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 my 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 Suresnes.

"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 indisposed, 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."

"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."

This reply was made in so positive a tone and with so much animation that the girl doubted no longer Evidently the countess knew the author of the theft, and was resolved to denounce him to save the innocent one who was accused. Alice was blessing her, when a suspicion glided into her heart. Why did the countess undertake so warmly the defence of Robert? Could it be supposed she maintained his cause out of pure love of justice? She, whose life was the sport of her caprices! It was much more probable that she was interested personally in M. de Carnoel, and this interest must be very lively, since she offered to sacrifice some one to him.

"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 evoid 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 got 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 protege 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.)

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The first factor in the education of a heifer is kindness. She should never know what it is to fear those who handle her. Her trust in and affection for her master must be cultivated at all times, for affection, as we call it, in animals is the first and greatest principle in maternity and maternity and reproduction are the very foundation on which a cow's usefulness of failure as a dairy cow rests. The whole nervous system throbs in unison with the laws of maternity and is influenced for good or ill by the treatment she received as a calf, heifer or mother.

POULTRY NOTES.

It is well to give the birds their morning feed at night, burying it deep in fresh, dry litter, renewed every two or three days, if the supply will admit. A flock of chickens are alarmingly disturbed by even the gentlest movement of litter during the day time, while they are on the floor.

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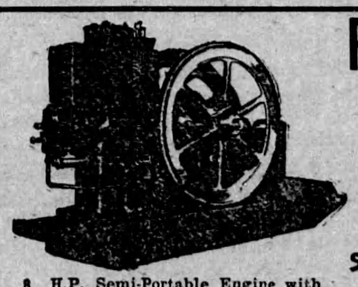

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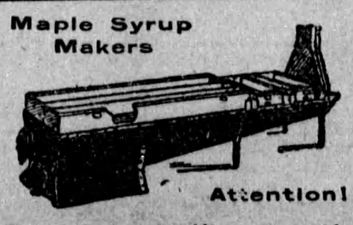

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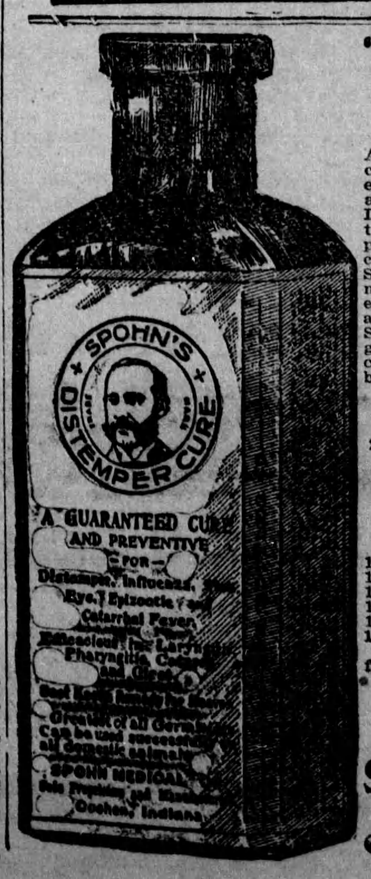

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5th Year	40,284	" "
6th Year	72,380	" "
7th Year	100,532	" "
8th Year	124,500	" "
9th Year	172,485	" "
10th Year	221,760	" "
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