

The Contrabandist; OR One Life's Secret!

A TRUE STORY OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

They reached Paris as they were about to be established as in another home, at the Hotel de Clairville. Here the kind-hearted Count Frederic and his amiable wife congratulated themselves upon having gathered together so happy a family party; and no pains were spared to contribute to the enjoyment of each. Rose had never been in Paris before; its splendors and gaieties were novel and pleasing to her. But every enjoyment had its chief source from the presence of Louis; nothing was complete if he were not at her side to share in her pleasures; and it charmed him to perceive this.

"You shall dwell here, some day, my Rose," he said to her, with his own bright smile that the young girl loved so well.

And she smiled in return; while Helen Montauban turned away, with a dark gleam in her eyes—a darker frown on that splendid brow.

"Some day! How little," said the haughty woman, mentally, "how little do they dream that the will of another is to exercise authority then! They count confidently on their future—upon the fate that is awaiting them. Ah, if they knew what it is to be—that fate!"

Now that Paris was gained, she was nearer to her purpose, and the fierce impatience she had felt subsided as she approached to the consummation of her purpose. Not because she quailed, or shrank from it, but that now she was able to contemplate it more nearly—look upon her revenge as almost accomplished, and she was content to wait longer.

"Helen, you are ill, I think," said Francis Egerton in alarm.

She had been sitting in the same attitude for a full hour, with her head resting on her hand, and those dark, calm eyes fixed on the floor. But her lips were very pale, and her face marble white.

"You are ill, I think," he repeated, gently, bending over to attract her attention, and laying his hand on hers. But the icy coldness of that hand chilled and startled him.

"You are not quite right, my lord," she answered; "for I am not ill exactly, and yet I am not well. I have merely a severe headache." And she pressed her hand to her brow.

"A headache—is that all? Nay, you are feverish, for now your cheeks are burning. Let me ask your father to send for a physician. You may, perhaps, have taken the fever which is prevailing in the city. Dear Helen, be advised."

"Francis, I command you to remain where you are," said Mademoiselle Montauban, imperatively. "I have assured you that I am not ill, and I do not wish either to attract attention or to interfere with the enjoyment of others. Since you are so anxious, I shall endeavor to rest awhile in my own apartment, and may regain my usual spirits by evening, in which case I will return to the family. Present my excuses to them, if you please." She left him and ascended to her chamber.

Night came. The rest of the family were to attend the opera. Helen Montauban assigned a severe headache as her reason for not accompanying them, and remained at home. From the casement of her room she looked down and saw the carriage roll away from the gates.

An hour afterwards there emerged from the hotel a youth, wearing a black hat slouched over his eyes and a cloak, which he drew about him, half concealing his face with its folds. He looked back with a hurried, nervous glance as he gained the portal. "No one has seen me," he muttered, "and the rest is suffering from my ease." At a rapid pace he hastened on. It was dark; but the lamps in the streets poured a flood of light along as he proceeded, and crowds of pedestrians passed him and the way was thronged with carriages and vehicles of every description. He only drew his hat lower over his eyes, arranged the folds of the cloak so as more fully to hide his features, and hurried along, passing from one street to another, and never looking at a single face in all the bustling multitude about him.

At length, in a retired street, he reached the door of a building, half shop, half dwelling; at this door he knocked. A domestic appeared, bearing a light, which she held up to survey the features of the youth; but he shrunk further back into the shadow, and gathered the folds of the cloak more closely about his face as he asked, in a low and somewhat hoarse voice:

"Is the alchemist at home?"

"He is, monsieur. Will you come in?"

The youth entered, the woman looking at him with a half-curious glance for an instant, but then turning to herself.

"Well—well, I need not trouble you with my first mask that has come hither," she added aloud; "this way, monsieur; you will find my master in here," and led the way through the room into which he had entered from the street to a back room, opening from the first. Here was an old man, bent half double, seated at a table, and engaged in poring over a rich and curious volume of antique appearance. About the apartment were arranged, in different places, various stuffed figures of animals, and some of them reptiles so hideous as to send an involuntary shiver over the boy as he beheld them. Strange and horrible forms were everywhere about him; he turned from contemplating them in disgust. The old man laid aside his book and looked up.

"You want me?—well, what is it?" he said, leaning back in his chair, and regarding his guest closely with the piercing dark eyes that seemed still darker and more piercing from the bushy, snow-white brows that overhung them.

The youth spoke not, but removed the cloak from his face; not silently advancing, presented a folded paper to the old man. He received and glanced over it. A slight frown darkened over his face, and again he fixed on the boy that same searching glance.

"You do not want me, but my wife," he said. "I touch not such matters as this," and he handed back the paper. Then going to a small door in the wall, he opened it and called, "Bianca—Bianca!"

