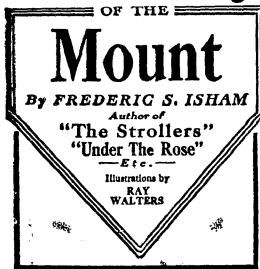


The Lady



(Continued.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Hall of the Chevalliers. The report of the capture of the Black Seigneur spread from Mount to town; from town to shore. Pilgrims repeated, peasants circled it; many credited; a few disbelieved. Like shadows had his comrades and the escaped prisoners vanished, leaving no trace, save one—an overturned car and severed rope at the foot of the poulain, without the fortifications. And flocking to that point, of greater interest now than shrine or sanctuary, the pilgrims gazed around; down the rocks; up the almost perpendicular plank to what looked like a mere pigeon-hole in the side of the cliff. Then ominous grumblings escaped them; some shook their fists at the black wall; others scoffed at distant sounds of priestly hallelujahs. Had the soldiers that day appeared in the town or on the beach, serious trouble would have ensued. For the time, however, they remained discreetly housed, while supplies for pilgrims' needs were, by the commandant's orders, so curtailed, many of the indigent multitude, urged by pinched stomachs, began, ere night, to wend their way from strand to shore. But as they left the vicinity of the Mount, they turned last looks of hatred toward the rock.

His Excellency, the Governor, wasted no time considering the humor of the masses; their resentment, or displeasure, signified nothing; his own complacency left little room for speculation on that score. He was undeniably satisfied; even the escape of the prisoners and the loss of the soldiers at the guard-house, or in the wheel-room, was over-shadowed by the single capture. This contentment, however, he kept to himself; instigating a rigorous inquiry and prepared to punish certain offenders. But the principal of these he could not reach; when released from the iron cage, the hunchback, knowing he would be called upon to answer for his part in the night's work, had made the best use of his short legs to place a long distance between himself and the Mount.

The sentinel that allowed the Black Seigneur to pass through the entrance near the barracks; the watchman encountered on the stairway, and the soldier that had been overpowered in the stable, his Excellency could, however, lay hands on, and promptly ordered into custody to await his official attention. For this last culprit, the commandant—mindful, perhaps, of bolstering his own position—interceded; pointing out that the man had to get the gas from his mouth and give the alarm; also, that the mountebank's appearance and acting had been calculated to deceive even one of the governor's discernment. Which remark his Excellency had received with sardonic gravity; had reserved his verdict, and continued, after his own fashion, to collect the details of the affair.

The searching process should have led him almost at once to his daughter—a puzzling figure in the maze of events; but the Governor had exhibited no haste in approaching that important witness. Only when he had marshaled his testimony and put it in order did the scope of his sifting extend to the girl. And then had his manner been strictly judicial; maintaining an imperious mask, he professed not to notice the pallor of her face, the unnatural brightness of her glance.

"When you sent for the mountebank to come to your apartments, did you know who he was?" the Governor asked.

"No."

"When did you find out?"

"When you entered the room."

"Why did you not give the alarm then?"

"Because," she hesitated; her face changed, "he would have killed you, I think—I had!"

"Was that solicitude for me the only reason?"

"Well, what other could there be?"

"What other, truly? And after he left with the commandant—why did you not, then, inform me?"

"You remember you had something important, from the King, to consider."

"Bastily."

"More important than this?"

"He was going to be locked up," was the best reply she could make.

"And in the morning set free!"

She did not answer.

"And yet, you gave the word that enabled us to capture him at the wheel-house! How, by the way, came you there—in the wheel-house?"

"I saw him from the abbott's bridge; heard him tell the watchman he had a message to deliver at your palace, and followed."

"Again feeling solicitude for me?"

"I did not know—he would care much; and what does it matter now?" almost wildly. "You have captured him, shut him up somewhere in some terrible, deep dungeon, where—"

"He is safe? True; that is the main consideration."

Thereafter had the subject of the Black Seigneur been dropped between them; the pilgrimage over, the Mount resumed its normal aspect, but only for a little while! One day about a week later, a bright cortege whose appearance was in marked contrast to that of the beggarly multitude, late visitors to the rock, came riding down through the forest to the sea; at the verge of the sands, stopped for a first distant impression of the rock.

"Noble monument, I salute you!" Smiling, debonair, the Marquis de Beauvilliers reined his horse.

"And the noble mistresses thereof?" suggested one of his train.

