

Woman The Mystery

By HENRY HERMAN

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

Drugged and rendered insensible, Helene would be ruthlessly shot through the head, and left in the little hut, while he and Henri made their way to Gen. McClellan's headquarters either by surrendering to the Federal pickets or by evading them.

There he would give information that a lady whom he had promised to bring through the lines to see Captain Denon, at Captain Denon's request, had been killed during the night by a shot from a Southern patrol, and that her body was lying just outside the lines. Upon this statement he felt sure that Helene's corpse would be brought into the Northern camp, where her identification by Denon, and afterward by Jack, would naturally complete his diabolical scheme.

On the Tuesday morning Quayle was making his preparations. He had provided Henri with a civilian's suit similar to his own, armed him with one of the two revolvers, and provided him with a tin canteen of the type used by both armies for the purpose of carrying water.

He passed the early morning hours in tearing up most of his papers and in selecting a few of paramount importance, which he put into his wallet for future use. He did not intend to return to Richmond, whatever the upshot of the enterprise might be, and the papers which he carried about him had to be chosen with great care and judgment so as not to embarrass him in case of an adverse investigation.

That being done, he went at about eight o'clock in the forenoon to the usual place of rendezvous of the intelligence Department, for the purpose of obtaining a pass for himself and a servant to the north of the lines near Mechanicsville. It was here that he made the only mistake in his otherwise extremely cunningly laid plan. He left Monsieur Henri in his weapons, and, for greater security, locked him in.

Monsieur Henri, having nothing better to do, yanked from one room to the other after the manner of an impatient caged lion, kicking about the odds and ends with which the floors were littered.

Quite by an accident his glance alighted on a little square piece of paper, evidently a cutting from a newspaper, which had escaped the general destruction. It was an advertisement, and was cut from *The Monitor* of June, 1848. It was in French, and ran as follows:

REWARD OF FIFTY THOUSAND FRANCS.

"A reward of fifty thousand francs will be paid to the person or persons who will give information of the present whereabouts of Helene Beringuay, only daughter of the late Herbert Beringuay, of Beringuay Manor, Devonshire, who is supposed to be living in Paris under the care of a man named Rustrone Parlowe. The said Helene Beringuay is sixteen years of age. As a child she was remarkable for her sparkling, large, deep-blue eyes. Rustrone Parlowe is a cripple. His right leg is paralyzed. He is about sixty years of age, and very likely looks older. The above reward will be paid to any person who will give the information above required, the said Helene Beringuay being entitled to a fortune amounting to nearly fifty millions of francs. Address all communications to the Honorable Walter Gladys, at No. 22 St. Germain, or to Mr. Charles Long, 5 Bond Street, London, solicitor."

Henri read and reread the little paper. "Helene Beringuay!" he said to himself. "Helene Beringuay! What has Quayle to do with a newspaper cutting offering a reward of fifty thousand francs for the discovery of Helene Beringuay? As a child she was remarkable for her large, deep-blue eyes. Why," he continued to himself, "Helene has remarkably large sparkling, deep-blue eyes, and he I come to think of it, Jean Lemure was a cripple, and his right leg was paralyzed. Quayle," he went on, "wants me to help him to do away with Helene. Somebody wants her dead, that's quite evident. If anybody is willing to pay fifty thousand francs to be able to find her alive, most likely somebody else will be willing to pay fifty thousand francs to be able to prove her dead. I shall have to think this business over."

The next thing that Henri noticed was that Quayle poured a quantity of colorless liquid into his canteen out of a little bottle marked "Poison."

"What vat for?" he asked.

"That's to help us in our business," Quayle said. "You needn't drink out of my canteen, and I won't drink out of it. That's all you have to take care of."

Everything being prepared Quayle and Henri immediately started on their eighteen miles' journey to Ashland. It might have been seven o'clock when the pair received, dust and travel stained, at Crockett's tavern. Helene rose calmly when she saw Henri and Quayle. The latter, of course, she did not recognize, but, greeting Henri with a smile, she held out her hand to his companion.

"I suppose you are the gentleman who has been so kind to me?" she said.

"I don't know that I have been particularly kind to you, Miss Lemure," said Quayle, with profuse courtesy. "I am simply about to keep a promise solemnly made to my friend and your friend, Captain Denon."

