

The Witch of Cragenstone

By ANITA CLAY MUNOZ,
Author of "In Love and Truth"

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break, and he did not mean any other time," she said crossly. "Mark me, a La Fabienne would never break his word to any one, much less to the woman he loves. See, Elsbeth," she cried a moment later, "the sun is only just above the mountain tops. 'Tis but now the break of day! They'll come anon!"

The women moved about, completing their arrangements with nervous haste, their feet to time pausing in their lair from time to time to listen for approaching horses' feet. Suddenly Elsbeth started her companion's arm.

"Hush!" she whispered. "What strange sounds fall on mine ears! Do not hear voices loud calling an' the tramp of many feet?"

Both hastened to an aperture in the hallway that commanded a better view of the road and gates. For a moment they looked on with beating hearts; then Margaret, uttering a groan, covered against the wall, covering up her face with her hands.

"Oh, God's pity! If Godfrey hath not my cousin Josiah and in his just anger hath killed him!" she moaned.

The other stood looking out of the window hopelessly. "Elsbeth, say that thou doest see my Godfrey riding this way unmoleted!" Margaret cried tearfully.

"I see thy cousin Josiah, an' me thinks 'tis the old elder who is the captain or superior in the council on horseback advancing toward this house," Elsbeth announced dully, "an' a party of soldiery surrounded by a group of excited people do follow them. They are turning in this gateway, Margaret!" the woman fairly shrieked as she turned and threw her arms about her young mistress. "Hide, my dear, 'tis they they want! Hide behind the door! Shut the windows! Batten them admittance!"

Margaret's face was white and starved. "Elsbeth, calm thyself. Cease thy wanderings," she answered sternly. "I bid Margaret Mayland hide her face as though she had done wrong! Shame on thee, Elsbeth! Rather bid me show open wide the door!"

"Margaret, sweet babe Margaret," the old woman cried, almost beside herself with fear and apprehension, "the take of the cross thou wearest doth anger them!"

At these words Margaret raised her head haughtily and drew away from her mistress, but Elsbeth clung to her. "Remember that I have loved thee so that thou hast never missed thy mother," she cried. "Thou hast told me as sweet, many times when 'twas thy mood to be tender. Margaret, for the sake I have given thee I demand a return. Take off the cross that doth anger them!"

"Nay, my dear, I cannot go!" Elsbeth crouched down in the corner of a chair, trembling as with a fit of palsy. "I had loved thee, too, Elsbeth," she asked as she pushed her gently from her.

"Hurry, hurry on the steps was heard then a loud rapping on the door. Margaret's eyes gleamed strangely. "Oh, Elsbeth, throw open wide the door," she said. "Bid our visitors enter!"

—here he paused to look over the scroll of parchment he held in his hand—"of a woman, one Margaret Mayland, accused of the crime of witchcraft."

At that moment old Elsbeth appeared in the doorway behind Margaret, her befrilled cap awry and her eyes red with weeping. The captain, observing her, made another low bow to Margaret.

"With your permission I will enter and take her now," he said. "Men, forward!"

The soldiers, with swords clanking, came up the steps. Margaret did not move, for, having caught sight of her cousin, Josiah Taunston, grim, exultant, astride his high horse in the middle of the gathering, she was gazing at him with an expression of reproachful sternness.

"Gracious mistress!"—the captain laid his hand upon her arm—"it will be necessary for me to take this woman. In the king's name I ask thee to allow me to enter."

She drew away from his touch with a quick gesture of offended dignity. "Why shouldst thou enter, man, when the whom thou hast come to take stands at thy side?" she said.

"Thou, mistress?" The captain fell back a step or two in his surprise. "'Tis no wonder that thou doth stare at me incredulously, with open mouth," she said bitterly. "Ye, I am Margaret Mayland, and a woman most unjustly accused."

"Prithee, captain," cried Elder Williams, the chief counselor, who had been whispering aside with Taunston, "do thy duty with more speed. Happen thou stay longer thou'lt fall under the spell of the woman, and instead of performing the king's work, thou'lt be doing pranks on the green! More haste, officer."

Thus sternly admonished, the captain replaced his helmet and, motioning to his men to come closer, said: "Margaret Mayland, in the king's name I do arrest thee for the black crimes of witchcraft and connivance with the devil. I am under orders to see thee safely in a cell in the town prison, there to await trial for these charges, and it is my duty to command thee to come with me now."

As the captain spoke Margaret listened immovably, with pale face and flashing eyes, and when he had finished, as if she could no longer restrain her indignation at the outrageous injustice, brushed him aside with a sweeping gesture of her hand and, walking through the soldiers to the top of the steps, stood looking defiantly at the concourse of people before her. The sun, now higher and brighter in the heavens, fell upon her warmly, and the gold cross on her bosom gleamed brightly in its rays.

