

The Crimson Slipper.

BY DORA LANGLOIS,

Author of "A Bolt From the Blue," "That Red-Headed Woman," "The Kiss of Judas," "The Secretary's Daughter," "Victoria's Dream," &c.

(Continued)

I followed Herman's injunction, and a moment or two later he joined me, behind the tree, just as a man on a cycle rounded the bend.

As the cyclist approached, us Herman gave a whistle, and in an instant, the newcomer was off his machine and coming in our direction. "Is that you Clarkson?" he demanded, the query proving that Herman had correctly imitated the whistle he had heard once before that night.

"He has been to the police-station," Herman said in a low voice. "Yes, yes," returned the newcomer. "I've had him in view the whole time. Markham's cycle has broken down; the cart's ahead, isn't it? Good Heavens! Who are you?"

"My name is Herman," my friend replied, "and Mr. Duncan is here also. We wanted to have a few words with you."

The man pushed his cycle off the grass into the road, with a sudden jerk, and stood looking at us with surprise and perhaps a little terror. He was not to be altogether blamed for that, for we were two to one; desperate men for aught he knew, who looked on him as an obstacle between themselves and liberty, and either of us would prove quite enough for one middle-aged man to tackle.

"Don't be alarmed," I said. "I've stopped you to tell you that the paper you are in search of was in my desk after all. Miss Denzell, the late Mr. Danvers' heiress entered my house at ten o'clock tonight, and took it away with her. She has been accompanied in her flight by two foreigners who have been hanging round my house, and whom you ought to have seen. We have just been to the police-station and applied for their arrest."

I spoke curtly, I daresay; the dull gnawing consciousness was on me that the thing was not done and over when the charge was made, that it was to do again and again till such time as she faced me in the dock. My hand was against her, and at every turn my lips must frame her name and brand her as a thief.

"You had the paper?" he cried. "You had it and it is gone?"

"There is no time for a long explanation now," I said. "I did not have the paper, I had the desk, and without suspicion or special knowledge I could not find what your men missed when they smashed my property to pieces. Miss Denzell found it and took it, and my friend saw her but did not think it mattered, because he knew nothing. We have taken precautions to prevent the thieves getting away with it, and if you know any means of stopping its getting across without them we suggest that you should adopt it now."

"You've told me this at a convenient time," he said, ironically. "The telegraph office is shut, so what can I do?"

"I did not make or choose the time," I answered. "There's an all-night office at II—, we thought of driving there ourselves, but did not know whom it would be best to address."

"My confrere's bicycle has broken down," he answered, irritably. "It is most inconvenient."

"My cob is fresh; he is at your disposal and can do the distance," I said.

"I'm obliged to you," he responded, stiffly. "I alluded to my confrere because our first duty to our superior is not to lose touch with you."

"What! now?" I cried. "When I tell you that the paper is already on its way to the seaboard?"

"Permit me to interpret my instructions myself," he retorted, hotly.

"Very well," I answered, restraining myself with an effort. "I will come with you. We can use the cart and my friend will take your cycle back to my house."

"No, I cannot consent to that," he said. "Your friend—Mr. Mr. What is his name?—must come too."

"Do you mean," Herman demanded, warmly, "that you think we are trying to shake you?"

"I mean," he replied, with a face like vinegar, "that you have shewn a great deal of activity tonight. We were drawn away from the house by a faint about an hour ago, and by coincidence my colleague's bicycle was broken over a big stone in the road; and now you are very anxious that I should go to a town sixteen miles away, leaving one of you behind with orders to watch his movements."

Herman's reply was to curse him hotly, but I put my hand on his shoulder.

"Herman," I said. "If you are afraid of looking at it we

can only prove our bona fides by accompanying him with what grace we may. We are sacrificing something to let him do his duty according to his lights. Come, let us go to the cart!"

I turned, and Herman followed me in dogged silence. I need not say that the position was galling, but the thought that the situation could only be saved by him kept us helpless. I don't want to boast, but I think I may say with truth that to face the "imminent deadly breach" for the old country's sake would not have taxed our resolution or cost either of us so much as it cost us to keep our hands off the man and do his bidding.

Of the drive I can say nothing. I was not out to admire the scenery. Little Bob did his duty, and jogged on at his best pace. Our companion soon shewed that he was not a good cyclist; the road was hilly and there was a head wind. Once I offered to take his cycle and give him a seat in the trap but he declined rather ungraciously. Still, I suppose he thought it his duty to take no risk of getting separated from one or the other of us, and its true enough that I might have cycled off, leaving him to settle with Herman before he could pursue me.