"Do you think you will be able to keep your promise?" asked Helene.

"I seldom fail in accomplishing a task I set myself," was Quayle's grim rejoinder. "May I suggest that we start immediately? The sooner we are away from here the better."

Helene had taken but little notice of Henri, but Henri had passed the time in looking at her closely, intent upon his own thoughts.

"Yes," he said to himself, "there can be no doubt about it. Those large, deep blue eyes are remarkable. There are no other eyes like that in the world, I should say. Helene Lemure must be Helene Beringuay, and she is very handsome—handsome enough for anybody—even for me. No, I am afraid," he continued in his self-communings, "I shall have to put a spoke into Monsieur Quayle's wheel. After all, I don't see why he should have all the profit, and I all the risk and blows. I want some of the profit myself, and let him take his chance."

When they had proceeded about a mile in a northerly direction, Quayle, coming to a little eminence where he could survey the surrounding country, suddenly climbed over a fence, and struck out through a coppice of vines, due southeast. Here he sat down on a gnarled root of a tree, and invited Helene and Henri to take seats close by him.

"We shall have to wait here," he said, "until it gets a little darker. We can easily cover the distance we have to go in about a couple of hours. It is only about six miles. There you will be able to rest, Miss Lemure, as we will have to wait until the morning mist rises to conceal us while we cross the line."

On a sudden the noise of many horses' hoofs reached them from the distance, and it soon became apparent that Quayle had chosen his point of vantage not many minutes too soon.

"I shall have to ask you to lie down, and keep out of sight, Miss Lemure," said Quayle, crawling to a spot where he could catch a glimpse of the road through the openings between the pines.

A couple of minutes passed in breathless silence, while the tramp, tramp, tramp of the horses approached closer, and in a few minutes more a number of horsemen, followed by a considerable detachment of Southern cavalry, came along the open road, some fifty or sixty yards beyond them. When they had passed away, Quayle crept down to the side of the road, and looked out toward the open. The cavalry had disappeared at a turn of the pike, and no other being was in sight.

"We can go on now," said Quayle, when he had returned to his companions. And they immediately started on their journey, heeding no obstacles, climbing over fences, crossing corn fields in full stalk, and taking their course through fields covered with brambles and blackberries. The road was a rough one for a woman, but Helene seemed determined not to be beaten by the two men.

As she walked along by Quayle's side, and looked at the rough red beard, the thin, sharp, unprepossessing face, and the crafty, cool, oblong blue eyes, she could not help saying to herself that this was not the kind of man from whom she would have expected gallantry and nobility of sentiment. But then she argued with herself that appearances were often untrustworthy, and Henri's presence, somehow or other, gave her a feeling of security.

Thus they journeyed on, across fields and through woods, up inclines and down little dales, until, after passing through a dense forest of pines, they arrived at the edge of a field where Helene could see a ruined hut, probably formerly used as a store shed.

"I want you to be very quiet at present, Miss Lemure," whispered Quayle. "We are now in sight of the Yankee pickets. They cannot notice us because we are in the shadow, but if we advance farther they will see us and fire upon us. We shall have to wait here until the early morning, when the thick mist, which always rises from the low-lying ground, will shelter us. Then we can creep into the lines between the felled trees that you see on the left there, and after that the rest of the journey will be easy. What I propose that you should do, Miss Lemure, is that you will take shelter in that hut there. I know the place. There is a quantity of straw in one corner. You can rest there undisturbed, and we will watch outside."

With this, he led the way cautiously to the little hut. Helene's heart stood still nearly as she peered into the place. The moon was shining through the broken roof, and in the greenish, patchy light it looked as if it were haunted by ghosts. The corner where the straw lay was dark as pitch.

"You need not be afraid," Quayle went on, in an encouraging whisper. "The little shed is not a hotel or a palace, but you will find it more bearable than you think. It is a fine night, and you will not feel cold. I suppose you must be thirsty," he said, slinging around his canteen. "May I offer you a drink of water?"

He had already unstoppered his canteen, in which Henri had seen him pour the contents of the poison bottle, when Helene stopped him.

"Thank you," she said. "I am very much obliged to you, but I have in my satchel a flask of cold tea."