"Ignorant churl! Ingrates! Poltroons!" she cried, with scornful anger. "Dost know 'tis Margaret Mayland that ye do attack? Cowards, to bring a band of soldiery to take one weak woman captive! But know now and think well before ye act that the woman whom ye do accuse is not defenseless, but hath a strong protector close at hand in the person of Sir Godfrey La Fabienne!"

"Hush thy harsh words, sweet. 'Twill only anger them the more. These good folk have naught against thee; 'tis thy gold cross that they mislike. Take it off and burn it before them all, an' they will go their way, leaving thee unmoleted, I'll warrant thee, babe."

The distressed old woman looked toward the throng of stern, unyielding faces entreatingly, but their only response to her appeal was the loud cry of "The cross, Satan's death dealing charm! The cross! The cross!"

The turbulent crowd surged nearer, and one woman, more excited than the others, sprang at Margaret, making a snatch at the cross as though to tear it off. In a second the handle of Josiah Taunston's riding whip fell on her shoulder heavily.

"Fool!" he said under his breath, directing a dark look at her. "Wouldst thou destroy the evidence?"

The woman, greatly abashed, fell back among the crowd. The mistress of Mayland farm, with flashing eyes, put her hand over the cross protectively, and she pushed her old nurse from her with firm determination, saying: "Elsbeth, thy words do fill my heart with shame. A Mayland asked to do the bidding of these village churls! Margaret Mayland to be told what to wear and what not to wear by these ignorant, prejudiced people! I have done no wrong. My cross contains no evil!"

As a full sense of the wrongful injustice from which she was suffering swept over her Margaret turned upon the crowd of accusers again, this time more furiously. "This cross I wear, no man can touch it while I live!" she cried. "And as ye have thought it seemly to brand me as a witch and bring soldiers here to arrest me, I do defy ye and do warn ye not to lay hands on me until ye have first notified my affianced husband, Sir Godfrey La Fabienne, of thine intention!"

Jeers, ejaculations of derision and contempt, also loud, scornful laughter, followed Margaret's words. "Sir Godfrey La Fabienne!" shrieked one woman shrilly. "Ha, ha! She doth command us to notify her white livered lover! Ho, ho!"

With a proud, hopeless gesture of her head the accused woman turned from the crowd of sneering, sinister faces before her and, addressing the captain of the guard, who stood close at her side, said entreatingly, "Good captain, wilt thou send notice of this outrage to my friend, Sir Godfrey La Fabienne, who for some good reason hath been detained at yonder tavern by the mill stream, the Sign of the Red Heart?"

"One moment, mistress," the man stepped down and, going to Josiah Taunston, appeared to be consulting him, the concourse of people, now grown silent, watching with bated breath. Suddenly Taunston threw up his head and let forth a harsh, unimirthful shout of laughter.

"Canst send a message to her lover?" he cried in a loud voice of triumph. "Nay, man, thou cannot, for the dastard hath run away, and no man knoweth whither!"

With angry glances from her flashing eyes Margaret turned upon him. "Josiah Taunston!"—the words came slowly and distinctly from her pale lips—"the truth is not on thy lips, and I tell thee that thou liest. And heed thee how loudly thou doth speak, for the man liveth not long who doth call Sir Godfrey La Fabienne dastard!"

Taunston rode a few paces closer to the steps and before the throng of riotous men and women, who were now capering on the green in wild enjoyment of their knowledge of her lover's departure and of Margaret's speedy discomfiture, the cousins, the accuser and accused, were face to face.

"Wanton! Witch! Thing of evil!" he said in a low, sneering voice. "Hear the truth from the lips of one who e'er speaks truth! Thy lover, thy beauteous, honorable, noble lover, who did talk so bravely to win thy favors, hath at the first sign of trouble run away! 'Tis not true!" Margaret cried, with set face and gleaming eyes. "I call thee here before all listeners a speaker of untruths and do brand thee as a liar!"

approached and knelt humbly against Margaret's feet. "Rise, Gaston," she cried in joyful tones, "and give the message that thou dost bring from thy master. Speak loudly, so that all his wicked tongued accusers may hear and know the wrong that they have done him."

The fellow did not lift his head. "Speak, good Gaston." "Fair mistress," he said in thick, muffled tones, "my lord left last night."

The glow of color that had swept over Margaret's face at Gaston's appearance faded away. "Whither went he?" "I know not, mistress."

"Rise, stupid," she commanded, with quick impatience, "and speak the message that Sir Godfrey left for me. What good reason for his going gave he, and what tender words of counsel left he for me?"

