After the Ball;

OR,

The Mystery Solved at Last.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Witty Italian.

An hour passed him thus motionless, tearless, yet filled with a weary despair that was worse than death. Then, as the sound of the clock striking eleven boomed heavily through the air, he started, and, going to a small cupboard, took down from a peg a violin, and, leaning against the window, with his face turned toward the starlit sky, commenced playing.

As the sweet, subtle melody filled the room, and turned it to a very paradise of sound, its delicious strains won his soul from the despair it had fallen into, and gradually, as his long, white fingers caressed the instrument and brought forth from it a childlike, simple ballad of ineffable sweetness and mournfulness, his eyes filled with tears, his lips quivered, and his face lit up as did the faces of the martyrs of old, when, with the glare of the fire in their eyes, they saw heaven's gate swinging slowly back to let them in.

Suddenly, in the very midst of a strain which the world would have poured out its gold with a lavish hand to purchase, the strange player ceased, dropped his bow, sprang to the middle of the floor, and stooping, picked up a piece of paper which lay there.

Carrying it to the window, he held it up to the moonlight, and ground out an imprecation between his teeth. On the paper was the imprint of a man's foot.

"Some one has been here!" he muttered. "The foot is too small for mine. The paper was unsoiled when I left it."

With his face as dark as a thundercloud, he stole to the cupboard and took a revolver from a shelf, then noiselessly glided to the door, the moonlight streaming on his grand form and lighting up his wild, lion-like head.

Cautiously, he unlocked the door, and quickly threw it open.

No one there. The landing, the stairs empty. Children's voices floating up from the street below.

He breathed hard, lowered the revolver, and threw his head back; then, re-entering the room, lit a candle, and, with a gesture as if a sudden thought had struck him, again went outside, and, kneeling down, examined the tablet of the lock.

There were a number of scratches lately made, they shone bright and new in the garish light of the candle.

With a growl of anger, he started to his feet, and, panting like a trapped tiger, paced the room.

"Tracked at last—but by whom?" he muttered; "whom? whom? Who could have picked that lock so deftly? No London thief, no clumsy apprentice to the trade, no bungler. A master hand turned that lock with so little damage. Whose—whose—but Spazzola's? Great Heaven! If I had found him here, our account should have been balanced! Spazzola! That sleek, slender hound, that bloodthirsty, avaricious tiger! I must be gone at once—to-night! Oh, Heaven! is there no rest, no peace on the face of the earth? Where have I not been, where have I not ventured to fly from my fate? And here—here, where at least one would think there was safety and secrecy, I am tracked—tracked by Spazzola!"

A creak on the stairs.

"Hist! what is that?" he hissed, starting and clutching his soft, felt hat. "What is that? Spazzola, by his cat-like tread! He is coming nearer—nearer. Another minute and I am lost!" and he looked around the room, clutching his revolver in a grasp of iron, his head thrown back, his body held like a hound in a leash. "Ah!" he muttered, "the window!" and, springing to it, he unfastened its rusty catch, threw it open, and stepped out onto the rickety parapet, from which the time-eaten plaster fell in a small stream.

Scarcely had he done so than the door, which he had left half open, was gently pushed back, and the Italian entered the room.

Looking around with an eager eye, his face fell blankly, and he hissed out an oath. At that moment, however, the window, which the fugitive had been unable to fasten, blew open, and the Italian, with a frightful imprecation, sprang to it.

Directly his hand touched its ledge, a sharp report rang through the air. The Italian clapped his hand to his shoulder, and, with a shriek, fell to the ground, overturning the easel and smashing the window in his descent.

Waiting one moment to hear if his pursuer still followed, the fugitive thrust the revolver in his breast, and, dropping down on his hands and knees, commenced the perilous journey along the moldering parapet.

These houses had been built of the same height, with parapets connecting them. Beyond that all was uncertain, for a turn in the street hid it from his view.

At every step small pieces of the stonework loosened and fell from beneath his hands and feet into the gardens below. He dared not look down; the depth was great; the fall, should he stumble or lose his hold, certain death. Yet there was no fear in his heart, only a dogged resolve to go on and reach the end, let it be what it might.

Once or twice he paused and listened intently, but after the first crash there was no sound in his wake, and only the dull murmur of the few passers-by in front.

