

THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP;

OR, THE HERITAGE OF MADAME YALTA.

CHAPTER IV.—(Cont'd)

The woman murmured her thanks and entered Rue Beaujon, which branched off from the Avenue de Friedland at the point where she had been interrogating the porter.

She soon discovered the magnificent entrance to the Yalta mansion, and there her hesitation renewed itself. She began to walk slowly the length of the iron railing, behind which was stationed the majestic porter who had introduced Maxime the morning before.

This personage, doubtless, intimidated her, for the nearer she approached him the more her footsteps relaxed, and she turned away her head as she drew the brass knob near the lodge.

The bedizened Swiss advanced majestically, measured the visitor with a glance, and inquired politely what she wished.

"I want to see Madame the Countess Yalta," she stammered.

"Madame the countess does not receive," replied the colossus; "but if you will give me your name and tell me why you come—"

The girl started and lowered her head; then conquering her timidity, raised it again, and said firmly:

"I am sure the countess will receive me if you will say to her that Mlle. Dorgeres wishes to speak to her."

The porter changed his tone instantly. He was not ignorant that the head coachman had driven Madame Yalta the day before to the house of M. Dorgeres, Rue de Surresnes.

"I beg mademoiselle to excuse me, and if mademoiselle will take the trouble to enter the waiting-room, I will inform madame the countess." She is still much indispensed, and I had orders to admit no one.

This discourse was punctuated by the striking of a bell, which resulted in the appearance on the stairway of a valet de pied.

Mlle. Dorgeres, introduced by the porter, was delivered into the hands of this valet, who conducted her to the apartments on the ground-floor in which her cousin had been received every day for a month past by Dr. Villagos.

She had not long to wait for the reply of the countess. The duenna who had introduced Maxime on his last visit came down stairs expressly to receive Mlle Dorgeres.

"Mademoiselle," she said smilingly, "my mistress is so happy to receive a visit from you that she will not ask you to postpone it till to-morrow, though she suffers much just now. She hopes you will excuse her for receiving you in bed."

Alice stammered a few words of thanks and followed the woman-in-waiting.

The duenna conducted her by the same stairway which ended in the superb apartments on the first floor through which she had conducted Maxime, but did not usher her into the oval chamber.

The countess was in her own room in an immense bed, a genuine specimen of the Louis XIV. age, with heavy curtains of Gobelin tapestry. A faint light was diffused through the stained-glass windows.

Alice could scarcely summon courage to advance. Timidity took possession of her. How was she to approach the woman whose pale face was scarcely visible? How should she explain this strange visit? And if Maxime had exaggerated! If Madame Yalta had gone no further than to express a sympathy for M. de Carnoel, without having undertaken to defend him against his accusers!

All these discouraging thoughts came to her at once; but her apprehensions were quickly dissipated.

A voice which sounded in her ears like celestial music pronounced these words:

"I knew you would come. You guessed I had something to say to you."

Alice colored with happiness and advanced quickly.

"Thanks for him and for me," resumed the countess. "If you had not come it is impossible to say when I should have seen you, for yesterday evening a new crisis

came on which has not yet passed. Pardon me that I do not offer you my arms, but my physician has ordered me to be absolutely motionless. Sit down and let us talk."

Alice took her seat in a low chair by the bedside, and said in an agitated voice:

"Madame, I am profoundly touched by your welcome, and cannot better show that I am sensible of your goodness than by telling you the whole truth. I came without the knowledge of my father, because my cousin told me you were anxious to prove the innocence of M. de Carnoel. I wanted to know on what you founded your belief."

"You love him; is it so?"

"I did love him," said Alice, with an effort.

"And yet you are betrothed to another?"

"I thought—they showed me that M. de Carnoel had been guilty of something dishonorable. I yielded to the entreaties of my father, who begged me to marry. I am engaged in the eyes of the world, but my heart is my own."

"They have shown you that this young man has—stolen. Why not speak the word, since it is an odious calumny? Before replying to this calumny, permit me to ask who informed you of what took place and what you have heard?"

