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THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

BY BARONESS ORCZY.

(Continued.)

Sally was already helping the ladies to
take off their travelling cloaks, and both
turned, with a shiver, towards the bright-
ly-burning hearth.

There was a general movement among
the company in the coffee-room. Sally
had bustled off to her kitchen, whilst
Jellyband, still profuse with his respect-
ful salutations, arranged one or two chairs
around the fire. Mr. Hempstead, touching
his forehead, was quietly vacating the seat
in the hearth. Everyone was staring
curiously, yet deferentially, at the foreign-
ers.

"Ah, Messieurs! what can I say?" said
the elder of the two ladies, as she stretched
a pair of fine, aristocratic hands to the
warmth of the blaze, and looked with
unpeakable gratitude first at Lord An-
tony, then at one of the young men who
had accompanied her party, and who was
busy divesting himself of his heavy,
caped coat.

"Only that you are glad to be in Eng-
land, Comtesse," replied Lord Antony,
"and that you have not suffered too much
from your trying voyage."

"Indeed, indeed, we are glad to be in
England," she said, while her eyes filled
with tears, "and we have already forgot-
ten all that we have suffered."

Her voice was musical and low, and
there was a great deal of calm dignity
and of many sufferings nobly endured
marked in the handsome, aristocratic face,
with its wealth of exquisite hair dress-
ed high above the forehead, after the
fashion of the times.

"I hope my friend, Sir Andrew
Foulkes, proved an entertaining travel-
ling companion, madame?"

"Ah, indeed, Sir Andrew was kindness
itself. How could my children and I ever
show enough gratitude to you all, Mes-
sieurs!"

Her companion, a dainty, girlish figure,
childlike and pithy in its look of fati-
gue and of sorrow, had said nothing as
yet, but her eyes, large, brown, and full
of tears, looked up from the fire and
sought those of Sir Andrew Foulkes,
who had drawn near to the hearth and
to her; then, as they met his, which
were fixed with unconcealed admiration
upon the sweet face before him, a thought
of warmer color rushed up to her pale
cheeks.

"So this is England," she said, as she
looked round with childlike curiosity at
the great open hearth, the oak rafters,
and the yokes with their elaborate
enamel and jival, rubicund, British coun-
tenances.

"A bit of it, Mademoiselle," replied Sir
Andrew, smiling, "but all of it, at your
service."

The young girl blushed again, but this
time a bright smile, fleet and sweet, il-
luminated her dainty face. She said: "No-
thing as Sir Andrew too, was silent
yet those two young people understood
one another, as young people have a way
of doing all the world over, and have
done since the world began."

"But, I say, supper!" here broke in
Lord Antony's jovial voice, "supper, hon-
est Jellyband. Where is that pretty
wench of yours and her kind of soup
Zooks, man; while you stand there gap-
ing at the ladies, they will faint with
hunger."

"One moment! one moment, my lord,"
said Jellyband, as he threw open the
door that led to the kitchen and shouted
lustily: "Sally! Hey, Sally there, are
you ready, my girl?"

Sally was ready, and the next moment
she appeared in the doorway carrying a
gigantic tureen, from which rose a cloud
of steam and an abundance of savoury
odour.

"Odd's my life, supper at last!" ejacu-
lated Lord Antony, merrily, as he gal-
lantly offered his arm to the Comtesse.

"May I have the honour?" he asked
ceremoniously, as he led her towards the
supper table.

There was general bustle in the coffee-
room. Mr. Hempstead and most of the
yokes and fisher-folk had gone to make
way for "the quality," and to finish
smoking their pipes elsewhere. Only the
two strangers stood on, quietly and un-
consciously playing their game of dom-
inoes and sipping their wine; whilst at
another table Harry Watte, who was fast
losing his temper, watched pretty Sally
bustling round the table.

She looked a very dainty picture of
English rural life, and no wonder that
the susceptible young Frenchman could
scarce take his eyes off her pretty face.
The Vicomte de Tournay was scarce
nineteen, a beardless boy, on whom the
terrible tragedies which were being en-
acted in his own country had made but
little impression. He was elegantly, and
even foppishly dressed, and once safely
landed in England he was evidently ready
to forget the horrors of the Revolution in
the delights of English life.

