

# The Contrabandist; OR One Life's Secret!

A TRUE STORY OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

CHAPTER XIII.  
It was evening. In the lofty and richly furnished library of the marquis, the silver lamps burned with a soft, subdued glow. Blending their moonlight radiance with the deeper and warmer tinge cast by a blazing wood fire upon the broad hearth, over the magnificent apartment, with its dark, massive, antique furniture, its broad, high walls, lined with costly and substantial volumes, the crimson draperies of its deep windows, and the polished ebon floor that shone and reflected back the mellow warmth in rippling lines of light.

Beside a table of curiously carved oak, which is strewn with rare and ancient volumes and the writing implements of the marquis, and which occupies the center of the floor, sits Rose. She is leaning forward upon this table, her face hidden in her folded arms—those fair, sculptured arms whose snowy whiteness gleams rarely through the veil of falling tresses. Her graceful form is attired in a robe of shining fabric, its pearl-embroidered folds sweeping the floor about her and shining, glittering softly in the mellow light shed all around her. She does not move; she is silent—motionless; she hardly seems to breathe even. So quiet is she, as she reclines thus, with her face concealed, that you might think her sleeping.

But Rose is not sleeping. Her errand hither is of too painful a nature for that. Alone, in this swelling silence, she waits and listens for an approaching footstep, she hears the door open, she hears her plighted word. For Rose has a duty, too long deferred, to perform to-night, and its consequences may be only too bitter—bitter to her, inasmuch as they affect others. She does not fear the performance of this duty because she shrinks from fulfilling her trust—rather, she keeps her plighted word, and she pictures to herself the disappointment she may be about to inflict on others.

A distant door unlocks, but so softly in its easing of cloth that no sound follows. It is a gentleman who enters; he pauses a moment; his glance takes in the beauty and subdued splendor of the scene before him; but it is accustomed to that. It rests upon the center of the whole—upon the bowed figure of the young girl yonder by the table. A shadow is cast upon the floor at once of sorrow and perplexity, rests upon his fine brow. Then, closing the door, he advances, and stands beside the table.

"Rose!" he calls, gently.  
The young girl raised her head.  
"Is it you, Louis?" she asked, with an air of sadness. "I thought you were away."

"I have remained at home, Rose. I could not go. I wished to see you."  
"You wished to see me, Louis? We are in each other's presence every day. To-night—"

"Ay, to-night, Rose! To-night, you would say, you have an interview with my uncle, and cannot listen to me. I knew of this interview; my uncle told me; and, forgive me, dear Rose, but I would prevent it."  
He spoke in a subdued, but agitated voice. He seated himself beside her, and leaned, also, forward on the table, with his hands clasped here, as he uttered these impeding words.

"You would prevent it, Louis?—why? Would you bid me neglect the fulfillment of a duty already too long delayed?"  
"Ah, Rose, you are about to seal your fate! Think once more, I beseech you; there is time. Break this ideal bondage; be silent, and forget the vows that no longer bind you. Do not bring this great sorrow to my uncle, who loves you so; do not break up this happy household, which can be no more happy when you have sacrificed yourself—when you have left the heart that is only bright with your presence, to hide yourself in obscurity!"

The tears were filling her sweet eyes; a great cry was struggling for utterance in her breast; but she silenced it with a half-despairing effort. She raised her glance to his.  
"You are aware, then, Louis, of the object of this interview?"  
"Ah, too well—to tell you," he answered; "for I knew that it must come, sooner or later, since you adhere to the decision you once made. But again I ask you—do not reveal this secret to a poor young workman; my will say he is a gardener. Well, these two—the girl and her lover—cannot marry yet, because they are by no means in suitable circumstances; for she is quite as poor as he. Ah, they must be content to wait!"

"Good! This young girl, then, is betrothed. Very well; that is not at all to be wondered at, as young girls very frequently find themselves in this position. She is betrothed to a poor young workman; my will say he is a gardener. Well, these two—the girl and her lover—cannot marry yet, because they are by no means in suitable circumstances; for she is quite as poor as he. Ah, they must be content to wait!"

ed, so that she did not see his expression. He did not speak; but the hand resting upon the table was withdrawn in a moment and it trembled.  
"Louis, I have hurt—wounded you; I have been too harsh! Will you not forgive me? Rose said, gently, and in a tone that quivered with agitation. She drew near to him, and laid her hand imploringly upon his arm. "You can but see that my promise must be kept, and it pained me that you should urge me to break it. Ah, it is sacred, Louis! help me to keep it!"