"My father. He told me that on opening the safe the cashier perceived the disappearance of a casket containing valuable papers belonging to a Russian. M. de Carnoel had left precipitately the night before at the very hour the safe was opened with a false key."

"And they concluded boldly that it was he. They did not stop to ask what interest this young man could have in possessing himself of a casket containing papers of nobody knew what sort, when the safe was full of gold and notes that were not touched."

"A sum of money was also taken," said the girl, in a stifled voice—"fifty thousand francs."

"It is not true," cried the countess.

"Alas, madame, it is too true! The cashier counted the money in the presence of my father and this Russian. A roll of bank-notes was missing."

"It is impossible!" said the countess, with an extraordinary confidence; "but continue, mademoiselle. Your father has given you no other details of this affair?"

"None, madame."

"He has not spoken to you, then, of a first attempt which failed, and which preceded the second by a few days only?"

"No. Had there been a previous attempt to rob the safe M. Vignory would have told me; it would have been spoken of in my hearing."

"Then he who gave me the information was mistaken."

"Georget, was it not?"

"You know that! Then you saw your cousin yesterday?"

"Yes, madame. Maxime brought the poor child to the office. I met them as I was going out with my governess, and it was then I had this conversation with Maxime. You believe, then, that M. de Carnoel is in Paris?"

"I am certain of it. You will be surprised when I say that the day you were awaiting him in the Bois de Boulogne he must have fallen into the hands of some powerful enemy."

"You knew I was expecting him!"

"The day the great cold began I went to the lake in a sleigh with M. Maxime Dorgeres. You passed near us in a carriage with your governess. Your cousin expressed a desire to follow you, and, pressed by me, confessed that he wished to be present at a rendezvous you had given to M. de Carnoel. Afterward I learned that M. de Carnoel had not appeared, and that he was accused of an infamy—long afterward, unfortunately, for there was not time to avert what might have been prevented had I been better informed at first. But fate intervened. I fell seriously ill. Now the time has come to repair the evil I have unintentionally suffered. I want to find M. de Carnoel, and when I have done so will take him myself to your father."

IN PAIN FOR YEARS "FRUIT-A-TIVES" BRINGS RELIEF



MRS. FRANK EATON
Frankville, Ont., Sept. 27, 1909.
"I suffered for years from headaches and pain in the back, and I consulted doctors and took every remedy obtainable without any relief. Then I began taking 'Fruit-a-tives', the famous fruit juice tablets, and this was the only medicine that ever did me any real good. I took several boxes altogether, and now I am entirely well of all my dreadful headaches and backaches."

(Signed) MRS. FRANK EATON.
50c a box, 6 for \$2.50 or trial box, 25c.
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"My father would refuse to receive him."

"He must receive him, when I bring him the proof that he has been calumniated and is entitled to reparation."

"The proof?" repeated Mlle Dorgeres, doubtingly.

"Yes, the proof; for if it is necessary in order to exonerate him the guilty party will denounce himself. I swear to you that it was not M. de Carnoel."

"She loves him, perhaps," thought Mlle Dorgeres, sadly.

"I hope now that you do not regret having come," said Mme Yalta, "and that henceforth we are united in the effort to save M. de Carnoel."

"You have known him long?" she asked timidly.

"I do not know him at all; I have never seen him that I am aware of."

Alice's face brightened, and she was about to protest with warmth her devotion to the projects of the countess, but at this moment the lady-in-waiting entered, and said to her mistress:

"M. Maxime Dorgeres begs to see the countess immediately. He assures me that he brings news of importance."

"Go," cried the countess, "bring him in."

The duenna turned briskly on her heels, and as soon as she was left alone with the countess, Alice rose and said with some agitation:

"Madame, I beg you not to compel me to see my cousin. I would not for the world have him find me here."

"If you were to follow my femme de chambre you would inevitably meet M. Dorgeres. There is no way to avoid him but to go in there," she added, pointing to a door not far from the head of the bed, which opened in the midst of tapestry hangings.

"You will find it a very commodious prison, and, I think, will not be detained long. It will be in your power to leave it should you change your mind as to the convenience of a meeting with M. Dorgeres."

