

The Contrabandist;

OR

One Life's Secret!

A TRUE STORY OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

CHAPTER XXI.

It was evening, and, in the chamber of the young girl so lately reclaimed from the very portals of death, the deepest stillness reigned. Softly burned the shaded lamps, casting a subdued glow about the apartment, yet so disposed as to leave in shadow the curtained couch and its slumbering occupant. For Rose was sleeping calmly, so calmly, so quietly, that you might almost have thought her dead. The breath that floated from those pale lips was scarcely perceptible, though regular, so much had illness reduced her strength. She slept, nor dreamed of danger.

For the first time to-day the invalid was left alone. But suddenly the door near the head of the couch was opened noiselessly, and with slow and stealthy caution, from without. A tall, light-robed, ghost-like form glided in without a sound—ghost-like, except for the large, brilliant dark eyes that gleamed more wildly than ever to-night, and the crimson spot of excitement burning on either cheek, while all the rest of that face was ashy white. It was Helen Montauban! What more fitting time was there for her work of evil to be accomplished? None could witness her now; and none were near this place. And the tiny flask gleamed in the softened light, as she drew it from her bosom.

One hand, holding the vial, was stretched forth to the silver cup set upon the stand by the bedside. Courage, and the work is done. Yet that guilty hand shook with fear, as, drop by drop, the poison was poured into the cup. And Helen Montauban glanced fearfully towards the door by which she had entered; for it almost seemed, to her miserable, horror-struck fancy, that some one must be watching her.

A shadow had startled her. With a ghastly smile at her own nervousness, she silently mingled the poison with the night drink of Rose; then, as noiselessly as she had entered, returned to her own room across the gallery. It was done! What had she to fear now? Who would ever dream, when the hour of death came, that such agency as this had been employed? Closing the door, she paced her chamber restlessly, with both hands clasped tightly against her heart, whose violent throbbings seemed to fill with clamorous sound this awful midnight silence. Listening in almost intolerable suspense, and pacing her apartment, she waited for some signal from the opposite chamber.

A whole hour passed. Then there was a sound—a light step—in the gallery. It was the Countess de Clairville, returning to the bedside of Rose. Helen Montauban could endure this suspense no longer. She must see, with her own eyes, the conclusion of this tragedy. Emerging from her apartment, therefore, she joined the countess, as she entered the opposite door.

"Ah, my dear, is that you? Then you have been asleep also?" said the countess, smiling. "But it is rather chilly to-night—do you not think so?"

"Yes—it is cold," uttered Helen Montauban, hoarsely—"it is cold!" and she shivered.

She drew near the fire and crunched shudderingly over the broad blaze. The Countess de Clairville went to the couch of Rose and bent over it for an instant. "The dear child is asleep, I think," she said, presently, returning to the hearth. "How refreshing—how delightful it is for one to see her once more enjoying so gentle a slumber! Poor little Rose! she must be well nigh worn out with this fatiguing illness. I wonder," the lady continued, seating herself by the hearth, opposite Mademoiselle Montauban—"I wonder how her father is down at the village? They thought he was dying this morning when the marquis went down. What a sad thing it would have been if the father and daughter had both died!" She spoke in subdued whispers.

Mademoiselle Montauban bent lower over the blaze, warming her hands.

"And peculiar, too," she returned, in a low tone. "But we cannot be too careful of her, even now; for M. Mery says that, in her present feeble state, the least excitement or alarm might be fatal to her. I dread that, I think, supposing anything should happen, after all our rejoicing? We must be so cautious! The least thing, you know—the least thing might kill her!"

She shook as she uttered these words; her eyes were wild and strange. Those delicate, slender hands, glistening in the flames, as she held them out, but she never knew it. A species of insanity was upon her. The protracted contemplation of this terrible deed, strong as were her nerves, had begun almost to tell upon her reason.