There was no reply. But he turned towards her; he held out his arms; he gathered her to his breast and held her there, while his lips were pressed calmly, silently, tenderly to hers. Then releasing her, he went out from her presence. The door closed behind him. A step is heard without—that of the marquis.  
"Well, my Rose, you are waiting for me," he said, cheerily, as he approached her; "and have been waiting some time. I am afraid, too. What shall I say for myself, eh?" and he seated himself beside her. "But, what ails you, my child?" he added, with evident concern; "you are ill!"

"No—no! I am not ill, sir; but I am unhappy," returned Rose, lifting her beautiful eyes, swimming with tears, to his earnest face.  
"Unhappy? you are young for that, Rose. Some girlish whim it is, I'll warrant me—nothing more, and you are thanking yourself extremely miserable about it. Am I mistaken?" he asked, smiling gently, as he spoke these words in an enlightening tone.

"It is no whim, sir," answered Rose, sadly. "I have been doing wrong all this time—"

"What silence? then you consent, Rose?—well, a wedding dress it shall be, then. As I said, I will wager a wedding dress, lace, jewels and all."  
"I do not want neither lace nor jewels, monsieur," said Rose, half sadly.  
"Do not interrupt me, my child! Against—let me see—against a pair of diamond buckles. You see I mean to make you pay well, Rose—that I shall guess right!"

"I do not understand you, monsieur," said the young girl, wondering, perplexed and diverted at his manner.  
"You don't? what a pity!" There was mischief in his eyes, that brought the smile to her. "What a pity?" he repeated. "Well, at all events, I will commence, and probably, by the time I shall have finished, you will comprehend my meaning more fully. In the first place, then, there is a certain young girl—you see I mention no names, Rose—a certain young girl, I say, who has a lover."

"You are listening, I presume, my child?"  
"I am listening, monsieur."  
"Good! This young girl, then, is betrothed. Very well; that is not at all to be wondered at, as young girls very frequently find themselves in this position. She is betrothed to a poor young workman; my will say he is a gardener. Well, these two—the girl and her lover—cannot marry yet, because they are by no means in suitable circumstances; for she is quite as poor as he. Ah, they must be content to wait!"

"And render him unhappy, cut Helen Montauban to the very heart, leave me wretched—miserable! Rose, listen to me—"

raising her head and speaking earnestly—seriously. "Robin was different from those about him. He was better—more noble than they. He was—"

"It is no merit to me, Rose, that my own honest convictions force me to acknowledge his superiority, and the good sense you have displayed in your choice. And now," he added, while the old laughing glance shone in his eyes, "I dare say you are dying with curiosity to know how I came into possession of all this knowledge."

"Indeed, sir, it is a matter of curiosity to me," she answered, frankly.  
"What, then, will you say, if I assure you that Robin himself told me the greater part of it all, and that I divined only a very little bit—eh, Rose?" he asked.  
"Robin, sir? ah, then you have seen him!" said Rose, with hardly suppressed joy.  
"I have seen him, my child."  
"And lately?"  
"Quite lately," he returned, pleased and amused at her innocent betrayal of delight.  
"May I ask when it was, monsieur?"  
"It was yesterday; nay—I have seen him as lately as to-day."

"To-day? ah, then, he is very near!" she said, in a subdued yet joyful tone, and with her eyes bent to the floor, as in meditation. Suddenly raising them, she asked: "Where was it, monsieur?"  
"Too many questions, Rose," laughed the marquis—"too many questions. I must keep his whereabouts a matter of secrecy for a short time."  
"Ah, monsieur," said Rose, gently, and with a pretty air of deprecation.  
"Indeed, my dear child, it will do you no harm. Wait till to-morrow, only to-morrow, and I will tell you where he is; nay, more—I shall tell you who he is, and what he does!"

"Willingly," observed her husband, who had just thrown a huge log on the open fire, "you don't disdain nothing to be thankful for! It's as harmless as a turkey as ever flapped, and I don't think of that sort of corn let!"  
"Tain't turkey or pumpkin pies or cranberry sauce as makes Thanksgiving," sighed Mrs. Nibbett.

"What is it, then? If it's cold weather, I should ha' thought the last best turkey facin'." Then, artlessly, he looked from Lida's scorched black, and the old maple is lovin' its leaves as if they was rainin' down. Parson Jarvis is comin' all the way from Sloateville to preach to-morrow, and the quire's larved 'n' new anthems 'n' hymns, about that sort of thing. I'm sure I don't know what else you'd have."  
Mrs. Nibbett only answered by a sigh. "I wonder if tain't possible Stepp'll be here to-night," she said after a pause.  
"He'll be here, if he thought he'd drop in early to-morrow mornin' if he caught the train he expected. Only think, old woman; it's five years since Stepp was back to Thanksgiving!"