With this she opened her satchel to take out the flask, and in doing so seemingly unconsciously showed a revolver, a small one, but quite big enough to make her personality respected. Quayle bit his lips, and if it had not been for the treacherous moonlight, Helene might have seen him turn gray with disappointment and rage. But there was nothing to be said. Helene entered the hut.

"Curse my luck!" muttered Quayle to himself. "That is the first disappointment. Are there any more coming? I shall have to wait until she really falls asleep of her own accord. It would not do to attempt it while she is awake. She would scream, and in the silence the pickets over there would hear her, and that would spoil all possible chance of my

(tale being believed. Mr. Denon might take it into his head to charge me with murdering the woman, and it would not take him long to get me hanged if he made up his mind that way.")

He crept up to where Henri sat at the foot of a tree.

"She would not drink from my canteen," he whispered.

"I should zink not," replied Henri, grimly. "Your face not your fortune. If I you, ven start on work like zis, I change face, sell face, get anozer if must steal it. Your face not inspire confidence."

"Silence!" growled Quayle. "Why don't you shout? Do you want her to hear you? We shall have to wait now until she is really asleep, and then you will have to do it. When the mist is on the land, sound travels strangely, and the pickets won't know where that shot was fired. You will have to be careful to fire it in the hut, so that they shall not see the flash. Mind you aim straight at the head, so that, if possible, one shot will be sufficient. Remember Toulon, and avenge us both."

CHAPTER XVII.

Thoroughly wearied out, Helene had sunk asleep on a pile of straw in the hut. How long she slept and what woke her, she knew not, but dim sounds of muffled whispers in the immediate vicinity of the hut, brought her a feeling of insecurity, and she listened, without moving on the straw, as if her heart were in her eyes. At the same time she looked out and saw that the white mist had risen from the lowlands, and was lying outside the hut and had partly filled it.

"She is quite asleep," said one voice, which she recognized as Quayle's, in a hoarse whisper. "Now is the time. Go and do it! Don't you remember Toulon? Don't you remember the galleys? Don't you remember what we both suffered? Are you going to let her escape this time, now that we have got her in our hands?"

Helene thought her heart was standing still as she listened. A cold perspiration beaded on her forehead, and, in spite of herself, she felt the color fade from her cheeks and neck, and her whole body growing chill.

"No!" was Henri's reply. "I not do it. I not do it."

"Well, then," was Quayle's nearly hissed retort, "if you are such a coward and such a cur, I will do it myself."

Helene had risen on one knee, with her back to the wall. Involuntarily her hand wandered toward her satchel, and her revolver was in her grip.

The most unexpected had happened. She had been prepared to meet dangers such as surrounded any expedition like the one she had undertaken, but to be entrapped by a pair of dastardly murderers, far away from all possible help, made her shrink in haggard tremor. But when the first thrill of horror was past, her natural bravery asserted its sway. She bit her lip, and, revolver in hand, determined to sell her life dearly.

Thus she waited, with her eyes afeared, and the moments seemed hours. On a sudden she saw a head appear in the doorway. A sharp-faced, bearded man, whom she recognized as Quayle, was crawling toward the hut. She could see the profile stand out black against the mist of the outer air, and without knowing what she did, she raised her revolver and fired. Quayle started up with a scream, and at the same moment another dark figure, a burlier one, Henri, appeared behind Quayle, and gripping him by the neck, swung him round and hurled him to the ground.

Helene rushed to the door, revolver in hand. The two men were rolling on the ground, shouting and screaming, seeming inextricably mixed up one with the other. She could see that at last Henri was on top of his opponent, holding him down with all his might, when a flash shot up out of the confused mass of limbs and arms, and Henri gave a yell and staggered away. At the same time Quayle jumped up and fired again, while Henri leaned against the corner of the hut, and gripped the wooden walls with all his might.

Helene could see Quayle raise his revolver, and she was about to fire upon him in her turn, when a line of flashes rippled through the haze in the direction of the creek, and a perfect hail of minute bullets hissed round the hut. At the same moment a long arm of flame burst from the rising ground beyond the creek, and with a roar a shell came whirling toward them.

Helene, with an involuntary cry, ran into the hut, and in the next moment an explosion which, she thought, resembled that of an earthquake, shook the air and ground around her, and jagged pieces of iron rattled against the sides of the shed and pierced it in places. She heard one piercing scream outside, then a long groan, and then all seemed silent around her.