Alice ran to the point of exit indicated, and glided noiselessly into a vast apartment, a toilette boudoir filled with luxurious furniture, objects of art and curiosities in glass cases. She had no sooner disappeared than Maxime entered radiant. His joy was somewhat abated at being received, not as before, on a divan of state, but a real invalid's couch.

"What! you are seriously indisposed, and were out yesterday?"

"I did get out and I was wrong, having obtained nothing from M. Dorgeres, and paid for my imprudence this morning. But that doesn't matter. Tell me of your expedition with Georget. First, how is he? Do you believe he will recover his reason?"

"I hope so. He has transient glimpses already, but is not yet master of himself. He allows words to escape him which he would not do ordinarily."

"What has he said?"

"I took him to the office where the theft was committed, and he mentioned that he knew the words that opened the safe, the defensive mechanism that protects it,—details of which no one is in possession but the cashier, and which Georget could have learned only by acting the spy on his chief. I beg your pardon for telling you frankly my opinion that your protegee was the accomplice of the rogues, that he furnished them information, and perhaps assisted

them more effectively. He recognized a hiding-place in which he must have been lurking for the purpose of opening the door to them."

"It is quite possible," said the countess, indifferently.

"What! you are not distressed to learn that Georget has been implicated in this affair?"

"Bah! a political matter."

"Political! how?"

"Undoubtedly. What did they take? A coffer containing unquestionably state papers, since it belonged to a Russian diplomatic agent. The proof that they wanted only the papers, is that they did not touch the money in the safe. Georget is the grandson of a woman of high birth who has had relations with Polish emigrants. He has, perhaps, followed the counsels of his grandmother in giving aid to these people."

"He has none the less been playing high, and if my uncle knew what this astonishing youngster has been doing, he wouldn't spare him—especially since money was taken as well as the casket."

"I have been told so, but can scarcely believe it. But I can answer that it was not Georget."

"Georget has merely connived at it. Moreover, in the remarks which he let fall, there was one which designated the thief."

"Designated him by name?"

(To be continued.)

THE FEDERAL LIFE.

Results of the Past Year Indicate Good Progress.

The annual report of the Federal Life Assurance Company of Canada contains very satisfactory indications of progress. The report, which is given in another place in this issue, shows new business consisting of 2,600 applications for insurance aggregating \$3,663,896.66, of which 2,501 applications for \$3,504,235.00 were accepted. As in previous years the income of the company shows a gratifying increase and the assets of the company have been increased by \$329,092.88 and have now reached \$3,643,949.53, exclusive of guarantee capital. The security for policyholders including guarantee capital amounted at the close of the year to \$4,513,949.53, and the liabilities for reserves and all outstanding claims, including \$20,000 set aside as a special addition to policy reserves, \$3,351,254.00, showing a surplus of \$1,162,695.53. Exclusive of uncalled guarantee capital, the surplus to policyholders was \$292,695.53. Death claims to the amount of \$200,406.07 were paid. Including cash, dividends and dividends applied to the reduction of premiums, with annuities the total payment to policyholders amounted to \$347,274.43. The assurances carried now amounted to \$21,049,322.31.

The Federal Life Assurance Co.

Of Canada

The Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Shareholders of the Federal Life Assurance Company of Canada was held at the Company's Head Office, in Hamilton, on Tuesday, 15th February, 1910, at 2 p.m., Mr. David Dexter in the chair, Mr. W. H. Davis, Acting Secretary.

The Annual Report, as follows, was read and adopted, on motion of the President, Mr. Dexter, seconded by the Vice-President, Lieut.-Col. Kerns: Your Directors have the honor to present the Report and Financial Statement of the Company for the year which closed 31st December, 1909, duly vouchered for by the Auditors.

The new business of the year consisted of two thousand six hundred applications for insurance, aggregating \$3,663,896.66, of which two thousand five hundred and one applications for \$3,504,235.00 were accepted.

As in previous years, the income of the Company shows a gratifying increase and the assets of the Company have been increased by \$329,092.88, and have now reached \$3,643,949.53, exclusive of guarantee capital.

