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THE WITCH OF CRAGENSTONE Continued from page two)

ly of logs, the interior comprising a row of dark cells, a long narrow passageway and a room for the keeper; village tribunal or council held its sessions. Here it was that they heard disputants, punished offenders otherwise sat in judgment. So quiet were the inhabitants of this obscure mountain village, so regular in their manner of living, peaceable and law abiding, that the jail for lack of serving any use of great importance had | thew." long since fallen into a state of neglect. The heavy wooden shutters hung loosely on broken hinges; the apertures that emitted air and light into the building were covered with a rusty, iron grating, and the plain, wooden furniture was dilapidated to an extraordinary degree. In fact, the only o part of the old prison that gave evidence of strength or resistance was the huge front door of rough oak beams riveted together with iron bands that

reached from floor to roof. Before this door on the afternoon of the day following Margaret's arrest the old jailer, Matthew Allen, sat on a three legged stool sleepily watching the sun's gradual descent toward the horizon line. His good dog slept quietly at his side, and inside the prison the silence was intense.

Sounds of horse's hoofs pounding the roadway fell on the dull ears of the jailer, who raised his head expectantly, for watching alone before the jail in an isolated part of the village was a monotonous existence even for a pious old man whose thoughts were wont to be nonrer heaven than earth, and so the hope of a chance visitor with whom to discuss the exciting events of the previous day caused an expression of unusual intentness to spread over Mat-******************* thew's countenance as he looked toward the turn. Apparently the sight of the old man was failing, for the rider had appeared before his vision and approached quite a few yards in his direction before he recognized the tall, gray clad form of Josiah Taunston. With noisy clatter the horse and rider advanced, the latter pulling rein in a cloud of dust before the huge door of

"I give thee good day, Matthew," he said. "How doth fare thy prisoner, the devil's young accomplice? Is she still with thee?"

"Yea, master," the man responded seriously. "She is here." "Thy news is good," Josiah observed. "Methought, perchance, to hear that she had disappeared. Gone up i' the air on a streak o' lightning or in a cloud of smoke, to join the revels of her evil

At this sally he laughed a loud laugh Poplar or Georgia Pine for of cruel enjoyment. The jailer looked about him fearfully, calling under his breath for the intercession of the

"How doth thy prisoner conduct herself, Matthew Allen?" Taunston inquired, with curious gloating. "Doth she rave an' curse, tear down her hair an' call on that white livered coxcomb, that quondam lover of hers, to come to save her?"

"My son, her behavior is unusual," he answered, shaking his head from side to side in a way that implied his inability to understand. "The maid doth sit on the stool quietly, with head bowed an' hands pressed together o'er her heart, or else doth kneel on the floor and rest her head on the side of her hard pallet."

The jailer sighed. "'Twere a sin, good sir, to feel a

sympathy for such?" he asked in a trembling voice, uncertainly. ward the old man familiarly, now sat

Josiah, who had been leaning over toerect with a sudden motion.

"Matthew Allen," he cried sternly, "keep in mind always that thou doth come under the spell of this woman, under the snare of her devilish wiles. Kidneys and Bladder. Slightly lax- Her tricks are many, I tell thee, an' deep is her art. She doth but play a part to lure thee on! Hast already had a feeling of pity for her? Then beware, Matthew! Keep distant from the charm She-He Medicine Co., - Lindsay of her spell, and pray-pray constantly for a speedy deliverance from the sore affliction that hath been visited upon

this village." The jailer paled visibly, and his jaw dropped as with eyes wide open in terror he looked into the dark and menacing countenance of his visitor, who now pompously drew a paper from his belt and with stern majesty proceeded to address the old man.

"Matthew Allen, keeper of Cragenstone jail, I have here an order from the chief councilor, herewith signed and sealed, commanding thee to bring the prisoner in thy charge-one Margaret Mayland, accused of witchcraft -before said councilor and council in the prison hall, where they will be assembled on the morrow at the hour of noon."

The jailer took the paper with trembling hands, stammering his surprise that so much haste had been deemed expedient.

