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Please Mention The Farmer's Advocate

The Scarlet Pimpernel.

A STORY OF ADVENTURE. By Baroness Orczy.

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(Continued from last week.)

CHAPTER XIV One O'clock Precisely!

Supper had been extremely gay. those present declared that never had Lady Blakeney been more adorable, nor that "demmed idiot" Sir Percy more

His Royal Highness had laughed until the tears streamed down his cheeks at Blakeney's foolish yet funny repartees. His doggerel verse, "We seek him here, we seek him there," etc., was sung to the tune of "Ho! Merry Britons!" and to the accompaniment of glasses knocked loudly against the table. Lord Grenville, moreover, had a most perfect cook -some wags asserted that he was a scion of the old French noblesse, who, having lost his fortune, had come to seek it in the cuisine of the Foreign Office.

Marguerite Blakeney was in her most brilliant mood, and surely not a soul in that crowded supper-room had even an inkling of the terrible struggle which was raging within her heart.

The clock was ticking so mercilessly on. It was long past midnight, and even the Prince of Wales was thinking of leaving the supper-table. Within the next half hour the destinies of two brave men would be pitted against one another-the dearly-beloved brother and

he, the unknown hero. Marguerite had not even tried to see Chauvelin during this last hour; she knew that his keen, fox-like eyes would terrily her at once, and incline the balance of her decision towards Armand. Whilst she did not see him, there still lingered in her heart of hearts a vague, undefined hope that "something" would occur, something big, enormous, epochmaking, which would shift from her young, weak shoulders this terrible burden of responsibility, of having to choose between two such cruel alternatives.

But the minutes ticked on with that dull monotony which they invariably seem to assume when our very nerves ache with their incessant ticking.

After supper dancing was resumed. His Royal Highness had left, and there was general talk of departing among the fatigable and had started on a new gavotte, which would fill the next quarter of an hour.

Marguerite did not feel equal to another dance; there is a limit to the most enduring self-control. Escorted by a Cabinet Minister, she had once more found her way to the tiny boudoir, still the most deserted among all the rooms. She knew that Chauvelin must be lying in wait for her somewhere, ready to seize the first possible opportunity for a tetea-tete. His eyes had met hers for a moment after the fore-supper minuet, and she knew that the keen diplomatist, with those searching pale eyes of his, had divined that her work was accomplished.

Fate had willed it so. Marguerite, torn by the most terrible conflict heart of woman can ever know, had resigned herself to its decrees. But Armand must be saved at any cost; he, first of all, for he was her brother, had been mother, father, friend to her ever since she, a tiny babe, had lost both her par-To think of Armand dying a traitor's death on the guillotine was too horrible even to dwell upon-impossible, in fact. That could never be, never . . As for the stranger, the hero . . well! there let Fate decide. Marguerite would redeem her brother's life at the hands of the relentless enemy, then let that cunning Scarlet Pimpernel extricate himself after that.

Perhaps-vaguely-Marguerite hoped that the daring plotter, who for so many months had haffled an army of spies,

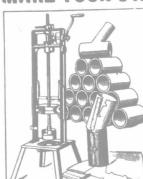
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