

THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP;

OR, THE HERITAGE OF MADAME
YALTA.

CHAPTER VI.

Maxime had not lost sight of his prey. He had followed the two foreigners, and was holding himself in ambush in the first turn in the corridor.

He had sworn not to leave the place until the brunette left her box, and to keep close in her footsteps so soon as she appeared. Further than that his plan was unsettled. Whether he should approach her as soon as she left the theatre, or follow her unobserved, he had not yet determined. The great point was not to lose sight of her, and to find out where she lived.

As for Borisoff and his companion, satisfied that they had left not to return, he thought no more of them, and was not a little surprised to see them reappear after an absence of a few minutes, and direct their steps toward the box where Madame Sergent still remained. Already he had ascertained that the box-keeper had brought her a superb fur pelisse and hood trimmed with swan's down, which recalled unpleasant recollections. Evidently she had begun her preparations for departure, and might be expected to leave the box every moment. But Maxime had not anticipated that her two cavaliers would return to seek her. The door was opened, and the lady all wrapped up appeared on the threshold and took the direction of the stairway, escorted on each side by two personages whom Maxime was sending to all the devils.

"They are accompanying her," he said, between his teeth; "this is the climax. Where are they going? To supper, perhaps, but no—there is a mystery in the reunion of these three creatures who have no right to know each other, and I shall find out the answer to the enigma if I have to pass the whole night on my feet."

Talking thus to himself, Maxime followed from afar the ill-assorted trio, and arrived almost at the same time under the peristyle. There he took care to conceal himself behind a gathering of talkers, and from his post of observation saw Borisoff separate himself from the little group, push aside one of the doors separating the exterior flight of stairs from the vestibule and beckon to some one. Maxime understood immediately that he was ordering a porter to advance a carriage—a hack to all appearance, for the servants of the board were not there awaiting their master.

It is vain to set one's good limbs and twenty-five years against a pair of horses, even hired ones, and Maxime understood that not a minute was to be lost in making his arrangements to follow them. It so happened that, just as he darted out, an uncovered victoria was passing the square at slow pace, driven by a freebooter in search of prey. He would have preferred a close carriage, but there was no choice, and he jumped into the one that offered, with a few very intelligible words to the coachman. In his character of experienced Parisian, he knew well how to speak to this class in the language that makes them move. Moreover, this coachman was one who took in half a word. He drew up against the side of Rue Halevy, and awaited further orders.

Turning toward the theatre, Maxime saw the brunette of the Rink and the two foreigners get in a large hack with four seats, which turned toward the Chaussee d'Antin. His only object now was to follow this hack which proved easy, as the peaceable beasts which led it travelled at a moderate speed.

"Where are they going? They are leaving the boulevard, consequently the night restaurants; then they do not intend to sup—that is, unless they are going to sup at Borisoff's. Yet, no; they would have taken Rue Scribe. It is true that all roads lead to Rome."

The proverb found this evening its application. Arrived at the cross-street whence might be seen the church of la Trinite, the hack turned to the left and filed along the Boulevard Haussmann, which ended in the Boulevard Malesherbes.

"One would swear Borisoff is taking them to his own house," murmured Maxime.

The victoria maintained its distance without difficulty, the coachman, an old stager, humming in a low voice Fahrback's polka.

It was not the first time he had aided a citizen in watching a woman, and he knew that such expeditions were always well paid.

Before the doorway of Saint Augustin the situation began to define itself.

"There is no longer room for doubt," growled Maxime; "they are going to the Rue de Vigny. What are they going to do? To make an end of Carnot—get rid of him? A spy, a valet, and a knave of a woman are capable of combining to murder a man who incommodates them; at least—that idea has never occurred to me, but it is not more inadmissible than all the rest—at least, if they do not all understand each other, and the Lord Robert does not make one of the band. I mean to set my mind at rest, and shall stick close to them till I have cleared all this up."

Unfortunately, it was not long before the problem became still further complicated. Instead of taking the Boulevard de Courcelles for the Borisoff mansion, the hack continued to roll in the direction of the fortifications.

"Can it be that they intend to leave Paris?" he asked.

It did not occur to him that Madame Sergent imitated the manoeuvre of the hare, who returns to its home after having given a long chase. And when he saw the hack stop at the corner of a certain street, he had much difficulty in believing his eyes. It was the same through which he had conducted Madame Sergent one beautiful November night,—that in which was a house that had been abandoned six weeks ago by its strange tenants.

"Shall I stop?" inquired the intelligent coachman. "They are unloading yonder, the two gentlemen first and then la particuliere. They are paying; seems they've arrived."