An instant and there appeared at this door a tall, dark-looking, yet splendidly handsome woman, with a brunette complexion, magnificent black eyes and a noble and commanding form. Those eyes were fixed upon the muffled figure and half-concealed face of the stranger.

"Bianca," said the old man, "there is one who has need of your services."

"What do you want?" asked the woman, as she came forward, with her

WAR ON RIO GRANDE.

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The listeners turned from the militia man in uniform, who had been complaining that a soldier had no chance these days, to the sun-tanned military-looking man in civilian clothes.

"A week ago last night," he continued, "I was in a fight in which more were killed than in any of the battles of the Spanish-American war. You see, I'm from the country of constant trouble—I'm a captain in the Texas Rangers—and in the past two years I've taken part in at least 100 fights in which men were slain, and often many men at that. If the press were to record all the fighting going on down there, there wouldn't be much show for any other news."

"It's a three-cornered sort of fight that goes on along the Rio Grande, in which the Mexican ranzales, or regular troops, the cattle thieves, smugglers and frontier desperadoes, and we rangers form the three corners. Sometimes we cross the border and help the Mexicans, sometimes the Mexicans

come over into American territory and take a hand in corraling some particularly desperate band of cattle raiders. But usually we do our own fighting, and the Mexicans their, each of us on our own side of the Rio Grande. The cattle raiders and smugglers are just as regularly organized as we are, and they also fight according to military tactics. Most of their leaders have held commissions in regular armies, and they teach their men to put up a pretty stiff scrap.

"They come across the Rio Grande, sometimes 100 strong, round in a herd of cattle from the ranges, and before dawn they are back again in Mexican territory. Often we run into them, but their horses, or Indian ponies, are usually dropped out of their saddles. Finally we scattered about among the houses and kept up a steady fire. Afterwards, when we examined the adobe walls of the council hall, we found that hardly a brick in it did not contain a bullet.

"At last we crept about the house on our horses, and in that way dropped down the two others made a break to get away, but we saw them. We tried to get them to surrender, but they fought on until my men killed them both.

"Once we had news from our friend, the Mexican commander, that he had cornered over 100 raiders in a ravine, and he asked us to come over and help him smoke them out.

"It didn't take long to get over, and we found two companies of ranzales stretched in firing line across the mouth of the canyon, while the raiders, entrenched behind rocks, were dropping the Mexicans by twos and threes. We came just in time to prevent a stampede of the commandant's troops.

"Then we charged the raiders and killed seventy of them. The commandant took no prisoners. But forty Mexicans and ten of my men went down. Considering the number engaged, that was a bloody battle as you will find in modern history."



CHARGING CATTLE THIEVES' ADOBE FORTRESS.

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A RAIDERS.

ally fresher than ours, and they get away, unless we can corner them. Then they fight. Formerly, when we did capture some of them, their organization would hire lawyers and defend them in the civil courts, and they usually got off for lack of evidence. This became so much the regular thing that we got discouraged.

"But one day the word was passed down that, instead of holding future captives, we should turn them over to the nearest Mexican post. Mexican law is best for cattle thieves.

"Not long after this I got information of a band that would cross the river that night at a certain ford, and I got my men ready. After dark we rode down to the ford and lay low. At about 11 we saw the raiders, fifty strong, crossing the shallows. We gave them time to cross, then dashed down along the bank, cutting off their retreat to Mexican territory and the mountains. It was a hard fight, but we outnumbered the raiders, and they scattered, leaving twenty dead. Next day we captured ten more, but the rest got away.

"Remembering orders, I didn't turn those ten men over to our authorities. Instead, I camped my men out till night, and then we crossed over into Mexico and made for the nearest Mexican post, a small place called Argen-

tion, not far from Ciudad Juarez, but far enough to prevent interference from the civil authorities. At 2 o'clock in the morning we reached the post, and the commandante came out in his pajamas to receive us.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" he said.

"Horse thieves," I answered.

"I saw the commandante grin. He had my men shown to the sleeping quarters and he shared his bed with me. Before breakfast he called me. "If you want to show your men an execution," he said, "line them up on the plaza."

"Aren't you going to try them?" I asked.

"Afterward," he said, laconically.

"I lined my men up with the Mexican garrison on the plaza. The ten men, most of them half-breed Indians and Mexicans, were lined up against the adobe wall, and I must say they died like men. Some were only wounded, but the ranzales shoved their bayonets into them and ended their troubles quickly. That band of cattle thieves never bothered the ranchers on our side again.

"A few weeks later we ran into another band, but they got away, all except five of them, whom we cut off from the river. Those five retreated to a small village, cleared out all the inhabitants, took possession of the adobe council hall and prepared to stand us off. We knew they had heard of the previous scrape, we knew they realized they could get no quarter, so we expected them to fight until the last. Excited by the skirmish, my men, numbering fifty, galloped up to within range of the raiders' guns, and before I could get them off to a safe distance

SERMONS OF THE WEEK.