The fellow rose, but did not meet her glance. He stood with bowed head, shifting his feet nervously. "Blockhead, wilt never speak?" Margaret shook his arm angrily. "Good Mistress Mayland," the man stammered, "I-I have but one word for thee from my master."

"And that is?" she interrupted almost wildly in her desperation. "Farewell."

Margaret fell back as if she had received a blow in the face, and the listening crowd closed in around them, with gloating looks and taunting words, wild with triumphant excitement. The captain laid his hand on her arm determinedly, but she threw him off and, clinging to Gaston, besought him to tell her more.

"Kind mistress," he said, "last night at about an hour after midnight, when I was sleeping heavily on a pile of straw in the stable. I felt some one touching me gently and, springing up in surprise, found my master bending over me. As I attempted to speak he put his hand over my mouth and whispered these words:

"Gaston, positive news hath reached me that at the rising of the sun I and Mistress Mayland are to be taken into custody by the soldiers who arrived here tonight and thrown into prison. As all the passes are strongly guarded we cannot escape by."

"At that instant the man sleeping at my side wakened and raised on his elbow. My master, hardly daring to breathe, crouched lower in the shadow, so that he was unperceived. "Much more would I say," he whispered, "but I cannot take the risk. Tell Mistress Mayland farewell and—"

"Just then another fellow stirred, and, rousing his companion, the men exchanged words, listening. Breathless we waited until the soldiers were breathing regularly again. Then my lord, giving my hand a strong pressure, took the first safe chance and slipped noiselessly through the doorway."

"Swear what thou sayst is the truth!" Margaret cried, now standing erect before him, a deathlike pallor on her countenance. "By the sacred memory of my mother's love I swear it!" Gaston said solemnly.

The proud head of the mistress of the Mayland farm, its covering of yellow hair gleaming in the sunlight, fell forward on her breast. The captain to hide his emotion gave a loud order, and the soldiers, with noise of clanking swords, closed in around her. Margaret looked about her in a dazed manner. "There is no need of force," she said dully. "I will go with thee."

Fenelon Train Paying at Last

THIS YEAR WAS A SUCCESS—WILL LIKELY BE CONTINUED.

After two years' running at a big expense to the G.T.R., the 8 o'clock Fenelon Falls train has made up for its expenditure to the company this year. The train started its regular two months' time-table in May last, for the benefit of the farmers in that district, and instead of leaving here at 2.40 o'clock they now can remain until 8 o'clock, giving them a long day in town for business. The officials say the train is paying twice as well as in former years, and leaves the depot crowded every night.

The benefit of the tourists and others desiring to visit that district. Instead of having to leave Toronto and other points at an early hour in order to catch the 11.10 or 2.40 train from Lindsay, the travelling public can now leave Toronto at 5 p.m., arriving here in time to catch the evening train at 8 o'clock. This train has been a great convenience to the citizens of Fenelon Falls, as well as the tourists, and every endeavor has been made by the Council and citizens of that village to advertise the same in order to make it remunerative to the Grand Trunk.

The officials say this year that the train is now paying twice as well as in former years; and it has been a noticeable fact that it leaves each evening with a good compliment of passengers.

Farm Hands Scarce In the North West

APPLICANTS FOR HARVEST HELP BECOMING NUMEROUS—MEN ARE STAYING IN ONTARIO.

The Winnipeg Free Press says: The demand for good farm hands is still largely in excess of the supply, and many applications are received daily in the city at the offices of the Department of Immigration. The wages offered range from \$25 to \$40 per month for experienced men. For inexperienced men, from \$15 to \$25 per month with board is offered. As many as fifty applications are received in a single day from farmers, the letters coming from all parts of the West. The applicants are in many cases men who in recent years arrived in the country practically penniless and who were themselves cared for at the immigration hall and assisted to find homesteads on the prairies. The demand for men for the farmers will soon become acute, and those who are interested in the matter of finding a supply of men for this purpose are somewhat at a loss. The usual excursions of farm laborers will be run from Ontario and the other eastern provinces, but the supply of men will probably be insufficient.

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Regiment will go to Camp on Aug. 31st.

45TH IS MUCH LARGER THIS YEAR THAN EVER BEFORE—CAMP AT KINGSTON.

The 45th regiment, under Colonel Sylvester, will leave on August 31st for their annual camp at Kingston for two weeks. It is expected a large number of companies which were not present at last year's camp, will be on the field this year. The regiment is stronger than it ever was before, and no doubt will make a good showing at Kingston.

