ONLY A MONTH;

OR, A CURIOUS MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

"My life is slipping by," she thought to herself, "and somehow I am not making the most of it. I am harder and colder than before all this trouble came, I was a mere fine-weather character, and the storm was too much for me. If I go on hating auntie perhaps I shall infect Swanhild, and make her turn into just such another narrow-hearted woman. Oh, why does one have to live with people that rub one just the wrong way?"

She fell asleep before she had solved this problem, but woke early and with a restless craving, which she could not have explained, dressed hastily, put on all the wraps that she possessed, and went out into the fresh morning air.

Leaving the steep high-road, she struck off to the left, intent on gaining the top of Hjerkinsho. All around her lay one great undulating sweep of gray country, warmed by the bright sunlight of the summer morning, and relieved here and there by the purple shadow of some cloud.

"If one could always be in a peace like this," she thought, "surely life would be beautiful then! If one could get out of all the littleness and narrowness of one's own heart, and be silent and quiet from all the worries and vexations and dislikes of life! But if one could always have a great wide open space like this that one could go into when one began to get cross—"

After a time she rose and walked quietly home, full of an eager hopefulness, to begin what she rightly felt would be a new life.

Poor Sigrid! she had yet to learn that with fresh strength comes harder fighting in the battle of life, and that of those to whom much is given much will be required.

They were very cheerful that morning at breakfast. Afterward, when they were standing in a little group outside the door, she even passed her arm within Sigrid's quite tenderly, and talked in the most amiable way imaginable of the excursion which was being planned to Kongswold.

"Look! look!" cried Swanhild, merrily, "here are some travelers. Two carioles and a stolkjaerre coming up the hill. Oh! I hope they will be nice, and that they will stay here."

The arrival caused quite a little bustle of excitement, and many speculations were made as to the relationship of the two sportsmen and the two ladies in the stolkjaerre.

"Is there any one of the name of Falck here?" asked one of the travelers as he dismounted from his variole. "We were at Dombaas last night and promised to bring this on; we told the landlord that we meant to sleep at Fokstuene, but he said there was no quicker way of delivery. Seems a strange mode of delivering telegrams, doesn't it?"

"Why, Miss Falck, I see it is for you," said Major Brown, glancing at the direction.

She stepped hastily forward to take it from him, with flushed cheeks and trembling hands; it seemed an eternity before she had torn it open, and the few words within half paralyzed her.

For a moment all seemed to stand still, then she became conscious of the voices around.

"Oh, we were almost blown away at Fokstuen," said one.

"But such fladbrod as they make there!" said another, "we brought away quite a tinful."

"Nothing wrong, my dear, I hope?" said Fru Gronvold. "Child, child, what is it? Let me read."

Then came an almost irresistible impulse to burst into a flood of tears, checked only by the presence of so many strangers, and by the necessity of explaining to her aunt.

"It is in English," she said in a trembling voice. "From Mr. Boniface. It says only, 'Frithiof dangerously ill. Come.'"

"Poor child! you shall go at once," said Fru Gronvold. "What can be wrong with Frithiof? Dangerously ill! See, it was sent from London yesterday. You shall not lose a moment, my dear. Here is your uncle, I'll tell him everything, and do you go and pack what things you need."

The girl obeyed; it seemed as if when once she had moved she was capable only of the one fear—the terrible fear lest she should miss the English steamer.

"I have murmured and rebelled," she thought to herself, "and now God is going to take from me even a chance of making up. Oh, how hard it is to try too late!"

"We have been looking out the routes, dear," said Fru Gronvold, coming into the room, "and the best way will be for you to try for the Friday afternoon boat from Christiania, it generally gets to Hull a little before the Saturday one from Bergen, your uncle says."

"When can I start?" asked Sigrid, eagerly.

"You must start almost at once for Lille-elvedal; it will be a terrible tiring drive for you, I'm afraid—eighty-four kilometers and a rough road. But still there is time to do it, which is the great thing. At Lille-elvedal you will take the night train to Christiania, it is a quick one, and will get you there in ten hours, quite in time to catch the afternoon boat, you see. Your uncle will take you and see you into the train, and if you like we can telegraph to some friend to meet you at the Christiania Station; the worst of it is, I fear most people are away just now."

"Oh, I shall not want any one," said Sigrid. "If only I can catch the steamer nothing matters."

"And do not worry more than you can help," said Fru Gronvold. "Who knows? You may find him much better."

"They would not have sent unless they feared—" Sigrid broke off abruptly, unable to finish her sentence.

Then came the wrench of parting with poor Swanhild, who broke down altogether, and had to be left in the desolate little bedroom sobbing her heart out, while Sigrid went downstairs with her aunt, bade a hurried farewell to Major Brown, Oscar, and Karen; then, with a pale, tearless face, she climbed into the stolkjaerre, and was driven slowly away in the direction of Dalen.

At length the final change had been made. Ryhaugen was pleased, and they drove on as rapidly as might be for the last stage of their journey. At any other time the beautiful fir forest through which they were passing would have delighted her, and the silvery river in the valley below, with its many windings and its musical ripple, would have made her long to stay. Now she scarcely saw them; and when, in the heart of the forest, the skydsgut declared that his horse must rest for half an hour, she was in despair.

"But there is plenty of time, dear," said her uncle, kindly. "Come and take a turn with me; it will rest you."

She paced to and fro with him, trying to conquer the frenzy of impatience which threatened to overmaster her.

"See," he said at length, as they sat down to rest on one of the moss-covered bowlders, "I will give you now while we are quiet and alone the money for your passage. Here is a check for fifty pounds, you will have time to get it cashed in Christiania;" then as she protested that it was far too much, "No, no; you will need it all in England. It may prove a long illness; and, in any case," he added, awkwardly, "there must be expenses."