"Go on further," answered Maxime, "only take the other side of the street, and put your horse into a brisk trot."

This manoeuvre was not ill contrived. Just as he reached the rising ground of Rue Jouffroy the brunette and her companions entered it on foot, having sent away their hack.

The victoria continued its route, but as soon as it had passed the corner of the street which the trio had just entered, Maxime rose, put his hand on the coachman's shoulder, and said, in a low voice:

"Quick! To the right! Stop near the other side, and do not budge till I return. Here are twenty francs in advance. It is possible I may keep you here all night."

"Good!" sneered the sly coachman. "I understand. You are after la particuliere. This sort of business always amuses me. Have no fear. I was fresh when you took me, and my horse will hold good till morning. And if you have need of me, call me in."

"I don't say no," replied Maxime, as he set foot on the ground, and he ran to gain his ambush on the corner of the street.

He arrived just in time to see the lady ring at the door formerly guarded by the cerberus with the red mustache.

The door opened immediately, and closed behind Madame Sergent and her friends.

Maxime was stupefied, astounded, petrified.

This denouement was the only one he had not contemplated, and the more he reflected the less capable did he feel of explaining it.

But he must act, or, at least, try to penetrate this strange mystery. How was he to go about it? Happy ideas are sometimes born of great perplexities.

"Parbleu! I cannot do better than consult my old acquaintance, the porter opposite. He must have a pretty good recollection of me. I gave him twenty francs every time I talked with him, and this evening will willingly give him forty if he will consent to serve me. I even think he would not refuse me his

lodge as an ambush. Provided my man has not gone to bed!"

He looked at his watch, and saw it was half-past ten.

"No," he resumed, "these tenants cannot retire so soon. But no time is to be lost."

The street, well lighted by the city gas, was silent and deserted. Not a passer-by, not a sound. Maxime glided the length of the wall, as he had done before on his first expedition to this quarter, and arrived without encountering a living creature at his wished-for haven.

From this well-chosen site he discerned, in full, Madame Sergent's mysterious habitation, and ascertained that no light was visible from the windows. All was sombre as on the evening he had escorted her from the Rink. Evidently the receiving rooms did not look on the street.

On the other hand, he observed, with a lively satisfaction, that from a window on the ground-floor of the dwelling confided to the surveillance of the porter he was seeking, shone the unobtrusive light of a lamp.

This curtainless window must be that of the lodge, and looking in he saw the porter, his elbows on a table and spectacles on his nose, reading from the evening's paper, which one of his tenants was, perhaps, awaiting with impatience.

He was alone with a big cat and a featherless parrot.

Maxime, having to enter upon delicate negotiations, could not have been more fortunate. Not being duplicated by a companion whom he would have been compelled to make the confidant of his projects, there remained nothing but to approach the porter frankly and enlist him as an ally.

Unwilling to quit even for a moment his post of observation, he concluded to strike on the window of the lodge. At the sound the porter laid down his paper, turned his head, and seeing the outline of a figure through the panes, went bravely to open it.

"Fear nothing," said Maxime, in a low voice; "I am the person to whom you gave some information last month about the Prussian opposite."

"How, sir, you!" cried the man, "at this hour!"

"Yes; I came to ask you to do me a service. Can you let me in immediately?"

"With pleasure; and remain as long as you please."

"That is what I was about to ask. There is something new—over there. But do not leave me longer in the street. I don't wish to be seen over yonder."

"I come, sir; I am running," and having closed the window and drawn the cord, M. Bidard went himself to receive his unexpected visitor.

"Quick!" said Maxime, gliding into the alley. "Let us go in; and put out the light, I beg, or hide it in a corner if you can't put it out. And to identify you for disarranging you, here are two louis."

Bidard pocketed them, and thrust the lamp under the table, muttering:

"Monsieur, I thank you all the same, but can assure you that what I do is not from calculation."

"I am sure of it. Now station yourself as sentry with me behind the window, and let us talk."

The man hastened to follow a monsieur who gave princely pourboires, and had ways as mysterious as a hero of romance.

"When did the tenants over there return?" asked this munificent stranger.

"Return! Monsieur knows the Prussian left six weeks ago, and nothing has been heard of him, and nothing ever will."

"Either by him or by some other the house is occupied now."

"By rats and mice, then. Everything is shut up, as monsieur may see, and nothing has budged since the Prussian decamped."

"You must be mistaken."

"Oh, no, sir. I pass half the day on the door-step since the weather is fine, and no one has been in the house. I answer for it with my head, and I beg monsieur to believe I set store by my head."

"A woman and two men are there at this moment. I have just seen them go in."