The Only True Life.—The acceptance of things that eye has not seen and cannot see is the only true life.—Rev. L. Watson, Episcopalian, Chillicothe, Ohio.

Infidel Colleges.—Our colleges and universities are a curse if God be not in them. Unsacred educational facilities foster infidelity.—Rev. J. C. Wilson, Methodist, Brooklyn, N. Y.

God's Kingdom.—We map out what we call the kingdom of God, and proceed to color it according to our personal and denominational ideas.—Rev. Dr. Carlisle, Methodist, Columbia, S. C.

Making Heroes.—Knowledge of right will make a hero of the frailest. The one who realizes that he is right with God can bathe his hands in the martyr's fame.—Rev. Dr. White, Baptist, Macon, Ga.

Fiction.—Literature of the modern type is to be condemned largely for its change. Formerly fiction stimulated virtue; now it is inoffensive in these matters.—Rev. Dr. Kruesskopf, Hebrew, Philadelphia, Pa.

Gumption.—The schoolboy whose lessons are always perfect will probably clerk at \$40 a month for the schoolboy who has less gifts and more gumption.—Rev. Frank Crane, Unitarian, Worcester, Mass.

The Great Trust.—Can we not have one colossal religious trust that will take in all the denominations, or at least all that are near enough alike to make affiliation possible?—Rev. W. H. Ramsey, Louisville, Ky.

The Price of Liberty.—Eternal vigilance is not only the price of liberty to nations and races, but to the weaker and more helpless classes of every country and people.—Rev. Dr. Banks, Methodist, New York City.

The Secret of Life.—Nature made God possible, and the individual must make Him actual. This is the whole secret of life. Ignorance alone defests this proposition.—Rev. F. E. Mason, Independent, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Remorse.—The sharper the sting of remorse the more insistent and profound the entrance of the iron of stern self-accusation into our souls, the more complete the expiation.—Rev. J. W. Chadwick, Unitarian, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Club Women.—Women have been criticized for joining literary clubs, yet the club, instead of injuring the home, has been the means of saving it by elevating its intellectual position.—Rev. M. M. Mangasarian, Independent, Chicago, Ill.

The Glory to Come.—Let us not be disheartened by labors, remembering that the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory to come and which shall be revealed to us.—Cardinal Gibbons, Roman Catholic, Baltimore, Md.

The Two Sovereigns.—The King is all on His golden throne, and conquers the darkness. The Queen, His church, by her reflected light and power, still moves the tides of the world.—Rev. L. W. Madden, Presbyterian, Princeton, Ind.

Doubt.—With all our progress in ingenious invention and mechanical appliances, with all our marvelous conquest of time and space, still the element of uncertainty is not yet overcome.—Rev. Henry Frank, Independent, New York City.

Charity.—If this generation would claim the great promise of the book of books, it would find a measure of happiness the world has never experienced. I fear it is too selfish to believe.—Rev. Dr. Simmons, Baptist, Peoria, Ill.

Stagnation.—It is a sorry condition, then, that a man is in, that a Christian believer is in, when he says that he has the same opinion of Christ that he had a year ago. It tells a sad story of the year the year has been passing with him.—Rev. C. H. Parkhurst, Presbyterian, New York City.

The Baptist Symbol.—We are Baptists because baptism symbolizes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Man in rising from the burial of baptism rises with no power of his own. We are free from death because Christ conquered death.—Rev. L. J. Brown, Baptist, Brooklyn, N. Y.

To Save Humanity.—With hands full of helpful charity, with a word in season to him that is weary, with a heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathize, we should bring our selves into contact with humanity at the point of need.—Rev. T. J. Villers, Baptist, Indianapolis, Ind.

The Young Man.—This is pre-eminently the country of the young man—because he is to be here for a long time it is to him of supreme consequence that the republic should prosper; it is for him to say what he desires his native land to be, and in what condition he will have it when he leaves it to those who will come after him.—Rev. A. McKenzie, Congregationalist, Cambridge, Mass.

The Harvest.—What we sow, we reap. Character reproduces itself in life. Grapes do not bring forth thorns, tares do not produce wheat. If you want character you must pay the price for it. Sowing love, you shall reap love. Sowing honor and truth, honor and truth you will reap. Therefore, the punishment is not imposed by God from without, but is imposed by the soul from within.—Rev. N. D. Hillis, Congregationalist, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Putting It in Mild Language.—She—Don't you think you were milder severe in saying that Matilda was the most inveterate talker you ever met?

He—Oh, I didn't put it in that bald way. I only said that it was impossible for her to keep her mouth shut except in a dentist's office.—Boston Transcript.

A second-hand automobile is sometimes better than a new one. Everything breakable about it may be broken.

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