"I wonder if Hugh Lamonte is still living?" continued the countess. "It is a pity that he could not be brought here; but Jean Morel said they had declared it impossible to move him with safety. Besides, it would be dangerous to Rose, perhaps, if he were in her vicinity, for she would be more likely to gain some knowledge of his situation. Yet what a sorrowful thing it is that they cannot bid each other adieu!"

At that moment the door near the head of the couch was opened. Both the countess and Helen turned to see who entered. It was the physician, M. Mery. He paused by the bedside an instant, bent over Rose and listened. Her respiration was calm and regular, though almost imperceptible. After regarding her a moment, he advanced silently towards the hearth. A chill struck through the guilty Helen. She had not expected him so soon, and the deed was yet unaccomplished!

"Ah, M. Mery, is that you?" said the countess; and she bent eagerly forward. "How is—"

The physician placed a warning finger upon his lip.

"Not too loud, my dear madame," he whispered. "It is all over!"

"You are awake, my dear?" she said, gently. "Ah, you have slept so nicely! And now, you are thirsty. Wait a moment, dear Rose."

She turned and took up the silver cup on the stand. A mingling of joy and horror by the most intense, seized the murderer by the heart.

"One moment, my dear madame," said M. Mery, hastily, rising and going towards her. "Let me give it to her."

He took the cup from the hand of the countess, glancing back as he did so, at Mademoiselle Montauban. Her brilliant eyes, fixed upon him with an awful fascination, were instantly averted. He stirred the contents of the cup slowly.

"It appears to me," he said, with fearful deliberation, "that there is something here which will do our little invalid no good. I will remove it, if you please, madame, and bring something different."

And following the stealthy figure of Mademoiselle Montauban, as it glided from the apartment, he closed the door behind him.

They were alone together in the gallery, lighted only by a single lamp, which but faintly revealed that ghostly form, moving swiftly towards the opposite chamber.

But, quicker than lightning, his grasp was upon her arm. Her wild, white face gleamed awfully upon him through the dim twilight. But she spoke no word.

"Come with me."

It was all he said. There was no power of resistance in the form beside him. Rapidly those two descended the staircase. He entered the library, with her arm locked in his; then he closed and locked the door. He stood before her. She was very still—very white. Only those terrible eyes burned like live coals amid lifeless ashes. He held the cup in his hand; he made her look at it.

"You know what this is?" he said.

There was no answer.

"You do know. You placed it there. I was a witness of the deed. Unhappy woman! What evil has that sweet child done to you? Would you murder your own sister—Marguerite Montauban?"

One moment the guilty woman gazed at him wildly. A gasp, a struggle, a faint cry, and she sank in awful convulsions at his feet.

That was a fearful night which followed, but it was only the commencement of a season fraught with agony. The marquis returned to the chateau from the deathbed of his brother, to find Helen struggling between life and death. For weeks she lay unconscious of everything about her; only coming out of the dull stupor that wrapt her, to fall, ever and anon, into those terrible convulsions, in which it seemed that nature must sink, worn out with the contest. The agitation produced by this circumstance, strange and sudden as it was, and the death of his brother, would have been beyond his power to bear had it not been for the inexpressible happiness which it was permitted him to enjoy in the discovery of his long-lost child. How would he have shuddered had he known the fearful fate which that sweet child had so narrowly escaped!

But the scenes enacted within the walls of the chateau that night were mercifully concealed from him. Fortunately for Helen Montauban, in the illness which succeeded the overwhelming denouement of the dark tragedy wherein she had taken

so terrible a part, there was no delirium, or her wretched secret would inevitably have been betrayed; and M. Mery, who tended her constantly, had destroyed all evidence of her guilt, or which on that night he had so providentially been made aware by returning, unannounced, and entering the apartment of the invalid just before the stealthy approach of the murderer. Her illness, anxiety and excitement attendant on the late danger of Rose, trusting that, if she recovered, she would bitterly repent, in secret, her sinful attempt on her sister's life, and unwilling to add to the shame and agony which she would feel by betraying her guilt. He could guess at the cause of her enmity towards Rose; for M. Mery was a shrewd man; and he resolved to expedite the union of the lovers as much as was possible, that, in case the hatred of Helen should be still unsatisfied, the young girl might be safe from her reach, under the protection of her husband.

