

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.

(Concluded)
CHAPTER XIV.

It is a matter of common knowledge that a lady's mill is not always eight runnings, but more or less according to her own abilities as a walker. Now, Mrs. John Halladay was evidently no pedestrian, for we had certainly not covered three-quarters of a mile of road when we found ourselves once more ascending a hill, and knew, therefore, that we must have overshot the turning. Fortunately a man with a turban cart was coming towards us just then, and to him we applied for information.

"Yes, you'll have to go back, sir," he said. "You ought to have turned off before you came to Tracy Court."

"Which is Tracy Court?" Howell asked. "We are strangers here."

"That big house that's all shut up," the man answered, indicating with his whip a large mansion standing back from the road in its own ground, which we had noticed before climbing the hill. "You can't see the mill from here, sir, it lies just behind the house, but I'll show you the turning when we come to it."

"It's in rather an out-of-the-way spot, isn't it?" said Howell.

"Well, sir, you've come the longest way if you're from Bowden," the carter explained. "There's a field path from the post-office that would have brought you here in half the time. But may be you'd have lost yourselves and wasted time if you'd come that way."

"What I mean," said Howell, "is that the mill is in an out-of-the-way place for business."

"I don't know, sir," the man rejoined. "I can mind when there was a sort of grain ground there. Sooner a peck of flour was sold in Bowden but what old Halladay had ground it. Things be different now with everything ready made in London, but he grinds a lot o' pollards for the farmers' pigs yet, and sells a good pastry flour still if you're wanting some."

"Ah! times have changed," said Howell, loitering a moment. "I suppose this Mr. Halladay is a poor man now?"

The carter grimaced. "Not he, sir," he said. "I wish I'd got as much in the bank as old Halladay has. It don't do to go by the outside of his place, nor by the outside o' him neither. You'd think he hadn't got no book learning till you come to reckoning with him, but he can write and cipher with the best, and he's got a headpiece on him. Poor! All the Halladays have got money, only the fault with them is they want more. Good-day, master. Keep straight on across this field, you can't miss the road."

The road, so-called, was a cart track across the grass field, lumpy at any time, and a quagmire in the winter. I should fancy. Through the field a little stream meandered, and beyond the second gate stood the mill house, built on the bank of an artificial water-course drawn from the stream. What was no doubt the principal face of the house fronted the path by which we approached it, and ran parallel with it; and a long, low, rambling, very unsequential dwelling it appeared to be.

The mill itself seemed to have been tacked on to it by some freeholder as an after-thought. The water-wheel was not visible, but it was clearly in that end of the building nearest to us as we advanced across the field; for the water of the mill-race ran from the parent stream in the field towards the back of the house, and appeared again flowing under the masonry of a low arch in the front wall of the building close to that corner of the dwelling which we were now approaching. The quiet lapping of the water showed that the wheel was not moving, a few pigs grubbed in the orchard in front of the house, churlishly pushing aside the cocks and the hens, who from time to time ventured too close to them; and so solitary and medicinal was the place that but for the hand-some, modern mansion in the rear, we might have fancied that we had been carried back to the days of our ancestors.

"Now, which is the front door, I wonder?" said Howell, dubiously, as we crossed the mill-race by a saw stone bridge. "I suppose our grandfathers thought it no drawback to step out into the rain when going from the kitchen to the parlor, or they wouldn't have given one so many front doors to choose from. Well, here goes, we'll try this one and chance it."

There was no answer to our summons, though Howell's knock was fairly loud, after waiting a little he adopted the custom in all country places, and lifting the latch, stepped boldly, with me behind him, into a low-ceiled, stone-flagged apartment which seemed to serve as a sort of kitchen or living-room.

"I'm not grinding today, neighbor," a sharp voice from some passage beyond called out the moment we set foot across the threshold. "May be I shan't grind for a fortnight; summat's gone wrong with the wheel."

"Are you Mr. William Halladay?" Howell demanded, addressing the unseen speaker in his most winning accents.

A shuffling of footsteps answered him, and a moment later the proprietor of the mill came round a wooden settle into the light and stood regarding us with pronounced disfavor in his coal-black eyes.

He was an old man, this miller, and his clothes hung like sacks upon his rheumatic bones; but what there was of him was the remnant of a very fine man indeed.

"I am William Halladay," he said, "and who may you be, gentlemen?"

"My name is Grant," Howell explained; and beginning once more he stated who we were and what we had come for, by which, of course, the reader will understand that he repeated the tale told at the post-office and the baker's shop.

"Very much obliged to you I'm sure, sir," the old man grumbled as we finished, "but that there Mrs. John might ha' saved you a long walk. I can't call to mind no Philip and Ellen was went to Amerikee. They weren't none o' our folks, that's sartain."

