

Woman The Mystery

By HENRY HERMAN

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Bernard Quayle, alias John Robb, had surrendered the Hotel de Paris in New Orleans for the more lucrative post of first sutler in the Confederate army, and then as a spy for both sides, equally indifferent which he served so long as he was well paid by both. In this double capacity he saw Helene in Richmond, knew of Col. Adams' shooting by Henri Sainton and observed Capt. Denon's escape. He also found his way into the field hospital where both Denon and Walter Graydes were lying wounded.

As his main purpose in life was to secure possession of Helene in order to put her out of the way, he conceived the plan of getting a letter from Denon which would induce Helene to trust herself to him. As a Federal spy he had no difficulty in securing an interview with the wounded officer, and by first telling him that Helene had sent him and artfully playing on his longings to see the woman he loved, he induced Denon to give him the following letter:

"Dear Miss Lemure—I owe my life to you, and next to you to poor Jack, who lies sorely wounded in the hospital near me. The doctors doubt that he will recover. I send this note by a friend upon whose devotion you may implicitly rely. What would I not give or do to be able to see you again? Would that you could be here to see poor Jack! A sight of your face might save his life, A. D."

Having received this note Quayle returned to Richmond and gave it to Henri to hand to Helene. That young lady, after having been informed by Sue of the meeting between Walter and Denon, naturally became very anxious as to what had become of them. In one way or another the rumor spread and came to her ears that they had fought a duel to the death on her account.

The rest of the week passed without further news. Adams was recovering but slowly, and required unceasing attention. Henri called twice with letters from Captain Warner for the colonel, and Helene twice saw him standing in the hallway without recognizing him, and, in fact, without bothering to look at him.

During the previous year Henri had avoided as much as possible immediate contact with either his colonel or with Helene. Adams had seen him only once in Paris, and Henri's appearance had been much changed by his broader and burlier figure, and by the Vandyke beard and the heavy mustache.

A few days more passed, and the Thursday of the following week Henri again brought a letter from Captain Warner for Col. Adams. On this occasion Helene saw the young Frenchman cross the garden in front of the house, and went to the porch to take the letter from him.

She knew not what it was, whether the tone of the voice, when Henri said: "Good morning, mademoiselle. Letter for Col. Adams," or a stray thought of her past life, or the seemingly savage gleam in the soldier's eyes, but she looked at the young man more closely.

As she did so a flash of recognition shot through her mind, and gripped her with a feverish contagion. That soldier and Henri's fierce look, when Henri was roused to passion!

She said "Thank you," and took the letter, and in doing so looked at the man again and turned pale. "Surely," she said, quite involuntarily and unknowingly, in French this time, "you are not Henri Sainton?"

"Surely," replied the young man, also in French, and quite unmoved, "I am Henri Sainton."

Helene gripped the banister of the stairs.

"Who would have thought of seeing you here?" she exclaimed, continuing the conversation in French.

"You did not expect it, of course," replied Henri, in the same language. "It is a long way from the galleys of Toulon to Virginia, and now I suppose, as you have recognized me, you will betray me to Col. Adams, as you betrayed me before and sent me to slavery."

Helene was silent. Then she held out her hand, and said, in tones of tenderness nearly, "Forgive me, if I can be forgiven, I was a child merely, and knew not what I was doing. How you must hate me!"

"I did hate you," was Henri's hissed reply. "I hated you for years with the bitterest hate a man can feel for a woman, and now, I dare say, you will give me further cause."

"I will not," Helene answered. "I am sorry to have brought trouble upon you years ago. I will bring no more. Ah! those were happy days in Paris, when old Father Lemure was alive, and we were children, both of us."

"If I could trust you now," said Henri, "I might tell you something you would like to know, and give you something you would like to have. But what assurance have I that, if I do place the means of betraying me in your hands again, you will not immediately take it?"

"You have something to give me I would like to have? What?" was Helene's demand.

"A letter from Captain Denon." She had been cold and hot by turns before, but now Helene felt her color leaving her altogether.

"A letter from Captain Denon!" she cried. "Give it to me! You can trust me with your life!"

Helene read and reread Denon's lines until she knew every word by heart.

"You are right, Henri," she said, beaming her brightest. "I have no right to ask. I am satisfied, and I will not betray you. But, tell me, are you the friend whom Captain Denon mentioned, upon whose devotion I might implicitly rely?" This, with a bewitching glance, which would have thrilled many a man, but left Henri unmoved.

"No," he said, gruffly and stubbornly. "Where is the man?"

"In Richmond."

"I would much like to see that man. I would like to thank him, and I would like to ask him a question."

Henri paused, seemingly totally untouched by Helene's allurements.

"Very well," he said at last, in French as before. "Write a note, and I will deliver it."

