

THE FAMILY JEWELS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF L. SCHUCKING.

CHAPTER VII.

Valentine had carelessly thrown herself upon the bed to wait the coming of dawn; gradually the excitement that had kept her wakeful during the night died away, and at last her weary eyelids closed in a profound slumber.

She reached the forest unperceived and sped along the path she had led Max a few hours before. On the summit she paused to regain her breath, and for an instant entranced by the magnificence of the glorious scene beneath her.

Another glance at the wondrous scene, at the Ferme still buried in deep repose—all quiet save from the stable ever and anon the impatient whinneying of a horse, or the triumphant cry of the royal crested chanticleer, and Valentine turned to hasten on her errand.

On she sped, lightly, as her fairy sisters had trod the self-same path in the light of the young moon, and at last stood at the foot of the rocky ascent leading to the grotto. Here she paused half in surprise, half in fear, for she saw that the door had not been closed—perhaps it had grown too old and rusty, for it had been placed there no one could tell when or why.

Climbing on a huge boulder she looked anxiously down the ravine, along the rarely used foot-path that followed the meanderings of the brook which dashed over the mossy stones beyond with a mellow, gurgling laughter then wandered on its way to the Meuse.

Right and left the hills rose in their steep sameness, as if they had once been united and had been torn asunder by a subterranean quarrel. A falcon was soaring above the lofty tree tops, uttering its harsh call—but no human figure, save the slight girlish figure was to be seen in the oppressive solitude. It was very strange! Had he perhaps neglected the warning and ventured too far into the grotto and met a horrible death in the black waters of the lake? No, the thought was too terrible, and Valentine cast it from her with a sudden. He had evidently become impatient at her delay and found his way to Void at dawn. But even this had been imprudent; how could he, a stranger and a German, have ventured alone in the enemy's country? Then a revulsion of feeling swept over her, and she stamped her foot with impatience and mortification; then she thought how little he had trusted her promise to return to him when the danger was over. For a few moments she stood irresolute, then quieting herself with the assurance that he must be safely with his friends in Void she hastened homeward.

As she approached the Ferme she half expected to see signs of the arrival of some one—some one, whom she could have greeted with an inexpressible joy spite of his disobedience to her commands; and should she not find him at the house she was determined to beg her father to accompany her to Void to satisfy herself that he had reached there in safety—what cared she for Gaston's criticisms now?—or for Ellen's contemptuous glances; that lady had won the girl's undying hatred.

As Valentine entered the courtyard the servant who fed the animals was just going toward the stables. Valentine called him to her, and learned that no one had arrived, and that the German's horse was still in the stable. She entered the *salon* and listlessly opened the shutters, then threw herself wearily upon a sofa, and closed her eyes with a long drawn sigh. She could not rest, but she rang to her feet with a feverish light in her sleepless eyes. What if after all he had perished—perished through her fault! was the sole torturing thought as she rushed to the ter-

race to feel the cool morning breeze on her heated temples. Suddenly she paused in her restless walk and bending forward with a glad expectant light breaking over her face, she waited with lips apart and clasped hands—there, through the centre avenue—was not that the enemy's uniform, the military cap and red collar—yes!—then a second—and a third—Valentine started back with a low cry of anguish, the light fading from her face leaving it a deathly paleness, as she watched the half dozen German soldiers, in their gray mantles with rifles on their shoulders, steadily approach the house. At the terrace stair they halted and lowered their clinking arms to the stones, while one of their number ascended the terrace and respectfully approached the young girl who stood beside the table like a statue, one cold hand resting on the back of an iron chair. The hostile warrior had nothing terrifying in his appearance; on the contrary his face was good natured in the extreme, as he approached hesitatingly, his finger laid thoughtfully upon his forehead as if summoning all his knowledge of the French tongue to his aid.

"I beg pardon, Mademoiselle—we disturb rather early. But orders—duty! The Captain has sent us to conduct Lieutenant Daveland to his quarters. Will you have the kindness to show us where he is—or to announce our arrival? We will wait—for the Captain has commanded the Herr Lieutenant to return with us. So you see, Mademoiselle I must beg of you."