"She, of course!" he said, still surveying a scene different from that final memory he had carried away with him. Then had the rock reared itself in all the glamour of a sunny day; now was the sky overcast, while through a sultry mist the Mount loomed like a shadow itself.

"A cold place for our gay Elise!" One or two who viewed the sight for the first time looked disappointed; even the Marquis appeared for the instant more sober; but immediately regained his lively demeanor.

"Wait until you have seen it at its best," he retorted carelessly, and set the pace across the sands.

Midway, where once on the sands the men of Brittany had engaged in fierce conflict the ancient abbott's forces, were the new-comers met by an

observed his Excellency, again seeking to break that spell of constraint, when suddenly she stepped to him, and, "Mon pere, her voice sounded strained, unnatural. "It was you who wanted this marriage?"

"Yes," he had answered in some surprise; "yes."

"And I have not opposed you—the King—"

"Opposed? Not of course not!" "Then," more hurriedly, "must you do something in return for me? I do not want my—the wedding festivities—marred by anything unpleasant! Promise that nothing will happen to him, the Black Seigneur, until after—"

"Impossible!" The sudden virulence her unexpected request awoke could not be concealed.

"Very well!" Before the anger in his gaze, her own eyes flashed like steel. "In that case, you can send the Marquis back! For I will not see him—today, tomorrow or any other time again!"

Long he looked at her; the white face; the tightly compressed lips; the eyes that would not flinch! They reminded him of another's—yet of the same hue—so like, and yet so different! Unlike, in bespeaking a will he could not break! What he said, matters not; his face wore an ashy shade. She did not answer in words; but he felt, with strange bitterness, a revulsion; she seemed almost suddenly to have become hostile to him.

Gay voices sounded without; nearer; she walked to a door opposite the entrance their visitors were approaching. An instant, and she would have passed out, when the Governor spoke.

But the Marquis, stepping quickly in a few moments later, noted nothing amiss between them. "Your Excellency!" With filial respect he greeted the Governor. "My Lady!" Gaily, approvingly, his eye passed over her; then in that hall dedicated to chivalry, a graceful figure, he sank to his knee; raised a small cold hand, and pressed it to his lips.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Under World.

A coterie of brilliant folk soon followed in the wake of my lord, the Marquis's retinue; holly-bushes were succeeded by holiday ribbons; the misere of the multitude by peacocks of merriment. Hymen, lo Hymen! In assuming the leading role to which circumstances now assigned her, the Governor's daughter brought to the task less energy than she had displayed on that other occasion when visitors had sojourned at the rock. Her manner was changed—frat, lukewarm; then, almost indifferent; until, at length, one day she fairly waived the responsibility of planning amusements; laid before them the question: "What, now, would they like to do?"

"Devise a play," said one.

"With shepherds and shepherdesses!"

The Marquis, however, qualified the suggestion. "A masque! that is very good; but, for this morning—I have been talking with the commandant—and have another proposal—"

"Which is?"

"To visit the dungeons."

"The dungeons?" My lady's face changed.

"And incidentally inspect their latest guest! Some of you heard of him when we were here before—Le Seigneur Noir—the Black Seigneur!"

"Le Seigneur Noir!" They clapped their hands. "Yes, let us see him! Nothing could be better. What do you say, Elise?"

She started to speak, but for the instant her lips could frame no answer; with a faint, strained smile, confronted him, when some one anticipated her reply.

"Did she not leave it to us? It is we who decide."

And a merry party they swept along, bearing her with them; up the broad stairway, cold, gray in the morn; beneath the abbott's bridge-black, spying span!—to the church, and thence to the isolated space before the guard-house to the dungeons. Here, at the sound of their voices, a man, carrying a bunch of keys—brought outwardly the antithesis to the hunchback—peered from the entrance.

"Unless I am mistaken, the new jailer!" With a wave of his hand, the Marquis indicated this person.

"The commandant was telling me his Excellency had engaged one—Bistre, or Fort l'Evêque, I believe?"

"Bistre, my lord!" said the man gravely. "And before that, the Bastille."

"Ah!" laughed the nobleman. "That pretty place some of the foolish people are grumbling about! As if we could do without prisons any more than without palaces! But we have come, my good fellow, to inspect this lower world of yours."

The man's glance passed over the paper the Marquis handed him; then silently he moved aside, and unlocked the iron doors.