Old Nibbett rubbed his horny hands, with a chuckle, saying:  
"And I'd loose, if all accounts is true, he's gettin' to be a great man out in that western country. It was kind of a hard pull when he went off and left us, but maybe the boy was in the right."  
"Yes," said Mrs. Nibbett, dolefully, "but some day he'll get reconciled to the loss of his marryin' a strange gal out there."  
Joel scratched his head. This was a phase of the subject that he scarcely felt compelled to discuss.  
"Maybe you'll like her. Stepp says so."  
"Stepp says so? As if a man over head and ears in love wouldn't say anything." Mrs. Nibbett groaned again. Joel went out to the woodpile, the everyday shrines where she got her coal, and with a demure she sought inspiration he had.

"It was a soft little voice, and the old lady's face relaxed instinctively as it sounded on her ears.  
"Why, Lida Tremaine—'tain't you!"  
"Is it you, Lida? I've been everything that Aunt Constance wanted, and now I've just run over to see if you don't need a bit of help."  
She stood in the doorway, a fair little apparition, all flushed and rosy with the November wind, while her blue eyes sparkled as if they were twin sapphires under a glow of her long, dark lashes. She was neither blond nor brunette, but a fresh cheeked girl, with nut brown hair, skin like the leaf of a damask rose, a straight, refined nose and lips as ripe as a red crabapple, though by no means so soft. Generally she had a demure about her gravity, suggesting about her face, but when she did laugh a simple came out upon her cheek and a row of pearly teeth glistened instantaneously.

In one hand she carried a bunch of late autumn leaves, holding them up. "I ransacked Aunt Constance's garden for these. I knew that big rose on the mantle needed something, and with a branch or so of scarlet leaves, I'll have a royal bouquet to help you keep Thanksgiving."  
"So, you're going to keep Thanksgiving," cried Lida, throwing off her outer wrappings and dancing up to the looking glass like a little gale of wind, "because you've invited Aunt Constance and me to dinner and because—your son is coming home."  
"Yes, child, yes," said Mrs. Nibbett, subsiding once more into the mournful key from which Lida's sudden appearance had momentarily aroused her. "Lida, you got the turkey shut up in a coop, and the hen's done, and I'm just afixin' them apples, and—"

"Oh, oh," cried Lida, who had flattered to the window, "what glorious red leaves speckled over with little drops of gold! May I make some wreaths for the wall? Oh, please say, yes!"  
Mrs. Nibbett said "yes"—it would have been hard work to say "no" to Lida—and the girl soon came in, her apron full of the sprigs of the old maple tree, whose shadowy boughs kept the window veiled with cool shadows through the glaring summer days and showered fading gold upon the dead grass when the autumn came.

Mrs. Nibbett looked with tenderness upon the graceful little figure seated on the hearth rug, when the shine of the high heaped logs took the fair oval face and made sparkles in her eyes, as the wreaths and trails of autumn leaves grew rapidly beneath her deft fingers.  
"Lida," she said softly, "Lida, my dear!" Lida looked up.  
"I see your Aunt Constance yesterday"

# Thanksgiving

WHEN THANKSGIVIN' COMES.

Goin' to have a joyful day  
'Bout next Thursday down our way;  
'Cause now 'r in far an' near,  
Got a turkey home, I'll bet,  
Is the biggest we've had yet;  
Always lots to eat, I've found  
When Thanksgiving comes around.

Pa, he'll carve the noble bird,  
Telling all the joys he's heard,  
'Cause now 'r in far an' near,  
Got a turkey home, I'll bet,  
Is the biggest we've had yet;  
Always lots to eat, I've found  
When Thanksgiving comes around.

Uncle Jim sez me an' Bill  
'S 'bout the best things you'll find,  
If they'll only talk a night—  
All exceptin' Bill an' me;  
'Cause we'll still eat still can be,  
Wouldn't have time to make a sound  
When Thanksgiving comes around.

Golly! but it's bully, though,  
Havin' relatives, you know,  
'Cause now 'r in far an' near,  
Got a turkey home, I'll bet,  
Is the biggest we've had yet;  
Always lots to eat, I've found  
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THE PRICE OF THE BARNYARD

but there's somethin' reserved about her, and I didn't like to ask about you—whether you had decided to go out as a governess or not; because, my dear, Joel and I were talkin' last night, and we both thought what a comfort it would be to have you here."

