

The Crimson Slipper.

BY DORA LANGLOIS.

Author of "A Bolt From the Blue," "The Kiss of Judas," "The Daughter of the Dream," &c.

(Continued.)

"It was true," I persisted, "that there was a lady there, but—"

"In common humanity, sir," said Howell, laying his hand on my arm, and that silenced me.

Wonder in defiance to his duty to me and Mary Densell, and in the interests of justice to a man falsely accused, the point of honour was with Howell or against him in using with his eyes open a woman's passions to her undoing is not for me to discuss, but now he was clearly in the right. To tell this poor woman now that the woman who had aroused her passionate jealousy and led her to betray her lover had never been anything but an unwilling prisoner in his house, was to inflict a blow on her so bitter and deadly that I could not deal it. It must come in time, and with it such remorse as only an unguarded nature such as hers incurs, but I had not the strength to make the revelation, and stood silent and concerned.

"You will repeat your story when called on, Miss Halliday?" Howell said, gravely.

"You will save Sir Robert Burchall's life," I will give evidence against Mr. Hatton and Mrs. Montgomery," she answered.

"That is what I mean to do. I don't care a jot for that idiot the police have taken, and I don't pretend to."

"Hush!" said Howell. "Whatever his faults may be, he is an innocent man, and as a Christian woman it is your duty to save him. Try to think of it in that way, Miss Halliday. Take my word, it will be better for you if you can, for censure, like children, come home, you know. And let me tell you for your comfort that I knew pretty much all you've told me before you spoke."

"You could not know," she retorted, hotly. "You could not have done without me."

"Well, if you ever want to think we could, you come to me and ask me," he answered, gently. "Now go upstairs to the room you were in, and close the door and lock it. Soon we will send you some food, and you can collect yourself before having to repeat your story. I suppose you don't accuse your uncle of being privy to the murder?"

"No, oh no!" she answered, with some touch of feeling. "He is a hard man, and gruff, and he'd do a great deal for money, but I never told him what I knew. He had no reason to think there had been anything but a little scheming to get the people back."

"That's pretty clear," said Howell to me, as she left the room and he stepped back down, watching her up the stairs. "The old man didn't know how much she knew, or he would never have run the risk of telling her such a story as that."

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sweetheart had gone away with a woman. What he knew or suspected himself about the Densell's business is another pair of shoes; but seeing it was imperative by the time she reached Bowden that that house should burn with all the three souls they'd got shut up in it, he had to tell her that the girl had left it. It was the only thing that would occur to him.

"But why," I said, "why should he do such an awful thing to save another man?"

"For money," Howell answered, "that's his god and all the prophets!"

"Money!" I repeated. "Where from?"

"This man Hatton had money; he would not have been playing such a desperate game."

"He was going to get some, if his house burnt down!" Howell said, significantly. "Be sure that, failing the paper, he had arranged for a fire before things got so critical. When it became of the first importance for him to get away and another man who was on his track I dersey a new arrangement was made, and Mr. Hatton, if he did the thing really, was to get the lion's share of the proceeds. Miss Densell wouldn't have been included in the evening's entertainment if it had been possible to let her off."

"But," I protested, "an educated man like Hatton would know that even a big fire can't destroy the traces of human remains—or even paraffin."

"It's no use figuring out what they meant to do," Howell responded. "They were in a very tight place, and had to risk something. Hatton, the educated man, wanted to get away more even than he wanted the money, most of which was to go, no doubt, to Halliday. Besides it was impossible to invent a plausible story—men attacked, and a big lamp broken; he effects his escape, and doesn't know if they got out, and so on. The main point is that we can find Mr. Hatton through his fire office, if we can get instructions to the police in time, telling them not to make any fuss at present. But now, sir, to your own particular bit of business. If you'll get a hat for yourself and a cap or something for me, we'll go at once to the cottage and get that paper."

"Come to my room," I said, and led him upstairs. I shivered as I passed the corridor at the end of which was the room in which the unhappy, self-deluded girl was waiting; but Howell, noticing it asked me what was the matter.

"When she knows," I said, "when she hears why Miss Densell was at Tracy Court."

He shrugged his shoulders. "He didn't run away with Miss Densell," he answered; "but if he doesn't do to ask too many questions, of course, still, one mustn't forget that what Mr. Herman and me into this house was a scream from poor Miss Densell."

