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THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

BY BARONESS ORCZY.

(Continued.)

Her head began to ache, she turned away from this strange Blue Beard's chamber, which she had entered, and which she did not understand. She did not wish Frank to find her here, and with a last look round, she once more turned to the door. As she did so, her foot knocked against a small object, which had apparently been lying close to the desk, on the carpet, and which now went rolling, right across the room.

She stooped to pick it up. It was a solid gold ring, with a flat shield, on which was engraved a small device. Marguerite turned it over in her fingers, and then studied the engraving on the shield. It represented a small star-shaped flower, of a shape she had seen so distinctly twice before; once at the opera, and once at Lord Grenville's ball.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL.

At what particular moment the strange doubt first crept into Marguerite's mind, she could not herself afterwards have said. With the ring tightly clutched in her hand she had run out of the room, down the stairs, and out into the garden where, in complete seclusion, alone with the flowers, and the river and the birds, she could look again at the ring, and study that device more closely.

Stupidly, senselessly, now, sitting beneath the shade of an overhanging sycamore, she was looking at the plain gold shield, with the star-shaped little flower engraved upon it.

Bah! It was ridiculous; she was dreaming! Her nerves were overwrought, and she saw signs and mysteries in the most trivial coincidences. Had not everybody about town recently made a point of affecting the device of that mysterious and heroic Scarlet Pimpernel?

Did she not herself wear it embroidered on her gowns? set in gems and enamel in her hair? What was there strange in the fact that Sir Percy should have chosen to use the device as a seal-ring? He might easily have done that... yes... quite easily... and... besides... what connection could there be between her exquisite dandy of a husband, with his fine clothes and refined, lazy ways, and the daring plotter who rescued French victims from beneath the very eyes of the leaders of a blood-thirsty revolution?

Her thoughts were in a whirl—her mind a blank... She did not see anything that was going on around her, and was quite startled when a fresh young voice called to her across the garden.

"Cherrie!—cherrie! where are you?" and little Suzanne, fresh as a rosebud, with eyes dancing with glee, and brown curls fluttering in the soft morning breeze, came running across the lawn.

"They told me you were in the garden," she went on prattling merrily, and throwing herself with pretty, girlish impulse into Marguerite's arms, "so I ran out to give you a surprise. You did not expect me quite so soon, did you, my darling little Margot cherrie?"

Marguerite, who had hastily concealed the ring in the folds of her kerchief, tried to respond gaily and unconcerned to the young girl's impulsiveness.

"Indeed, sweet one," she said with a smile, "it is delightful to have you all to myself, and for a nice while long day."

"You won't be bored?"

"Oh! bored! Margot, how can you say such a wicked thing. Why? When we were in the dear old convent together, we were always happy when we were allowed to be alone together."

"And to talk secrets?"

The two young girls had linked their arms in one another's and began wandering round the garden.

"Oh! how lovely your home is, Margot, darling!" said little Suzanne, enthusiastically, "and how happy you must be!"

"Aye, indeed! I ought to be happy—oughtn't I, sweet one?" said Marguerite, with a wistful little sigh.

"How sadly you say it, cherrie... Ah, well, I suppose now that you are a married woman you won't care to talk secrets with me any longer. Oh! what lots and lots of secrets we used to have at school! Do you remember—some we did not even confide to Sister Theresa of

the Holy Angels—though she was such a dear."

"And now you have one all-important secret, eh, little one?" said Marguerite, merrily, "which you are forthwith going to confide to me. Nay, you need not blush, cherrie," she added, as she saw Suzanne's pretty little face crimson with blushes. "Faith, there's naught to be ashamed of! He is a noble and a true man, and one to be proud of as a lover, and... as a husband."

"Indeed, cherrie, I am not ashamed," rejoined Suzanne, softly; "and it makes me very proud to hear you speak so well of him. I think mummy will consent," she added thoughtfully, "and I shall be—oh! so happy—but, of course nothing is to be thought of until papa is safe."

Marguerite started. Suzanne's father! the Comte de Tournay!—one of those whose life would be jeopardized if Chauvin succeeded in establishing the identity of the Scarlet Pimpernel.

She had understood all along from the Comtesse, and also from one or two of the members of the league, that their mysterious leader had pledged his honor to bring the fugitive Comte de Tournay safely out of France. Whilst little Suzanne—unconscious of all—save her own all-important little secret, went prattling on, Marguerite's thoughts went back to the events of the past night.

Armand's peril, Chauvin's threat, his cruel "Either—or—" which she had accepted.

And then her own work in the matter, which should have culminated at one o'clock in Lord Grenville's dining room, when the relentless agent of the French government would finally learn who was this mysterious Scarlet Pimpernel, who so openly defied an army of spies and placed himself so boldly, and for mere credit, on the side of the enemies of France.

