

The Contrabandist; OR One Life's Secret!

A
TRUE
STORY
OF
THE
SOUTH
OF
FRANCE

CHAPTER XIV.

"I shall see Robin this morning!" was the first thought of Rose, as she sprang from her couch at dawn, and her heart beat faster, and her cheeks flushed with a deeper red, and her sweet hazel eyes sparkled with happy excitement as she sat before her mirror. The blue-eyed Finette was in raptures.

Rose had hardly thought, during the absence of Robin, that she could be so deeply excited by the news of his anticipated return; but she was too overjoyed to remain quiet a single moment. At breakfast, it was impossible for her to eat; and the remarks everywhere made concerning the sudden improvement in her appearance, as well as on her sudden and contradictory loss of appetite, increased the tinge of crimson that already glowed in her young cheek.

One thing detracted from her otherwise perfect happiness. Louis had excused himself from appearing. She had scarcely seen him the night before, after leaving the library, and then he had been unusually quiet, communing with himself during the entire evening; and he was absent this morning. She longed to see him—to hear him speak, that she might know he was not offended with her; for she remembered the interview between them; and might not the abruptness—the violence, perhaps, of her manner, unconscious though it was, have wounded him? Yes; despite the tenderness of that silent parting. How her pulse quickened at the remembrance of his embrace! She could but sigh.

"I wonder at what time I shall see Robin?" soliloquized the young girl. "Will monsieur le marquis call me into the library, I wonder? Or will the meeting take place here, among all these people? Where is Robin?" was her next restless inquiry—an inquiry which she had started a thousand times, and as a matter of course, in vain, since the previous evening; "and where is it that monsieur le marquis has seen him so often of late?"

Her queries were interrupted by observing suddenly that the marquis was about to leave the apartment.

"Ah, he has not said a word to me!" meditated Rose. "He tantalizes me. Will he not come back and speak—only three words? Will he not even look at me, that I may understand—that I may know whether Robin is coming soon?"

But he neither spoke, turned nor gave her a single glance. Yet there was something, despite his evident care, which betrayed in his countenance the sympathy he felt with Rose. He went out. The Count de Clairville talked, aside, with his wife. Helen Montauban, at a distant window, sat calmly at her embroidery. Lord Egerton bent over her, and spoke, from time to time, some words, which, if their effect had been noted, might have been seen, ever and anon, to be followed by a deeper mantling of color in the fair cheek of the lady, though she scarcely seemed pleased, either. Anon the young man toyed and trifled with the gorgeous silks that lay in a tangled mass of rainbow bloom in the tiny basket by Helen's side; and then his glance rested on her face with an expression difficult to be defined, though at times it was clearly one of unhappiness and disappointment.

But Rose, albeit she glanced towards the pair more than once, hardly took note of these things. She could only think of the marquis, of Robin, and of the anticipated meeting. She was restless—uneasy. From one employment to another she turned, without being able to settle her attention undividedly upon any individual thing. Suddenly mademoiselle called, gently:

"Rose, come hither a moment!"

The young girl advanced towards the window.

"You wish to speak with me, Helen?" she asked.

"I have been telling Lord Egerton of some favorite books of his which are in the library," returned Mademoiselle Montauban, carelessly. "Will you have the kindness, Rose, to help him find them? He will tell you their titles."

"Cruel Helen!" murmured Francis Egerton, reproachfully, as he glanced at her quiet face before turning away.

"Not so, my lord," she answered, in the same tone, without lifting her eyes.

At that instant a domestic entered, and coming directly to Rose, informed her that monsieur le marquis desired to see her immediately in the library.

The young girl's heart bounded violently.

"I am going now," she answered; and yet she paused.

Francis Egerton glanced back at Helen, with an air, half of triumph, half of sorrow, which said plainly, "You see your unkind artifice to repel me avails you nothing. Why will you persist in this conduct—this treatment of me?"

Mademoiselle Montauban saw the look, and read it easily; but she never once changed countenance, and her eyes were instantly fixed on her embroidery again.

Lord Egerton turned to Rose:

"You are going, mademoiselle?"

"Yes—now." She gathered courage; she would not look up in her companion's face, but hastily proceeded to meet the marquis.

Francis accompanied her as far as the library door, and then leaving her, returned directly to Helen.