"Pardi, if this is England," he said as
he continued to ogle Sally with marked
satisfaction, "I am if it be satisfied."

It would be impossible at this point to
record the exact exclamation which es-
caped through Harry Watte's clenched
teeth. Only respect for "the quality,"
and notably for my Lord Antony, kept
his marked disapproval of the young for-
eigner in check.

"Nay, but this is England, you aban-
doned young reprobate," interposed Lord
Antony, with a laugh, "and do not I
pray, bring your nose foreign ways into
this most moral country?"

Lord Antony had already sat down at
the head of the table with the Com-
tesse on his right. Jellyband was bust-
ling round, filling glasses, and putting
chairs straight, Sally waited, ready to
hand round the soup. Harry Watte's
friends had at last succeeded in taking
him out of the room, for his temper was
growing more and more violent under
the Vicomte's obvious admiration for
Sally.

"Suzanne," came in stern, commanding
accents from the rigid Comtesse.

Suzanne blushed again; she had lost
count of time and of place, whilst she had
stood beside the fire, allowing the hand-
some young Englishman's eyes to dwell
upon her sweet face, and his hand, as
if unconsciously, to rest upon hers. Her
mother's voice brought her back to real-
ity once more, and with a submissive
"Yes, Mama," she too took her place at
the supper table.

CHAPTER IV.
THE LEAGUE OF THE SCARLET
PIMPERNEL.

They all looked a merry, even a happy
party, as they sat round the table; Sir
Andrew Foulkes and Lord Antony Dew-
hurst, two typical good-looking, well-bred
and well-bred Englishmen of that year of

1792, and the aristocratic French
comtesse with her two children, who had
just escaped from such dire perils, and
found a safe retreat at last on the shores
of protecting England.

In the corner the two strangers had ap-
parently finished their game; one of them
arose, and standing with his back to the
merry company at the table, he adjusted
with much deliberation his large triple
capote coat. As he did so, he gave one
quick glance all around him. Everyone
was busy laughing and chatting, and he
murmured the words "All safe!" his com-
panion then, with the alertness borne
of long practice, slipped on to his knees
in a moment, and the next had crept
noiselessly under the oak bench. The
stranger then with a loud "Good-night!"
quietly walked out of the coffee-room.

Not one of those at the supper table
had noticed this curious and silent man-
oeuvre, but when the stranger finally
closed the door of the coffee-room be-
hind him, they all instinctively sighed a
sigh of relief.

"Alone, at last!" said Lord Antony,
jovially.

Then the young Vicomte de Tournay
rose, glass in hand, and with the grand
affectionate peculiar to the times, he raised
it aloft, and said in broken English:
"To His Majesty George Third of Eng-
land, God bless him for his hospitality to
us all, poor exiles from France."

"His Majesty the King!" echoed Lord
Antony and Sir Andrew as they drank
loyally to the toast.

"To His Majesty King Louis of France,"
added Sir Andrew, with solemnity. "May
God bless him and give him victory over
his enemies."

Everyone rose and drank this toast in sil-
ence. The fate of the unfortunate King
of France, then a prisoner of his own peo-
ple, seemed to cast a gloom even over
Mr. Jellyband's pleasant countenance.

"And to Mademoiselle de Tournay de Be-
serrive," said Lord Antony, merrily. "May
we welcome him in England before many
days are over."

"Ah, Monsieur," said the Comtesse, as
with a slightly trembling hand she con-
veyed her glass to her lips. "I scarcely dare
to hope."

But already Lord Antony had served out
the soup, and for the next few moments
all conversation ceased, while Jellyband
and Sally handed round the plates and ev-
eryone began to eat.

"Faith, Madam!" said Lord Antony,
after a while, "must I not tell you, I
ing yourself, Mademoiselle Suzanne and
my friend the Vicomte safely in England
now, surely you must feel reassured as to
the fate of Monsieur le Comte."

"Ah, Monsieur," replied the Comtesse,
with a heavy sigh, "I trust in God—I can
but pray and hope here interposed Sir
Andrew Foulkes, "trust in God by all
means, but believe also a little in your
English friends, who have sworn to bring
the Count safely across the Channel, even
if they have to march through fire and
sword to do so."