Meanwhile the burial of Henri took place. It was quiet, unostentatious. He was laid in the family vault, to rest at last, after a weary life of sorrow, of desperation and of crime. Only the marquis and the immediate members of his family were made acquainted with the history of the unhappy man, in the records which he left behind. Louis returned from Paris in time for this burial. Retained, in anticipation of his approaching marriage day, to find his intended bride but just recovering from a dangerous illness, and Helen Montauban, as many believed, at the gates of death, to learn the story of the strangely chequered life of his deceased relative, and recognize, in his beloved Rose, a

cousin, and the child so long mourned as lost by his uncle. What an astounding revelation was this.

In the evening preceding the bridal day the marquis called Rose to him in the library, and after some remarks, careless and insignificant enough in themselves, but accompanied by a manner that betrayed the emotion agitating him, he said, suddenly:

"Rose, my child, you have loved your father?"

"O, yes, monsieur!" she replied, earnestly, and with tears standing in her eyes.

"And you have also loved me, Rose?" His voice trembled, despite his efforts to control himself.

"Ah, my friend, my benefactor, what have you been to me but a second father?"

He seated himself beside her.

"It is sweet, my child, to hear you say this—ah, you do not know how sweet to me! Rose, did I not tell you once that I lost fourteen or fifteen years ago, a child—a lovely, gentle infant, whose picture you have seen in the saloon—a child who was stolen from me?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"And I have told you that you were what that child would be now if she were living. It is why you have ever been so dear to me. Ah, many a time, Rose, I have clasped you in my arms with an emotion of tenderness which, even had you felt, you could not have comprehended! For my child—my Marguerite—my pearl—resembled her mother—her sweet mother, my wife, and you were the image of both mother and child. And now listen, Rose. It is within these two last months, Rose, that I have discovered what became of my little Marguerite. She was stolen from me by my own brother, Henri. You start, Rose, and turn pale. It was so; it was his revenge. He would have taken Helen, the child of her whom he had loved so madly; but he knew that I loved my youngest darling the best—that I idolized the daughter of my lost Marguerite; and he took the youngest. He reared her as his own. He brought her into this neighborhood, after an absence of two years, during which time she had grown and altered beyond recognition, though, when I met her, I saw a likeness to my wife. Yet I never suspected. He dwelt, a solitary man, with this little orphan child, whose mother—his wife—then said was dead. He lived not more than half a league from this very dwelling. There my child, unrecognized, expanded into a lovely womanhood. She was—"

He was interrupted in his hurried and agitated recital by a faint cry from Rose. She sprang up with clasped hands and quivering lips.

"O, tell me—tell me who it was!" she cried. "Speak—it was—"

"My child—my daughter!" uttered the marquis, extending his arms to embrace her; "behold her—for they called her—Rose Lamonte!"

"Ah, my father!" And with the soft utterance of that dear name, she fainted upon his breast.

As a matter of course, Rose—no, Marguerite—and Louis were united. And though Marguerite mourned still, with a child's affection, the loss of him whom she had hitherto regarded as a parent, yet her heart turned, with natural love, to her true father; and the regard which she had ever felt for him, while her relationship to him was yet unknown, expanded and deepened now into that bold and tender sentiment—a daughter's affection.

Helen Montauban, as soon as her health became re-established, entered a convent, to enter upon her novitiate; and when it was expired, assumed the veil, that shut her from a world grown hateful to her. The frustration of her evil design upon her sister was too much for her to bear; and though, thanks to the mercy of M. Mery, her guilt remained a secret from all save himself, yet she could not endure to meet daily with those whose happiness continually reminded her of the fate alike of her love and her revenge. None knew why she entered the convent, save M. Mery. Persuasion had availed nothing, and a nun she became.

Francis Egerton returned to Paris, where, in a year or two, he married happily. Jacques Leroux, shortly after the death of his former leader, returned to the neighborhood of the Chateau Montauban, and entered in the service of Louis d'Artois, whom he served faithfully and who rewarded him well for his many services.