The Security for Policyholders, including guarantee capital, amounted at the close of the year to \$4,513,949.53, and the liabilities for reserves and all outstanding claims, including \$20,000 set aside as a special addition to policy reserves, \$3,351,254.00, showing a surplus of \$1,162,695.53. Exclusive of uncalled guarantee capital, the surplus to Policyholders was \$292,695.53.

Policies on one hundred and fifteen lives became claims through death, to the amount of \$200,406.07. Including Cash Dividends and Dividends applied to the reduction of premiums, with annuities, the total payment to Policyholders amounted to \$347,274.43. Careful attention has been given to the investment of the Company's funds, in first-class bonds, mortgage securities, and loans on the Company's policies amply secured by reserves. Our investments have yielded a very satisfactory rate of interest.

Expenses have been confined to a reasonable limit, consistent with due efforts for new business. The results of the year indicate a most gratifying progress. Compared with the preceding year, the figures submitted by the Directors for your approval show an advance of nearly ten per cent. in assets.

The assurances carried by the Company now amount to \$21,049,322.31, upon which the Company holds reserves to the full amount required by law, and, in addition thereto, a considerable surplus.

You are to be congratulated on the fact that the surplus over Capital and all Liabilities increased \$42,624.88 during the past year, from which a special addition of \$20,000 was made to policy reserves.

The field officers and agents of the Company are intelligent and loyal, and are entitled to much credit for their able representation of the Company's interests. The members of the office staff have also proved faithful to the Company's service.

Your Directors are pleased to be able to state that the business of the Company for the current year has been of a most satisfactory character, and that the outlook for the future is most encouraging.

DAVID DEXTER,
President and Managing Director.

AUDITORS' REPORT.

To the President and Directors of the Federal Life Assurance Company: Gentlemen,—We have carefully audited the books and records of your Company for the year ending 31st December last, and have certified to their accuracy.

The Cash and Journal Vouchers have been closely examined and agree with the entries recorded.

The Debentures, Bonds, etc., in the possession of the Company have been inspected, whilst those deposited with the Government have been verified by certificate, the total agreeing with the amount as shown in the Statement of Assets.

The accompanying Statement, viz., Revenue and Expenditure, Assets and Liabilities, shows the result of the year's operations and also the financial position of the Company.

Respectfully submitted,
CHARLES STIFF, C. A. } Auditors.
C. S. SCOTT, F. C. A. }

Hamilton, 1st February, 1910.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1909.

RECEIPTS.		
Premium and Annuity Income	.....	\$718,927 86
Interest, Rents and Profits	.....	174,074 82
		\$893,002 68
DISBURSEMENTS.		
Paid to Policyholders	.....	\$347,274 43
All other payments	.....	233,249 04
Balance	.....	312,479 21
		\$893,002 68
ASSETS, DECEMBER 31ST, 1909.		
Debentures and Bonds	.....	\$1,443,973 35
Mortgages	.....	808,095 77
Loans on Policies, Bonds, Stocks, etc.	.....	636,865 91
All other Assets	.....	765,014 50
		\$3,643,949 53
LIABILITIES.		
Reserve Fund	.....	\$3,256,510 00
Special Addition to Policy Reserves	.....	20,000 00
Death Losses awaiting Proofs	.....	63,030 00
Other Liabilities	.....	11,714 00
Surplus on Policyholders' Account	.....	292,695 53
		\$3,643,949 53
Assets	.....	\$3,643,949 53
Guarantee Capital	.....	870,000 00
Total Security	.....	\$4,513,949 53
Policies were Issued Assuring	.....	\$3,504,235 00
Total Insurance in Force	.....	\$21,049,322 31

All the retiring Directors were re-elected as follows: M. H. Alkms, M.D., David Dexter, Hon. Geo. B. Foster, Hon. J. M. Gibson, T. C. Haslett, K.C., Lieut.-Col. Wm. Kerns, John G. Scott, A. E. Russ, M.A., Jehz Wakefield, D.D., and A. Woolverton, M.D.

At a subsequent meeting of the Directors the following officers were re-elected: David Dexter, President and Managing Director; Lieut.-Col. William Kerns and T. C. Haslett, K.C., Vice-Presidents; Dr. A. Woolverton, M.D., Director.