But Rose, even though her hand rested upon the fastening of the door, had, at first, scarcely the courage to pass in. She hesitated and trembled, but finally, laugh-

ing at herself for a little coward, she quietly entered. The marquis stood at the further end of the apartment, in company with a gentleman—a stranger, and both had their faces turned from the door. They had not heard her come in. She paused an instant longer, and looked about her. No other person was in the room. Robin, then, was not here. She had half expected, she hardly knew why, to see him at this moment, and she sighed. The marquis still continued his conversation with the stranger. This person, who was richly yet plainly attired in a suit of deep black, with a short cloak of sable velvet drooping from his shoulders, held in one hand a pen and a small portfolio of papers; the other rested on the table beside him, supporting him, as he leaned forward towards the marquis.

Suddenly the latter, aroused by some movement of Rose, turned and beheld her, and immediately, after whispering a single word to his companion, advanced to meet the young girl. There was an arch smile on his countenance as he bent down to kiss her.

"Rose, my pet," he said, simply, "you are Robin; go and meet him." And he passed her directly, leaving the apartment and closing the door behind him.

"That Robin?" Rose, in her astonishment, could neither speak nor move. "That Robin?" was her inward query. For, forgetting the warning of the marquis, she had looked for Robin of the olden memory, and the change bewildered her, until recollection came.

Here, indeed, was no sturdy figure, in its linen blouse, its heavy boots, no large hat, such as had covered the gardener's head, and shaded his face from the sun; no peasant's garb, or peasant's air; and yet—it was Robin!

"Why does he not speak?" said the young girl, trembling to herself.

But suddenly the gentleman raised his hand, passed it across his brow, and held it there for an instant; then, laying aside the writing materials which he held, turned and advanced to meet her.

A low, glad cry escaped the lips of Rose on beholding that face—Robin's face, and then she was silent—she turned pale. What was this change which she beheld as he came nearer? What countenance was it? Did she indeed behold Robin himself, or—The cloak dropped from his shoulders.

"Robin—Louis!" she uttered, quivering with emotion.

"Well, which is it?" With the same light, beaming, sunny smile that she had met every day for the last two weeks—with the familiar voice, and air that blended in one two characters hitherto distinct, he came forward, and taking her hands into the gentle yet firm clasp of his own, while he drew her to his breast, repeated: "Which is it, Rose? Doubting and believing, too? Tell me my name, mignonnette!"

"Ah, Louis—Louis, tell me what this means?" she cried, in an imploring tone.

"Then you declare that I am Louis?" he said, laughing; "but see—how audacious he has grown!" And the young man, with daring tenderness, pressed his lips to hers. "Which is it now, Rose?"

"It is—Robin—it is Louis; either, or—both. I cannot tell. I am bewildered!" She covered her face with her hands.

"My Rose—my little, faithful, noble-hearted darling!" Louis murmured, lovingly, and with the softest emotion in his tones, as he led her to a seat. "My generous—brave Rose, will you forgive this long and heavy trial? You have conquered—nobly conquered! You are victorious, love. Look up and speak to me. Let me see, at least, that Louis has not lost the heart that Robin won."

She did look up. The sweet face, tinged with reddest blushes, sparkled with blended tears and smiles.

"You deceived me, Louis. I see it now; I understand it all. But you deceived me most cruelly!" she said.

"And almost broke my own heart, Rose, as well as your own. Ah, if you now how I suffered last night, you would forgive me!"

And Rose could but do so. The period of probation was passed. The unhappiness to which each had been subjected, in its duration, was terminated now. Louis d'Artois had perfected his scheme, and tested it fully, to his own satisfaction. The outward charms of the woman he loved were nobly equalled by her truth, her firmness, her constancy. Neither ambition, nor pride, nor cupidity, had tempted her, for one instant, to swerve from her faith. She had remained true to the humble lover, who had won her first affection.

"Rose, do you love me? will you take Louis now?" asked the count, with arch tenderness.

"How can I take Louis? I am promised to Robin," returned she, gravely. "I came here to meet Robin; he has vanished and you are answerable for his disappearance. I refused Louis last night."

"Nay, then—I will become a gardener again, for your sake, love. I will put on my peasant's dress once more and take my spade, and toil in the garden from morning till night; while you sit, as you used to sit, just by the cottage door and sing to me while you sew. What a pretty cottage girl you were, Rose! I believe I loved you the first time we met."

"And I thought—"

"Ah, what, Rose?"