"Are you not coming?" At the threshold the Marquis looked back. When first they had approached the guard-house, involuntarily had the Governor's daughter drawn aside to the ramparts; now, with face half-averted, stood gazing off.

"Coming?" Surprised, the Marquis noted her expression; the fixed brightness of her eyes and her parted lips. "Oh, yes!" And turning abruptly, she hastened past him.

Would they have to be locked in?—the half-apprehensive query of one of the ladies caused the jailer at first to hesitate and then to answer in the negative. He would leave the doors from the outer room open, and himself await there the visitors' return. With which reassuring promise, he distributed lights; called a guard; familiar with the intricate underground passages, and consigned them to his care.

One of the gay procession, the Lady, Elise stepped slowly forward; the guide proved a talkative fellow, and seemed anxious to answer their many inquiries concerning the place. The salle de la question? "Yes, it existed; but the ancient torture devices for the 'interrogatory ordinary' and the 'interrogatory extraordinary' were no longer pressed into service; the King had ordered them relegated to the shelves of the museum. The cabans, or black holes? Louis XI built them; the carceres durt and vade in pace, however, dated from Saint Mauritian, fourth abbot of the Mount.

"And the Black Seigneur? How have you accommodated him?"

"In the petit exil; just to the left! We are going there now."

"I am going back!" A hand touched the arm of the Marquis, last of the file of visitors, and, lifting his candle, he held it so that the yellow glimmer played on the face of the Governor's daughter. Her eyes looked deeper; full of dread, as if the very spirit of the subterranean abode had seized her. He started.

"Surely you, Elise, are not afraid?"

"I prefer the sunlight," she said hurriedly in a low tone. "It is not cheerful down here! No; do not call the guide—or let the others know. I'll return alone, and—wait for you at the guard-house."

He, nevertheless, insisted upon accompanying her; but, indicating the not distant door through which they had come, she professed to make light of objections, and when he still clung to the point, replied with a flash of spirit, sudden and passionate. It compelled his acquiescence; left him surprised for a second time that day; a little hurt, too, perhaps, for heretofore had the inmate been mistaken on a strictly ethical and charming plane. But he had no time for analysis; the others were drawing away to the left, into a side passage; and, with a last backward glance toward the retreating figure, the Marquis reluctantly followed the majority.

Despite, however, her avowed repugnance for that under-world, my lady showed now no haste to quit it; for scarcely had the others vanished than she stopped; began slowly to retrace her way in the direction they had taken. When the narrow route to the petit exil connected with the main aisle, a sudden draft of air extinguished her light; yet still she went on, led by the voices, and a glimmer safe until reaching a room, low, massive, as if hewn from the solid rock, again she paused. Drawing behind a heavy square pillar, she gazed at the tords and ladies assembled in the forbidding place; listened to a voice that ran on, as if discoursing about some anomalous thing. Again was she cognizant of their questions; a jest from my lord, the Marquis; she saw that several stole forward; peered, and started back, half afraid.

But, at length, they asked about the obliettes, and, chatting gaily, left their garments almost touched the Governor's daughter. Lights played about the gigantic pillars, and like will-o-the-wisps whisked away. Now, staring straight ahead toward the chamber they had vacated, my lady's attention became fixed by a single dot of yellow—a candle placed in a niche by the jailer's assistant. It seemed to fascinate; to draw her forward; across the portals—into the room itself!

How long she stood there in the faint suggestion of light, she did not realize; nor when she approached the iron-barred aperture, and what she first said! Something eager, solicitous, with odd silences between the words, and the impression of a motionless form, and two steady, cynical eyes fastened on her, brought her to an abrupt pause. It was some time before she continued, more coherently, an explanation about her apprehension on account of her father, which

cue of the others; his remaining behind to bear the brunt—as brave as act as she knew of! Her tone here and tremulous.

"Who betrayed me?" His voice bold and scoffing, into aupt

She answered. It was like speaking to some one in a tomb. "The soldier you bound gave the alarm."

From behind the bars came a mocking laugh.

"You don't believe me?" She caught her breath.

"Believe? Of course."

"You don't!" she said, and clung tighter to the iron grating. "And I can't make you!"

"Why should your Ladyship want to? What does it matter?"

"But it does matter!" wildly. "When your cloister accused me that day in the cloister I did not answer nor deny; but now—"

"Your Ladyship would deny?"

