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The Legend of the Passion Flower

In a corner of one of the darkest streets of the royal city, wedged in and almost covered by the Moorish tower of an old Mozarabic parsonage and a blackened wall of a feudal palace, decorated with escutcheons, there stood many years ago, a damp, dark and wretched house, just like its owner, Daniel Levi, a Jew.

This Hebrew, full of hatred and vengeance like all his race, was deceitful and cunning like no other.

Although, so it was whispered, he was immensely wealthy, still he was seen all day long sitting doubled up in his gloomy shop, arranging and cleaning metal chains, old belts and broken jewelry. He did a rushing business among the jolly brothers of the Zocodover, and second hand dealers of Postigo and poor noble men.

Bearing as he did an irreconcilable hatred against Christians, he nevertheless uncovered and bowed to knights of famous race, or to canons of the Cathedral as they passed his shop and not only once but ten times would he take off the dirty cap which covered his bald, yellowish head, also he never received one of those belonging to the neighboring parsonage without accompanying his humble greeting with a smile.

Daniel's smile was a byword in all Toledo, and his meanness in bearing insults, rough tricks, and jokes knew no bounds.

It was useless that the boys threw stones at his shop, that the pages of the neighboring palace called him the vilest nicknames to anger him, or that the pious women of the parish crossed themselves whenever they passed his shop as if they saw the devil himself.

Daniel always smiled, the same remarkable inscrutable smile.

His small, dried up lips opened under the mighty shadow of a nose shaped like the beak of an eagle, and although now and then depths of those round greenish eyes, hid under heavy brows, flashed a spark of ill-concealed anger, he still continued quietly at work as if everything were immaterial to him, hammering away at his anvil and repairing that lot of seemingly useless knickknacks which was his stock-in-trade.

Over the entrance to the shop of the Jew and under a framed tablet of colored glass was an Arabian-arched window of that peculiar Toledan style, built during the time of the Moors. Around the carved window cornice, which was divided into two equal halves by a marble column, there grew from the inside of the house one of those vines that usually run wild over walls and ruins.

In this room, on account of the small windows always in semi-darkness, lived Sarah, Daniel's daughter, whom he intensely loved.

When the neighbors of this quarter of the city passed the house of the Jew and by chance saw Sarah back of the curtains of the Moorish window and at the same time noticed Daniel bent over his anvil they would always remark in a loud voice: "It is not possible that such a dried-up stem should bear such a lovely branch.

And in truth Sarah was a marvel of beauty.

Large eyes, shaded by high-arched black brows, out of whose depths sparkled a light like a star in heaven on a densely dark night. Her fiery red lips seemed to be cut out of Tyrian purple and her white, almost transparent neck glowed like alabaster. She was hardly sixteen years of age.

The rich Jews of the city, bewitched by her loveliness, sought her in marriage but she was deaf to their appeals as to the councils of her father, who insisted that she choose a life-companion as he was getting old and did not want to leave her unprotected. On such occasions her silence seemed to show her intention of remaining unmarried.

One day one of her admirers, tired of the rebuffs he had received and suspecting her refusal was on account of some secret love affair, said to Daniel: "Do you know, Daniel, what is the common talk among the brethren about your daughter?" "For a moment the Jew raised his eyes from the anvil, without showing the faintest sign of emotion, and stopped his everlasting hammering.

"And what do they say of her?" "They say," continued the jealous lover, "they say—what do I know?—many things—among others, that your daughter—is in love with a Christian." Here he paused to see what impression his words made upon Daniel.

The Jew raised his eyes again, looked sharply at the speaker without saying a word and then resumed his work. After a pause he said:

"And who will pledge me that this is not all a lie?"

"Those who have seen her speak more than once to Christians in this very street while you were attending the meeting of the 'High Council.'" "The young Jew replied, greatly astonished that his insinuations as well as his assertions seemed to make no impression on Daniel.

The latter, without interrupting his work kept his eyes on the anvil and laying aside his hammer took a file and began to polish the handle of an old piece of jewelry, meanwhile speaking in a low-hollow-sounding voice, as if his lips were mechanically translating the thoughts surging through his brain.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughing a strange, uncanny manner, "my Sarah, bride of our race, the staff of my life, this Christian dog intends to rob me of her?—And you believe he will succeed?—Ha, ha, ha!" he continued as if talking to himself, laughing all the time while the file screeching louder and louder dug its teeth into the metal. "Ha, ha, ha! poor Daniel! My own say he is childish why does he have in his old age such a young and beautiful daughter, when he knows how to protect her from the desiring eyes of our enemies? ha, ha, ha! do you think Daniel is sleeping?—Do you believe that if my child has a lover which may indeed be true and if this lover is a Christian dog, who tries to lead her astray, which may be possible—and if the schemes to elope with her, which can also happen—yes, perhaps tomorrow already with her do you think Daniel will allow his treasure to be taken so easily? Do you think he would not know how to revenge himself?"

