

A LEGEND

In early times the Island of Sardinia was inhabited by a warlike and superstitious people known as the Neb-rites. These people had, by arms and ability, built up a great nation in less than two centuries. Of their other achievements very little remains today, and we know practically nothing of their disappearance from civilization. Nevertheless, we know something of their customs, and occasionally we find among relics of ancient civilizations, manuscripts, testifying to the superstitious beliefs of this people.

One custom—which I presume was founded on some such belief—was, that the heir to the throne, whether male or female, had to undergo a test to prove his or her capability or incapability of carrying on the affairs of the kingdom when he or she should succeed to the throne. If the heir failed to stand this test he or she was considered an unfit subject to rule the people, and the next in line of succession obtained the crown.

The test was that the heir, at the age of twenty-one, had to go to a remote part of the Island, and there, without supplies or dwelling, and with only one attendant, provide for himself as best he could for several weeks. It was while the beautiful Nemourine, daughter of King Kubla, was undergoing this test, that our story begins.

One morning, as she and her attendant were walking along the rugged cape, watching the angry waves dash against the stones, she suddenly grasped the attendant by the arm and shouted:

"Look! look!"

The servant, being taken by surprise, first looked towards Nemourine, who was pointing towards the water.

"A person! A man!" exclaimed she in excitement. The servant looked towards the sea and there, a few yards from the shore, saw a helpless victim of the storm, clinging to a piece of wreckage. At first both thought to flee but, being moved by pity, decided to attempt a rescue.

"I think the piece of wreckage is caught by a stone and prevented from drifting in. Break some vines in yonder grove and weave a rope, quickly, before the tide turns," Nemourine commanded excitedly.

The servant obeyed, and in a short time the Princess was swimming out to the wreckage with one end of the

rope—which had been quickly woven by experienced hands—while the servant remained on the shore with the other. When Nemourine arrived at the wreckage, the man had just lost consciousness, and a minute later all hope of rescue would have been in vain.

With much difficulty the two girls succeeded in rescuing him and taking him to their hut, where he lay for some time in a daze. Nemourine, who had now become interested in the man, watched eagerly for signs of his recovery, but no such signs appeared for many days. At last, one morning, as she was preparing him some food, the man raised himself upon his elbows, and having looked all around him, asked in a weak tone:

"Where am I? Where am I?"

"We saved you," replied the Princess.

For a few moments the man sat in bewilderment and then, as if remembering some unhappy occurrence, sank down on his uncouth bed, uttering in a half distinct tone: "Oh, that you had not done so!"

After that he quickly recovered, and two weeks later, when Nemourine was leaving for the palace, having stood her test, he could move around, although not at all totally well. The Princess invited him to accompany her to her home, where he could receive proper medical aid. Philip, for this was the stranger's name, at first refused, but after persistent pleading by the Princess, finally consented to go along with her.

At the palace the King and the Princess tried by every means to learn something concerning the man, but were in no way successful. When they approached the subject, Philip would answer them by saying, "Oh, I'm just an unlucky youth," or something to that effect. He would remain in his room all day long and, although visited frequently by Nemourine, he showed her little attention.

After he had been at the Royal Court for some weeks, the annual festival was held, at which all the nobles of the kingdom and many foreign kings were present. Philip was invited to attend and, being unwilling to displease the Princess and her father, accepted. At this festival it was customary for a stranger from a foreign land to tell a story of some great adventure. It so happened that on this occasion, on account of the rough weather for many days, the invited guest did not arrive.

When all were assembled in the great hall and the time for the adventure story had come, the King called upon Philip who, not being in a position to refuse, arose and began his tale.

"Oh, King, you ask me to relate an unutterable sorrow and to tear open again the half-healed wounds of a racked heart. But since your kindness to me has been much greater than I deserve from a stranger, I will grant your request."

He then revealed that his father was a king and he was heir, and how he had fallen in love with the daughter of his father's enemy. His father forbade him to see her and he disobeyed. He was then placed in the custody of the royal guard until, one day, he received a letter telling him that the princess whom he loved had been murdered. He immediately suspected his father of the act, and watching his chance, soon escaped, and embarked upon a ship which was sailing to a distant land. It happened that this ship was wrecked off the Island of Sardinia, and out of a crew of two hundred, he was the only one who survived.