"That you loved Helen," she answered, blushing.

"Helen, thou little mouse, what put that thought into thy pretty head?"

"It came there, Louis; I do not know well how. I suspect the idea was a very natural one. She is so beautiful!"

"My pet, Helen must never hear you acknowledge that little piece of innocent audacity. Helen? Ah, she would smile with amusement at the mere mention of such a thing! She would not marry me, Rose. I do like her very dearly. She likes me, also, quite as well, I believe; but I should as soon contemplate an alliance with a queen as with her."

"You make me smile, Louis. How modest you are! You mean to say that Helen—"

"I mean to say, Rose, that my proud and lovely cousin will be content to remain unwedded all her days rather than wed with so humble a personage as myself. She is a dear cousin, Rose; but I think that, secretly, she is ambitious. Francis Egerton loves her, I am sure; but do you not see that she treats him coldly?"

"I thought it was so," said Rose, in a half-musing tone.

"And, speaking of that same Francis Egerton, do you know, Rose, that I came near being jealous of him on the first evening of my return hither? He was continually near you. He seemed chained to your side."

"And you to that of Helen, do you remember?" archly asked Rose. "Probably the latter circumstance was the cause of the former."

He laughed.

"Perhaps; but I think, if he had never seen Helen, he would have been your captive. How would you have treated him, petite?—as you treated me last night?"

"Yes."

"I believe it. How fortunate he is! I endured agony last evening, Rose!"

His tone was sad as he said it.

"Agony, Louis?"

"Least I should gain the very boon I seemed so earnestly to crave. But you were true to Robin. I was more than satisfied with the result of my trial. And then, what joy filled my breast, with the ringing echo of that sorrowful, yet firm denial of my suit! It was music to me."

"Why, Louis—Louis! Where are you, my boy?" shouted the rich, clear, merry voice of the Count de Clairville, from the terrace; and the next moment they heard his step approaching the library.

Rose sprang up.

"Let me go, Louis," she said.

"Away, then, my bird!" And he sprang to a side door that opened on a staircase leading to the gallery above. "This way, Rose. Our mischievous friend, I strongly suspect, knows all about this business of ours, and is inclined to tease me a little."

And the door closed behind Rose just as the summons of the count was heard at the opposite entrance.

It required some hours of retirement and silence in the solitude of her own chamber to restore to Rose anything like her usual tranquillity. The excitement of the last four-and-twenty hours had their effect on her, and every nerve was thrilling to the tension produced by it. Quiet was impossible; so she fastened her door, and walked the floor to work off in some degree the restless agitation she felt. When she had succeeded in wearying herself with the exercise she sat down, and leaning back among the cushions, laughing and resolutely shut her eyes, with the determination to sleep. This was a difficult matter, however. Her mind was not quite composed yet. Rose, after she had bathed her face, had her hair re-arranged and made some alterations in her dress and descended to the saloon.

Louis was gone to the village. The marquis and his friend, Count Frederic, walking together on the terrace, were engaged in conversation. The Countess Marie, in one corner, read quietly from a favorite book. Helen Montauban worked at her embroidery and wore a brighter and better pleased expression than in the morning; for Francis Egerton was away. She beckoned Rose immediately to her side.

"Truant! where have you been?" she said, smilingly, as she made the young girl sit by her and stroked her bright hair.

"In my chamber, Helen," answered Rose, laying her pretty head against the shoulder of her companion, with happy and loving confidence.

"A penance of solitude and reflection, my fair sister? What sin have you committed?"

"No sin—no penance was mine. I was restless. I went to become calm and quiet."

"And succeeded, I think. But what ails you, Rose? What is in your eyes—your face? Some reflex from underlying emotions—glad emotions. You have had good news?"

"No—yes! Ah, do not ask me—at least, not now!" laughed the young girl. "Come to my chamber to-night—will you, Helen? or, I will come to yours: it does not matter which; and then I will tell you what I cannot—dare not tell you now, here, in this broad daylight, with eyes and ears all about us. Yes—ah, yes, Helen! I am glad!" She laid her face on Helen's breast and clasped her arms about her.

A strange expression flitted for a moment over the countenance of Mademoiselle Montauban. It flitted her dark eyes with a glance of quick and searching meaning, as they rested fixedly on Rose. But it was only for an instant; for Rose lifted her head again, and those sweeping, jetty eyelashes veiled every gleam of the awakened spirit.