"So," interrupted the youth, "you already know?"

"I know all," replied Daniel tapping the young Jew lightly on the shoulder as he arose, "I know more than you. You would know nothing if the others had not told you—Go tell your brethren to meet as soon as possible—about the second or third hour of the night, I will be there. Farewell."

After saying this Daniel pushed the young man into the street and gathering his tools together he began to lock and bolt the door of his shop.

The noise which the screeching of heavy hinges caused drowned another noise caused by the dropping of the heavy Venetian blinds above, which were let down the same moment, as if she had just drawn back from the window.

It was Good Friday. The inhabitants of Toledo had either retired, after being present in the glorious Cathedral at the Temprae, or were telling one another stories seated by the warm hearthfires. Some were relating how Christo de la Luz had been robbed by the Jews and how the trail of blood led to the capture of the thieves; others spoke of the Holy child of Guardia whom the Jews had repeated the cruel tortures of the Saviour.

A deep silence rested upon the city, broken here and there by the distant call of the night—the boat-man had pointed out to

watch, who were patrolling around the Alcazar, or the sighing of the wind which set in motion the banners on the towers, or murmured in the corners of the crooked streets. Near the Mills, which lie below the city at the foot of a rock washed by the Tajo, a skiff tied to a post was bobbing up and down and its owner seemed to be impatiently expecting some one. Soon a figure was seen approaching the boat, coming down the narrow path to the river.

"It is she," whispered the boatman to himself. "It seems as if the whole devilish brood of Jews was in rebellion—Where have they decided to meet the devil that they all come to my boat?—There are only a few steps from here to the bridge—No, no, they are not meeting for any good object, seeing how carefully they come along, keeping their eyes about so as not to meet any of the watch from San Servando.

—But what difference does it make to me? I am earning a good piece of money in taking them across. They are responsible for their own doings. I will not mix myself up with it."

After the brave man had said this he sat down and got his oars ready when Sarah—for it was she whom he expected—stepped into the boat. He loosened the rope and began to row toward the opposite shore.

"How many have you taken over tonight?" asked Sarah as if she were talking about something agreed upon before.

"I could not count them," replied the boatman. "A whole swarm.—It seems as if this were the last night in which they were to meet."

"And you know what has called them together?—What did they carry when they left, the city at the appointed time?"

"I do not know, but it seems to me they expect some one who is to expect tonight, I don't why they expect him, but I believe their intentions are bad."

After this short conversation Sarah sat for a while sunk in silence as if she wished to compose her thoughts.

"No doubt," she thought, "my father has received some information in regard to our love and he is preparing a terrible revenge. It is necessary that I know where they have gone, what they are planning and what they intend to do. A moment's hesitation may cause her ruin."

Sarah rose and, placing her hand on her brow, covered with an ice-cold sweat, as if to banish the terrible thoughts which were frightening her. The boat touched the lonely shore.

"Good man," said the hand-some Jewess, giving the boatman a coin she pointed to the narrow crooked way which ran through the rocks like a snake. "Is that the way they took?"

"Yes! and as they came to the 'Head of the Moor' they disappeared to the left. Where they went after that only the devil and themselves know," the boatman gave in answer.

Sarah followed the indicated directions. A few minutes later she disappeared in the black labyrinth of the dark and pointed mass of rock. As she arrived at the rock called the "Head of the Moor," the dark outline of her figure could again be seen against the bluish sky, finally she disappeared in the shadows of the night.

On that path where today still stands the picturesque monastery of Our Lady del Valle about two shots of the bow from the peak-shaped rock, which the Toledians call "Head of the Moor," are the remains of a Byzantine Basilica built before the invasion of the Arabians.

In the vestibule of which we are reminded by some broken pillars still lying there, briars and all kinds of vines grow wild. Of the church only a part of the side-walls and a few cracked arches remain standing.

When Sarah, whom a supernatural presentiment seemed to guide, arrived at this place, which this day in some parts of Spain, the boat-man had pointed out to

her, she hesitated a moment not knowing which way to turn.

At last with determined and firm step she went toward the wild ruins of the fallen church.

Truly her presentiment had not deceived her.

Daniel, without the everlasting smile, Daniel, who was not any more the weak broken down old man of other days, Daniel whose pretended humility had disappeared and who seemed to be possessed of the demon of revenge, on an enemy of their faith. There Daniel stood erect and seemed to grow taller every minute as he gave the commands to prepare the work with which they were to carry out that terribly bloody performance that he had been planning for many a day while bowed down over his anvil in the shop at Toledo.

