POOR DOCUMENT

MC 2033

THE POWERS AND MAXINE

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CHAPTER V.

Ivor Does What He Can For Maxine.

"How long a time do you think I had been in this room, Monsieur," she asked, "before you—rather rudely, I must say—broke in upon my conversation with my friend?"

"You had been here exactly three minutes," replied the Commissary of Police.

"As much as that? I should have thought less. We had to greet each other, after having been parted for many months; and still, in the three minutes, you believe we had time to concoct a plot of some sort, and to find some safe corner—all the while in semi-darkness—for the hiding of a thing important to the police—a bomb, perhaps? You must think us very clever."

"I know that you are very clever, Mademoiselle."

"Perhaps I ought to thank you for the compliment," she answered, allowing anger to warm her voice at last; "but this is almost beyond a joke. A woman comes to the rooms of a friend. Both of them are so placed that they prefer her call not to be talked about. For that reason, and for the woman's sake, the friend chooses to take a name that isn't his—as he has a right to do. Yet, just because that woman happens unfortunately to be well-konwn—her face and name being public property—she is followed, she is spied upon, humiliated, and all, no doubt, on account of some silly mistake, or malicious false information. Ah, it is shameful, Monsieur! I wonder the police of Paris can stoop to such stupidity, such meanness."

"When we have found out that it is a mistake, the police of Paris will apologize to you Mademoiselle, through me," said the Commissary, "until then, I regret if our duty makes us disagreeable to you." Then, turning to his two gendarmes, he directed them to search the room, beginning with all possible places in which a paper parcel or large envelope might be hidden, within ten metres of the spot where Mademoiselle and Monsieur had stood talking together when the police opened the door.

Maxine did not protest again. With her head up, and a look as if the three policemen were of no importance to her than the furniture of the room, she walked to the mantelpiece and stood leaning her elbow upon it. Weariness, disgusted indifference were in her attitude; but I guessed that she felt herself actually in need of physical support.

The two gendarmes moved about in noiseless obedience, their faces expressionless as masks. They did not glance at Maxine, giving themselves entirely to the task at which they had been set. But their superior officer did not once take his eyes from the pure profile she turned scornfully towards him. I knew why he watched her thus, and thought of a foolish, child's game I used to play twenty years ago, at little-boy-and-girl parties: the game of "Hide-the-Handkerchief." While one searched for the treasure, those who knew where it was stood by, saying: "Now you are warm. Now you are hot—boiling hot. Now you are cool again. Now you are ice cold." It was as if we were five players at this game, and Maxine de Renzie's white, deathly smiling face was expected to proclaim against her will: "Now you are warm. Now you are hot. Now you are ice cold."

There was a table in the middle of the room, with one or two volumes of photographs and brightly-bound guide books of Paris upon it, as well as my hat and gloves which I had tossed down as I came in. The gendarmes picked up these things, examined them, laid them aside, peered under the table; peered behind the silk cushions on the sofa, opened the doors and drawers of a bric-a-brac cabinet and a small writing desk, lifted the corners of the rugs on the bare, polished floor; and finally, bowing apologies to Maxine for disturbing her, took out the logs from the fireplace where the fire was ready for lighting, and pried into the vases on the mantel. Also they shook the silk and lace window curtains, and moved the pictures on the walls. When all this had been done in vain, the pair confessed with shrugs of the shoulders that they were at a loss.

During the search, which had been conducted in silence, I had a curious sensation, caused by my intense sympathy with Maxine's suffering. I felt as if my heart were the pendulum of a clock which had been jarred until it was uncertain whether to go on or stop. Once, when the gendarmes were peering under the sofa, or behind the sofa cushions, a grey shadow round Maxine's eyes made her beautiful face look like a death-mask in the white electric light, which did not fail now, or spare her any cruelty of revelation. She was smiling contemptuously still—always the same smile—but her forehead appeared to have been sprinkled with diamond dust.

I saw that dewy sparkle, and wondered, sickeningly, if the enemy saw it too. But I had not long to wait before being satisfied on this point. The keen-eyed Frenchman gave no further instructions to his baffled subordinates, but crossing the room to the sofa stood staring at it fixedly. Then, grasping the back with his capable-looking hand, instead of beginning at once a quest which his gendarmes had abandoned, he searched the face of the tortured woman.

Unflinching in courage, she seemed not to see him. But it was as if she had suddenly ceased to breathe. Her bosom no longer rose and fell. The only movement was the visible knocking of her heart. I felt that, in another moment, if he found what she had hidden, her heart would knock no longer, and she would die. For a second, I wildly counted the chances of overpowering all three men, stunning them into unconsciousness, and giving Maxine time to escape with the letter-case. But I knew the attempt would be useless. Even if I could succeed, the noise would arouse the hotel. People would come. Other policemen would rush in to the help of their comrades, and matters would be worse than with us before.