"That I betrayed you at Casque? Here? Yes, yes!"

"Or at the wheel-house when you called to warn the soldiers?"

"You were about to—throw yourself over!" she faltered.

"And your Ladyship was apprehensive lest the Black Seigneur should escape?"

"Escape?" she cried. "It was death."

"And the alternative? My lady preferred to see the outlaw taken—die like a felon on the gallows!"

"No; no! It was not that."

"What then?" His eyes gleamed bright; her own turned; shrank from them. A moment she strove to answer; could not. Within the black recess a faint light from the flickering candle played up and down. So complete the stillness, so dead the very air, the throbbings of her pulses filled the girl with a suffocating sense of her own vitality.

"I spoke to my father to try to get your cell changed," she at last found herself irrelevantly saying; "but could do nothing."

"I thank your Ladyship! But your Ladyship's friends will be far away. Your Ladyship may miss something amusing!"

"I did not bring them—did not want them to come!"

"Not?"

"Her figure straightened.

"Perhaps, even, they are not aware you are here?"

"They are not, unless—"

"Elise!" From afar a loud call interrupted; reverberating down the main passage, was caught up here and there. "Elise! Elise!" The whole under-world echoed to the name.

"I promised to meet them at the guard-house," she explained hurriedly. And hardly knowing what she did, put out her hand, through the bars, toward him. In the darkness a hand seized hers; she felt herself drawn; held against the bars. They bruised her shoulder; hurt her face. The child of the iron sent a shudder through her; though the pain she did not feel; she was cognizant only of a closer view of a figure; the chains from him to the wall; the bare, damp floor—then, of a voice low, tense, that now was speaking:

"Your Ladyship, indeed, found means to punish a presumptuous fellow, who dared displease her. But ma foi! she should have confined her punishment to the offender. Those stripes inflicted on him, my old servant! Think you I knew not it was my Lady's answer to the outlaw, who had the temerity to speak words that offended—"

"You dream that! You imagine that!"

The warmth of his hand seemed to burn hers; her fingers, so closely imprisoned, to throbb with the fierce beating of his pulses.

"I do not want you to think—I can't let you think," she began.

"Elise!" The searchers were drawing nearer.

She would have stepped back, but the searchers tightened on her hand.

"They will be here in a moment—"

Still he did not relinquish his hold; the dark face was next to hers; the piercing, relentless eyes studied the agitated brown ones. The latter cleared; met his fully an instant. "Be lieve!" that imploring wild glance seemed to say. Did his waver for a moment; the harshness and mockery soften on his face?

"Elise!" From but a short distance came the voice of the Marquis.

A moment the Black Seigneur's hand gripped my lady's harder with a strength he was unaware of. A slight cry fell from her lips, and at once, almost roughly, he threw her hand from him.

"Bah!" again he laughed mockingly. "Go to your lover."

Released thus abruptly she wavered, straightened, but continued to stand before the dungeon as if incapable of further motion.

"Elise! Are you there?"

"There!" Caverns and caves called out.

"There!" gibed voices amid a labyrinth of pillars, and mechanically she caught up the candle, fled.

"Here she is!" Coming toward her quickly out of the darkness, the Marquis uttered a glad exclamation. "We have been looking for you everywhere. Did I not say you should not have attempted to return alone? Mon dieu! you must have been lost!"

(To Be Continued.)

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Might Some Day Be Called Upon to Govern Here.

Imposing guard; escorted with due honor through the gates, and up the narrow street of the town.

As he climbed the winding highway, my lord, the Marquis, bestowed approving nod and smile this way and that; it may be that he already felt a nearer affiliation with these people; for his glance, gracious, condescending in passing, was that of a man armed with the knowledge that he, kinsman of the King, might some day be called upon to govern here. But to these advances, the townspeople responded ill, and the young noble's brow waned delicately up, as if a little amused! Mon dieu! did not unfriendly eyes peer from every lurking place around the royal palaces and pleasure grounds near Paris; and had they not encountered them all the way to the sea? People were the same everywhere; must be treated like bad children, and, with relays of troops from the capital to the sea, from the strand to the Mount's high top, one could afford to smile at their petty humors.

Above all, when one had more momentous matter for consideration! And my lord lifted his head higher, toward a rampart, where some one had once bid him au revoir, and where he might yet in fancy see a fluttering ribbon wave a bright adieu!