"To have me here?"  
"Yes, you are so very, very kind. Believe we've both took a fancy to you, my child. So when your Aunt Constance goes back to the city, if you choose to come here—"

Mrs. Nibbett paused abruptly and burst into tears.  
"We had a little girl once, my dear, and if she'd lived she would ha' been nigh about your age."

Lida let the leaves drop down on the floor as she sprang up and threw both arms round the old woman's neck.

"Oh, Mrs. Nibbett," she whispered softly, "you are so very, very kind. Believe me, I appreciate it all, but—but—I hardly know how to tell you."

Mrs. Nibbett listened intently. Lida smiled and cried a little and then whispered so low it was scarcely audible.

"I'm going to be married."

"Married? ejaculated Mrs. Nibbett, with all a woman's interest in this important piece of information. "And who to?"

"Your son lives in Iowa—in Farlington?"  
"Yes."  
"Well, did he ever mention the name of—"

Lida paused, her cheeks glowing rosy. Old Nibbett had come in with an armful of wood, bringing a gale with him from the frosty outer world.

Lida as she went back to her work.  
"Joel'll go out again arter awhile," thought Mrs. Nibbett, "and then I'll hear about Lida's bein'."

But Joel sat down before the fire with a complacent satisfaction which looked ill for the gratification of his wife's curiosity, and finally accompanied Lida home, thus frustrating all his wife's designs and cutting off her chance of hearing Lida's story.

"Dear me," thought she, "I don't believe the man was ever born who knewed when he wasn't wanted! How long some it seems when Lida's gone! What does the girl want to get married for when I could ha' took such a sight of comfort with her? Oh, dear, dear! It been a son to us. But Lida didn't know Old woman, what do you say to Stepp's wife?"

Mrs. Nibbett clasped Lida to her heart.  
"I do say," she ejaculated, "this is the thankfulest Thanksgiving I ever lived to see!"—New York Daily News.

Sad Times for Them.  
Of what are the turkeys thinking? Get yonder in the yard. With their red eyes sadly blinking? Do you get their feet as hard? Are they on life reflecting? And to hear their final rattle? Ever moment now expecting? No, turkeys don't think at all.

THANKSGIVING DAY IS A GOOD TIME FOR EVERYONE TO CHEER UP.

It is a poor man, indeed, who has nothing for which to be thankful. Pitiably meager is the life that contains nothing which on this day of prayer and praise creates a glow of joy or an impulse of gratitude. Shadow is the soul that can reflect no sunshine of blessings and is ever gloomy with worries and wrongs.

But there is none such. The narrowest, the shallowest, the most darkly pessimistic among us all may sometimes be surprised into a smile and shamed into at least a whisper of thanks. They who can find nothing else to be glad about may at least be glad they are still alive and not yet passed to that world of gloom and despair especially fitted to such temperaments.

The depth of possible human misery has never yet been reached. Perhaps old Job came nearest to it, and even Job was no croaker. It is easy to imagine that old Job, with all his bolts and other troubles, would still be a lively figure at a modern Thanksgiving service. He would at least find words of thanks that his body was no larger and so could hold no more bolts. Job would be positively jolly in comparison with some of the living gronches who exist only in their own little life.

It is said that man differs from the lower animals chiefly in his being able to laugh. But the dog's wagging tail, that tells us he would like to laugh if he could, proves him to be better in heart than the human gronch who seems to feel that he could not laugh if he would.  
Cheer up! You can't spite God by refusing to give him thanks. God will go right on doing business just the same. But you spite yourself by shutting your eyes to the blessings within your reach and by your complaining you make a nuisance of yourself to everybody else.  
Cheer up! One of the very lowest forms of consciousness—that of the seed sprout—instinctively seeks the light, somehow knowing that life is there, while deeper down is naught but gloom and death.  
Is any man to show less sense and less appreciation of the eternal law than does the seed sprout? Is he alone, of all wonderful creation, to willfully seek the gloom, to narrow his mind, to shut off his supply of energies, to dam up the sources of his health and to force his life back through a thousand cycles of evolution and into a mussel shell of little worth? We can all find cause to be glad and thankful if we look for it.  
Thanksgiving day is a good time to throw open the window of the soul and look out and up, taking a long, deep draught of the pure air with which the heavens are filled—the breath of hope and happiness.  
Everybody has cause to be thankful—everybody but the turkey, and even the turkey may be thankful that his last days were passed in bounteous plenty.

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Huntington	Portland, Ore.	10:30 a. m.
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Tue., Sat. and Sun.	Tue., Sat. and Sun.
7:00 a. m.	7:00 a. m.
Daily (except Saturday)	Daily (except Saturday)
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