The Frenchman, having looked at Maxine, and seen the tell-tale beating of her bodice, deliberately laid the silk cushions on the floor. Then, pushing his hand down between the seat and the back of the sofa, he moved it along the crevice inch by inch.

I watched the hand, which looked cruel to me as that of an executioner. I think Maxine watched it, too. Suddenly it stopped. It had found something. The other hand sprang to its assistance. Both worked together, groping and prying for a few seconds: evidently the something hidden had been forced deeply and firmly down. Then, up it came—a dark red leather case, which was neither a letter-case nor a jewel-case, but might be used for either. My heart almost stopped beating in the intense relief I felt. For this was not the thing I had come from London to bring Maxine.

I could hardly keep back a cry of joy. But I did keep it back, for suspense and anxiety had left me a few grains of sense.

"Voila!" grunted the Commissary of Police. "I said that you were clever, Mademoiselle. But it would have been as well for all concerned if you had spared us this trouble."

"You are alone to blame for the trouble," answered Maxine. "I never saw that thing before in my life."

I was astonished that there was no ring of satisfaction in her voice. It sounded hard and defiant, but there was no triumph in it, no joy that, so far, she was saved—as if by a miracle. Rather was her tone that of a woman at bay, fighting to the last, but without hope.

"Nor did I ever see it before." I echoed her words.

She glanced at me as if with gratitude. Yet there was no need for gratitude. I was not lying for her sake, but speaking the plain truth, as I thought that she must know.

For the first time the Commissary of Police condescended to laugh. "I suppose you want me to believe that the last occupant of this room tucked some valued possession down into a safe hiding place—and then forgot all about it. That is likely, is it not? You shall have the pleasure, Mademoiselle—and you, Monsieur—of seeing with me what that careless person left behind him."

He had laid the thing on the table, and now he tapped it, aggravatingly, with his hand. But the strain was over for me. I looked on with calmness, and was amazed when at last Maxine flew to him, no longer scornful, tragically indifferent in her manner, but imploring—a weak, agonized woman.

"For the love of God, spare me, Monsieur," she sobbed. "You don't understand. I confess that what you have there, is mine. I have held myself high, in my own eyes, and the eyes of the world, because I—an actress—never took a lover. But now I am like the others. This is my lover. There's the price I put on my love. Now, Monsieur, I ask you on my womanhood to hold what is in that leather case sacred."

I felt the blood rush to my face as if she had struck me across it with a whip. My first thought, to my shame, was a selfish one. What if this became known, this thing that she had said, and Diana should hear? Then indeed all hope for me and the girl I loved would be over. My second thought was for Maxine herself. But she had sealed my lips. Since she had chosen the way, I could only be silent.

"Mademoiselle, it is a grief to me that I must refuse such a prayer, from such a woman. But duty before chivalry. I must see the contents of that case," said the Commissary of Police.

She caught his hand and rained tears upon it. "No—no!" she implored. "If I were rich, I would offer you thousands to spare me. I've been extravagant—I haven't saved, but all I have in the world is yours if——"

"There can be no such 'if,' Mademoiselle," the man broke in. And wrenching his hand free, he opened the case before she could again prevent him.

Out fell a cascade of light, a diamond necklace. It flashed to the floor, where it lay on one of the sofa cushions, sending up a spray of rainbow colours.

"Sacre bleu!" muttered the Frenchman, under his breath, for whatever he had expected, he had not expected that. But Maxine spoke not a word. Shorn of hope, as, in spite of her prayers and tears, the leather case was torn open, she was shorn of strength as well; and the beautiful, tall figure crumpling like a flower broken on its stalk, she would have fallen if I had not caught her, holding her up against my shoulder. When the cataract of diamonds sprang out of the case, however, I felt her limp body straighten itself. I felt her pulses leap. I felt her begin to live once more. She had drunk a draught of hope and life, and fortified by it was gathering all her scattered forces together for a new fight, if fight she must again.

The Commissary of Police turned the leather case wrong side out. It was empty. There had been nothing inside but the necklace: not a card, not a scrap of paper.

"Where, then, is the document?" Crestfallen, he put the question half to himself, half to Maxine de Renzie.

"What document?" she asked, too wise to betray relief in voice or face. Hearing the heavy tone, seeing the shamed face, the hanging head that lay against my shoulder, who—knowing a little less than I did of the truth—would have dreamed that in her soul sne thanked God for a miracle? Even I would not have been sure, had I not have felt the life stealing back into her half-dead body.

