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ing-suit which he had on when Marguerite last saw him at Richmond, so many hours ago. As usual, his get-up was absolutely irreproachable, the fine Mechlin lace at his neck and wrists was immaculate in its gossamer daintiness, his hands looked slender and white, his fair hair was carefully brushed, and he carried his eyeglass with his usual affected gesture. In fact, at this moment, Sir Percy Blakeney, Bart., might have been on his way to a garden-party at the Prince of Wales', instead of deliberately, cold-bloodedly running his head in a trap, set for him by his deadliest enemy.

He stood for a moment in the middle of the room, whilst Marguerite, absolutely paralyzed with horror, seemed unable even to breathe.

Every moment she expected that Chauvelin would give a signal, that the place would fill with soldiers, that she would rush down and help Percy to sell his life dearly. As he stood there, suavely unconscious, she very nearly screamed out to him,-

"Fly, Percy !- 'tis your deadly enemy ! -fly before it be too late !'

But she had not time even to do that, for the next moment Blakeney quietly walked to the table, and, jovially clapping the cure on the back, said in his own drawly, affected way,-

"Odds fish ! . . . er . M. Chauvelin . . . I vow I never thought of meeting you here."

Chauvelin, who had been in the very act of conveying soup to his mouth, fairly choked. His thin face became absolutely purple, and a violent fit of coughing saved this cunning representative of France from betraying the most boundless surprise he had ever experienced. There was no doubt that this bold move on the part of the enemy had been wholly unexpected, as far as he was concerned : and the daring impudence of it completely nonplussed him for the moment.

Obviously he had not taken the precaution of having the inn surrounded with soldiers. Blakeney had evidently guessed that much, and no doubt his resourceful brain had already formed some plan by which he could turn this unexpected interview to account.

Marguerite up in the loft had not moved. She had made a solemn promise to Sir Andrew not to speak to her husband before strangers, and she had sufficient self-control not to throw herself unreasoningly and impulsively across his men together was a terrible trial of fortitude. Marguerite had heard Chauvelin give the orders for the patrolling of all the roads. She knew that if Percy now left the "Chat Gris"-in whichever direction he happened to go-he could not go far without being sighted by some of Captain Jutley's men on patrol. On the



to paint anything that useds paint-

ing. It protects the surface

covered better and longer than

Marguerite's breath stopped short ; she seemed to feel her very life standing still momentarily whilst she listened to that voice and to that song. In the singer she had recognized her husband. Chauvelin, too, had heard it, for he darted a quick glance towards the door, then hurriedly took up his broad-brimmed hat and clapped it over his head.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Eagle and the Fox

The voice drew nearer; for one brief second the wild desire seized Marguerite to rush down the steps and fly across the room, to stop that song at any cost, to beg the cheerful singer to fly-fly for his life, before it be too late. She checked the impulse just in time. Chauvelin would stop her before she reached the door, and, moreover, she had no idea if he had any soldiers posted within his call. Her impetuous act might prove the death-signal of the man she would have died to save.

"Long to reign over us. God save the King !"

sang the voice more lustily than ever. The next moment the door was thrown open and there was dead silence for a second or so.

Marguerite could not see the door : she held her breath, trying to imagine, what was happening.

Percy Blakeney on entering had, of course, at once caught sight of the cure saying cheerfully, "so very sorry . .

"thule, there ! no one about ? Where's of soup."

He wore the magnificent coas and rid- down at Chauvelin.

if he stayed, would have time to come back with the half dozen men Chauvelin had specially ordered.

The trap was closing in, and Marguerite could do nothing but watch and wonder. The two men looked such a strange contrast, and of the two it was Chauvelin who exhibited a slight touch of fear. Marguerite knew him well enough to guess what was passing in his mind. He had no fear for his own person, although he certainly was alone in a lonely inn with a man who was powerfully built, and who was daring and reckless beyond the bounds of probability. She knew that Chauvelin would willingly have braved perilous encounters for the sake of the cause he had at heart, but what he did fear was that this impudent Englishman would, by knocking him down, double his own chances of escape ; his underlings might not succeed so well in capturing the Scarlet Pimpernel, when not directed by the cunning hand and the shrewd brain which had deadly hate for an incentive.

Evidently, however, the representative of the French Government had nothing to fear for the moment, at the hands of his powerful adversary. Blakeney, with his most inane laugh and pleasant goodnature, was solemnly patting him on the back.

"I am so demmed sorry . . ." he was at the table; his hesitation lasted less I seem to have upset you . . . eating . . just like you . . . with a spoonful

And he surled shyly, good-humoredly,

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