THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP;

OR, THE HERITAGE OF MADAME YALTA.

CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont'd)

"Perhaps. But I doubt whether my uncle will let us see her."

"I have foreseen that, and made arrangements for an interview with your cousin. I have written her that I was in possession of the entire proof of M. de Carnoel's innocence, and begged her to come immediately by the little door on the Avenue de Friedland. After a brief interview, I will return with her myself to her father, and he must receive us."

Maxime would have had more than one objection to urge, but it was now too late. He knew Alice; he knew that she would catch at this last hope, would find means of escape and hasten to the stranger who promised to restore to her the betrothed of her heart. He was roused from these reflections by the sound of a light step approaching through the shrubbery. Madame Yalta, absorbed in her reflections, seemed to hear nothing. Soon a white hand put aside the leaves, a head appeared between two camelia bushes, and Maxime rose, uttering a cry of surprise. He had recognized a face which shone an instant like a ray of sunlight, to be eclipsed almost immediately.

"She!" he exclaimed.

"What do you mean?" asked the countess, raising her head.

"The woman of the Rink — the woman who delivered Carnoel!"

Madame Yalta started. Evidently she was not expecting this visit, and found it inopportune. But she soon recovered herself, and called:

"Justine!"

The branches were put aside again, and the brunette with the golden complexion reappeared. She was beautiful as ever but had changed her toilette. The skater of the Rink, the elegant lady of the opera was modestly clad as became a lady-in-waiting. The butterfly had returned to a chrysalis.

This enigmatical creature came forward deliberately and appeared not at all surprised at seeing Maxime, who, on his part, looked at her in stupefaction.

"What is the matter?" inquired Madame Yalta.

"The person whom Madame the Countess was expecting has just arrived."

"Where have you taken her"

"Into Madame the Countess' boudoir."

"Villagos has not yet arrived?"

"Not yet; but a box has been brought from him. Madame the Countess will find it on the lacquer table in her sleeping chamber."

"Very well. Leave us."

Justine bowed and went out quickly.

"This girl has just informed me that Mlle. Dorgeres is here," said the countess. "Do you wish to see her?"

"But—I do not know whether I ought," stammered the cousin.

"Yes. Better that you should be present at our interview. Come."

"But—"

"What?"

"The brunette—the accomplice of the thieves—she whom you call Justine—"

"Is my femme de chambre," replied the countess, quietly. "Come, the moments are precious."

And cutting short any further explanations, she rose to leave the conservatory. Maxime followed without a word. He was in a state of extreme agitation.

"Her femme de chambre," he thought.

"The creature who pilfered me of the bracelet is in her service—like the gardener—like the fencing-master—and she has given me to understand that all this pretty set of people took part in the theft of the safe. Am I to suppose that the orders came from her?"

They crossed, without exchanging a word, a corner of the park, meeting with no one, and arrived before a door of the cottage that was unfamiliar to Maxime. The Countess conducted him through corridors and stairways to the large apartments on the first floor. Neither Justine nor the duenna who had twice introduced Maxime, were there to receive them.

Preceded by Madame Yalta, he reached the room in which he had seen her the day before in the great bedstead with pillars and canopies.

"Mlle. Dorgeres is there," she said, pointing to the doorway of Gobelin tapestry, which concealed the entrance to the boudoir. "Do you not think you would do well to speak to her first, and prepare her for what I have to say?"

"No," replied Maxime. "She thinks I have taken sides against Robert de Carnoel, and would not listen to me. She now believes only in you, and is distrustful of me."

He was still speaking when his eyes fell upon an object upon a Chinese lacquer table. It was a box of peculiar shape, widened at the top and closed with a lid.

"There, no doubt, is what Dr. Villagos has sent you," he said.

Madame Yalta opened the strange coffer which was of fir wood, quite rough, and drew from it a bouquet of immortelles.

"A singular gallantry," said Maxime.

The countess did not reply. She let fall the mournful flowers, and he saw that she turned pale.

"I expected it," she said.

"What does M. Villagos mean by this ridiculous present?"

"It signifies my sentence of death."

"Your sentence of death!" exclaimed Maxime.

"Yes; I am condemned."

"Condemned by this miserable Villagos!"

"By the Nihilists, of whom he is the chief. They accuse me of having betrayed them."

"You!"

"I have been allied to them. I deserve my fate."