"The contents of the case are not what I came here to find," admitted the enemy.

"I do not know what you came to find, but you have made me suffer horribly," said Maxine. "You have been very cruel to a woman who had done nothing to deserve such humiliation. All pleasure I might have taken in my diamonds is gone now. I shall never have a peaceful moment—never be able to wear them joyfully. I shall have the thought in my mind that people who look at me will be saying: 'Every woman has her price. There is the price of Maxine de Renzie.'"

"You need have no such thought, Mademoiselle," the man protested. "We shall never speak to anyone except to those who will receive our report, of what we have heard and seen in this room."

"Won't you search further?" asked Maxine. "Since you seemed to expect something else——"

"You would not have time to conceal more than one thing, Mademoiselle," said the policeman, with a smile that was faintly grim. "Besides, this case was what you did not wish us to find. You are a great actress, but you could not control the dew which sprang out on your forehead, or the beating of your heart when I touched the sofa, so I knew: I had been watching you for that. There has been an error, and I can only apologize."

"I don't blame you, but those who sent you," said Maxine, letting me lead her to a chair into which she sank, limply. "I am thankful you do not tell me those diamonds are contraband in some way. I was not sure but it would end in that."

"Not at all, Mademoiselle. I wish you joy of them. It is you who will adorn the jewels, not they you. Again I apologize for myself and my companions. We have but done our duty."

"I have an enemy, who must have contrived this plot against me," exclaimed Maxine, as if on a sudden thought. "It is said that 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.' But what of a man who has been scorned—by a woman? He knew I wanted all my strength for to-night—the night of the new play—and he will be hoping that this has broken me. But I will not be broken. If you would atone, Messieurs, for your part in this scene, you will go to the theatre this evening and encourage me by your applause."

All three bowed. The Commissary of Police, lately so relentless, murmured compliments. It was all very French, and after what had passed, gave me the sensation that I was in a dream.

CHAPTER VI.

Ivor.

They were gone. They had closed the door behind them. I looked at Maxine, but she did not speak. With her finger to her lips she got up, trembling still; and walking to the door, she opened it suddenly to look out. Nobody was there.

"They may have gone into your bedroom to listen at the door," she whispered.

I took the hint, and going quietly into the room adjoining, turned on the light. Emptiness there: but I left the door open, and the electricity switched on; they might change their minds, or be more subtle than they wished to seem.

Maxine threw herself on the sofa, gathering up the necklace from the cushion where it had fallen, and lifting it in both hands pressed the glittering mass against her lips and cheeks.

"Thank God, thank God—and thank you, Ivor, best of friends!" she said brokenly, in so low a voice that no ear could have caught her words, even if pressed against the keyhole. Then, letting the diamonds drop into her lap, she flung back her head and laughed and cried together.

"Oh, Ivor, Ivor!" she panted, between her sobs and hysterical gusts of laughter. "The agony of it—the agony—and the joy now! You're wonderful. Good, precious Ivor—dear friend—saint."

At this I laughed too, partly to calm her, and patted gently the hands with which she had nervously clutched my sleeve.

"Heaven knows I don't deserve one of those epithets," I said, "I'll just stick to friend."

"Not deserve them?" she repeated. "Not deserve them, when you've saved me—I don't yet understand how—from a horror worse than death—oh, but a thousand times worse, for I wanted to die. I meant to die. If they had found it. I shouldn't have lived to see to-morrow morning. Tell me—how did you work such a miracle? How did you get this necklace, that meant so much to me (and to the one I love), and how did you hide the—other thing?"

"I don't know anything about this necklace," I answered, stupidly, "I didn't bring it."

"You—didn't bring it?"

"No. At least, that red leather thing isn't the case I carried. When the fellow pulled it out from the sofa, I saw it wasn't what I'd had, so I thanked our lucky stars, and would have tried to let you know that all hope wasn't over, if I'd dared to catch your eye or make a signal."

Maxine was suddenly calm. The tears had dried on her cheeks, and her eyes wer fever bright.

"Ivor, you can't know what you are talking about," she said in a changed voice. "That read leather case is what you took out of your breast pocket and handed to me when I first came into the room. At the sound of the knock, I pushed it down as far as I could between the seat and back of the sofa, and then ran off to a distance before the door opened. You did bring the necklace, knowingly or not; and as it was the cause of all my trouble in the beginning, I needn't tell you of the joy I had in seeing it, apart from the heavenly relief of being spared discovery of the thing I feared. Now, when you've given me the other packet, which you hid so marvellously, I can go away happy."