About an hour afterward Henri delivered to Quayle the following note from Helene:

"Sir—May I see you to thank you for the service you have rendered to me? The news you have brought me, though painful, has greatly relieved my mind. In his letter, the writer suggests a possibility. I have been thinking whether that possibility might, perhaps, be carried into reality."

"Gratefully yours,
"HELENE LEMURE."

"The charm is working!" Quayle said to himself, warmly. "We shall have only to keep the bait dangling before her eyes until she gets to hunger for it, and the thing is done. We must not be too hasty. We must not consent too quickly. Women hate being kept waiting. Nothing drags so much at their nerves as suspense. When they get impatient, they lose their ready judgment and their powers of calculation."

"The difficulty is the identification of the body. It would not serve my purpose to do away with her, and to have the fact of her death disputed. It will be easy enough, if I can get her outside the lines, to put a bullet through her head and to say that she was killed by a stray shot from the pickets, but who will prove for me that the dead woman is Helene Berinquin? There lies the difficulty."

"Vell?" said Henri, "vat you say to er?"

"I say to her nothing for the present," was the reply. "I have to make inquiries. You say that she recognized you this time?"

"Oh, yes," answered Henri, "an' she make sheep's eyes like zis."

Here Henri gave a clownish imitation of Helene's persuasive glances, with the result that Quayle threw himself upon his bed and roared.

"Acting is not in your line," said Quayle, still laughing. "The only part you could play to life would be that of a drunken man. You know all about him. But I have no doubt, when the time comes, you will allow this wench to do what she likes with you."

"Do vat she like?" exclaimed Henri, with a sneer of disgust. "I know vat due to me. I not forget. I olways remember Toulon."

"We will see," answered Quayle. "If I were to take you at your word"—this with a cruel glitter in the oblong eyes, and the words hissed between the set teeth—"do you think you would have the nerve?"

"Nerve for vat?" exclaimed Henri.

"Nerve to pay her for the injury she did to us. Nerve to return to her with interest payment for our years in chains. Nerve to strike, if necessary, a blow that will avenge all we suffered through her."

Henri had turned pale beneath the olive of his skin, and he sat on his chair, gripping the arms with his hands. His dark eyes flashed and his brow darkened. At last he rose with his face distorted by the evil passions which his companion's speech had aroused.

"I pay out zat 'ound Adams," he said. "an' I vill pay out se woman who betray us."

"Very well. I will send for you when I am ready."

Quayle's next step was to again penetrate the Union lines and have another talk with Captain Denon. The evening found him at Savage Station. Walter was under strict surgical surveillance, and nobody was allowed to speak to him, but the surgeons gave Quayle permission to see Denon. Denon was overjoyed when he heard that his letter had been delivered to Helene.

"Do you think she will come?" she asked.

"I can't say," was Quayle's reply. "She has your letter. She has asked to see me, but hitherto I have not been able to meet her. I can only say I will try my best."

"Miss Lemure will be doubly glad to come when she knows that Major Adams has regained consciousness and that there

is great hope of his recovery," said Denon. "The strange thing in connection with his improvement is the fact that he thinks he is not Major Adams, of the Louisiana battalion, but somebody else altogether."

Quayle stared.

"Somebody else altogether?" he asked. "Who does he think he is?"

"He says that his name is Walter Graydes, and that he is the son of an English nobleman, Lord Yorley."

If a bullet had struck Quayle at that moment, he could not have started up more excitedly. His face was ashen.

"Does the doctor think he is likely to recover soon?" he asked.

"The doctor has every hope that a week or ten days will see him fairly on the road to recovery."

That night Quayle crossed the Chickahominy, and took a northeasterly direction to search for a spot where the villainous deed he was planning might be safely and effectually committed.

"It will have to be done near enough to the Yankee pickets to get her into the Yankee lines," he said, "and it will have to be done when Mr. Walter Graydes will have thoroughly recovered his memory. When he knows all about himself, he will be able to recognize his fair cousin, Luck is in my way. I have been bothering my head to get the body identified. Mr. Walter Graydes himself shall identify her when she is dead."

CHAPTER XVI.

Helene decided, if facilities were afforded her for so doing, to risk the journey to the Northern camp. She was not prompted by love or pity, by affection or charity, but the idea had the charm of danger and of romance about it. She was not a romantic woman, but her life had been one of very even tenor lately, and the excitement of the venture thrilled her already.

Col. Adams had recovered so far that the doctors had given permission to have him removed to the residence of a friend in the country some forty or fifty miles from Richmond, where the greater quiet, and the air uninfected by the vicinity of Chickahominy swamps, would hasten his restoration to complete health and activity.

The colonel was to be sent there on the following day, and Helene was to accompany him. Where an excuse is to be found for anything, a woman is sure to be able to fashion one. Helene arranged with Col. Adams to go with him to his friend's residence, and then to return to Richmond for the purpose of superintending certain household affairs. These, she said, would occupy about a week.