I looked at Howell for a moment, then I, too, recognized the wisdom of not asking questions; but I never forgot his words, and from that moment my repugnance to the task of helping to hang a man entirely left me.

We reached my room, and I was just looking for something to suit Howell, and

wondering where all my hats and capes had got to, when I heard an odd exclamation from him at the window.

"Popped on the post!" he said.

"What is it?" I cried, springing to his side.

"Your friend of the secret service corps and Inspector Bronson coming up to the house together!"

"He is coming in answer to Miss Densell's summons," I said, faintly.

"Not possible!" Howell retorted, "There has not been time. Why, Minding hasn't even got back from South-west. Mind you, I don't say he was not the party who will receive instructions; but I do say they haven't reached him yet."

"And the paper is not here," I cried. "We don't even know if it is still in the cottage. We have failed her, Howell, Good Heavens! we have failed her, for that man won't wait—he will arrest her here under my very roof."

"Keep your head! Keep your head!" said Howell. "Her wire has gone, it proves her bona fides. Except that he can go through the form of arresting her if he likes, it makes no difference to her."

"Can't you see," I answered, desperately, "that if she is arrested at all it makes all the difference in the world to me?"

"Of course," Howell responded, calmly. "Did you think I didn't know the game? Did you think I took you for a cracked philanthropist? Be quiet, and let me think. Ah! there is Minding coming back with Bob and the cart. I see a way out of this. Come along, sir."

He crossed the landing and knocked at the door of my guest chamber. Mrs. Foreman opened it, and we saw Mary Densell standing at the dressing table. She was fully dressed, and Howell stepped into the room, I followed him with hesitation as one who had no right to venture into her presence.

"Two gentlemen will knock in a minute," he said, hurriedly, to Mrs. Foreman. "Don't open the door till you hear Minding drive into the yard. Then show them in. Do you understand?"

His turned from my housekeeper and faced Mary Densell. "Miss Densell," he said, "there's something unpleasant coming; and on my soul it's worse for Mr. Densell here than you!"

"Then," he said, "you may not choose to see it, and a schoolboy might be able to, but it would be patent to the simplest school mite. Here's a man that at a pinch chose his country rather than you, and has been mean enough to regret it ever since. That's his weakness; you're not right to blame him, and if you're going to act as you acted last night to him you're the most ungrateful female that that ever had a man to serve her body and soul."

I say her in the mirror, for she was turned away from me, and the face I saw in the glass flushed red and paled again to white.

"I have considered," she said, "and I have forgiven."

"Then tell us straight," he demanded, "that wire of yours to the big man in London?"

"He told me to send it if I found the paper," she answered, "and it was to him or his chief agent."

"Right," said Howell, briefly. "Go down, sir, see your man, and trust the rest to me."

A second later he himself had vanished, and I stood there looking at Mary Densell all she at me. Something secret fighting within her for expression, some thing else strove to keep back with all the force of her will. Then suddenly she

struggle ceased, and she moved rapidly to ward me.

"All my life—all my life," she said, in low, thrilling tones, "I have been in a false position, nameless, dependent on charity from a doubtful source. No one looks to find grapes on thorns or figs on thistles; the thorn and the thistle are condoned, named. You have served me, and I thank you. I, too, have served you, and we are quits; but if you had only said so yourself 'She is innocent, because it is not in her nature to be guilty,' when I could have borne all the rest. Go now. I'm not afraid of the man downstairs. I have suffered all I can suffer; nothing can hurt me now."

"You will know some day," I said, in a broken voice, and led her and went down.

CHAPTER XIX.

The hall door was open, and the men were already in the house. Bronson looked uneasy, the other man had on his face that cursed sneer which I remembered so well.

"Come in," I said. "I know your business."

He stretched out his hand to stay Bronson, who had made a move to follow me into the smoking room, and stood facing me in the middle of the hall.

"Mr. Duncan," he said, curiously, "warned you when you made a certain communication to me that your bona fides were not above suspicion. I warned you again, through the police, that it was not the wish of those for whom I am empowered to set that you should show yourself so active in attempting to trace the person who took a certain paper from your house."