"I stared at her, feeling more than ever like one in a dream.

"I gave you the only thing I brought," I said. "It was in my breast pocket, inside my coat. I took it out, and put it in your hands. There was no other thing. Look again in the sofa. It must be there still. This red case is something else—we can try to account for it later. It all came through the lights not working. If it hadn't been so dark, you would have seen that I gave you a dark, green leather letter-case—quite different from this, though of about the same length—rather less thick, and——"

Frantically she began ransacking the crevice between the seat and back of the sofa, but nothing was there. We might have known there would be nothing, or the Commissary of Police would have been before us. With a cry she cut me short at last, throwing up her hands in despair. She was deathly pale again, and all the light had gone out of her eyes, leaving them dull, as if she had been sick with some long illness.

"What will become of me?" she stammered. "The Treaty lost! My God—what shall I do? Ivor, you are killing me. Do you know—you are killing me?"

The word "treaty" was new to me in this connection, for the Foreign Secretary had not thought it necessary that his messenger should be wholly in his secrets—and Maxine's. Yet hearing the word brought no great surprise. I knew that I had been catspaw in some game of high stakes. But it was of Maxine I thought now, and the importance of the loss to her, not the national disaster which it might well be also.

"Wait," I said, "don't despair yet. There's some mistake. Perhaps we shall be able to see light, when we've thrashed this out and talked it over. I know I had a green letter-case. It never left my pocket. I thought of it and guarded it every moment. Could those diamonds have been inside it? Could the Foreign Secretary have given me the necklace, instead of what you expected?"

"No, no," she answered with desperate impatience. "He knew that the only thing which could save me was the document I'd sent him. I wifed that I must have it back again immediately, for my own sake—for his—for the sake of England, Ivor! Think again. Do you want me to go mad?"

"I will think," I said, trying to speak reassuringly. "Give me a moment—a quiet moment——"

"A quiet moment," she repeated, bitterly, "when for me each second is an hour! It's late, and this is the night of my new play. Soon, I must be at the theatre, for the make-up and dressing of this part for the first act are a heavy business. I don't want all Paris to know that Maxine de Renzie has been ruined by her enemies. Let us keep the secret while we can, for others' sakes, and so gain time for our own, if all's not lost—if you believe still that there's any hope. Oh, save me, Ivor—somehow. My whole life is in this."

"Let your understudy take your part to-night, while we think, and work," I suggested. "You cannot go to the theatre in this state."

"For an actress there's no such word as 'cannot,'" she said bitterly. "I could play a part to the finish, and crawl off the stage to die the next instant; yet no one would have guesed that I was dying. I have no understudy. What use to have one? What audience would stop in the theatre after an announcement that their Maxine's undertsudy would take her place? Every man and woman would walk out and get his money back. No; for the sake of the man I love better than my life, or twenty lives—the man I've either saved or ruined—I'll play to-night, if I go mad or kill myself to-morrow. Don't 'think quietly,' Ivor. Think out aloud, and let me follow the workings of your mind. We may help each other, so. Let us go over together everything that happened to you from the Foreign Secretary up to the minute I came into this room."

I obeyed, beginning at the very beginning and telling her all, except the part that had to do with Diana Forrest. She had no concern in that. I told her how I had slept with the green letter-case under my pillow, and had waked to feel and look for it once or twice an hour. How when morning came I had been late in getting to the train: how I had struggled with the two men who tried to keep me out of the reserved compartment into which they were intruding. How the man who had a right to it, after wishing to prevent my entering, helped me in the end, rather than be alone with the pair who had forced themselves upon him. How he had stumbled almost into my arms in a panic, during the confusion after the false alarm on the boat's gangway. How he had walked beside me and seemed on the point of speaking, later, in the Gare du Nord. How I had avoided and lost sight of him; but how I had many times covertly touched my pocket to be sure that, through all, the letter-case was still safe there.

Maxine grew calmer, though not, I think, more hopeful as I talked; and at last she folded up the diamonds neatly in the red case, which she gave to me. "Put that into the same pocket," she said, "and then pass your hand over your coat, as you did often before. Now, does it feel exactly as if it were the green letter-case with which you started out?"

"Yes, I think it does," I answered, doubtfully. "I am afraid I shouldn't know the difference. This may be a little thicker than the other, but—I can't be sure. And you see, I never once had a chance to unbutton my coat and look at the thing I had in this inner pocket. It would have attracted to much attention to risk that; and as a matter of fact, I was especially warned not to do it. I could trust only to the touch. But even granting that, by a skill almost clever enough for sleight of hand—a skill which only the smartest pick-pocket in Europe could possess—why should a thief who had stolen my letter-case give me instead a string of diamonds worth many thousands of pounds? If he wanted to put something into my pocket of much the same size and shape as the thing he stole, so that I shouldn't suspect my loss, why didn't he slip in the red case empty, instead of containing the necklace?"