An old woman remarkably ugly, and as stout as he was lean, but well dressed, and not altogether common-looking, and joined the group by now and out in, evidently disapproving of his precipitation.

"They might be, William. Why not

show the gentlemen into the parlor, and look into the old Bible?"

"I don't want no Bible," the old man answered, turning on her restily. "If this ere Philip was born in eighteen hun'er and twenty, an' died in eighteen hun'er and seventy odd, he'd be a young man when I was a boy, and I should mind him right enough without no Bibles, and no entries."

"But there's no harm, William, in asking the gentlemen into the parlor," she expostulated.

"It's givin' 'em a sight o' trouble," the old man complained, "and I tell you, woman, that that there money from Amerikee ain't for us; but if so be they like to come they're welcome. This way, sirs, if you please."

He stepped right out into the open as he spoke, and grumbling to himself that the women always wanted their own way, led us to the left end of the house. Here he took a key from his pocket, opened one of the doors we had previously noticed, and admitting us to a room which was in darkness owing to the fact that the shutters were up, struck a match and lighted a candle which stood on the mantelshelf. The place had the damp, earthy smell of a chamber seldom aired, but we saw at once that it was much more luxurious and ornate than the apartment we had just quitted.

Old Halladay handed us a couple of leather-seated chairs, and then turning to a mahogany chest of drawers called our attention to a couple of large Bibles each covered with a bright wool mat, so lumbered with knick-knacks that the books might have been supposed to be there for ornament only, and not by any manner of means for reference or use.

"Here they be," he said, with a sort of grudging civility, as he extracted the elder of the two Bibles and displayed its yellow front pages. "Here be the entries of every man Jack or woman Jill born a Halladay since seventeen hun'er and ninety year; and if you can find a Philip married to a Ellen, it's more than I can. There's old Maria up to the almshouses—she's my cousin. There's my two brothers—my wedding to my missus is the last entry, and we haven't had no childer. My brother's weddings and deaths and the childer they've had is all in t'other Bible if you want to see un—and there you have the whole family."

"Look over them, my boy," he said, addressing me and pointing to the entries.

"Look over them, your eyes are better than mine."

"I knew, of course, that he meant that his eyes were the best for talking in the salient features of the room, and that mine were quite good enough for puzzling out the family pedigree; but I obeyed meekly, and read all the entries carefully and slowly to give him time.

"I'm sorry they ain't in that," said the old man, with a half-regretful sigh, when at last I was compelled to own myself satisfied. "But since they ain't, they ain't, and it's no use wasting time."

"No use at all," Howell admitted, rising to depart, "and we are sorry to have troubled you, my dear sir."

"No trouble, no trouble!" the old man

croaked in a voice about as cordial as the one the ordinary mortal keeps for cursing. "It be terrible damp in this here room, I think."

He moved to the door as he spoke, but at that very moment his wife (who no doubt could no longer resist the temptation to join in the hunt for a missing relative with money) came into the room through an inner door.

"Tovrgi'aa & Ameri-etaoin shrdlu emfwpf He threw at her one of his ugly looks (and I must say that I never met an old man with a larger assortment of them), but making no move to conduct us back through the house said: "Well, seeing that you are here, Martha, you can say good-bye to the gentlemen, as they've done their business."

That was a sufficiently broad hint; we took it, bade good bye to the flustered and disappointed Mrs. Halladay and her spouse, and departed without further parley.

"Now, that is the sort of person," Howell said, calmly, "that it would please me immensely to hand a legacy to."

He was tramping on steadily, without a single backward glance at the house, like one who had quite forgotten the true object of our visit. I was not as stoical, and was about to look over my shoulder when he checked me.

"Eyes front," he said, sharply, but he did not arrest my attention by touching me, and no one behind us could have known that he had stopped a movement of mine.

"Is she in there?" I demanded, in an earnest whisper.

"Probably!"

"And your plan is?"

"I'm going for a little walk, first—up hill round by the back of that big empty house, and then—"

"Yes, then?"

"Then we get back to the mill-house, I'm going straight up to the door to ask for my walking stick, which I have accidentally left behind me. Push on, sir! It's no good if they see us coming, and no good if we don't get back while they're still a bit flustered."

"But why?" I demanded.

"Why?" he retorted, with some scorn for my dullness. "Why, because the old man jaws his wife, or I'm a Dutchman! Everything that goes wrong is the missus's fault. He didn't like our visit, and so, of course, he'll think she has done something to betray him. There's going to be a family quarrel, that's all, and it's our business to hear the rag end of it."

We did push along at our best pace, holding our tongues, and harbouring our breath. But the land round the big empty house was not so easy as it looked; the stream lying low between its ditches like a Lincolnshire dyke, threw us out and added to the distance we had to cover. But at last we got into a sort of vegetable garden, and were moving as rapidly as could be expected when Howell suddenly and without warning pulled me down flat on my chest into a culley trench.