As he spoke this with difficulty in his wretched French his eyes twinkled mischievously, betraying his knowledge of the Captain's intention to play a trick on the First Lieutenant, and under the pretext of conducting him safely to Void, have him roused from a delicious nap at this early hour. Valentine understood but half of what the man said, but enough to increase her anxiety a hundred fold.

In a trembling voice she asked: "Has Lieutenant Von Daveland not returned to Void—did you not meet him?" "Returned? No, Mademoiselle; we knocked at his window when we started, he was not there—nor did we meet him—has he gone already?"

"Wait, I will call my father," she exclaimed turning suddenly and hastening to her father's room. In a few hasty words she told him how she had concealed Max in the grotto, and on returning to release him had not found him, and that some of his men were below asking for him. Mons. d'Avelon started from his pillow with a hurried exclamation of alarm, and accompanied his daughter to the terrace. 'Twas fortunate that he spoke German so readily, for the landwehr's knowledge of French was limited to a few common phrases and simple questions.

Mons. d'Avelon concluded to tell the Prussians the truth, knowing well that it would only endanger his already precarious situation by attempting to conceal anything. He told him of his desire to detain Max because they were interested in the game; of his daughter's suspicion that the workmen at the Forges of Rubrai knew of his being at the Ferme, and were going to surprise him—only withholding Valentine's part in the affair;—and of Valentine's conclusion to lead him to a place of safety, and of her vain effort to find him when the danger was over. But he assured them, that they would surely find the young gentleman, who had likely wandered some roundabout way, safely in Void by this time. At this intelligence the landwehrman grew serious; he turned inquiringly to his comrades, whom he had beckoned to approach, and who stood near, as serious as himself. For several moments he paused as if deliberating what to do in this unexpected turn of affairs. What these French people said might be true; the young lady with her pale face and anxious eyes was surely truthful; but the old gentleman's physiognomy was by no means so prepossessing—and perhaps he was trying to deceive them as he had already deceived his daughter—for who had brought the forge men to the Ferme? who had told them of the officer's presence here?

"I am very sorry, sir," he said at last, "but our regulations are very severe; it would be well for you should Herr Von Daveland turn up soon—if anything has happened him, then we must know who is to blame. I must now request you to accompany us to Void where our Captain can examine you further."

"This means that you arrest us?" exclaimed Mons. d'Avelon in a faint voice. "I only said that you must accompany us to Void—the officers will decide anything further."

Valentine clutched her father's arm with an agonizing cry as she leant helplessly against him. With a half suppressed expletive Mons. d'Avelon placed his fainting daughter in a chair and bent over her, whispering tenderly: "Calm yourself, my child, calm yourself! This is a terrible business, but we will soon convince them of our innocence, for Herr Daveland must appear somewhere—somehow. Pray, be firm, my darling; rouse your energy and—Herr!"—turning to the landwehrman, when he saw Valentine recovering—"do you mean to drag my daughter to Void—don't you see she is ill?"

The honest warrior stood, both hands clasped around the muzzle of his rifle, his eyes resting pityingly on the young girl's face. If a crime had been perpetrated here, it was very evident that the members of the household remaining behind

would obliterate all traces of it, with the master and his child were in Void. He decided quickly. Approaching his comrades he held a short consultation, then turned to d'Avelon and said: "If you prefer it—and it is perhaps just as well—we will guard you here in your house while I send two of my companions with a report of what has occurred to the Captain."

"Certainly we prefer that," returned d'Avelon. "Come Valentine, we will retire to the *salon*, they can guard us there; I will send for Ellen."

She sprang to her feet at the mere mention of that name, recalled her sinking energies, and taking her father's arm, exclaimed angrily:

"She is the most to blame for all this! She and Gaston concocted the scheme, which was to have been carried out last night; she has—"

"Valentine!" exclaimed Ellen in a threatening voice, as she hastened toward them, "if you do not cease your shameless slanders instantly, I will—"

"In God's name, girls! is this the time and place for such a scene?" interrupted d'Avelon, interposing himself between them. "Ellen, can't you see what has occurred? the German has disappeared, they demand him of us, they have arrested us, and we are their prisoners; you too, Ellen, and we will likely be shot unless the missing man appears in time to save us. Come into the house; we will talk there—come!"