On account of the darkness Sarah had entered unnoticed into the vestibule of the ruined church. Her blood froze in her veins at what she saw and grasping hold of a broken pillar she could hardly suppress a cry of horror.

In the bloody glare of the fire, that threw long shadows of the devilish hand on the walls of the church, she saw some men exerting themselves to raise a heavy cross on high, others were making a crown of thorns or sharpening the points of huge nails on stones. A horrible thought passed through her mind. She remembered how her people had been accused at different times of mysterious crimes; she involuntarily thought of that atrocious killing of a Christian child, a fact which up to now she had considered a vile calumny spread among the people to instigate them to persecute the Jews.

Now all her doubts were gone, here before her very eyes stood the instruments of torture, and the devilish crew were only waiting their victim.

Sarah filled with holy anger and inspired with an unshakable faith in the true God, which she had learned from her lover, could contain herself no longer and breaking through the brambles she suddenly stood on the threshold of the church.

As soon as the Jews saw her they cried aloud with consternation and fear. Daniel, however, sprang toward his daughter in a threatening manner and in a voice shaken with passion said:

"What are you seeking here, unhappy one?"

"I come," answered Sarah firmly, "I come to hurl upon your heads the curse of your damnable work. I come to tell you that it is useless to wait any longer for your victim unless my blood will satisfy your thirst. The Christian whom you await will not come because I have destroyed your plans."

"Sarah," screamed the Jew, "Sarah! No, no! That is not true! You cannot have gone so far as to betray our guild customs. And if it is true—if you have betrayed us, then you are my daughter no longer."

"No, I am not. I have another Father, a Father full of love for his children—a Father whom you have nailed to the wood of shame and opened for us the eternal gates of heaven—No; I am not your daughter—I am a Christian and ashamed of those who bore me."

When Daniel heard these words that were spoken with firmness which heaven only gives to martyrs, blinded with the fury of a demon he threw himself upon his daughter and catching hold of Sarah's hair he dragged her to the cross—the cross that seemed to stretch out its fleshless arms waiting to receive the victim.

"I give her to you," said Daniel to his comrades. "Let justice be done to her who has sold her honor—her faith—her brethren."

The following day as the bells of the Cathedral were announcing the pre-resurrection feast the good citizens of Toledo were passing their time in shooting at straw Judases, as is the custom to this day in some parts of Spain, when Daniel opened the door of

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Father O'Neill



The twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Rev. A. M. O'Neill, was celebrated by nearly 1,000 men who attended a banquet given Monday night at the McInerney restaurant in its Holy Name Society. More than 500 members of the society assembled at the parish hall and participated in the banquet.

The interior of the hall was beautifully decorated with national colors. Compulsions of the seat of the banquet, Henry, was an ivy-covered scroll bearing the date 1885-1910. The dinner finished, Hickey was introduced as the first speaker.

"I was a classmate of Father O'Neill," said he, "and in 1885, years since we left the academy, I have watched his career of love and sympathy. He has a full duty to the church and his flock and I am more glad to praise him on the fullness of his triumph."

"You thousand or more met here to-night to do him honor, are a more fitting means of his work than I can convey in words. This is a memorial inspiration to all who do their best for their own lift and for the betterment of their fellow men. You are honoring one who has helped us to forgetfulness of self and attention to your spiritual good."

"Nothing can explain the power and his best your appreciation of O'Neill's work in your are sufficient evidence that a relation does exist."

Mayor Edgerton followed an address in the course of which he emphasized the historical importance of April 16th, saying: "On April 16th the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, and the same day the first split in the Civil War was in the streets of Baltimore, done on this account is a memorable in history. On same date the present was born. Maybe at some time, the day will be used national holiday for some other date is marked with many occurrences fraught with great for the nation."

Judge John M. Murphy, William C. Barry also spoke. A large number of clergy and prominent citizens present.

Five Minute Sermon

The Good Shepherd

At that time, Jesus said to the Pharisees: "I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep. And the hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

One of the oldest residents of Lisburn passed away on March 14, in the person of Thomas Doran, whitesmith, Smithfield. Of late years deceased was in failing health, but was able to move about out of doors. One of his last public acts was to record his vote at the recent municipal election in favor of Mr. D. Mooney.

Weekly Church Calendar

Sunday April 24 St. Mark's
Monday 25 Our Lady of Good
Tuesday 26 St. Patrick's
Wednesday 27 St. Paul's
Thursday 28 St. Peter's
Friday 29 St. Catherine's
Saturday May 1 St. Anne's

Mr. William McKillop, M. P., former representative of North Sligo, and now representing Armagh, still remains in a Nursing Home in Glasgow, progressing favorably.