Sigrid, with a horrible choking in her throat, thanked him for his help, but that "in any case" rang in her ears all through the drive, all through the waiting at the hotel at Lille-elvedal, all through that weary pourney in the train.

Yet it was not until she stood on board the "Anglo" that tears came to her relief.

The bustle and confusion on the steamer, the busy sailors, the weeping emigrants, the black mass of people on shore waving their hats and handkerchiefs, some sobbing, some singing to cheer the travelers, and behind, the beautiful city of Christiania with its spires and towers, all this had to Sigrid the strangest feeling of unreality; yet it was a scene that no one present could ever forget.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the following Monday afternoon, Roy Boniface, pale and worn with all that he had been through, paced the arrival platform at King's Cross Station. His heart beat quickly as the engine darted into sight and one carriage after another flitted past him. For a minute he could nowhere see her; but hastening up the platform, and closely scanning the travelers, he at length caught sight of the golden hair and black dress which he had been imaging to himself, and heard the clear voice saying, with something of Frithiof's quiet decision:

"It is a black trunk from Hull, and the name is Falck."

Roy came quickly forward.

"Frithiof?" she asked, as she took her hand in his.

"He is still living," said Roy, not daring to give an evasive answer to the blue eyes which seemed to look into his very heart.

"I will see to your luggage," he said; "but before you go to him you must have something to seat; I see you are quite worn out with the long journey, and unless you are calm you will only agitate him."

She did not speak a word, but passively allowed him to take her to the refreshment-room and get her some tea. To please him she tried hard to eat and drink, and before long they were driving to Vauxhall, and all fear lest she should break down was over.

"Now," she said at last, "tell me more about his illness. What brought it on?"

"The doctor says it must have been brought on by a great shock, and it seems that he heard very sad news that day of Lady Romiaux."

"I knew it was that wretched girl in some way," cried Sigrid, clinching her hand. "I wish she were dead!"

"She is, as Frithiof incessantly says, 'Worse than dead,'" replied Roy. "It is a miserable story. Apparently he got hold of some newspaper, read it all, and was almost immediately broken down by it. They say he was hardly himself when he left the shop that night, and the next evening, when I saw him, I found him delirious."

"It is his brain that is affected, then?" she faltered.

"Yes; he seems to have been out of health for a long time, but he never would give way. But if only we could get him any sleep he might even now recover."

"How long has he been without it?"

"I came to him on Tuesday evening; it was on the Monday that he read that paragraph, just this day week, and he has never slept since then. When did my telegram reach you, by the bye?"

"Not until Thursday. You see, though you sent it on Wednesday morning, yet it had to be forwarded from Bergen, as we were in an out-of-the-way place on the Dovrefield."

"And you have been traveling ever since? You must be terribly worn out."

"Oh, the traveling was nothing; it was the terrible anxiety and the slowness of everything that almost maddened me. But nothing matters now. I am at least in time to see him."

"This is the house where he is lodging," said Roy, as the cab drew up. "Are you fit to go to him now, or had you not better rest first?"

"No, no, I must go to him directly," she said. And, indeed, it seemed that the excitement had taken away all her fatigue; her cheeks were glowing, her eyes, though so wistful, were full of eagerness. A

(To be continued.)

CZAR FERDINAND OF BULGARIA.

BIG TRAIN ROBBERY.

Mystery in France Cleared Up After More Than Eight Months.

Eight months of inquiry into the sensational robbery of the Indian mail train between Paris and Dijon, on the night of November 16 last, has proved that the extraordinary feat, which, it was supposed, only a thoroughly organized band could accomplish, was committed by a raving maniac, single-handed. The express, which left the Gare de Lyon in Paris at 8.35 p.m., consisted almost exclusively of mail vans. Three of them were broken into while the train was going at speed of sixty or eighty miles an hour. About 100 mail bags were ripped open, bonds and scrip of various descriptions were stolen, and certain amounts of cash disappeared. Suspicion fell on a former postal employe named Bazencourt, who was traced to Belgium, and who was arrested as he was trying to negotiate some of the scrip, on which he had made clumsy erasures and changes. He was extradited, and in the course of the examination it was learned that he had been discharged by the postal authorities on account of his eccentricities.

There was a suspicion that he was not entirely sane. The magistrate asked him for his reason for robbing the mails. Bazencourt, who had fully admitted having committed the deed quite alone, was proud of his achievement, and complained that he was not allowed to carry out his scheme to the end, which was to buy a menagerie, to become famous as a tamer of wild animals, make a fortune, and reimburse those whom he had robbed.

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This contest is along the same lines as the one which was so successful last year, except that there are three times as many prizes, and therefore three times as many chances for each contestant to win. Every farmer in Canada who uses "Canada" Cement is eligible to compete. The conditions are such that large and small users of cement have equal opportunities to win a $50 prize.

The contest is divided into three classes, and there are first, second, third and fourth prizes ($50, $25, $15 and $10) in each class.

CLASS "A"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who use most "Canada" Cement on their farms in 1912.

CLASS "B"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who send photographs of the *best concrete work* done with "Canada" Cement on their farms in 1912.

CLASS "C"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who send the best *description*, telling how any piece of concrete work was done with "Canada" Cement. (Entries for this prize must be accompanied by photographs of the work.)

In addition to thus being divided into classes, so as to give small users of cement an equal chance with those who use more, the Contest is also divided into nine divisions, one for each province. So you see you need only to compete with the other farmers of your own province, and not with those all over Canada.

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