But today my lady, the Princess of the Rock, was not there; waited above, with her father, to receive him—then—in the great Hall of the Chevalliers. Until that morning she had not known of the coming of the Marquis, an important mission following the courier and the perfumed missive acquainting her with the noble's near approach. Certainly had she shown surprise; but whether she was pleased or not, his Excellency could not tell.

He was still uncertain; standing, near the raised gallery, in the ancient salle des chevalliers, from time to time regarded her furtively! Often had she looked from one of the round windows, commanding a view of the shore and the sands; many times turned away. At first sight of the company on the beach, the Governor had seen the girl's face alter and noted the involuntary start she had given. Whereupon, moving toward one of the giant fire-places, had he sought for the sake of diplomacy and the end in view, to turn their conversation into a channel that should have interested her; spoke of plans to be made; preparations for festivities and merry-making commensurate with the circumstances. But to these suggestions of gaieties, the prelude to a stately ceremony, had she hardly listened; paused absently before the blazing logs; once or twice seemed about to say something and stopped. She was silent now, a slender figure beneath that great canopy of stone designed for the shelter of a score of knights; nervously twining and intertwining her fingers, she looked out at the shadows moving between the columns, playing around the bases, or melting in the vaulting.

"They should be almost here now,"



"My Father Hates You, and You—"

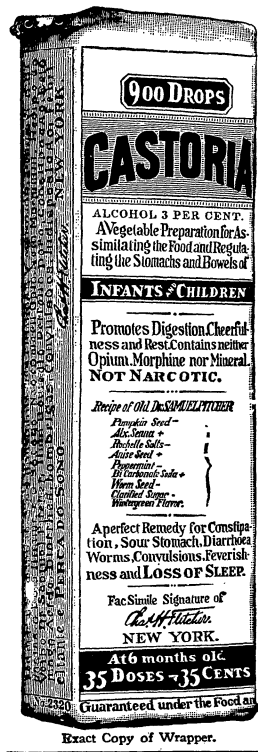
had entirely left her when she peered through the window of the guard-house.

"You thought me, then, but a common assassin?" a satirical voice interposed.

"My father hates you, and you—"

"My Lady has, perhaps, a standard of her own for judging!"

Unmindful of ironical incredulity, she related how she had been forced to take refuge in the wheel-house; how, when Sanchez had seen her, alarmed she had fled blindly down the passage; waited, then hearing them all coming, at a loss what else to do, had opened the wheel-house door; run into the store-room! What she had seen from there, disconnect edly, also she referred to; his res-



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NEW PARTY MUST FAIL.

Former Senator Chandler Says 14th Amendment Disobedience Spells Defeat.

Former United States Senator William E. Chandler writes to the New York Tribune, from Concord, N. H., as follows:

Sir: The political failure of the Roosevelt Republicans, if they deny the right of suffrage to the colored citizens of America, is certain. They may defeat Mr. Taft and elect Mr. Wilson, but they will soon be heard of no more, except as political suicides. Negro suffrage may be unwise, but it is constitutional right, and a party movement which proclaims as a fundamental basis of its existence disobedience to a plain constitutional provision, will soon disappear.

The great historic glories of the Republican party are:

1. That it resisted the extension by the South of human chattel slavery.
2. That while saving the Union in the slave holders' rebellion it emancipated all the slaves.
3. That it established manhood suffrage by the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

A new party or movement which declares this amendment shall not be enforced and shall be disobeyed, is doomed to failure. It is more radically unrighteous than the initiative, referendum and recall.

Arrest Check Defrauders.

Wm. Huggins, of Roscoe, and a female partner of the same town, were arrested Tuesday by U. S. Marshal Henkel, of New York, for fraudulent use of the mails. Huggins and his partner would visit merchants all along the O. & W. lines, make a small purchase, pretending that they were opening a large boarding-house in some nearby town, and offering a large check in payment of same. They used checks at Ellenville, Middletown and Port Jervis, in which banks they never had accounts. At times they would redeem the checks before they were presented for payment, and a little later make another purchase presenting a large check, often "stings," a single merchant for as much as \$75, as in the case of Siegle Bros., of Parkville.

Saved Small Boy's Life.

William Moser, Sr., a fruit peddler, of Harriman, N. Y., saved Joseph Melvin from drowning Monday morning. He dived into a pond where the six-year-old had fallen in while fishing and hauled him out in the nick of time.

\$100 Reward, \$100.

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