I had no practice in "taking cover," so just for a moment I felt seriously annoyed with him, and even when I ceased to be angry found it very irksome to lie prone in a trench on that portion of the anatomy which the snake is doomed to use for locomotive purposes; but when at last Howell cautiously raised his own head and peered over the ridge of earth, curiosity got the better of my injured dignity and I followed his example.

Then I saw the pressing necessity that had demanded that sudden dive into the culley trench, for old Mrs. Halladay her-

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self was on a garden path quite close to us, waddling as fast as she could go towards the apparently empty house.

"A message!" said Howell between his teeth, as she rounded some bushes and passed out of our sight. "She's carrying a message! (?! xzififfii yhgkjiffi , a message, and the folks we want are not in the mill-house but over there!"

Coupons in Each Package.

Every 10c. package of Rainbow Cut Plug Smoking Tobacco contains a coupon which is valuable for premiums.

GEORGE McLEAN PROMOTED

BOSTON, May 4.—George J. McLean, a well known newspaper man who was formerly a resident of St. John, has been appointed city editor of the Boston Herald, a position of great responsibility in a city of nearly 600,000 population. Mr. McLean was engaged in newspaper work in St. John up to eight years ago. He was on the staff of the Worcester Telegram for some time, and later after joining the Herald local staff, was appointed Boston correspondent of the New York Herald. His rise has been steady, and he is receiving numerous congratulations on his well deserved elevation to the city editor's chair. A previous occupant of the position was S. A. Wetmore, also a former St. John man.

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THE CANADIAN DRUG CO., LIMITED.

ANNAPOLIS.

ANNAPOLIS, May 4.—The death of Samuel Bent, a highly respected farmer, occurred at his home in Granville Centre on Monday, from the effects of la grippe, at the advanced age of 85 years. Deceased leaves two sons and three daughters. One son, John, is living in Middleton, Mass., and the remaining children at home.

News was received on Tuesday of the death of Mrs. Fullerton, relict of the late James Fullerton of Round Hill, which occurred at the home of her son in Toronto Sunday last, after an attack of pneumonia, at the age of 68 years. Three children, Dr. William S. Fullerton of St. Paul, Minnesota; Aubrey W. Fullerton, journalist of Toronto; and Miss May, also of Toronto, survive her. The remains were brought to Round Hill, and the funeral took place yesterday and was largely attended.

The examination in the case of Maggie Vidite, the girl arrested at Bidgetown last week for breaking into the house of Mrs. Beeler here, and appropriating several articles of feminine apparel and a small amount of cash, took place Monday before the stipendiary, and she was remanded for trial. Much sympathy is felt for the girl, who is but fifteen years of age, and her environment has been such that nothing better could be expected.

The saw mill of William Ramsey, of Dalhousie, which was located at Tupperville, was totally consumed by fire on Friday night last. The loss is a heavy one to Mr. Ramsey, as it was not insured. A cricket club was organized here on Wednesday with a large number of members, who will shortly be heard from.

Miss Chute, of Bridgetown, has opened a branch millinery parlor here in W. W. McLaughlan's building, with Miss Mabel Trosby, an experienced milliner, in charge. A. Mr. Fleet, from the United States, is reported to be in the western counties endeavoring to organize fishermen's unions, under the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. Nickerson, M.P.P., cautions the fishermen that such unions can have no legal standing. There is a local statute providing for the organization of fishermen.

Rainbow Gives Pleasure.

Just as a rainbow in the heavens is a delight to the artist, so Rainbow Cut Plug Tobacco in the pipe is a delight to the smoker.

WANTS DIVORCE

On the Ground That His Wife Was Already Married.

Scott B. Jones, of Sutton (Mass.), has instituted divorce proceedings in the Worcester county court, which opens at Worcester (Mass.) on Monday next.

He asks that his marriage to Matilda Jones be declared null and void on the ground that the woman had a husband living at the time of his marriage to her and that her first husband is still living. In his petition, Jones states that he married a woman in Sutton known as Matilda May, Dec. 24, 1898, and that they have since lived together in that town as husband and wife. He alleges that although the marriage was in legal form it was not a marriage in substance or legal effect. He further alleges that he believed he was the legal husband of the woman until recently, when he learned that she was, and still is, the rightful wife of Alexander Hay of Barnesville, N. B., to whom she was united May 1, 1882, at Barnesville. Jones asks the court to declare the marriage ceremony of 1898 null and void. It is expected depositions or other evidence from New Brunswick will be laid before the court, which will also hear Mrs. Jones' side of the case.

The Thistle Curling Rink Company, Ltd., met last evening and elected the following officers:—E. Wood Vail, president; David McClelland, vice-president; John A. Sinclair, secretary-treasurer.

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