He crawled to the end of the turn and looked down. The next house had been built considerably lower than the rest. There was a drop, did he intend proceeding, of some feet, onto a small ledge of stone, or compo. The red-bricked tiles could not be trusted, the water-pipe shook as his hand passed over it. Turn he could not. No window was open through which he could creep, had he felt so inclined. He must drop.

To a man who had scaled the highest mountains of ice and snow, shot the deadliest and swiftest rapids, slain the most ferocious of wild beasts in single encounter, the drop was nothing, had it not been for the danger of an alarm, should the ledge slip and throw him onto the shaky tiles or into the garden beneath. In both cases there would be a noise, and he would have to give an account of his presence and strange behaviour. In the latter case, he might break his leg, and thus destroy all chance of escape from the man who was even now recovering from his shot and preparing to follow.

Thinking thus, and scanning the depth below, his eyes lit up with a strange, desperate fire; he felt for the revolver.

"Five barrels more, Spazzola!" he muttered, and, drawing himself up, he lowered his legs over the parapet, clutched the rickety stonework with his iron-like hands, then dropped.

One slight crash, that might have been occasioned by a wandering cat, and there he was, as far as detection went, safe.

Leaping to the ground, he drew his revolver out and crept stealthily through the garden into the road.

Not a soul in sight.

With the same caution, keeping well under the shadow of the old houses, he hastened up the street; then, gaining a broad thoroughfare, he hailed a cab, and told the man to drive in the direction of London.

His face, as the light streamed on it from the wayside lamp, was as white as death—not with fear, but rage—his teeth closed tightly, and his eyes like a lion's that, though it has escaped the hunter's toils, still growls vengeance on its pursuers.

* * * * * *

About ten miles from Grassmere, on the London road, there stood a small public-house, low-roofed, broad-eaved, and comfortable. The landlord of this house, whose name was Gregory—simply Gregory, whether surname or Christian could not be discovered—was sitting on the wide bench in the sun, and thinking it was almost time for tea, when a tall figure turned the corner of the dusty road and approached him.

"Hello! here he is," said Mr. Gregory, half fearfully, wholly reverentially, adding, aloud:

"Good-even, sir."

The stranger inclined his head, and, seating himself on the little table that was cooking in the sun, said:

"Have you the dog?"

"Oh, yes, sir, as right as a trivet."

Again the stranger nodded.

"He is well, you say? Where have you kept him?"

"In the stable, sir, where you ordered him to be kept."

"Has any one seen him?"

"No, sir; no one except me and Bill, the 'ostler, sir. We told them as the dog were a little bit touched, and that stopped their curiosity."

"And you have told no one that you had him?"

"Not a soul—not me nor Bill," was the reply, honest enough, as the speaker's clear, simple eyes attested.

"Have there been any inquiries?"

"Oh, a deal, your honor," replied the man. "Sir Fielding, up at Grassmere, was making inquiries everywhere. His game-keeper came down here, asking, quite friendly-like, if I had seen a gentleman with a dog, or heard of him. But I told him I hadn't, and as my word's pretty well taken in these parts, where I have loved ever since I was as old as that child"—pointing to a little girl toddling around the door, with her finger in her mouth—"he believed me."

"Good," said the stranger. "You may bring the dog out to-night in the wood there. I will meet you at eleven o'clock. There is what I promised you, and a like sum added to it," and he dropped a small pile of gold into the man's hand.

The simple fellow stared, then looked at the gold, and shook his head.

"This is a deal o' money, sir," he said, hesitatingly.

"I am glad you are satisfied," was the curt reply. "So long as you are silent concerning the dog and myself, I will give you the same sum every six months. If you prefer to talk and chatter, I will find some means to make you repent your gossip, in addition to the loss of the money," and he frowned heavily.

The countryman threw his head back, with a sturdy look on his face, although it had grown pale, as he replied:

"I don't know who you be, sir. I am thinking you must be a great person—perhaps the duke himself; but I know you ain't used to deal with common people, or you'd know an honest man when you see him. I'm not a rich man, your honor, but I'm a'most sorry to see you, because o' the dog, which I've got to grow fond of. As to betraying you, after all this money, I couldn't do it, and it didn't need any more, neither," and, breaking off his incoherent speech abruptly, the man put the extra gold back on the table.

The dark, heavily-browed eyes that watched him grew less stern, and the hard mouth less inflexible.