"This necklace, too, of all things in the world!" murmured Maxine, lost in the mystery. "It's like a dream. Yet here—by some miracle—it is, in our hands. And the treaty is gone."

"The treaty is gone," I repeated, miserably.

It was Maxine herself who had spoken the words which I merely echoed, yet it almost killed her to hear them from me. No doubt it gave the dreadful fact a kind of inevitability. She flung herself down on the sofa with a groan, her face buried in her hands.

"My God, what punishment!" she stammered. "I've ruined the man I risked everything to save. I will go to the theatre, and I will act to-night, my friend, but unless you can give me back what is lost, when to-morrow morning comes, I shall be out of the world."

"Don't say that," I implored, sick with pity for her and shame at my failure. "All hope isn't over yet; it can't be. I'll think this out. There must be a solution. There must be a way of laying hold of what seems to be gone. If by giving my life I could get it, I assure you I wouldn't hesitate for an instant, now: so you see, there's nothing I won't do to help you. Only, I wish the path could be made a little plainer for me—unless for some reason it's necesary for you to keep me in the dark. The word 'treaty' I heard for the first time from you. I didn't know what I was bringing you, except that it was a document of international importance, and that you'd been helping the British Foreign Secretary—perhaps Great Britain as a power—in some ticklish manoeuvre of high politics. He said that, so far as he was concerned, you might tell me more if you liked. He left it to you. That was his message.

"Then I will tell you more!" Maxine exclaimed. "It will be better to do so. I know that it will make it easier for you to help me. The document you were bringing me was a treaty—a quite new treaty between Japan, Russia and France: not a copy, but the original. England had been warned that there was a secret understanding between the three countries, unknown to her. There was no time to make a copy. And I stole the real treaty from Raoul du Laurier, to whom I am engaged—whom I adore, Ivor, as I didn't know it was in me to adore any man. You know his name, perhaps—that he's Under Secretary in the Foreign Office, here in Paris. Oh, I can read in your eyes what you're thinking of me, now. You can't think worse of me than I think of myself. Yet I did the thing for Raoul's sake. There's that in my defence—only that."

"I don't understand," I said, trying not to show the horror of Maxine's treachery to a man who loved and trusted her, which I could not help feeling.

"How could you?—except that I've betrayed him! But I'll tell you everything—I'll go back a long way. Then you'll pity me, even if you scorn me, too. You'll work for me—to save me, and him. For years I've helped the British Government. Oh, I won't spare myself. I've been a spy, sometimes against one power, sometimes against another. When there was anything to do against Russia, I was always glad, because my dear father was a Pole, and you know how Poles feel toward Russia. Russia ruined his life, and stripped it of everything worth having, not only money, but—oh, well, that's not in this story of mine! I won't trouble you or waste time in the telling. Only, when I was a very young girl, I was already the enemy of all that's Russian, with a big debt of revenge to pay. And I've been paying it, slowly. Don't think that the money I've had for my work—hateful work often—has been used for myself. It's been for my father's country—poor, sad country—every shilling of English coin. As an actress I've supported myself, and, as an actress, it has been easier for me to do the other secret work than it would have been for a woman leading a more sheltered life, mingling less with distinguished persons of different countries, or unable to be eccentric without casual scandal. As for France, she's the friend of Russia, and I haven't a drop of French blood in my veins, so, at least, I've never been treacherous to my own people. Oh, I have made some great coups in the last eight or nine years, Ivor! . . . for I began when I was sixteen, and now I'm twenty-six. Once or twice England has had to thank me for giving her news of the most vital importance. You're shocked to hear what my inner life has been?"

"If I were shocked, no doubt the feeling would be more than half conventional. One hardly knows how conventional one's opinions are until one stops to think," said I.

"Once, I gloried in the work," Maxine went on. "But that was before I fell in love. You and I have played a little at being in love, but that was to pass the time. Both of us were flirting. I'd never met Raoul then, and I've never really loved any man except him. It came at first sight, for me: and when he told me that he cared, he said it had begun when he first saw me on the stage; so you see it is as if we were meant for each other. From the moment I gave him my promise, I promised myself that the old work should be given up forever: Raoul's fiancee, Raoul's wife, should not be the tool of diplomatists. Besides, as he's a Frenchman, his wife would owe loyalty to France, which Maxine de Renzie never owed. I wanted—oh, how much I wanted—to be only what Raoul believed me, just a simple, true-hearted woman, with nothing to hide. It made me sick to think that there was one thing I must always conceal from him, but I did the best I could. I vowed to myself that I'd break with the past, and I wrote a letter to the British Foreign secreary, who has always been a good friend of mine. I said I was engaged, and hoped to begin my life all over again in a different way, though he might be sure that I'd know how to keep his secrets as well as my own. Oh, Ivor, to think that was hardly more than a week ago! I was happy then. I feel twenty years older now."