TOM LONGBOAT IS IN A CLASS BY HIMSELF TOM FLANAGAN RETURNS FROM ENGLAND—INDIAN TOOK SUN STROKE.

(Special to Free Press.) Toronto, Aug. 6.—Tom Flanagan arrived home in Toronto this morning from England. He claimed that it was the heat that killed Longboat at the Marathon.

In the twelfth mile of the race he started to mow down the field, and at the 19th, before the collapse came, he looked good to win by a mile. At the 20th stake he fell senseless from a sunstroke and did not open his eyes for twenty-four hours.

Spirit of Destiny Seems Unkind to Fernie Town

COMMUNITY HAS HAD MANY SETBACKS—AN EXPLOSION, A STRIKE AND THREE FIRES—INCORPORATED A CITY IN 1904.

The city of Fernie was founded in 1897 and grew rapidly, but has had to face a series of drawbacks. It received its first in 1902, when on May 22 the great explosion at Coal Creek killed 128 men and badly wrecked No. 2 mine. A strike followed, and the mine was closed up for three months, but on April 1st, 1903, a permanent agreement was reached.

But Fernie was a town of wooden buildings, and its business centre had to be purged by fire before it could be built up with the fine structures that lined Victoria-ave. before the conflagration of Saturday last.

The first big fire came early on April 29, 1904, and in four hours six blocks in the centre of the town were in ashes and over \$500,000 of property had vanished. Brick, concrete and stone were the materials used on most of the new buildings, and in eighteen months the burned portion was fully restored. In July, 1905, another wooden block, valued at \$80,000, was removed by fire, and in August of the same year \$40,000 damage was again done.

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William English Fined for Raising Disturbance on Train

ROW ON JULY 13TH CLEARED UP AT LAST—ENGLISH QUARRELED AND USED FOUL LANGUAGE.

Mr. W. English appeared before Magistrate Moore, Wednesday, Aug. 5th, after being summoned for the fifth time. He was charged with disorderly conduct on the train from Peterboro to Lindsay on July 13th.

Mr. Howard Scott was the first witness called, and he testified he saw Bates and English raising a row, and that English fell on him in his seat. English then got up and went away. Mr. A. Bates was present and saw the trouble. He was standing near the end of car when English came up and muttered something to him, and he told him it was all right. English came back again and he caught him by the wrists, but was struck by him on the face. Bates then pushed him over a seat. English was the worse of liquor.

Under the cross-examination of Mr. Knight, he said that English was sober enough to navigate up and down the aisle, and he thought he had no more than a couple of drinks in him.

The accused was then sworn and said he did not think he was to blame for the trouble, and claimed that he was sober. When asked by the magistrate if he had any liquor in him, he replied that he had a few drinks, but not enough to make him drunk.

The magistrate said he thought the travelling public should not be subjected to the foul language of drunks on the train. The ladies and children, he said, were in a place where they could not escape.

His Worship then imposed a fine of \$2 and costs, to be paid inside of two weeks.

REV. FATHER McCOLL RETURNS FROM HIS TRIP TO EUROPE

WESTERN THE SHOW PLACES IN WESTERN EUROPE—TOOK BATHS IN FRANCE—SPENT DAYS AT RESORTS.

(Peterboro Examiner.) It will be a source of deep pleasure and satisfaction to the many friends of Rev. Father McColl to learn that he has returned to this city refreshed and invigorated, to resume the duties which impaired health forced him to temporarily resign. Upon the desire of His Lordship Bishop O'Connor and the whole congregation of St. Peter's, he left Peterborough on March 11th, and after nearly five months' rest and quiet in Europe's most famous health recuperating resorts, he arrived safely back to continue his ministrations to his people. The journey and its intermediate visits to some of Nature's most beauteous gardens was most successful and Father McColl states that he is now in the best of health.

He visited it almost daily while in the city, but always found something new to ponder on, some new feature to gaze at in wonder. Rev. Father McColl had the honor of saying mass at the main altar, which is above the tomb of St. Peter. On Palm Sunday he had a private audience with Pope Pius X, and on Holy Thursday assisted at mass sung by His Holiness, at which Father McColl received communion.

His travels took him through northern Italy, visiting Loretto, Venice, Florence and Milan. Through southern France, by easy stages, he went on to Switzerland, where he spent considerable time in the mountains and at the lakes. He saw Lake Geneva, also Lake Lucerne. A little chapel on the shore of the latter marks the spot where William Tell escaped from Gessler by climbing the sheer rocks to the ledge above.

In Paris the church of the Invalides was very interesting. Close at hand is the tomb of Napoleon, around which are flags which the ambitious leader won in his great battles.



"Why shouldst thou enter, man?"

(To be continued.)

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