"The council, as thou dost know, Matthew, is composed of wise men," he observed, "men who foresee danger and anticipate obstacles that might rise in their paths. Thy prisoner, jailer, hath a lover abroad known to have vast influence at court. As all the roads and passes are guarded by good Puritans heavily armed, his only way of escape was by the Sterndorf forest. where he must either die of starvation

warrant thee, Matthew, that if the prisoner is found guilty and condemnspeedily."

"Doth fear a rescue, master?" the jailer asked, alarm written on his countenance.

was in the man's mind when he left," Taunston replied soberly. . "An we were careless enough to let the prisoner lie here a month or so mayhap the popinjay, safely surrounded by

"rest easy, Matthew, an' have faith softly: in the council."

Having finished his discourse, he

turned his horse about. It was a primitive affair built rough-"One moment stay thee," the jailer cried eagerly, laying a detaining hand on the horse's mane. "An' should this knight find means of escape through also a large assembly hall where the the forest and ride back to save his lady, this old prison would offer but

"With so much dispatch will the council seal the woman's fate," Josiah answered sternly, "that unless La Fabienne hath eagle's wings wherewith to speed him on his travels he will arrive too late. Fare thee well, Mat-

He started to ride away, then, pulling rein, suddenly brought his animal to a

"I a'most forgot to tell thee," he called over his shoulder, "that the council hath under advisement the matter of sending some other to remain with thee until the day that thy prisoner hath been freed or her doom sealed. God be with thee, Matthew."

Putting spurs to his horse, he rode away, and the keeper, calling his dog, turned the great key in the lock and entered the jail.

The next morning, despite the fact that a heavy mist hung over the mountain and a drizzling rain was falling, the quiet village of Cragenstone presented a scene of unusual activity. From the various houses people were issuing on their way to the council hall, and at the Sign of the Red Heart stern faced Puritans from far distances were arriving constantly, for the story of Margaret's arrest had been passed from mouth to mouth over the mountain, and in those credulous, superstitious times such a sensational event as the trial of a witch was the signal for a general holiday. Shepherds left their flocks, housewives their spinning wheels, the husbandman laid down his plow, and, donning their best attire, they walked or rode to the scene of interest. So all the morning along the roadways and before the various shops in the village groups of newcomers advanced or stood listening with mouths agape to the startling and fearful tales told them by the townspeople of "the accurst woman's doings" and the suffering she had caused those that had come under her evil spell.

Precisely at the hour of noon, as the rusty iron bell at the prison clanged out the tidings that the time of Margaret's trial had arrived, the chief councilor and council, accompanied by two judges from Sterndorf renowned on the mountain for their knowledge of the law, made their way through the great concourse of people gathered before the jail. Trembling with excitement, old Matthew threw open the door, and they entered, walking slowly to the council chamber, followed at a respectful distance by the assembled people, who took seats quietly on the rough wooden benches prepared for them.

When all were seated and the clanging of the bell had ceased, the chief councilor rose and called loudly the name of Matthew Allen. Immediately the jailer appeared at

"Matthew Allen," he said in solemn tones, "I call on thee in the name of the



All eyes were turned toward the entrance. king to produce the woman in thy charge, one Margaret Mayland, before this tribunal. Bring forth the prison-

Amid a breathless silence he resumed

Presently the grating noise of the opening and shutting of an iron door was heard, then the sounds of footsteps coming along the corridor. All eyes were turned toward the entrance and there was a ripple of excitement and deep interest as the old keeper, leading the prisoner, appeared in the doorway. Eagerly the spectators fixed their curious glances on Margaret, who wore a plain dress of black cloth unrelieved by any color or ornament save the gold cross on her bosom, that shone brightly on its fine gold chain. Her glittering hair, brushed back smoothly, was colled in a loose knot, and she walked with drooping head, her pale face wearing an expression of suffering and hopeless

They advanced slowly, the jailer finding difficulty in making a way for them through the crowded aisle, until they or become a prey to the hunger of the came to an open space before the council, where Matthew, seating Margaret He snapped his fingers indifferently, on a wooden stool placed there for the as if he did not care which. "So our purpose, left her. So intense was the good councilmen, knowing the value stillness in the room that the noise of of precaution and having fair knowl- the falling of a pin could have been heard as the assemblage gazed at the over good, deemed it expedient to set prisoner brought face to face with her the trial at the earliest hour, an' I judges and accusers and who now sat aione apart, per nands clasped together in her lap, her proud head bent and ed to die her execution will follow her blue eyes duil and heavy, their glance not lifted from the floor.