Since then she had heard nothing from Chauvin. She had concluded that he had failed, and yet, she had not felt anxious about Armand, because her husband had promised her that Armand would be safe.

But now, suddenly, as Suzanne prattled merrily along, an awful horror came upon her for what she had done. Chauvin had told her nothing, it is true; but she remembered how sarcastic and evil he looked when she took final leave of him after the ball. Had he discovered something then? had he already laid his plans for catching the daring plotter, red-handed, in France, and sending him to the guillotine without compensation or delay?

Marguerite turned sick with horror, and her hand convulsively clutched the ring in her dress.

"You are not listening, cherrie," said Suzanne, reproachfully, as she paused in her long, interesting narrative.

"Yes, yes, darling—indeed I am!" said Marguerite with an effort, forcing herself to smile. "I love to hear you talking... and your happiness makes me so very glad... Have no fear, we will manage to propitiate mummy. Sir Andrew Moulton is a noble English gentleman; he has money and position, the Comtesse will not refuse her consent... But... now, little one... tell me... what is the latest news about your father?"

"Oh! said Suzanne, with mad glee, "the best we could possibly hear. My Lord Hastings came to see mummy early this morning. He said that all is now well with dear papa, and we may safely expect him here in England in less than four days."

"Yes," said Marguerite, whose glowing eyes were fastened on Suzanne's lips, as she continued merrily:

"Oh, we have no fear now! You don't know, cherrie, that that great and noble Scarlet Pimpernel himself, has gone to save papa. He has gone, cherrie... actually gone... added Suzanne excitedly. "He was in London this morning; he will be in Calais, perhaps, tomorrow... where he will meet papa... and then... and then..."

The blow had fallen. She had expected it all along, though she had tried for the last half-hour to delude herself and to cheat her fears. He had gone to Calais, had been in London this morning... he... the Scarlet Pimpernel... Percy Blakeney... her husband... whom she had betrayed last night to Chauvin...

Percy... Percy... her husband... the Scarlet Pimpernel... Oh! how could she have been so blind? She understood it now—all at once—that part she played—the mask he wore—in order to throw dust in everybody's eyes.

And all for sheer sport and devilry of counsel—saving men, women and children from death, as other men destroy and kill animals for the excitement, the love of the thing. The idle, rich man wanted some aim in life—he, and the few young bucks he enrolled under his banner, had amused themselves for months in risking their lives for the sake of an innocent few.

Perhaps he had meant to tell her when they were first married; and then the story of the Marquis de St. Cyr had come to his ears, and he had suddenly turned from her, thinking, no doubt, that she might some day betray him and his comrades, who had sworn to follow him; and so he had tricked her, as he tricked all others, whilst hundreds now owed their

COLLINS HEDGED IN BY

VERY STRONG EVIDENCE

Chief Clerk Produces Murdered Woman's Handkerchief From the Prisoner's Valise---Damaging Evidence Given About Gold Watch Which Prisoner Had on the Road to Musquash.

Hopewell Cape, N. B., Sept. 27.—The strongest evidence for the crown which has yet been given in the preliminary examination of Thomas Collins, suspected of the murder at New Ireland of Mary Ann Macaulay, was that of Chief Clerk of the St. John police force at this afternoon's session before Magistrate Stuart at Hopewell Cape. The production from a valise taken along with Collins in Don's Hotel at Musquash of a silk handkerchief on which was worked the name "Mary Ann Macaulay," is in itself damaging to the case of the prisoner as are also a number of statements made to Chief Clerk while in jail at St. John, the principal one of these was in regard to a gold watch which Thomas Lynch, of Carleton Place, had seen Collins carrying at Spruce Lake and which after the suspect's arrest was not found and has never been located.

Mr. Clark, in his evidence, said that Collins for a time had denied ever having this watch, but later said he had thrown it away. The prisoner showed more interest in the evidence than he had ever previously displayed and especially so when the valise was opened in court and its contents tolled off. Then he leaned forward on the table at which he sat watching eagerly every movement and when the last article had been removed the prisoner was peering freely although the court room was not more than comfortably warm.

The emptying of the valise was one of the most interesting features of this afternoon's case. It was a grey telescope grip and was found to contain the following articles: One pair men's drawers, bath towel, two undershirts, cotton shirt, brush and two combs and clothes brush, two neckties, six linen handkerchiefs, four men's and two ladies'. A silk handkerchief embroidered worked in one corner with "Buffalo exposition, 1901" and the other with the name, "Mary Ann Macaulay" box soap, cake toilet soap, matches, pack of cards, razor in case, pencil and small case court plaster.