"A week ago. You've been engaged only a week?" I broke in.

"Not many days more. I guessed, I hoped, long ago that Raoul cared, but he wouldn't have told me, even the day he did tell, if he hadn't lost his head a little. He hadn't meant to speak, it seems, for he's poor, and he thought he had no right. But what's a man worth who doesn't lose his head when he loves a woman? I adored him for it. We decided not to let anyone know until a few weeks before we could marry, as I didn't care to have my engagement gossiped about, for months on end. There were reasons why—more than one: but the man of all others whom I didn't want to know the truth found out, or, rather, suspected what had happened, the very day when Raoul and I came to an understanding—Count Godensky of the Russian Embassy. He called, and was let in by mistake while Raoul was with me, and, just as he must have seen by our faces that there was something to suspect, so I saw by his that he did suspect. Oh, a hateful person! I've refused him three times. There are some men so vain that they can never believe a woman really means to say 'no' to them. Count Godensky is one of those, and he's dangerous, too. I'm afraid of him, since I've cared for Raoul, though I used to be afraid of no one, whenI'd only myself to think of. Raoul was going away that very night. He had an errand to do for a woman who was a dear and intimate friend of his dead mother. You must know of the Duchesse de Montpellier? Well, it was for her: and Raoul is her godson. She has no children of her own."

"I don't know her," I said, "but I've seen her; a charming looking woman, about forty-five, with a gloomy-faced husband—a fellow who might be rather a Tartar to live with. They were pointed out to me at Monte Carlo one year, in the Casino, where the Duchess seemed to be enjoying herself hugely, though the Duke had the air of being dragged in against his will."

"No doubt he had been—or else he was there to fetch her out. Poor dear, she's a dreadful gambler. It's in her blood! She lost, I don't know how much, at Monte Carlo on an 'infallible system' she had. She's afraid of her husband, though she loves him immensely; and lately a craze she's had for Bridge has cost her so much that she daren't tell the Duke, who hates her gambling. She confesed to Raoul, and begged him to help her—not with money, for he has none, but by taking a famous and wonderful diamond necklace of her's to Amsterdam, selling the stones for her there, and having them replaced with paste. It was all to be done very secretly, of course, so that the Duke shouldn't know, and Raoul hated it, but he couldn't refuse. He had no idea of telling me this story, that day when he 'lost his head,' while we were bidding each other good-bye before his journey. He didn't mention the name of the Duchess, but said only that he had to leave, and was going to Holland on business. But while he was away a dreadful thing happened—the most ghastly misfortune—and as we were engaged to be married, he felt obliged when he came back to let me know the worst."

"What was the dreadful thing that happened?" I asked, as she paused, pressing her hands against her temples.

"The necklace was stolen from Raoul by a thief, who must have been one of the most expert in the world. Can you imagine Raoul's feelings? He came to me in despair, asking my advice. What was he to do? He dared not appeal to the police, or the Duchess's secret would come out. And he couldn't bear to tell her of the loss, not only because it would be such a blow to her, as she was depending on the money from the sale of the jewels, but because she knew that he was in some difficulties, and might be tempted to believe that he'd only pretended the diamonds were stolen—while realy he'd sold them for his own use."

"As she's fond of him, and trusts him, probably she would have thought no such thing," I tried to comfort Maxine. "But certainly, it was rather a bad fix."

SCHOONER LOST IN BAY CREW HAD HARD TIME

The Cumberland Abandoned Off Goose River and Crew Get Ashore With Difficulty.

The three-masted schooner Cumberland, of Portland (Me.), was driven ashore at the mouth of Goose River, St. John Co., Monday night and is, with her cargo, a total loss. The crew of six men reached shore in an exhausted condition.

The Cumberland was owned by H. M. Sargent, of Portland. She was built at Freeport (Me.), in 1874 and reclassed in 1899. She was of 349 tons and was under command of Capt. J. Y. Littlejohn.

She sailed from Cheverie (N. S.) on Saturday last with plaster. Owing to the unfavorable weather, Capt. Littlejohn did not go out of the bay until Monday afternoon.