The chief councilor sat on a bench surrounded by the council, and back of them, seated on wooden stools, were "'Tis hard telling what intention the witnesses and accusers. Josiah Taunston, summoned to serve in both capacities, sat with his mother in a place of prominence and received a large share of comment and curious attention. Seated just before him in the armed followers, would ride back to council was one of the visiting judges break down the door and bear the from Sterndorf, who, after surveying

pallor deepen on the old keeper's face, tonishment, turned to Josiah, saying

"By my faith, good sir, the maid is cossessed of wondrous beauty and ooks not like one that had sold her soul to the devil."

Josiah's grim face darkened.

"Hist, man! Look not her way, an' put thy thoughts on holy things. To appear winsome is of her evil art; 'tis one of the first tricks she doth use t put folk under her spell. 'Tis well I were here to warn thee, friend."

The man turned about with a frightened expression and, fixing his glance on the audience, kept it there. Soon the chief councilor, in large curled wig and loose gown of black,

rose to his feet. "Margaret Mayland, rise." The prisoner, without lifting her

eyes, obeyed his command. "Margaret Mayland," he continued, speaking with stern distinctness, "in the name of the king, thou hath been taken into custody and now brought to trial on the following charges: Connivance with Satan in rebellion against God, possessing a malevolent influence over human beings and supernatural powers to injure them, to read their thoughts, to fascinate and harm by a look, to control the elements and in other ways most wicked to practice the awful crimes of magic, black art and witchcraft. Thine accusers state," he continued, "that already thou hast wrought much suffering to thy neighbors in this village. Woman, hath

aught to say in thy defense?" For the first time Margaret lifted her eyes. "Good sir, of the charges thou dost name I am not guilty," she answered gently.

"Hast thou secured any one to argue in thy defense, to plead for thee?" he demanded.

"Nay, sir." Her head fell forward, and she clasped her hands together tightly. "I-I have no friends hereabout,

save one old woman, who can do naught but cry for me." "Thou mayst be seated." A murmur of deep interest ran through the assemblage as the old councilor said: "Councilmen, we will

proceed with the trial. Let the first witness be called." He resumed his seat with solemn dignity, while the court crier, bristling with importance, rose at once, calling dramatically, "Josiah Taunston to the witness bench!"

CHAPTER XXV. AS his name was spoken thus loudly and suddenly Taunston turned deathly white, and great beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. He attempted to rise, but, feeling his legs unsteady under him, resumed his seat; then, controlling himself by a strong effort, again

set apart for the witnesses. The chief councilor addressed him solemnly: "Josiah Taunston, doth thou promise, knowing that a just and revengeful God heareth all thou wilt say, to speak

rose and walked with his accustomed

air of calm seriousness to the bench

"I do so solemnly promise." Then a young attorney, who had been appointed by the council to question witnesses, stepped forward, taking a place just before Margaret, who if she heeded what was going on gave no evidence of it, but sat motionless, with

lowered head and eyes downcast. "Josiah Taunston," he commenced rapidly, addressing the witness, "as the accused hath secured no person to defend her or to parley questions with witnesses it will be proper for thee to give thy evidence directly and with as much speed as possible. Witness, what occurrence between thee and the prisoner first caused thee to think she was

in connivance with the devil?" After mopping his brow with his handkerchief and wetting his pale lips

with his tongue Josiah spoke: "'Twas on a day soon after Margaret Mayland's return to her estate that I went one morning to fetch my sister, who had been detained by the storm a few days at the house. As I approached from the roadway mine astonished gaze fell upon my sister, usually a maiden of great decorum, running like a wild thing along the top of the pasture wall, whilst the prisoner, with her hair unbound an' streaming i' the wind. swung from tree to tree, laughing an' chattering gleefully as one bewitched. My sharp cry of rebuke brought them to their senses, and, greatly abashed and crestfallen, they advanced quietly to meet me. Hoping for some good influence with my cousin, I entered the house and stopped a short time to remonstrate with her for her unbecoming

behavior. (Continued next week.)

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