We got to II—at last, and requesting us to come into the office with him he despatched a long cipher wire from the post-office.

Outside he turned to us a trifle more graciously. "You—ah—I daresay know this hole of a place better than I do," he said. "Is there some hotel where they keep a night porter where we could put up for a few hours?"

"There may be," I answered; "but—"

"Half a moment," interrupted Herman. "There is one thing I should like to say first. Of course, in sending such an urgent wire we naturally would not expect you to say anything about us; but I trust that in any report you may make to-morrow you will not fail to mention not only that Mr. Duncan was not aware that the paper was ever in the desk until he learnt that it had been removed from it, but also that he has given you every assistance in his power to enable you to get that wire off without having to lose sight of us for a moment."

And what does the reader think was the answer Herman got to this fair and courteous appeal in the interest of his friend?

The brute drew himself up, and said coldly: "I shall report that Mr. Duncan makes that statement relative to the paper, and I shall add that I thought it necessary that you should both accompany me, and therefore insisted on your doing so."

I had no words in which to answer him, and was too surprised at the moment to note that Herman did not reply. He turned away from us both for a moment to address some query as to an hotel to a chance passer-by, and that instant Herman touched my arm.

"Up you get, Duncan!" he said. "Bob can do the distance. There's no hotel for our friend to-night!"

Instinctively I did as he desired, but as little Bob shook his head, and answering to the kiss of the whip-drawn across his flank set off at a respectable trot, I intervened.

"Herman," I urged, "it's mere madness to try to give him the slip now."

"Who wants to slip him?" Herman rejoined, chuckling softly as he glanced over his shoulder at our companion, who had wheeled his cycle into the road and was just about to mount. "Who wants to slip him? I don't. But as he is so fond of our company he is going to follow us home; and by Jove! he ought to employ it, for he rides like my grandmother in bloomers."

Herman was right, the man rode with all the faults of the amateur; his uneven pedalling, his stiff grip on the handle-bars, the way he put the brake down before taking the smallest incline, all indicated that in this short spin he was exerting as much energy as would have helped a better cyclist to cover a hundred miles.

"Go it, Bob!" said Herman, coaxingly. "He'll be tired of our company this time before we are tired of his. There's blood and there's bone in you, Bob, my boy! Give him the benefit of them now!"

"He can't do it, Herman," I urged. "Don't punish the beast."

"Punish the beast? That's just what I'm bent on," Herman retorted. "But it's not Bob I'm going to injure. You just sit still and shut up, Duncan; I'm engineering this business."

I said no more, for the cob was sticking to it like a hero, and I was a very invertebrate mortal just then;



"Eat Plenty of Fruit."

That's what the Doctors say when one is constipated. Because fruit acts on the liver, causing it to excrete bile which aids digestion and increases the peristaltic action of the bowels, thus prevents constipation. But eating fresh fruit alone, won't CURE. The laxative principle is too weak and in too small quantity.

Fruit-a-tives

or Fruit Liver Tablets

are the tonic and laxative virtues of apples, oranges, figs and prunes, many times intensified—by our secret process of combining the juices—and made into tablets.

"Fruit-a-tives" act gently and naturally—tone up the liver—greatly increase the flow of bile—effectively cure Indigestion, Biliousness, Headache and Constipation—build up and strengthen the whole system.

At all druggists. 50c. a box.

Manufactured by FRUITATIVES, Limited, OTTAWA.

so mile by mile the distance slipped under our wheels till, showing some signs of distress, but plucky to the end, little Bob brought us before five a. m., in sight of the chimneys of Elsinore.

"Good!" said Herman, approvingly. "A whisky-and-soda immediately, and breakfast in half-an-hour, that's our programme, Duncan. As for our perspiring and saddle-sore friend behind, unless one of his colleagues is hanging about, he can cool himself quite healthily outside."

"Let him come in if he likes," I answered, wearily. "He is as welcome to break bread with me as anyone, except yourself."

"No, I'm hanged if he shall!" Herman retorted. "I'd see his tongue hanging out for want of a drink, and then I wouldn't give it him. No; the Jack-in-office doesn't know what's gentlemanly, but he has got to learn that it isn't always expedient to insult a poor wretch who is down on his luck!"

CHAPTER X.

I let Herman have his way, and a few stones thrown at the window having brought Minting down in sleepy deshabille we entered the house. It was Sunday morning now, but I was not really in a forgiving or generous mood, when I proposed to feed my enemy; the simple fact was that for me the barrier between loved and hated was overturned, the line we drew between friend and foe was expunged; most men, and all women, were false, and therefore equal in the great chaos.