Adams readily consented. Helene had become dearer to him every day, and from regarding her as a daughter, his feeling had changed to an affection of a different kind, and he hoped and longed for the day when he would dare to ask her to become his wife.

His attentions had become more marked, and Helene was glad of the opportunity to escape them. The excuse of the journey to Richmond gave her time to go to the federal camp, and return if her mysterious guide and protector could so arrange. She, therefore, wrote a note as follows:

"I go with the colonel to Columbia the day after to-morrow, and shall be free to meet you on Monday or Tuesday next at any place you may appoint. Kindly send me your instructions, and I will implicitly follow them."

She inclosed this little note in an envelope, and sent Sue with it to the camp to give it to Henri. The next morning she received the following reply, brought to her by Henri:

"If you can arrange to be at Ashland on Tuesday evening next, the 24th instant, about seven o'clock, I will meet you at Crockett's tavern, and I will then comply with your wish. Will you also do me the favor to ask the colonel for a week's leave for the bearer of this note?"

Helene had no difficulty in obtaining the requisite permit for Henri. She did not even mention who the soldier was, Adams was only too happy that she should ask him for anything, no matter what, and he granted her request without a question of why or who.

When the young Frenchman came to Quayle's rooms and brought him Helene's reply, agreeing to meet him at the appointed place, Quayle for the first time felt a shiver creep through him, and a repugnance which he had not known before chilled his blood.

"Bah!" he said to himself. "It is not a nice job, but it has to be done. Besides—who knows? I may be able to get that sweep to do it for me. Ah! Mr. Robert Berinquin," he said, "you don't know how much nearer you are to-day to those millions of Mademoiselle Helene than you were yesterday. When this job is over Dixieland will know me no more, nor Yankeeedom either. It'll be 'Ho, for old England!' And I shall be glad to get back to London. I'll have a better chance this time with one hundred thousand pounds in my pocket."

Quayle's plan was fiendishly simple. After meeting Helene on Tuesday evening at Ashland, a village about eighteen miles to the northwest of Richmond, he would take her southeast, outside of the pickets of both armies, to a ruined hut in a field not far from the Union lines at Beaver Dam creek.

He had provided himself with a couple of short, but very heavy, revolvers, carrying bullets of the Southern army pattern. He had also secured a small vial filled with a powerful narcotic, which he intended to mix with the water Helene would be given to drink.

(To be continued.)

Couldn't Answer.

"Say, Bill," said the first burglar, "how many rooms wuz dey in dat last house you cracked?"

"I dunno," replied the other. "I wuz on'y interested in the haul."—Philadelphia Press.

A woman might be happy without a new huznet if no other woman had one.

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

No man enjoys the farm when he dows it with his face.

Never judge by appearances; the loveliest girl usually has the most money.

Skin-tight trousers are coming into style again. Bow-legged men will find it harder than ever to be cheerful.

The United States has granted 3,500 patents to women, but as yet there is no device for keeping a bat on straight.

Money makes the mare go, and Incentor Baldwin has demonstrated that he lack of it prevents the airship from going.

The case of the man who cut out a horse's tongue because the animal is a tickler justifies a regret that the day of the rack and thumbscrew is past.

It is now reported that the Baltic feet sailors saw war balloons off the Jagger bank. The only blessed things they didn't see were fishing vessels.

A Missouri paper advises its readers to invest their money in mules, not automobiles. On the ground that suicide is less a moral sin than murder, probably.

Maybe it is merely the combination of college yell and football that is responsible for the alleged softening of the brain in the case of the gridiron athletes.

New Yorkers are complaining because there is only 12 per cent of oxygen in the subway atmosphere. What did they think the contractors would give them—hummingbirds?

A Chicago pastor advised his congregation to "hang on to their pocket-books while they prayed." The only strange thing about this advice is that it should have been given in Chicago.

As the Seattle News wittily remarks, "the servant girl occupies a distinctive place in the domestic life of America. But where the rub comes is in the fact that she never occupies the place long."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox writes to the promoters of a cat show that she is leading an existence which she describes as her "rushed, jammed, triple life." Why, Ella! These double lives we hear of are bad enough, but a triple life—why, Ella!

The proprietor of a hotel in New York claims people are being scared away from his place by false stories or high prices. A nice room may be had for \$8 a day, he says, while roast chicken is only \$3 a portion in his restaurant. Now, who could ever have started such false stories?

An Indiana teacher whipped a pupil with a switch until blood ran down his back, and the pupil's father nearly killed the teacher with a poker. Of course, if the switching had occurred in the ordinary process of hazing, by the young man's schoolmates, that would have been different and he would have been silly to get mad.