As the Cumberland made her way down the bay a gale blew and seas ran high. The schooner sprang aleak about 10 o'clock at night. From that hour on the crew pumped without cessation,but when morning broke there were seven feet of water in the schooner's hold, and she was in a sinking condition. The men remained at the pumps. About the noon the fog lifted sufficiently to enable them to see land quite near. They cast anchor and took the desperate chance of reaching shore in the small boat. That they finally did get to land was not due to their own efforts so much as to the direction of the winds which cast them up at the mouth of Goose River, near Chas. T. White's place. The six men comprising the crew were cared for at Mr. White's and later went to Point Wolfe, Albert county, where they are now awaiting a chance to come to St. John.

The mate of the schooner is William Littlejohn, brother of the captain, the cook is a Japanese, while the three other men hail from Portland.

F. H. Soule bought a bag of candy kisses at the Skowhegan (Me.), fair, last week, and on eating one of them, he found a hard substance within it. On looking at it he found that it was a cut diamond worth $300.

THOMAS F. COLLINS TO BE HANGED NOVEMBER 15

Found Guilty of the Murder of Mary Ann McAuley a Year Ago

Jury Over Three Hours in Reaching a Verdict---Judge Hanington's Charge Called a Model of Impartiality by Prisoner's Counsel---Says Capital Punishment Has Been Law of the Empire for Ages, and the Law of God Since Biblical Days.

Hopewell Cape via Moncton, N. B., Sept. 24—"The sentence and judgment of the court is that you be taken to the place from whence you came and there kept in close custody till Friday the 15th day of November next, and that then you be taken from thence to the place of execution and there hanged by the neck until you are dead, and may the Lord God Almighty, in His infinite compassion, have mercy on your soul."

This was the dread sentence to which Thomas F. Collins listened for the second time this afternoon within a year.

Save for a little nervous swallowing at the throat there was no outward sign to indicate that the calm, cool indifference he has maintained throughout has forsaken him. After sentence had been pronounced and he was being led across the jail yard he turned to one of the constables in charge and inquired after a book of fiction which he had lent to some one and which he wished to be returned.

The scene was a most impressive one. The weather outside, which had been dull and threatening most of the day, had brightened up considerably after dinner and the sun, while yet tempered with thin clouds, was bright and warm. Every seat in the court room was taken when court resumed at 9.30. Soon after his honor had taken his seat he commenced his charge to the jury.

Judge Hanington's Charge.

He spoke for about an hour and a quarter and Mr. McKeown, senior counsel for the defenee, said afterwards that the whole was a model of impartiality and correct law. He said in part:

"Gentlemen of the jury, you are now, as well as myself called upon to perform a most solemn and important duty. The prisoner is indicted before you on the most serious charge known to the criminal calendar, that of murder, and he has the right to the fullest and fairest trial. It matters not that he is a stranger and without resources, because it is the duty and privilege of the presiding judge to assign counsel to him if he does not have it. Such is the inalienable right of every one under the aegis of British law. The counsel on both sides of this case have discharged their duties faithfully and well. Mr. McKeown has intimated that his services here have been gratuitously rendered, and if so it is to that gentleman's great credit. Let me, who am an old man, tell my young and esteemed friends, that I never refused to defend any man because he had no money.

"It is for me, gentlemen, to lay down the law in this case and for you to judge of the facts. Assuming that this murder took place and there is unfortunately no room for question on that point, the blood of the victim cries aloud to heaven for vindication and it is on the county of Albert to grant this vindication.

The Law of God.

Capital punishment, gentlemen,has been the law of this empire for over 1,000 years but it is more, it is the law of Almighty God, not the law delivered from Sinai amid lightning and thunderings, but that which was established when God set His bow in the clouds and promised that the world should no more be destroyed by a flood. In my humble opinion it is imperative now as ever. You are sworn to try this case according to the evidence and I ask you to throw whatever you may have read in the newspapers or heard outside from your minds so that you may judge of it in that way."

His honor then commented briefly on the nature and value of circumstantial evidence and after reviewing the evidence with the greatest impartiality left the case in their hands.

The jury retired about 10.50 and at 1 o'clock his honor directed dinner to be served to them in their room and court rose till 2.30 p. m. Judge Hanington resumed his seat promptly on time and instructed the sheriff to ask the jury if they had agreed on a verdict and on his returning with word that they had, he gave orders that they should come down and the prisoner be brought into court. After the usal formalities Clerk Dixon said:

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict, and who is to speak for you?"

"Guilty," Says Foreman.

Foreman Berryman at once rose in his place and pronounced the single word, "Guilty."

His honor in thanking the jury for their services said he entirely concurred in their finding. After discharging them from further service he adjourned the court, announcing that he would pronounce sentence at 4 o'clock.