Daniel Lynch, of Carleton, St. John, gave some important testimony. He said he was employed by the Union Ice Co. He saw the accused, Thomas Collins, at Spruce Lake, 21st day of August. He met him about half past 6 or 7 o'clock. He asked a friend who was with him if he knew where he (Collins) could get a boarding house and his friend told him he did not know. Collins had a valise in his hand somewhat similar to the one produced in court. The next evening he met Collins again. This time he was driving on a double team with Billy Dean and going in the direction of Musquash. He and Dean approached the place where he was the drivers of the team and said "If I had enough money I'd treat." Turning around to Collins he said, "Have you any money?" Collins pulled out a red pocket-book and taking out about 35 cents gave it to Dean. They went into a house run by a man named Martin and had a drink. After having a drink they went into the piano room. There were a couple of girls there and after they had sung a couple of songs Collins started to talk to one of them whom he knew as Maggie. After talking to her he pulled out a gold watch, which had engraved on the outside the letters "M. M." She took the watch in her hand and tried to open it. Collins took it away from her and opened it himself, showing her the inside. There were three initials on the inside. The watch was a small one and the case appeared to be gold. It was hung case watch. Collins was asked where he got it and said it was a present he had given his girl. He said the girl died suddenly and the

lives to him, and many families owed him both life and happiness.

The mask of the insane fog had been a good one, and the part consummately well played. No wonder that Chauvin's spies had failed to detect, in the apparently brainless nincompoop, the man whose reckless daring and resourceful ingenuity had baffled the keenest French spies, both in France and in England. Even last night when Chauvin went to Lord Grenville's dining-room to seek that daring Scarlet Pimpernel, he only saw that insane Sir Percy Blakeney fast asleep in a corner of the sofa.

Had his astute mind guessed the secret, then? Here lay the whole awful, horrible, amazing puzzle. In betraying a nameless stranger to his fate in order to save her brother, had Marguerite Blakeney sent her husband to his death?

No! no! no! a thousand times no! Surely Fate could not deal a blow like that! Nature itself would rise in revolt: her hand, when it held that tiny scrap of paper last night, would surely have been struck numb ere it committed a deed so appalling and so terrible.

"But what is it, cherrie?" said little Suzanne, now genuinely alarmed, for Marguerite's color had become dull and ashen. "Are you ill, Marguerite? What is it?" "Nothing, nothing, child," she murmured, as in a dream. "Wait a moment... let me think... think!... You said... the Scarlet Pimpernel had gone today...?"

"Marguerite, cherrie, what is it? You frighten me..."

"It is nothing, child, I tell you... nothing... I must be a little nervous... and—dear one... I may have to curtail our time together today... I may have to go away—you'll understand?"

"I understand that something has happened, cherrie, and that you want to be alone... I won't be a hindrance to you. Don't think of me. My maid, Lucile, has not yet gone... we will go back together... don't think of me."

She threw her arms impulsively round Marguerite. Child as she was, she felt the poignancy of her friend's grief, and with the infinite tact of her girlish tenderness she did not try to pry into it, but was ready to efface herself.

She kissed Marguerite again and again, then walked sadly across the lawn. Marguerite did not move, she remained there, thinking... wondering what was to be done.

Just as little Suzanne was about to mount the terrace steps, a groom came running around the house towards his mistress. He carried a sealed letter in his hand. Suzanne instinctively turned back; her heart told her that here perhaps was further ill news for her friend, and she felt that her poor Margot was not in a fit state to bear any more.

The groom stood respectfully beside his mistress, then he handed her the sealed letter.

"What is that?" asked Marguerite. "Just come by runner, my lady."

Marguerite took the letter mechanically, and turned it over in her trembling fingers.

"Who sent it?" she said.

"The runner said, my lady," replied the groom, "that his orders were to deliver this, and your ladyship would understand from whom it came."

(To be continued.)

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A RAIN MOOD

We prayed for a day of rain In the sunny summer weather And for long hours spent together In the heavy bush and gloom Of a dusky silent room And the pater of drops in the pane, And a murmurous sigh in the leaves And the swish of the rain in the eaves And the tremulous trouble and start Of a wind in the great tree's heart— We prayed for a day of rain That the world might seem less wide And the minutes might seem more long Sung to the drowsy song of the pane. For a barrier betwixt our souls That seemed to us to be one In the glare of the blazing sun. We prayed for a day of rain And the exquisite infinite sense Of a being more intense And the needlessness of speech For the lips and hands of each In the patter of drops in the pane. By William Apperall Bradley, in the October McClure.

The insurance companies interested in Centenary church fire yesterday appointed Edward Bates to appraise the damage for them. The church trustees appointed James Myles. The quarterly board and trustees of the church are to meet tonight to consider the situation. Rev. Dr. Sprague, the pastor, said last night that he hoped to hold service in the church Sunday. It is thought because of the smoke the church will have to be re-painted.