The country as a whole is experiencing a wholesome reaction against the free and easy divorce system which has brought so much reproach on America. States are modifying the laws which in so many instances have practically invited the filing of petitions. Courts, responding to the general impulse, are being more careful against abusing the discretion lodged in them—are more vigilant against collusion—more insistent that proof shall be complete. In social life there is a tendency to go back to the old opinion which regarded divorce as a disgrace and visited obloquy on the divorced. The pendulum which so long swung one way is now swinging the other.

The result of the tipping system is, quite naturally and inevitably, that those who pay fees get excellent service, while others are neglected. It is, indeed, hard to find any good defense for the custom, however it is viewed. It is undemocratic because it draws a line between the classes that can be tipped and those to whom a tip would be an insult. It enables the rich, who do not mind the change out of a bill, to outbid the poor, who can not afford more than an extra dime. It forces the public to pay the employes of railroads, hotels, steamships, etc., as well as servants in private families the wages which should come from the employer. It is a well-known fact that wages are cut down in consideration of fees and the thrifty innkeeper merely lets his guests pay his servants.

Of the three weeks recently given up to special services in a Brooklyn church, one was devoted to women's work.

horted to get married, and not to give up hope on account of age. In explaining the program one of the clergymen interested said, "The reason we devote a whole week to unmarried women is because we feel that much of the preliminary work of the married state rests with the woman. She should be taught to realize this, and we are going to do our best to show her the necessary responsibilities, and how to shoulder them with the pleasure and bliss attendant upon a happy and God-blessed marriage." An "institutional" church in Boston has in its parish house what has flippantly been called a "courting parlor," but it is only a pleasant room where the young people of the neighborhood may gather for amusement in wholesome surroundings. Their homes are so small that there is little room for a gathering of young people in them, and if the church does not provide such a place the young people will go to dance halls and other resorts where they will be under demoralizing influences. The "courting parlor" is a necessity in the crowded districts of all large cities. What better thing could there be than that the preliminary arrangements for a Christian home should begin under the oversight of a Christian church?

Juliet's question, "What's in a name?" might be answered in various ways. One could say, "Something and nothing," and both with equal truth. The name is not the thing and yet comes to be closely identified with it. Although merely a name, it carries with it history, geography, genealogy and ecclesiasticism. How aristocratic the names of localities are now compared with those of a century or two ago. Where once the term field was applied the demand to-day is for park. Our ancestors lived in Brookfield, Suffolk, Springfield, Enfield and Byfield. We live in Highland Park, Hyde Park, Morgan Park or Norwood Park. No plebeian "field" for us. A sign of the times is that biblical names are no longer given to towns, or if they are it is in honor of some older town and not in commemoration of a place mentioned in the Bible. Salem, Lebanon, Sharon and the others were sacred names to our ancestors and full of religious meaning. The era of the classics is noted in the settlement of New York State when Troy, Syracuse, Ithaca, Rome and other towns were honored with illustrious names, as if to foreshadow their own eventual greatness. Then the American spirit began to prevail and the names of presidents, senators and members of the cabinet were transferred to States, counties and towns. The tie with the old world was severed, or rather America was asserting herself and her individuality as worthy of recognition.

Doubtless without being conscious of it names are given to localities to-day which indicate the spirit of the times. There is too frequent repetition of names in different States which causes great inconvenience aside from the wearisome monotony. There is the disposition for elegant high-sounding names regardless of their fitness, and in some cases there is the tendency to return to more antiquated forms. "Road" now is aristocratic where formerly "street" and then "avenue" were the distinguished terms. "Terrace" is affected ever where the word has not the slightest application. It carries evidence of ignorance and pretension and is well adapted to the kind of insincerity now in vogue. Names tell fearful truth which they were not intended to convey, and, easy as it would seem to change them when found ill-fitting or deceiving, they refuse to go. They still remain to reveal the former pretension, tastes and characteristics of the people who gave them. The city or town or street honored with a really good name, appropriate in all respects, reflects great credit on the honest persons who gave it. Good names are about as hard to find as they are hard to earn.

Jack's Picturesque Slang.

Although, with clue-garnets and stu'n'-sails, much of the picturesque language of the sea has passed away Jack's conversation is still tarnished with expressions and terms born of the conditions of his life on the ocean. His language with his mates is a curious combination of Bowery slang and sea-phrases—"Youse guys come in on er that boat and bear a hand!" as I heard one young coxswain order—and I believe that if Shakespeare could have known our modern Yankee man-of-war's-man, he never would have put strange oaths in the mouth of a soldier. Yet in spite of the peculiarities of his speech, and his almost universal neglect of the rule that two negatives make an affirmative, he can send a read the most complicated message in either the international or naval code—with signal-flags in the daytime, q by the Ardois system of red and white electric lights at night, through which our warships hold conversations with one another.—Century.

When you attend a circus, turning some-sult looks easy, and when you see a lecture talking in public look