The man against whom Herman shut the door might for aught I cared, sit at my board and eat till he lacked nothing, but I doubt whether, at that moment I would have given myself the trouble of arguing with Herman to feed a starving friend. So we went in to carry out Herman's programme—whisky-and-soda at once, then breakfast and bed. But though I promised my friend to follow his lead, and turn in, I strolled from the breakfast-room, into the smoking-room, when he had gone upstairs, and fell to working out a useless calculation.

It was now nearly seven a. m. at ten, the night before Mary Denzell had been in this very room. Nine hours had passed; the trouble and cares of years seemed to have gone over my head since then, yet to the rest of the world they were nine ordinary hours capable of holding only so much human activity.

Presuming that the fugitives had caught that train from Santrigg to York, and there again taken the first possible train for London, they could not fail to reach town in time to get across to Cannon-street or Charing Cross for the Continental mail at nine a. m. If they had escaped at York, it was only to be trapped later. There were men in blue waiting for her now; enemies my hand had raised crowding every exit, barring her way at every turn. At nine o'clock at latest, some man would lay his hand upon her shoulder, and looking into those beautiful eyes, in which I had lost

my soul, would say to her, "You are my prisoner."

I could not bear the thought. In spite of what she had done it seemed a desecration. In these moments of inaction, strive as I would, I could not separate the real Mary Denzell from the ideal; and the ideal Mary still held me heart and soul. My trouble pressed on me, stifled me. The room, the house itself, seemed too small to hold me, and my mystery, so, throwing the window open, I passed out on to the lawn.

Here on this spot only yesterday Herman had spoken jestingly of the blight on the ill-tended flowers. He was right, there was a blight upon the place indeed. I moved towards the tall hollyhocks he had praised for their bright colours, and as I did so a masculine head crowned with a dilapidated billycock bobbed down behind the hedge.

In an instant my blood was up and running an invigorating race through veins in which it seemed only to have stagnated since last night. Who was this new spy, who was on the track of one who had given his best to his country, and so far received only a dog's thanks? I forgot that the man was little and my hand was a sledge-hammer. I meant that he should feel its weight, as King Kaiser, or plenipotentiary would assuredly have felt it had such a one crossed me then.

I was over the hedge in an instant, and came down on the soft earth on my feet with the thud of an ox; then I struck out and hit the man. For answer I got a blow, which, though not heavy, was remarkably well directed, and the fellow springing back adopted a scientific attitude of defence, and began to parley.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir, for looking over into your garden," he said, "but I don't see what you wanted to strike me for all that."

"If there's anything interesting in my garden, or my house either," I retorted, "come inside; but henceforward I intend to know the business of anyone who chooses to interfere with my affairs."

"All right, I shan't run away," the man replied, somewhat sulkily, as he followed me round to the gate and so back into the house through the open window.

I sat down, motioned him to a chair, and got a look at him. He was only of medium height, had a thin face, strong jaws, no hair on his chin save the day's growth that ought to have been shaved that morning, clear grey eyes, and very short light-brown hair; and he was dressed like a stableman in early morning rig, which is equivalent to saying that his costume was neither neat nor gaudy.

(To be continued.)

Piles To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain and absolute cure for each and every form of itching, bleeding and protruding piles, the manufacturers have guaranteed it. See testimonials in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured. 50c a box, at all dealers or EDMANSON, BATES & Co., Toronto.

ABBEY'S

Recommended by the FACULTY

Used by the masses, who, unsolicited, certify to its worth.

Tones the Stomach and Stirs the Liver to healthy action.

Effervescent

Is Nature's Remedy for Tired, Fagged-out and Run-down Men

If taken regularly contributes to the Perfect Health, Makes Life Worth Living.

ALL DRUGGISTS.

SALT.

Flour - White

Bread - Light

Price - Right

Then HOME'S BRIGHT

All Essentials for a Bright Home found in

FIVE

ROSES

FLOUR

Artificial bleaching not required.

Lake of the Woods Milling Co. Ltd.

The Three Essentials for a Good Meal.

GOOD BREAD, GOOD BUTTER, GOOD TEA.

Buy what flour you like, where you like. Buy your butter where you like. Buy your tea where you like, **But Buy VIM TEA.**

Where you buy

VIM TEA

you are very apt to find good flour and good butter.

"BIRDS OF A FEATHER," Etc.

VIM-TEA CO.

ST. JOHN, N. B.

Now is the Time to Subscribe for THE 8-Page 1-Cent EVENING TIMES.