The fire of the Federals grew stronger, until the air seemed to be alive with messengers of death. Helene, hardly knowing what she did, with her hands and face cold as ice, and her limbs quivering, lay down on the ground, her eyes fixed toward the line of flashes, which seemed to creep nearer and nearer every moment.

Another shell, this time bursting in the woods behind the hut, and then Helene heard words of command, and hazy figures approached through the mist, and grew darker and more solid. Helene watched the line of skirmishers as they advanced toward her, firing into the woods as they went on. When they had passed the little shed she breathed a little more freely, and slowly and timidly crept to the door and peered around her.

Shocking.

Mrs. Hystile—Poor Percy had a sad experience on his last trip to Philadelphia.

Mr. Hystile—Accident?
Mrs. Hystile—Yes; he lost the London and Paris labels off his grip.—New York Press.

A little brief experience on the stage stimulates lofty ideas as to salary.

GOOD Short Stories

Sylvester R. Burch, chief clerk of the Department of Agriculture, comes from Kansas. A Kansas farmer called on Mr. Burch in Washington, and all the farming marvels of the Department were shown to him. He was silent. He seemed impressed. "I tell you what it is, sir," said Mr. Burch, enthusiastically, "the time is coming when a man will be able to carry all the fertilizer for an acre of ground in one of his waistcoat pockets." "I believe it, sir," returned the farmer, "but he will then be able to carry all the crop in the other."

General Frederick D. Grant is responsible for a story that embodies in answer to quick-tempered people who argue that they soon get over their tantrums. Grant had a friend who, on account of his fiery temper, could never keep a valet. One of them remained two months, and, on leaving, told his erstwhile employer bluntly the reason for his departure. "Pooh, pooh, James," said Grant's friend; "what if I am a bit quick-tempered? My anger is no sooner on than it is off." "True, sir," said James, reticently; "but it is no sooner off than it is on again."

The Czar is superstitious, and often consults fortune-tellers. A young gypsy girl has been making a success in St. Petersburg along this line, and the czar, hearing of her, sent word for her to visit him. He told her of a dream that he had had, of seeing three rats, a lean one, a fat one, and a blind one. He wanted the dream interpreted, saying that it troubled him. "Has it a meaning?" he asked. "It has," said the gypsy, who is extremely frank. "The fat rat stands for Russian officialdom—for all your various ministers and departmental heads. The lean rat is your people. The blind rat is yourself."

The Punkville Debating Society was a regular session, and Mr. G. Watkins Spurling was making an earnest plea on the affirmative side of the question, "Resolved, That man's every act is the result of a selfish motive." "I go further than that, Mr. President," he said; "about three-fourths of the things a man does is because he's envious of what somebody else does. The pin-headed speaker that had the floor last on the other side lied like a pirate when he said—'Here he president of the society rapped on the desk.' The gentleman must not use such language as that," he said. "Why not?" "Because it isn't parliamentary." "It may not be parliamentary, Mr. President," vociferated Mr. J. Watkins Spurling, loosening his collar and rolling up his sleeves, "but, by gum, it's congressional!"

A colored Virginia preacher announced one Sunday morning: "Bred-tern an' sistern, I shall discourse dis mornin' on de power of de miracle, in' I am gwine ter take as example te chillern of Israel acrossin' of de Red Sea. Der was Moses on de brink of de sea, and right behin' him was de army of Pharaoh. An' all at once, de breddern, de sea froze over es solid es a rock, an' de chillern and Moses walked across." In the congregation were some young negroes who had been to college, and whose orthodoxy had been slightly warped. One of them arose, and said: "Why, parson, that can't be possible, 'cause the geographers tell us that water don't freeze at the equator." The old man hesitated a moment, and then replied, solemnly: "I jest knowed one of you young niggers was gwine ter dispute de work of de Lawd. Young man, when the Red Sea froze der warn't no geography, and der warn't no equator."

IN THE "GOOD OLD TIMES."

Facts Which Show How Much Better Off We Are To-day.

Not until February of 1812 did the people of Kentucky know that Madison was elected President in the previous November.

In 1834 one of the leading railroads of the United States printed on its time-table: "The locomotive will leave the depot every day at 10 o'clock, if the weather is fair."