They entered the *salon* and one man was stationed at the terrace door, another at the hall entrance, two more were dispatched to Void, while the leader of the little band, and the remaining one explored the house and surroundings. They found Daveland's horse in the stables, and tried in vain to gain some information from the servants, who avoided them frowningly. In vain he strove to ascertain where Max had spent part of the night, or in what part of the house the room in which he had slept was located; the men servants returned but a laconic "je ne sais pas, moi!" while the maids avoided the Germans as a pestilence.

"If we only had two more of our fellows here," at last impatiently exclaimed the leader, "I would station a guard at the gate, and order them to shoot any of the vermin who dared to venture out. I cannot understand how Lieutenant Daveland could be so careless as to pass the night with such a lot. Do you believe in this tale of a gang of forgermen invading the house last night?"

"Not a word of it!" returned the bearded warrior at his side, emphasizing his words with a thump of his rifle upon the graveled walk. "These creatures don't look as if they needed any outside assistance to dispose of a single helpless German."

"That they don't. I wonder if they are silly enough to expect to go unpunished?"

"I suppose they never dreamed we were such early birds, and would be here at this hour; nor would we have been if the Captain had not wanted to play a trick on the Lieutenant. Perhaps the old monster and his daughter were just on the point of starting to some place of security when we came."

"Hum, we spoiled their plans quickly enough: They must rise earlier if they want to get ahead of us."

"I feel sorry for the young lady, should it fall ill with them. She seemed to be really worried about the Lieutenant. I tell you, if she was acting she understands the art better than I ever imagined any christian did."

"Do you really think that if the Lieutenant does not appear soon the Captain will have them shot?" asked his companion, leaning against the corner of the house.

"I don't know whether he has the authority to do it, I think he will send them to Commercy, where the—but look there," he added suddenly, as he pointed to the ground beneath the window; the grass was trodden down as if a struggle had taken place, and on the window sill was the marks of greasy, sooty fingers.

"This looks rather suspicious," said the leader thoughtfully. "It looks as if a number of persons had burst in the window, seized the Lieutenant—but the window is not broken—"

"Which proves that it was opened from the inside," interrupted the other. "Perhaps the old gentleman was kind enough to open it for them—at all events they entered here and these footprints were made in the struggle with the villainous rascals!"

"They will atone for it!" exclaimed the leader, shaking his fist menacingly; "we will likely have the pleasure of making a bonfire of this accursed but before twenty-four hours!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

A PEORIA man arose the morning after a storm and found his dog kennel buried in a drift as high as a church. He worked for half an hour, to dig his dog out, and then went down town and told his clerks what he had done, adding, "A merciful man is merciful to his beasts." But after he left home the neighbors saw his wife and daughter shoveling out paths through the snow and carrying in coal.

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REPORT OF THE CONDITION OF THE National Bank of Beaver County, NEW BRIGHTON, PA.

At the close of business on the 27th of December 1872: RESOURCES.

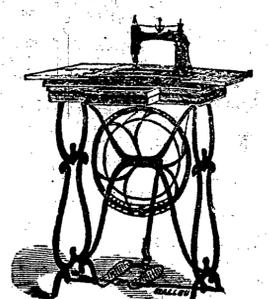
Table with 2 columns: Resource Name and Amount. Includes Loans and Discounts, Overdrafts, U. S. Bonds, U. S. Bonds and Securities on hand, Due from National Banks, Due from State Banks and Bankers, Banking House, Furniture and fixtures, Current expenses, Premiums, Cash items—Stamps, Bills of other National Banks, Fractional Currency, Specie—Coin, Legal Tender Notes.

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LIABILITIES. Capital Stock, Surplus Fund, Discount, Exchange, Interest, Profit and Loss, National Bank circulation, Dividends unpaid, Individual Deposits, Due to National Banks, Due to State Banks and Bankers.

State of Pennsylvania, I, Edward Hoops, Cashier of Beaver County, do solemnly affirm that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. EDWARD HOOPS, Cashier. Subscribed before me this 6th day of January, 1873. MURTON TOWNSEND, N. P.

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