"And the Prussian is one?"

"No; they are foreigners whom I know, and do not resemble the bear. It is not the first time the woman has come here in the night. I escorted her to the door the night before I came to you for information and on that day I told you the name she gave me—Madame Sergent."

"I recollect. Monsieur thought she was a cocotte. And monsieur is certain she is within with the gentlemen?"

A Revelation in Tea Goodness



is a delicious and fragrant blend of the finest Ceylon Tea.
Get a package from your grocer and enjoy its excellent qualities.

"Absolutely certain."

"Then that house is the Tour de Nesle," cried the porter; "there must be horrors going on there. Suppose I go for the police."

"No; I have reasons for not having recourse to the police. Besides, what ground should I have? This woman has undoubtedly the right to enter a house of which she carries the key in her pocket, and to take there whoever she will. What I want is simply to find out what these people are about."

"Monsieur may act as if at home, and nothing can escape him here."

"Has the house another outlet?"

"I don't know of any. There is a garden behind, but it is enclosed and there is no gate on the other side."

"How is the house arranged inside?"

"First there is the ground-floor, with a dining-room and billiard-room; on the first floor a large salon; on the second, two bedchambers; on the other front a small salon on the first floor; on the ground-floor—"

"Look!" interrupted Maxime, "there is a light in the first story."

"True, they are lighting up the large salon; two lamps—and wax candles. See how it is lighting up everywhere, quicker than the Champs-Elysees on illumination days! The dining-room's turn has come now—one light—two lights—"

ah, the cocotte is going to give a ball and supper! And the larbins, where do they come from? See how they pass and re-pass before the windows. 'Pon my word if a body was superstitious he might believe the devil was making a feast there, for since the house was built nobody has seen the end of a candle burning in it."

"And you declare that for some days past you have seen no one enter?"

"Not a cat. Monsieur may ask

all the tenants in the neighborhood, if they hadn't gone to bed they'd be at the windows, and would make such a stir people would collect in the streets."

"It is amazing," thought Maxime, "evidently they have brought a squad of servants in the night to prepare for the reception of the master and his guests. Who has done that and for what purpose?"

"It is my notion the cocotte has brought two rich foreigners to spend the night at play and get their money."

"I don't think play has anything to do with it. You say there is a small salon on the side next the garden?"

"Not so small, and richly furnished. It looks like a lady's boudoir."

"That is where she has taken the two men, while she gave orders to have the apartments for reception made ready."

"That's what I said to monsieur. They will begin by sitting down to table, and certainly it will not be to make way with the leavings of the Prussian. But where did they get decent provisions? Not a carriage from Potel or Chabot has been seen to enter Rue Jouffroy. Ah! the illuminators are disappearing. They are coming to supper."

(To be continued.)

DEAD BACTERIA.

Are Not Wholesome, Says Dr. Louis Fischer.

Commercial pasteurization of milk has been condemned in scathing terms by Dr. Louis Fischer, an eminent authority on the nutrition of infants.

He declared that it had been absolutely proven that the use of sterilized milk had produced in infants scurvy, rickets and marasmus, and said it was his opinion that the persistent taking of the pasteurized fluid might possibly produce the same symptoms in a lesser degree, although this had not yet been definitely established by research, as it had with sterilization.

"Pasteurized milk," he continued, "is essentially dead milk, for the life in it has been destroyed. All milk, to be palatable and to be relished, must have life in it. Pasteurization also gives too many opportunities to those who would mix milk from all sources, good, bad and indifferent, and by treatment convert it into a seemingly sweet and wholesome product, which, however, still retains all its injurious properties. Contaminated milk can no more be made suitable for food by pasteurization than a piece of tainted meat can be made fit to eat by boiling it."

"Milk reeking with bacteria, stale and contaminated with disease germs such as typhoid, diphtheria and tuberculosis," said Dr. Fischer, "can be rendered sweet and apparently as good as fresh milk by the effects of steaming."

"It does not seem plausible that milk containing dead bacteria is fit for the food of healthy persons, and surely it is unfit for delicate infants. We should not forget that disease germs produce a poison, technically known as a toxin, which is deadlier than the germ from which it was secreted."

Vaseline Camphor Ice

VASELINE

FOR CHAPPED SKIN AND LIPS,
COLD SORES, WINDBURN.

12 Vaseline Remedies in Tubes

Capitium, Borated, Mentholated, Carb-
lated, Camphorated, White Oxide of Zinc,
etc. Each for special purposes. Write for
Free Vaseline Book.

CHESEBROUGH MFG. CO. (Cons'd)
379 Craig St., W., Montreal