The first typewriter was received by the public with suspicion. It seemed subversive of existing conditions. A reporter who took one into a courtroom first proved its real worth.

In England, some centuries ago, if an ordinary workman, without permission, moved from one parish to another in search of work or better wages, he was branded with a hot iron.

When Benjamin Franklin first thought of starting a newspaper in Philadelphia many of his friends advised against it, because there was a paper published in Boston. Some of them doubted that the country would be able to support two newspapers.

One hundred years ago, the fastest land travel in the world was on the

Great North Road, in England, after it had been put into its best condition. There the York mail coach tore along at the rate of ninety miles a day, and many persons confidently predicted Divine vengeance on such unseemly haste.

When Thomas Jefferson was elected President of the United States, on February 17, 1801, after one of the most exciting political campaigns in our history, the gratifying news did not reach the successful candidate for as many days as it now takes hours to transmit the result of a presidential election to the whole civilized world.

When, in 1800, Richard Trevithick uttered the following words, there were many who considered him an insane, dangerous person: "The present generation will use canals, the next will prefer railroads with horses, but their more enlightened successors will employ steam carriages on railways as the perfection of the art of conveyance."

When Benjamin Franklin first took the coach from Philadelphia to New York he spent four days on the journey. He tells us that, as the old driver jogged along, he spent his time knitting stockings. Two stage coaches and eight horses sufficed for all the commerce that was carried on between Boston and New York, and in winter the journey occupied a week.

Napoleon, at the height of his power, could not command our every-day conveniences, such as steam heat, running water, bath and sanitary plumbing, gas, electric light, railroads, steamboats, the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, daily newspapers, magazines, and a thousand other blessings which are now part of the daily necessities of even manual laborers.

When the first two tons of anthracite coal were brought into Philadelphia, in 1803, the good people of that city, so the records state, "tried to burn the stuff; but at length, disgusted, they broke it up and made a walk of it." Fourteen years later, Colonel George Shoemaker sold eight or ten wagonloads of it in the same city, but warrants were soon issued for his arrest for taking money under false pretenses.—Success Magazine.

MONSTER SPIDERS.

Some of the Bird Eaters Are Nearly as Big as a Rat.

The bird eating spiders of South America, Africa and Australia are beasts of prey worthy of their tropical jungles. Their appearance is repulsive. They are of immense size. Some which have been caught have been nearly as big as a rat. They are of a dark, dingy color, either quite black or brown verging upon black, and the hair with which they are covered is mixed with short, coarse bristles.

Like other beasts of prey of tropical forests, they are essentially creatures of the night. During the day many of them hide in some natural crevice in the ground. The more indolent or ambitious pick out a promising hole in a fallen trunk or in a living tree and line it with a soft, delicate web. Others elaborately spin for themselves a long tube in which they lie concealed throughout the day.

Curiously enough, they reserve their spinning powers for their nest building, entirely disdaining the use of webs for the trapping of their prey. Their feeding time is at night. They go out to seek their food, prepare to leap upon and devour any living creature that they come across. Their name comes from the fact that they have been found in the act of devouring small newly killed birds clutched closely between their hairy claws.

Owens a Mammoth Mule.

State Senator George H. Vane, of Philadelphia, is the proud possessor of one of the biggest mules on earth. In his joy at the possession of this giant animal the senator has been treating Philadelphians to a parade in which the big mule is seen in company with a horse, the latter looking quite dejected at being seen in such company, and obviously feeling quite small over the comparisons made by the spectators.

The big mule, which took a number of prizes at St. Louis, stands nineteen hands high, which to a horseman means that he measures six feet four inches from his front feet to his withers. When he raises his head the tip of his ears are far out of the reach of an ordinary person, so that to put a bridle upon him without the beast's consent would be considerable of a feat.

The mule weighs 1,900 pounds, is 14 years old and eats three buckets of feed every day. He has never been worked, having always been regarded as a prize animal above such vulgar use as labor. It is the intention of his owner, however, to use him as a draft animal.

To Much of a Blow.

She—Did you blow the lamp out Henry?

He—What do you take me for, a cyclone? It was all I could do to blow out the light.—Boston Transcript.

The man who advertises for a wife will get a lot more replies than the one who advertises for a cook.