Maxime was about to cry out, but the duenna whom he had seen before, entered suddenly, went straight to her mistress, and spoke to her in a language he did not understand. The conversation was very short, and the duenna went out on a motion from the countess. Turning toward Maxime, she said shortly:

"Do not ask for explanations. The conversation you are about to hear will tell you all. Go into the boudoir where Mlle Dorgeres is awaiting me, and beg her to listen with you. In a few moments she will have the proof that M. de Carnoel is innocent."

"Who is it you are about to receive?"

"You will see—not a word more. Go in; it is better we should not be surprised together."

"Swear to me that you are exposing yourself to no danger."

"None at this moment. You need not close the door, and by hiding behind the tapestry, may hear all that is said."

"And if you should have need of assistance, I would be there," murmured Maxime.

He felt that he loved, in spite of all, this strange woman who now rose against the Nihilists after having co-operated with their dark dealings. It was time for him to disappear. The tapestry had no sooner closed on him that M. Villagos entered.

The doctor of medicine and conspiracies was grave as a justice, and his eyes shone with a deadly light.

The countess was calm, and she advanced deliberately toward him.

"What do you want with me?" she asked. "You have announced the sentence of death that has been passed upon me."

"I wish to question you."

"To what purpose, since I am already condemned?"

"You have accomplices. I wish to know them. Traitors must be punished."

"When I know of what I am accused, I will see whether it suits me to reply to you."

"You are accused of having compromised the success of our plans."

"This vague reply will not answer. Be precise."

"So be it. In the name of the Central Committee, I have forbidden you to interest yourself in a Frenchman suspected of a theft on the banker Dorgeres. You paid no heed to this order. Not only have you charged another Frenchman with the recovery of M. de Carnoel, but have enlisted persons engaged in your service in this work,—subalterns whom we had initiated into all our secrets and who have long worked for us. Your fencing-master, Kardiki, and your femme de chambre, Justine, have taken part in an intrigue, the object of which was to deliver a stranger who, to prove his own innocence, would not fail to designate the guilty party."

"He does not know them."

"But he would know them if I let you live. You have sworn to restore him what he has lost, and you cannot reinstate him without denouncing us."

"Without denouncing myself you mean. You have rightly guessed. I propose to recount to M. Dorgeres, to his daughter, the true history of the theft. I shall tell them by whom it was committed and with what object. He will believe me, for I shall bring him an unanswerable proof. I think fit to add that I shall not mention the names of any of those who urged me to it."

"I have no longer faith in your discretion; but I may ask why it is that you turn against us after having so well served us."

"Because I choose to have no dealings with the murderers who have just blown up the Winter Palace," replied the countess, looking fixedly at Villagos.

"Your scruples come rather late. When you took the vow to contend with us against tyranny, you were not ignorant that fire and sword would be employed to destroy it."

"I pictured to myself an insurrection against the Russian government," replied the countess, proudly "I knew there had been murderers among you, but I believed these to be isolated acts to which those who committed them had been driven by despair. The news from St. Petersburg has opened my eyes. You may kill me; you will not force me to remain one of you. I am the daughter of a man who died in Siberia, whither he had been exiled for taking up arms for the independence of Poland. It was to free my country that I consented to become your ally, and the brave men and women whom I have led into a complicity with you have had no other aim. Kardiki has served his country, and he believed he was serving her still in executing my orders. Justine is Parisian, but her father and her husband are Polish. Georget, the brave boy who has risked his liberty and his life for me, is the grandson of a Frenchman who died fighting in the ranks of the Polish army, and she who shared his dangers and who married him during the great insurrection of 1831 was born the Countess Wielenska. She has sacrificed everything for her country—rank, name and fortune, and during the forty years in which she has been consigned to the humble position to which our misfortunes have brought her, she has not ceased to work day and night for the deliverance of her country. Do you think this noble woman would consent to serve longer the cowardly partisans who murder?"

"She has permitted her grandson to aid them to steal," said the doctor, with a sarcastic smile.

"The permission was granted with the sole purpose of destroying papers which compromised hundreds of her compatriots. But it was I whom he obeyed; I who dedicated myself to the accomplishment of this act, which I regarded as a sacred duty, and I do not need to remind you what it cost me."