"And I," I answered, "told the police that I believed her life was in danger, and that I should certainly look for her. I have looked for her and found her, and—"

"The information comes too late in the day," he interrupted. "She was seen to enter this house with you about two hours ago." His words, and more than his words his tone, showed me that the malignant brute would give neither of us a chance; without the paper we had no money to expect from him.

"She is here," I said. "I have not attempted to deny it."

"Then," he replied, "I will see her at once. You know our business, and you will do well not to interfere."

"Stay!" I cried, desperately. "Whatever may happen outside, you will not interfere in my house."

"Half a moment," Mr. Duncan, said a soft, amiable voice behind me. "The gentleman won't want to make any unpleasantness when he has had the goodness to take a look at this."

It was Howell, of course, calm and unruffled, smiling and offering a leaf torn from his pocketbook. At the same instant my eyes, directed by the glance of the intruder, turned to the top of the staircase, and there, beautiful as a saint enshrined in a cathedral niche, stood Mary Densell looking down upon us.

Bronson, impelled by his companions, took one step forward; but my arm went out like a steel bar across the stair. The mastery of the law had no terrors for me then; my heart held but one thought, and that was for the woman.

"Not yet," I said. "She's there in your sight, and in five minutes you shall take her if you must; but not yet. You are not the principle in this; she deals with one, who is your master."

"Go easy," said Howell, softly. "Easy, easy all! Do you understand that either

wire, sir?"

The man glanced at the paper Howell had handed him, and saw at once what it was; but his was one of those mean natures that delight in the exercise of arbitrary power—power in its basest use, directed against a woman.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"What of this? Where did you get it?"

"It's a copy of a wire Miss Densell wrote," Howell answered, politely, "and it went off to London, that is to say, it left this house, before any of us broke bread this morning."

(To be Continued.)

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A rainbow in the sky is the symbol of purity and perfection of color. That is why the name is chosen for Rainbow Cut Plug Smoking Tobacco, which is a pure and perfect smoke for the pipe.

THE READY REVOLVER

A Texan Shoots Two Men and Carries Some Lead Himself.

A Houston, Texas, despatch of May 12th, says:

W. T. Eldridge, former vice-president and general manager of the Cane Belt factory, killed his second man on board a passenger train approaching this city Wednesday morning.

Eldridge, who had been riding in a Pullman, walked into a day car. There he met Edward Calhoun, a man who had once shot him. Both instantly went for their guns. Eldridge drew his weapon first and fired four shots. Three of them hit Calhoun and a fourth struck A. W. Turney, a passenger, in the arm. Calhoun sank to the floor dying.

The car was filled with passengers and a stampede to get out ensued in which several women fainted. Eldridge was placed under arrest at Walls.

Two years ago, in the same coach, at nearly the same hour, while Eldridge was manager of the Cane Belt, he met Capt. William Dumont, a director of the road, and a similar tragedy ensued. Both men drew revolvers, but Eldridge killed Dumont.

That killing was the result of a bitter enmity among Cane Belt stockholders and directors. Twice later Eldridge was shot down from ambush, but each time he recovered. On the plea of self-defence he was acquitted of the charge of murdering Dumont.

Eldridge then declared he would leave the state to prevent further trouble, but he failed to do so. Calhoun, whom he killed today, was a close friend of Capt. Dumont and a leader of the anti-Eldridge faction.

Eldridge, in a statement, declared that Calhoun had once shot him and he had long expected trouble when they again met. He was not expecting to meet him on the train, but was at all times prepared. He said that Calhoun fired the first shot, but it missed. He then returned the fire, sending three bullets into Calhoun's breast.

The Victoria baseball club held the drawing in their lottery of a picnic trip and it was won by ticket 48, the holder of which can secure his prize by giving the ticket to any member of the team. The proceeds are for the purchase of suits for the team, in the Canadian league.

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CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS

The Toronto Grand Jury in the Criminal division, returned no bill on the manslaughter indictment against Mrs. Sarah Goodfellow, Isabella M. Grant, Elizabeth See and Wm. Brundrett, the Christian Scientists, who are held responsible for the death of Wallace Goodfellow, son of Mrs. Goodfellow. They, however, brought in a true bill charging unlawful conspiracy to deprive young Goodfellow of the necessities of life, and proper medical attention and nursing, whereby death was caused, and unlawfully conspiring to effect Goodfellow's cure by unlawful and improper means, thus endangering his life. The case will be tried this week.

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