"You are wrong. I know an honest man when I see him. Put up the gold, bring the dog to-night. Keep your promise, and you will find that I shall keep mine."

Then, before Gregory could make any reply, save the reverential bend of the head, the wayfarer had gone on his way.

(To be Continued.)

You're Bilious! Let "Cascarets" Liven Liver and Bowels

Don't stay headachy, constipated, sick, with bad breath and stomach sour.

Get a 10-cent box now.

You men and women who can't get feeling right—who have headache, coated tongue, bad taste and foul breath, dizziness, can't sleep, are bilious, nervous and upset, bothered with a sick, gassy, disordered stomach, or have a bad cold.

Are you keeping your bowels clean with Cascarets, or merely forcing a passageway every few days with salts, cathartic pills or castor oil?

Cascarets work while you sleep; cleanse the stomach, remove the sour, undigested, fermenting food and foul gases; take the excess bile from the liver and carry out of the system all the constipated waste matter and poison in the bowels.

A Cascaret to-night will straighten you out by morning—a 10-cent box from any drug store will keep your stomach sweet, liver and bowels regular, and head clear for months. Don't forget the children. They love Cascarets because they taste good—never gripe or sicken.

Household Notes.

Lettering can be removed from muslin bags by soaking the bag in kerosene over night.

Oysters broiled on the half-shell should be sprinkled with chopped parsley and red peper.

Carrots should be scraped or peeled very thinly, as the best of as the best of the carrot is next to the skin.

Beans of all kinds must be very slowly and thoroughly cooked if they are to eaten by children.

Half a cup of cold water mixed in with each pound of prepared steak wil make it much jucier.

Rice fritters are delicious and can be served with a sweet sauce as a dessert or plain as a vegetable.

Nothing is more appetizing for supper on a cold night than a carefully made and savory chowder.

Had Chronic Indigestion Thought She Would Die.

After Years of Suffering Attributes Cure to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

Eating too much or using foods that do not agree are the usual causes of indigestion.

The trouble usually begins not in the stomach, but in the liver, since it devolves on this organ to filter the excess waste matter from the system.

Now, since Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are the greatest of liver regulators, it naturally follows that they are unexcelled as a cure for chronic indigestion.

With the liver, kidneys and bowels active the poisonous waste matter is quickly removed from the system and there is nothing to interfere with the natural and healthful working of the organs of digestion. In this way only can lasting cure be effected.

Mrs. Rebecca Elliott, Magnetawan, Ont., writes:—"I feel it my duty to write you in regard to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. I had gastritis of the stomach for three years, and could get nothing to stop it until I tried Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. I would have an attack of this trouble with my stomach every three or four weeks, and was so bad at times that my friends thought I would surely die. Thanks to these pills, I have not had an attack for six months, and believe that the cure is thorough. My husband has had very satisfactory experience with Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. He was much run down, and very pale and weak. I persuaded him to use the Nerve Food, and after having taken five boxes he looks and feels real well."

It is such experiences as these that have made a place for Dr. Chase's medicines in the great majority of homes. They do not fail, even in the most complicated cases. Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, one pill a dose, 25 cents a box. Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50 cents a box, 6 for $2.50. All dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Limited, Toronto.

Splendid for Bad Coughs, Colds, Bronchitis

An Inexpensive Home-Made Remedy—Gives Surest, Quickest Relief.

Anyone who tries this pleasant tasting home-made cough syrup, will quickly understand why it is used in more homes in the United States and Canada than any other cough remedy. The way it takes hold of an obstinate cough, giving immediate relief, will make you regret that you never tried it before. It is a truly dependable cough remedy that should be kept handy in every home, to use at the first sign of a cough during the night or day time.

Any druggist can supply you with 2½ ounces of Pinex (50 cents worth). Pour this into a 16-oz. bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup. The total cost is about 54 cents and you have 16 ounces of the most effective remedy you ever used.

The quick, lasting relief you get from this excellent cough syrup will really surprise you. It promptly heals the inflamed membranes that line the throat and air passages, stops the annoying throat tickle, loosens the phlegm, and you your cough stops entirely. Splendid for bronchitis, croup, whooping cough and bronchial asthma.

Pinex is a highly concentrated compound of Norway pine extract, combined with guaiacol and is famous the world over for its healing effect on the membranes.