(To be continued.)

Dangerous Tardiness.

First Doctor—What makes you think the patient will die if we don't perform the operation?

Second Doctor—That isn't the point. This is a new disease, and if he should live without the operation it would establish a precedent—Life.

Swiss Schools for Girls.

Switzerland has 125 schools for girls. Domestic science and gardening are among the branches taught.

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

CALIFORNIA & OREGON COAST.

Prospects for a Line From Grants Pass to Eureka.

Grants Pass—Never were the prospects of a railroad from Grants Pass southward, through Josephine and the southern counties of this state, and Del Norte county, California, connecting with the line being built north to Eureka, as bright as at the present time. For several months railroad talk has been at a low ebb in Southern Oregon, especially that pertaining to the proposed Oregon & Pacific, but recently it has been revived, and in a way that gives promise of something definite being done. This road would open up a large and rich mining section.

There has been organized in San Francisco, and incorporated in California, a concern known as the California & Oregon Coast railroad company. It is organized with a capital stock of \$1,000,000, and several influential men are behind the enterprise, among them being John Barth, of Milwaukee; B. V. Thomas, of New York; J. O. B. Gunn, T. W. M. Draper, H. H. Laidlaw and M. S. Wilson of San Francisco.

The purpose of the newly organized company is to build a line of railroad from Grants Pass to Eureka, Cal., or rather to some point on Humboldt bay. The new company absorbs the old Oregon & Pacific, and is more extensive in its scope than the former company, as it was the original intention to build a line only from Grants Pass to Crescent City, while the new road will extend on south, connecting with the northern built line to Eureka, giving a new line from Grants Pass to San Francisco.

As has been previously stated, the survey for the proposed road is completed, and grade stakes have been set over a large part of the proposed route. Right of way has also been secured for a greater part of the line. Grounds for sidings and stations have also been granted, and the company is ready to begin the actual construction of the road with the arrival of the spring months.

FIRE AT TILLAMOOK.

Courthouse Burned and Business Portion of the City Threatened.

Tillamook—A disastrous fire occurred here last week which entirely destroyed the courthouse of Tillamook county and seriously endangered the business portion of the city.

When the fire was discovered the building was entirely ablaze and to save it was impossible, but by the valiant work of the fire company and citizens many books and papers were saved from destruction. The entire contents of the offices of the school superintendent and the county surveyor were lost, and most of the papers and books of the assessor's offices were burned, although the contents of the safe are thought to be intact.

This year's assessment roll was fortunately saved.

Bills Vetoes by Governor.

Salem—If a special session of the legislature should be called, other matters than the tax law must receive some attention. The governor's vetoes in the last session constitute a sort of "unfinished business" which must be taken up by the legislature when it next convenes. The governor said, after sending out his letter, that he did not intend to attempt to preclude action upon these vetoed measures, for the constitution particularly prescribes what course shall be pursued, and the governor could not prevent legislative action, even if he so desired.

Altitudes in Union County.

La Grande—A complete survey of Union county has just been made by T. R. Berry, United States geological surveyor. This survey determined the geological as well as the topographical formation of Union county. The altitude of all the streams and feeders have been determined, at the source as well as at the mouth. The highest point in Union county is at the summit of Granite mountain, which is a little over 8,000 feet. Mount Fannie, above Cove, is 7,000 feet, and the lowest point is at the mouth of the Wallowa river, which is 2,535 feet.

Carpenters are Not to Be Had.

Pendleton—There is a scarcity of carpenters in Pendleton. This is the season for repairing old buildings, but workmen cannot be secured. A number of people are desirous of constructing homes, but owing to the scarcity of men and materials, it is not likely any new buildings will be started until spring. There are from 15 to 20 buildings under way, and carpenters are busy on all of them. It is estimated that there are fully 300 carpenters at work on new buildings in different parts of the city.

Pays \$15,507 for Land.

Pendleton—A deed has been filed with the county recorder whereby Michael McCracker sold 2,000 acres of Manuel Pedro for \$15,507. The property is located several miles southwest of Pendleton.

SNOW IN BLUE MOUNTAINS.

Promise of Plenty of Water for Next Year—Big Price for Haystack.

Baker City—More than three feet of snow has fallen in the mountains in this vicinity during the past few days. Such a heavy fall of snow this early in the season is unusual, and while it has its inconveniences, on the whole the people regard it as a favorable condition, because it argues well for an abundant supply of water for mining and irrigation purposes next season.