"Yes, I know that you have been heroic," said Villagos, slowly, "and I ask myself what mad inspiration led you to desert our party after having so bravely and skilfully served it. Not a trace remained of an accident that might have ruined us, when you suddenly undertake to stir up this affair, go to war with your friends, and, seeking to destroy your own work, launch all your auxiliaries into an insane enterpirse, which has succeeded only too well. Could you explain to me the cause of this sudden change?"

"The cause? There was no other than the desire to save the innocent; it was that I swore to repair the wrong unintentionally done to M. de Carnoel and to his betrothed"

"Very well. You confess that you have compromised us by your sentimental follies. It is an unpardonable crime. I may, however, take on me to pardon you on two conditions."

"Spare yourself the trouble of naming them. I shall not submit to them."

"The first," resumed the imperturable doctor, "is that you leave France never to return. The second—your protege, Carnoel is here, I am certain. It was to your house that Justine and Kardiki brought him last night. If you wish the Committee to overlook your faults,—if you desire to live, it is necessary to deliver up this man—to deliver him to me this day—instantly."

"To deliver M. de Carnoel to you!" said the countess, with a contemptuous smile, "to be murdered, no doubt. And it is to me you dare to propose a cowardice."

(To be continued.)

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McKenzie Mine at Elk Lake Has Started Bagging Ore

Successful Operations at the Mine Which Make the Property a Coming Shipper.

ELK CITY, May 4.—With the opening of navigation, which is now in full swing, the greatest of activity prevails at the various mines and prospects in this vicinity and the city is rapidly recovering from the recent fires.

The district is likely to become another Cobalt and the veins run to depth with values. Among the shippers and properties bagging ore are the Lucky Godfrey, the Borland-Thompson, the Devlin and the Moose Horn mines.

The Moose Horn mine put in a new plant this spring and are now sinking a winze at the 125-foot level on a vein which has shown values from the surface.

In the midst of the mines is the McKenzie, a group of five properties on which work was begun last January. They have been fortunate from the start and soon hope to rank with the shippers.

The engineer in charge, Mr. Harry McMaster, reports that the vein on location 846 of the company's group at a depth of 50 feet continued steadily the whole distance and showed free silver all the way with the exception of four feet. Several hundred feet of stripping has already been done, resulting in the discovery of two additional veins, one of which is 7 inches wide, cutting at an angle of six degrees. It is the intention to continue this shaft to the 75 or 100 foot level, then drift to the McKenzie vein, where the new 7 inch vein crosses. Mr. McMaster states that in his opinion this week will result in the placing of the value of the mine beyond question. The necessary buildings have now all been erected, including bunk house, cooking camp, manager's dwelling, blacksmith shop, powder house, and the necessary machinery is being installed. A good wagon road has been built from the main road which parallels the road from Elk Lake.

The McKenzie company are in a very fortunate position, owning a group of five properties which have been thoroughly tested. Six assays made from the veins on which the company are now working have shown results of from 400 ounces of silver up as high as 15,000 ounces to the ton.

This company is under good management, and it is the opinion of the engineer in charge and those who have seen the property that it should be brought to the shipping stage in a very short time, 600 pounds of good ore having been bagged by May 1, and the work in this regard being pushed rapidly from day to day.

Application is being made to list this Stock on the New York Curb.

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My petrol consumption was 16 miles to the gallon, including a great deal of driving in traffic. The tyres show no appreciable signs of wear, and I think it will prove light on tyres.

I am really delighted with the car.—Yours sincerely,

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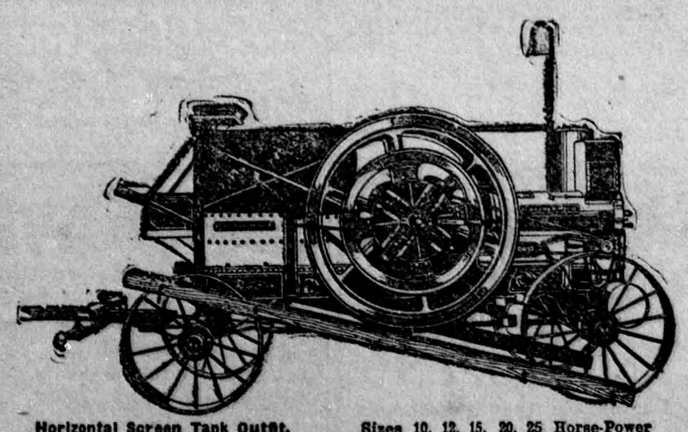

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