"Indeed, indeed, Monsieur," she replied,
"I have the fullest confidence in you and
in your friends. Your fame, I assure you,
has spread throughout the whole of
France. The way some of my own friends
have escaped from the clutches of that aw-
ful revolutionary tribunal was nothing
short of a miracle—and all done by you
and your friends."

"We were but the hands, Madam, in
Comtesse . . .

"But my husband, Monsieur," said the
Comtesse, whilst unshed tears seemed to
well her voice, "he is in each and every
I would never have left him, only . . .
there were my children . . . I was torn
between my duty to him, and to them.
They refused to go without me . . . and
you and your friends assured me so so-
lemnly that my husband would be safe.
But, oh! now that I am here—amongst you
all in this beautiful free England—I think
of him, lying for his life, hunted like a
poor beast . . . in each peril . . . I
should not have left him . . . I should not
have left him . . .

The poor woman had completely broken
down; fatigue, sorrow and emotion had
overmastered her rigid, aristocratic bear-
ing. She was crying gently to herself,
"What Suzanne ran up to her and tried to
kiss away her tears."

Lord Antony and Sir Andrew had said
nothing to interrupt the Comtesse whilst
she was speaking. There was no doubt
that they felt deeply for her; their very
silence testified to that—but in every cen-
tury, and ever since England has been
what it is, an Englishman has always felt
somewhat ashamed of his own emotion and
of his own sympathy. And so the two
young men said nothing, and busied them-
selves in trying to hide their feelings, only
succeeding in looking immeasurably sheep-
ish.

"As for me, Monsieur," said Suzanne,
"I am not a Frenchwoman, though a wealth
of brown curls across at Sir Andrew, "I
trust you absolutely, and I know that
you will bring my dear father safely to
England, just as you brought us today."

This was said with so much confidence,
such unuttered hope, and belief, that it
seemed as if by magic to dry the mother's
eyes, and to bring a smile upon every-
body's lips.

"Nay, you shame me, Mademoiselle,"
replied Sir Andrew, "though my life is at
your service, I have been but a humble
tool in the hands of our great leader, who
organized and effected your escape."

He had spoken with so much warmth
and vehemence that Suzanne's eyes fast-
ened upon him in undisguised wonder.

"Your leader, Monsieur," said the Com-
tesse, sagely, "Ah! of course, you must
have a leader. And I did not think of
that before! But tell me where is he? I
must go to him at once, and I and my
children must throw ourselves at his feet,
and thank him for all that he has done
for us."

"Ah, Madame!" said Lord Antony,
"that is impossible."
"Impossible?—Why?"

"Because the Scarlet Pimpernel works
in the dark, and his identity is only
known under a solemn oath of secrecy to
his immediate followers."

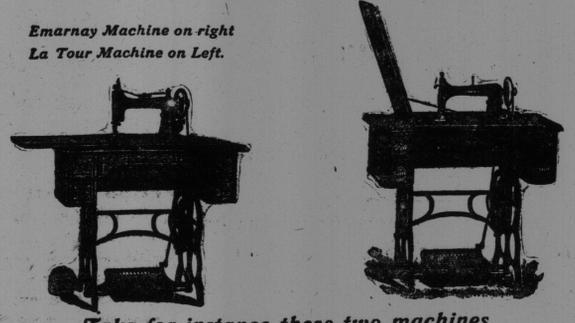
"The Scarlet Pimpernel!" said Suzanne,
with a merry laugh. "Why! what a droll
name! What is the Scarlet Pimpernel,
Monsieur?"

She looked at Sir Andrew with eager
curiosity. The young man's face had be-
come almost transfigured. His eyes shone
with enthusiasm; her worship, love, ad-
miration for his leader seemed literally
to glow upon his face.

"The Scarlet Pimpernel, Mademoiselle,"
he said, at last, "is the name of a
humble English way-side flower; but it
is also the best chosen to hide the iden-
tity of the best and bravest man in all
the world, so that he may better succeed
in accomplishing the noble task he has
set himself to do."

"Ah, yes," here interposed the young
Vicomte, "I have heard speak of the
Scarlet Pimpernel. A little flower—red?
—yes! They say in Paris that everytime

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