and"—

"Refuse this sacrifice, Sir Godwi which perchance will be scarcely to l liking."

"I wish to say goodby to Masoud she who is waiting woman to the pri cess."

"That you cannot do, for know mistrust this Masouda and believe th she was at the bottom of your plot. have dismissed her from the person the princess and from my camp, whi she is to leave—if she has not alrea left—with some Arabs who are h kin."

"Then," said Godwin, with a sigh, desire only to see Egbert the Templ that he may shrive me according our faith and make note of my l wishes."

"Good; he shall be sent to you. accept your statement that you are t guilty man and not Sir Wulf and ta your life for his. Leave me now, w have greater matters on my mind. T guard will seek you at the appoint time."

Godwin bowed and walked aw with a steady step, while Saladi looking after him, muttered:

"The world could ill spare so bra and good a man."

Two hours later guards summon Godwin from the place where he w prisoned, and, accompanied by the bishop who had shriven him, he pass its door with a happy countenance, su as a bridegroom might have wo They took him to a vault of the gr house where Saladin was lodged, large, rough place, lit with torches, which waited the headsman and assistants. Presently Saladin enter and, looking at him curiously, said:

"Are you still of the same mind, Godwin?"

"I am."

"Good. Yet I have changed mi You shall say farewell to your cous as you desired."

"Sire," pleaded Godwin, "spare l such a sight."

But he pleaded in vain. A wh passed, and Godwin, hearing the swe of robes, looked up and saw the t shape of a veiled woman standing the corner of the vault where the sh ow was so deep that the torchlight o glimmered faintly upon her royal or ments.

"They told me that you were si princess, sick with sorrow, as well y may be, because the man you love about to die for you," said Saladin i slow voice. "Now I have had pity your grief, and his life has been bou with another life, that of the kni who stands yonder."

The veiled form started wildly, th sank back against the wall.

"Rosamund," broke in Godw speaking in French, "I beseech you, silent and do not unman me w words or tears. It is best thus, a you know that it is best. Wulf y love as he loves you, and I believe t in time you will be brought togeth Me you do not love, save as a fri and never have. Moreover, I tell this that it may ease your pain and conscience. I no longer seek you my wife, whose bride is death. I p you, give to Wulf my love and bl ing, and to Masouda, that truest a most sweet woman, say, or write, t I offer her the homage of my hea that I thought of her in my last m ments, and that my prayer is we m meet again where all crooked pa are straightened. Rosamund, farew peace and joy go with you throu many years—aye, and with your c dren's children. Of Godwin I only a you to remember this, that he li serving you and so died."

She heard and stretched out h arms, and, none forbidding him, G win walked to where she stood. Wi out lifting her veil she bent forw and kissed him, first upon the br and next upon the lips, then with low, moaning cry she turned and f from that gloomy place, nor did Sa din seek to stay her. Only to hims the sultan wondered how it came ab that if it was Wulf whom Rosamu loved she still kissed Godwin th upon the lips.

As he walked back to the death pl Godwin wondered also, first that Ro mund should have spoken no sin word and secondly because she h kissed him thus, even in that ho With a sigh, he knelt down before headsman and, turning to the bish said:

"Bless me, father, and bid th strike."

Then it was that he heard a w known footstep and looked up to Wulf staring at him.

"What do you here, Godwin?" ask Wulf. "Has yonder fox snared b of us?" and he nodded at Saladin.

"Let the fox speak," said the sult with a smile. "Know, Sir Wulf, t your brother was about to die in y place and of his own wish. But I fuse such sacrifice who yet have ma use of it to teach my niece, the pr cess, that should she continue in h plottings to escape or allow you continue in them certainly it will bri you to your deaths and, if need be, also. Knights, you are brave m whom I prefer to kill in war. Go horses stand without; take them as gift and ride with these foolish citize of Jerusalem. We may meet ag within its streets. Nay, thank me n I thank you who have taught Salah-e din how perfect a thing can be love of brothers."