Having told his tale, Philip expressed his intention of leaving within a few days to go to some unknown land, where he might, if possible, forget the past, and if not, spend his life mourning for his love.

As he sat down silence reigned throughout the great hall and a thousand sympathetic faces were turned upon him. After a few moments the King arose and, having expressed his deep sympathy, begged Philip to remain with them as a guest of the kingdom. Philip did not wish to remain, but being again unwilling to displease the king, consented to do so for a time.

One morning shortly after the festival, while Philip was strolling through one of the magnificent gardens, he accidentally met the Princess.

"Good morning, your Highness," greeted Philip, who had become more friendly than usual.

"Good morning," replied the Princess, "I'm surprised to find you here so early. Did my Lord not rest well?"

"I was awakened," explained Philip, "early this morning, by the noise in the near-by streets, and, being unable to sleep again, thought a walk here would do me good."

"Oh! did you hear the noise? They are preparing for

the tournament which begins next week. Is my Lord going to enter the jousts?"

"No, I left home with the intention of going somewhere where I might forget my unhappy love affair or, if not, spend my life mourning for her for whom I would willingly give my life."

"But you are not trying to forget. Why not take part in the enjoyments of the Court and give your mind to more pleasing thoughts? If you will enter the jousts, I will give you my steed, and do all I can to help you forget the past."

So it happened that, through the persistent demands of the King and the Princess, Philip soon began to take part in the enjoyments of the Royal Court. In the jousts he showed his superiority over the nobles of the land and received the title of the "Great Knight." Nor was Nemourine without honor in this, for in all the sports he wore her favour, to the dissatisfaction of many a great noble.

Not only in the jousts was Philip successful, but he soon ranked the highest in the King's regard. Nemourine, too, had become very fond of Philip, and although she could never hope to win his love, yet he had won her heart, and she just could not be contented with another. Sometimes a spark of hope would creep into her soul, but the thought of his sorrowful tale would quickly extinguish it.

But Nemourine was ignorant of Philip's feelings. For although he had promised always to be true to his first love, yet he could see a cloud quickly gathering between him and her image, and at the same time a growing love for the Princess entering his heart.

One evening, five years after Philip had been rescued by the Princess, we find him strolling in one of the splendid gardens of the palace. He is waiting and watching for a little white figure to come tripping through the flowers to the old seat under the big apple tree, around which he was walking. As he waited, the thoughts of long ago began to crowd his mind, but were soon expelled by the appearance of his expected friend. As she drew near she whispered, "Have I kept you waiting?" in a tone which made Philip's heart beat rapidly.

"Not at all, dearest, I could wait for ever for you,"

and then, taking her hand, he murmured: "Nemourine, I love you, and I want you to be all mine."

"I *am* yours, forever."

"Dearest," he uttered, as he took her in his arms in a loving embrace.

Philip had no sooner retired to his rooms that night when a servant announced that the King desired his presence at the reception hall. Philip sent word he would come and immediately began to dress. As he descended the stairs to the great hall, he wondered why the King had sent for him. Could it be that Nemourine had told him of their love and now he wished to rebuke Philip for it? But then why should he take him to the reception hall? Perhaps it is someone from home? No, that is impossible. Such thoughts as these rushed through his mind, but before he could choose among them he was at the door of the hall, where the King was waiting for him. As he entered the King began:

"I wish——," but was stopped by the ghastly look on Philip's face.

There was no need for an introduction, for whom should Philip find, standing before him as a beautiful Venus, but Cloril, his own first love! She had not been murdered at all. His father had sent him the letter thinking that it would cause him to forget her. What was he to do? His mind was a sea of confusion.

Now here was Philip's position. On the one hand was the girl for love of whom he had sacrificed a kingdom, to whom he had promised always to be true, and who now stood before him more beautiful than ever. But on the other hand there was Nemourine, who had saved his life, who had helped him to forget the past, and who, an hour before, had promised to be his forever. In this situation what would *you* do?

—W.E.C., '30.

The time draws near the birth of Christ
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

—Tennyson