It will be hard on stock, especially sheep, on the ranges, but, as stockmen generally are prepared for a bad winter season, very little actual loss is anticipated. Sheepmen were obliged, on account of the high price of hay, to sell a goodly portion of their sheep, and they are prepared to feed those they have on hand until spring.

It is an ill wind that does not benefit some one, and in this instance the hay ranchman is the man who is gathering in the harvest. Hay is hay, and will be until grass comes again.

One rancher in this vicinity recently sold the hay in one big stack for \$18,000 cash. It was a big stack or rick, and there is several thousand tons of hay in the stack.

WHISTLER LEAVES HARNEY.

Reading of Water Gauges in Streams Will Be Kept Up All Winter.

Burns—John T. Whistler, engineer in charge of the work being conducted in Oregon by the reclamation service of the United States geological survey, has left for Pendleton. This will be his final visit to Harney county for the present year, as he will leave the state for Washington, D. C., in December, to take up the work of making a detailed exposition of the present year's fieldwork in Oregon.

Mr. Whistler has had three parties of engineers in the field in this state all summer, one of these parties having been engaged since June in surveying the proposed reservoir site in Silvies valley, and also in working out the details of an irrigation system to carry water therefrom to the adjacent lands in Harney valley.

The approach of bad weather has drawn the work for this year to a conclusion, with the exception that the reading of water gauges in the streams will be kept up without interruption.

End Fruit Tree Shipping.

Milton—The season for shipping small fruit trees has closed. It is estimated that 12,500 trees have been shipped out to all parts of the west, middle and eastern states during the past two weeks. About 10 cars have been shipped in the past 10 days. As the season was short this year, many of the smaller trees had to be expressed, as it would delay matters too long to send them by freight. Samuel Miller has one of the largest nurseries in Eastern Oregon, and there are several fruit men who have small nurseries.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 71c; blue-stem, 75c; valley, 75c@76c.

Barley—Feed, \$20 per ton; brewing, \$22; rolled, \$21.

Flour—Valley, \$3.75@3.85 per barrel; hard wheat straight, \$3.90@4.10; clears, \$3.55@3.75; hard wheat patents, \$4.20@4.50; graham, \$3.75; whole wheat, \$4; rye wheat, \$4.75@5.

Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.07½; gray, \$1.05 per cental.

Millstuffs—Bran, \$20 per ton; middlings, \$24; shorts, \$20; chop, \$18; linseed, dairy food, \$19.

Hay—Timothy, \$16 per ton; clover, \$13; grain, \$11; cheat, \$11.

Vegetables—Turnips, 65c per sack; carrots, 75c; beets, 90c; parsnips, 50¢@75c; cabbage, 1¢@1½¢; celery, 35¢@60¢; pumpkins, 1¢@1½¢ per pound.

Onions—Yellow Danvers, 75c@81¢ per sack.

Honey—\$3@3.25 per case.

Potatoes—Oregon, choice and fancy 60¢@75c per sack; common, 50¢ per sack; sweet potatoes, sacks, 2c; boxes, 2½¢.

Fruits—Apples, 75c@82¢ box; pears, \$1@1.50 per box; cranberries, \$9@10.50 per barrel.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 27¢@30¢ per pound; dairy, 20¢@22½¢; store, 15¢@15½¢.

Cheese—Full cream, twins, 15¢@15½¢; Young America, 16¢@16½¢; Tillamook, 14¢@14½¢; Eastern cheese, 15¢@15½¢.

Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 10¢@10½¢ per pound; spring, 10½¢@11¢; hens, 11¢; turkeys, live, 15¢@16¢ per pound; dressed, 16¢@18¢; ducks, \$6@7 per dozen; geese, 7¢@8¢ per pound.

Eggs—Oregon ranch, 30¢@32½¢; Eastern, 25¢@27¢.

Beef—Dressed, 5¢@6¢ per pound.

Veal—Dressed, small, 8¢@8½¢; large, 6¢@6½¢ per pound.

Mutton—Dressed, 4¢@5½¢; lambs, dressed, 6¢.

Pork—Dressed, 6¢@7¢.

Hops—1903 crop, 12¢@22¢ per pound, according to quality.

Wool—Valley, 17¢@18¢; Eastern Oregon, 12¢@15¢; mohair, 35¢@37½¢.