(The end)

A Light Comedian.

Mrs. McMoriarty—That is your son doin' now, Mrs. O'Rafferty?

Mrs. O'Rafferty—Sure, he's adopted the stage as a profession, Mrs. McMoriarty.

Mrs. McMoriarty—Dhrivin a stage, is it?

Mrs. O'Rafferty—Be away wid your nonsense. It's an actor he is. He do be a light comedian.

Mrs. McMoriarty—A light comedian, is it?

Mrs. O'Rafferty—Yis. He stands beayt the back curtain, wid his mouth to a hole forinist a candle, an' whin Pawnee Ike shoots at the candle he blows it out.—New York Weekly.

A Reversal.

Frank—John's wife isn't the kind of a woman he should have married at all. And I understand she was his cook before he married her?

Henry—Yes.

Frank—What did he ever do that for?

Henry—Well, he said the first woman he married was a good wife, but no sort of a cook, so he thought he would reverse the order when he had the chance.

A Kentucky Suspicion.

"Do you agree with the people who assert that milk is not a wholesome article of diet?"

"Well," answered Col. Stillwell, "I wouldn't like to make positive assertions. But I have heard it rumored that they put a great deal of water into it."—Washington Star.

Toilet's Study.

Count Tolstoi's study is a small room, with an unpointed and uncarved floor, vaulted ceiling, and thick stone walls. These last are covered with implements of labor.

He that will make a good use of any part of his life must allow a large part of it to recreation.—Locke.

WORK OF THE SCIENTISTS.

Americans Too Busy to Devote Themselves to Original Research.

The American man of science works in the general laboratory of application and assimilation, says the Book-lovers' Magazine. The individual and epoch-making discovery is not usually made under American conditions. It has not been here that chemistry has been recognized by the periodic law of Mendelejeff, or physics by Helmholtz's conception of the conservation of energy. The greatest work of mathematics has not come from Americans, and it is not from them (if we except the work of Willard and Walcott Gibbs) that the flying leap has been taken from the conceptions of the mathematicians to the concepts of molecular or chemical physics. American physicists last winter seemed to be principally occupied in describing to more or less popular audiences what French and English physicists had accomplished in radium and radiant energy.

The broad, continuous record is made here in a wide round. So is the practical application of scientific discovery made elsewhere; but the initial discovery, the co-ordinating theory is not usually American.

Bessemer, a German, discovered the steel process that bears his name. English capital applied it. The United States makes more than half the world's Bessemer. This is not an invariable sequence, but it is frequent. Research in Germany; primary application in England; expansion in America.

It is in this country, most rife with the application of science but deficient in original research, that Mr. Andrew Carnegie has given to this special work the largest endowment yet consecrated to the extension of the boundaries of knowledge. It is a favorite theory in American scientific circles that much discovery is stifled here by the insistent claims of teaching on time and strength. If this be so the revenue of the Carnegie Institute furnishes an escape. If it does not the cause for the relative absence of discovery must be looked for in our imperfect elementary education, which stifles where it should stimulate and dulls by routine and mechanical teaching, leaving the mind unable to profit to the highest by higher study in succeeding years.

THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF EUROPE.

Herewith is reproduced the latest portrait of King Christian, of Denmark, who has been dubbed the "father-in-law of Europe" owing to the fact that his children have married into reigning families of several of the great powers. One of his daughters is



KING CHRISTIAN.

Queen Alexandra, of England, who does not let a year pass without paying a visit to her royal sire. The photograph from which the illustration was made was taken at Vienna while King Christian was paying a visit to his son-in-law, the Duke of Cumberland.

German Anti-Tipping League.