To avoid disappointment ask for "2½ ounces of Pinex" with full directions and don't accept anything else. A guarantee of absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded goes with this preparation. The Pinex Co., Toronto, Ont.

Minard's Liniment Cures Distemper

HOT DRINKS!

It is a great comfort these cold nights to have the Thermos Bottle at hand with hot milk for the baby.

It's a luxury when travelling to have a Thermos set with you. Hot tea, hot coffee, hot drinks of any kind can be carried in the Thermos.

We are offering some real Bargains in the Thermos line this week.

Single, 1 pt. Cases, $1.00. Now	60c.
Single, 1 qrt. Cases, $1.20. Now	80c.
Double, 1 pt. Cases	$1.00
Double, 1 pt. Cases, with Lunch Box and Bottle	$2.25
Double, 1 pt. Cases, $5.00. Now	$3.00
Double, 1 pt. Cases, $4.50. Now	$3.25
Double, 1 qrt. Cases, $7.00. Now	$4.50
Double, ½ pt. cases, Tan Russian Leather, $8.25. Now	$7.00

Ekko Alcohol Stoves, 50 cents, Refils 15 cents.

AYRE & SONS, Limited,

Hardware Department.

Our Great Blouse Bargain

WORTH COMING FOR

Over Five Hundred White

PIQUE BLOUSES,

Worth up to $2.00 in High and Low effects for

$1.20 each.

Excellent Quality, Perfect F

See Window.

S. MILLEY.

Right! Right! Right!

In both PRICE and QUALITY are the

Ladies' Corsets

at 45c, 50c., 70c., 80c., $1.20 and $1.60 per pair.

Also:

Ladies' Knitted Vests at 45c.
Ladies' Knitted Pants at 45c.
Ladies' Fleece Lined Vests at 75 and 80c.
Ladies' Fleece Lined Pants at 75 and 80c.

Showing this week at

A. & S. RODGER'S

War News

Messages Received Previous to 9 A. M

TO COPE WITH THE LATEST CAMPAIGN.

LONDON, Feb. 14.

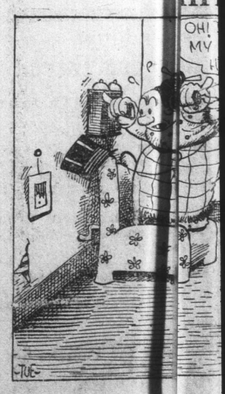
While naval officers here express the belief that submarine operations may continue at high tension for a couple of months, they show the utmost confidence in the ability of the Navy to cope with the latest campaign with approximately the same success as the campaign against the U-boats in 1915. An Admiralty official showed the Associated Press to-day the figures of arrivals and departures for yesterday at English ports proving that a larger number of vessels entered and departed than on any day during the past six months. Taking a day at random during the period since the latest war zone was declared, out of 140 British arrivals and departures only four vessels were sunk. These figures, according to the official, gives an excellent idea of the per cent. loss. The Admiralty says losses have been extraordinarily small at a time when more shipping than usual are being routed through the Channel.

GERMANY'S VIEW OF AMERICA.

NEW YORK, Feb. 14.

A News Agency despatch from Berlin dated to-day says, "Tentative Fate" is the way Germany regards the action of the American Government in permitting U. S. ships to sail for ports in the barred zone. The greatest surprise was manifested here to-day when it became known that American ships had cleared for allied ports in the face of Germany's frank announcement of unlimited U-boat warfare. It is gravely remarked the ships' owners must take a frivolous view of the situation by despatching ships to the danger zone. Commenting on the sailing of the American ships, Count Reventlow in the Tages Zeitung says: The announcement of the sailings of two ships and their description as signs they carry purposes to exert pressure on the German Government in order that exception may be made to the treatment of these two cases. If the Americans still cannot or will not realize that the purpose and goal of the German submarine warfare would be frustrated by making exceptions and that Germany is determined to go through with it undeterred to the end, why then there is no help for them.

UNRESTRICTED WARFARE.

LONDON, Feb. 14.

A Berlin official statement dated Feb. 14, referring to news from abroad to the effect that the marine barrier against Britain, maintained with submarines and mines, has been or will be weakened out of regard for the United States, or for other reasons, says prompt and clearer declaration of unrestricted warfare