Long before that hour all the sitting room in the court was taken and many were standing in the aisles and at the back of the different galleries. The scene was strongly impressive. The only one in the whole crowd who seemed absolutely composed was the prisoner. He never for a moment, as far as outward appearances went, lost the calm, cool indifference that had marked him during the whole of the three trials. After the usual formalities Clerk Dixon asked Collins:

"Have you anything to say why the sentence of the court should not be passed upon you?"

Instantly the youthful figure in the dock arose to his feet and replied, "Nothing, sir."

The judge then commenced his address to the prisoner, which lasted about twenty-five minutes. The whole address was solemn and eloquent. He dwelt on the heinousness of the crime of which the prisoner had been convicted and urged him in the few weeks which were left to him to seek the favor and forgiveness of Almighty God from the burden of the great sin which rested upon him. He did not, he said, wish to say a word to harrow the feelings of the condemned man. What he had said was simply the outcome of his belief in his guilt. He went on to pronounce sentence in a low tone of voice, every word of which was distinctly heard throughout the court room, the prisoner meanwhile standing with his hands clasped behind him, seemingly the only unmoved person in the room.

TERRIBLE CRIME OF BUFFALO WOMAN

Buffalo, Sept. 24—Shortly after 7 o'clock this morning Mrs. Martha Mund, aged 37, strangled her three children, Christopher, aged 8 years; Helen, aged 2 years, and Fred, aged eight months, at their home 925 Clinton street. Immediately after committing the deed she went to the Pennsylvania railroad yards, where her husband is employed as a member of a wrecking crew, and informed him of her action. Mrs. Mund was placed under arrest.

The children were all sleeping when their mother destroyed them. She murdered the boy Christopher first. He was asleep on a mattress in the parlor. She wrapped a blanket about the boy's head covering his face and then tied a clothesline about his neck turning it around three times and then drew it tight and fastened it by tying several knots. The police say the boy could not have lived more than a few minutes. When found his body was half on the mattress and half on the floor with face downward.

The girl Helen was next slain, the child was asleep in a crib in the parlor. Mrs. Mund wound a clothesline around the little neck twice and after strangling the child she carried the body into the bedroom and put it on the bed and covered it with a quilt.

Fred, the baby, was her next victim. He was asleep in a baby carriage in the kitchen. Mrs. Mund tied a piece of clotheseline about the little one's neck once and fastened it in two knots.

When Mrs. Mund met her husband she said: "Fred I have made away with the three children, come home and see." Mund hurried home, taking his wife with him. When they reached the house Mrs. Mund sat down at a table and began to cry. Mund notified the police and the woman was taken into custody.

To superintendent of Police Regan,Mrs. Mund made a statement in which she said: "I killed the children because I did not want them to grow up and be crazy like me."

The police say the woman does not realize the enormity of her crime and that she killed the children while suffering with an attack of insanity.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT OVERRIDES NEWFOUNDLAND

Imperial Order-in-Council Suspends Colonial Bait Act---Premier Bond's Organ Calls It an Outrage and Suspension of the Constitution---Calls on All Autonomous Colonies to Stand With Them.

St. John's, Nfld., Sept. 24—A complication has developed in connection with the recent agreement between Great Britain and the United States, as to the conduct of the fisheries on the west coast during the coming season. Tonight the Royal Gazette published an imperial order in council, made under the authority of an imperial act of 1819, following the treaty between the two countries the year previously. The order in council, in effect, suspends several sections of the foreign fishing vessels act passed by the Newfoundland government in 1905, and touches upon the bait act passed by the government in the same year.

The St. John's Telegram, the newspaper organ of Sir Robert Bond's government, describes the order in council as "outrageous," and declares that the colonial cabinet refused to participate in publishing this order. The Telegram says that the explanation for the order in council is that last year's modus vivendi ratified by the American government lacks legal sanction and that the imperial authorities now assert that an old British act fully sanctions the modus vivendi of 1907.

The newspaper declares that the act of 1819 was passed when British admirals ruled the colony. The paper berates the British cabinet and asks them to repudiate the edict, and appeals to the other autonomous colonies in the British empire to take action toward vindicating the rights of colonial peoples.

The Telegram, in a long denunciation of the order in council, interprets it as a practical suspension of the constitution. The imperial act of 1819 empowered the cabinet to enforce the law through the agency of orders in council. The Newfoundland cabinet contends that the treaty of 1819 does not allow Americans to hire colonial fishermen, and that therefore the latest order is unlawful.

It has been submitted to the Hague tribunal for judgment, the imperial authorities having agreed to abide by its decision.