A movement has just been started in Berlin to abate, if possible, the practice of tipping in cafes and restaurants. An anti-tipping league has been founded in Berlin, with branches in the principal cities of Germany. The members of the league sign a pledge to frequent only those restaurants and cafes in which tipping is strictly prohibited. The proprietors of the establishments which abolish the tipping will be supplied gratis with a big sign bearing the letters "O. T." (Ohne Trinkgeld) meaning "no tips," printed in large type. The waiters themselves profess to be in favor of the innovation as long as their employers pay them a wage sufficiently large to enable them to dispense with tips. It would be a great relief to the traveling public, and particularly to American tourists, who at home are not accustomed to be taxed at every turn, if the league should become a success.

He Wanted to Choose.

A small boy was told by his mother that there would be a new baby for him to play with, as the doctor was going to bring it in his black bag. That afternoon the youngster appeared at the office of the family physician and said:

"Are you going to bring a new baby to our house?"

"Yes, my little man," replied the doctor, highly amused.

"Then," returned the small boy, "let me have a look at the kids you have in stock, and I'll pick out the one I think I'll like best."

Expert Testimony.

"To settle a bet," said the visitor, "how long can a man go without food?"

"Ask the man over there," said the snake editor.

"Is he the editor who answers questions?"

"No, he's a poet."—Philadelphia Press.



Mrs. Anderson, a prominent society woman of Jacksonville, Fla., daughter of Recorder of Deeds, West, who witnessed her signature to the following letter, praises Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—There are but few wives and mothers who have not at times endured agonies and such pain as only women know. I wish such women knew the value of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It is a remarkable medicine, different in action from any I ever knew and thoroughly reliable.

"I have seen cases where women doctored for years without permanent benefit, who were cured in less than three months after taking your Vegetable Compound, while others who were chronic and incurable came out cured, happy, and in perfect health after a thorough treatment with this medicine. I have never used it myself without gaining great benefit. A few doses restores my strength and appetite, and tones up the entire system. Your medicine has been tried and found true, hence I fully endorse it."—Mrs. R. A. ANDERSON, 225 Washington St., Jacksonville, Fla.

Mrs. Reed, 2425 E. Cumberland St., Philadelphia, Pa., says:

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—I feel it my duty to write and tell you the good I have received from Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"I have been a great sufferer with female trouble, trying different doctors and medicines with no benefit. Two years ago I went under an operation, and it left me in a very weak condition. I had stomach trouble, backache, headache, palpitation of the heart, and was very nervous; in fact, I ached all over. I find yours is the only medicine that reaches such troubles, and would cheerfully recommend Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to all suffering women."

When women are troubled with irregular or painful menstruation, weakness, leucorrhoea, displacement or ulceration of the womb, that bearing-down feeling, inflammation of the ovaries, backache, flatulence, general debility, indigestion, and nervous prostration, they should remember there is one tried and true remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound at once removes such troubles.

The experience and testimony of some of the most noted women of America go to prove, beyond a question, that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will correct all such trouble at once by removing the cause and restoring the organs to a healthy and normal condition. If in doubt, write Mrs. Pinkham at Lynn, Mass., as thousands do.

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\$5000 FORFEIT if we cannot forthwith produce the original letters and signatures of above testimonials, which will prove their absolute genuineness. Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass.

Brilliant Advice. It was Count Montrond who said to Alexander de Girardin of a young man who was beginning to make a brilliant reputation and whom Girardin did not appreciate, "Hasten to recognize him or he will not recognize you."

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething season.

Unfortunately the Only Way. "Of course you wouldn't marry a title?"

"Not if there was any other way of getting one," answered the severely practical girl.—Chicago Post.

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Write Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y., for a free sample of Allen's Foot-Ease. It cures sweating, hot swollen, aching feet. It makes new or tight shoes easy. A certain cure for corns, ingrowings, and bunions. All druggists sell it. 25c. Don't accept any substitute.

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FITS Permanently cured. No other servicer has ever first day's use of Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for Free \$2 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ltd., 931 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Brave Man.

Ethel—Do you really think the lieutenant will propose to Beth.

Edith—Oh yes. He has several medals for bravery, you know.—Puck.

\$100 REWARD \$100.

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials. Address: F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by druggists. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

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