

The Lady



OF THE
Mount
By **FREDERIC S. ISHAM**
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"The Strollers"
"Under the Rose"
Illustrations by
RAY WALTERS

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CHAPTER XXI.

The Stairway of Silver.

The stillness of the moment that followed was tense; then thickly the young man answered something irrelevant about a clown, a bottle and a loaf; with cap drawn down and half-averted face, he lurched a little forward in the darkness, and the sentinel's weapon fell. "Oh, that's you, is it, Henri?" he said in a different tone, stepping back. "How did you leave the fellow?"

"Eating the bread and calling for more!" As he spoke, the other stopped, swaying uncertainly; above the arch, the wick, ill-trimmed, brightened and darkened to the drafts of air through break and slit of the old lamp; and briefly he awaited a favorable moment, when the flame blew out until almost extinguished; then with hand near sword-hilt, somewhat overbravely, but in keeping with the part, he stepped toward the arch; through it, and quickly past the sentinel.

"You seem to have been feasting and drinking a little yourself, tonight, comrade!" called out the latter after him. "I noticed it when you went in, and— But aren't you taking the wrong way?" As the other, after starting toward the barracks, straightened, and then abruptly wheeled into the road, running up the Mount.

"Bah!" A moment the young man paused. "Can't a soldier," articulating with difficulty, "go to see his sweetheart without—"

"Eh bien!" The sentinel shrugged his shoulders. "It isn't my business. I think, though, I know where they'll put you tomorrow, when they find out through the guard at the barracks."

To this ominous threat the other deigned no response, only, after the fashion of a man headstrong in insubriety, as well as in affairs of gallantry, continued his upward way; at first, speedily; afterward, when beyond hearing of the man below, with more stealth and as little noise as possible, until the road, taking a sudden angle, brought him abruptly to an end at the foot of a great flight of stone stairs.

Broad, wide, broken by occasional platforms, these steps, reaching upward in gradual ascent, had designedly, in days gone by, been made easy for broken-down monarchs or corpulent abbots. Also they had been planned to satisfy the discerning eye, jealous of every addition or alteration at the Mount. My lord, the ancient potentate, leisurely ascending in ecclesiastical gown, while conscious of an earthly power reaching even into England, could still fancy he was going up a Jacob's ladder into realms supernal. Saint Louis, with gaze benignly bent toward the aerial escalier de dentelle of the chapel to the left, might well exclaim no royal road could compare with this inspiring and holy way; nor is it difficult to understand a sudden enchantment here, or beyond, that drew to the rock on three pilgrimages that other Louis, more sinistrous than saint, the eleventh of his name to mount the throne of France.

But those stones, worn in the past by the footsteps of the illustrious and the lowly, were deserted now, and for the moment, only the moon, which had escaped from the cloud, exercised there the right of way; looking squarely down to efface time's marks and pave with silver from top to bottom the flight of stairs. It played, too, on facades, towers and battlements on either side, and, at the spectacle—the disk directly before him—the Black Seigneur, about to leave the dark and sheltering byway, involuntarily paused. Angels might walk unseen up and down in that effulgence, as, indeed, the old monks stoutly averred was their habit; but a mortal intrusion on the argent way could be fraught only with visibility.

To reach the point he had in mind, however, no choice remained; the steps had to be mounted, and, lowering his head and looking down, deliberately he started. As he proceeded his solitary figure seemed to become more distinct; his presence more obtrusive and his echoing footsteps to resound louder. No indication he had been seen or heard, however, reached him; to all appearances espionage of his movements was wanting, and only the saint with the sword at the top of the steeple-guardian spirit of the rock—looked down, as if holding high

a gleaming warning of that unwanted intrusion. Yet, though he knew it not, mortal eye had long been on him, peering from a window of the abbot's bridge spanning the way and joining certain long unused chambers, next to the Governor's palace, with my lady's abode. Against this somber background of that covered passage of granite, the face looking out would still have remained unseen, even had the young man, drawing near, lifted his glance. This, however, he did not do; his eyes,

with the pale reflections dancing in them, had suddenly fastened themselves lower; toward another person, not far beyond the bridge; some one who had turned in from a passage on the other side of the overhead architectural link, and had just begun to come down. An old man, with flowing beard, from afar the new-comer looked not unlike one of the ancient Druids that, in days gone by, had lighted and watched the sacred fires of sacrifice in the rock. He, too, guarded his light; but one set in the tall, pewter lamp of the medieval watchman.

"Twelve o'clock and all's—" he began when his glance, sweeping down, caught sight of the ascending figure, and, pausing, he leaned on his staff with one hand and shaded his eyes with the other. A half-savage exclamation of disappointment was suppressed on the young man's lips; had he only been able to attain that parallelogram of darkness, beneath the abbot's passage, he would have been better satisfied, his own eyes, looking ahead, seemed to say; then gleamed with a bolder light.

"A sword and blade
A drab and a jade;
—It's one to the King's men of the army!" he began to hum softly, as with a more reckless swing, quickly he went up in the manner of a man assigned some easy errand. At the same time the patriarch slowly and rather laboriously resumed his descent, and just below the bridge, without the bar of shadow, the two came together.

"Think you it is too late for his Excellency, the Governor, to receive a message?" at once spoke up the younger, breaking off in that dashing, but low-murmured, song of the barracks. "That you may learn from the guard at the palace," was the deliberate answer, as, raising his lamp, the watchman held it full in his questioner's face.

"Thanks! I was going to inquire." As he answered, at the old abbot's window in the bridge above, the face, looking out, bent forward more intently; then quickly drew back. "Good night!"

But the venerable guardian of the inner precinct was not disposed thus lightly to part company. "I don't seem to know you, young man," he observed, the watery, but keen and critical eyes passing deliberately over the other's features.

"No?" Unflinching in the bright glare of the lamp, the seeming soldier smiled. "Do you, then, know all at the Mount—even the soldiers?"

"I should remember even them," was the quiet reply. "Those, too, but lately brought from St. Dalard?"

"True, true! There may be some of those—" uncertainly.

"No doubt! So if you will lower your lamp, which smells rather vilely—"

"From the miscreants it has smoked out," answered the old man grimly, but obeyed; stood as if engrossed in the recollection his own response evoked; then turned; walked on, and,



Twelve O'Clock, and All's—

a few moments later, his call, suddenly remembered, rang, belated, in the drowsy air: "Twelve o'clock and all's well! A new day, and St. Aubert guard us all!"

A sword and a blade;
A drab and a jade—

The words, scarcely begun, above his breath, died away on the seeming soldier's lips, as the watcher on the bridge, looking down to follow first the departing figure of the old custodian, crossed quickly to the opposite window, and, from this point of vantage, gazed up after the young man rapidly vanishing in the track of the moonlight. A moment the onlooker stood motionless; then, ere the figure, so vividly defined in shine and shimmer, had reached the top of the stairway, made an abrupt movement and swiftly left the window and the passage.

At the head of the steps, which without further incident or interruption, he reached, the Black Seigneur, stepping to the shadow of a small bush against the wall, glanced about him; with knit brows and the resolute

manner of one who has come to some definite conclusion, he left the spot of observation, almost the apex of the Mount, and plunged diverging to the right. From slant and glimmer to darkness unfathomable! For some time he could only grope and feel his way, after the fashion of the blind; fortunately, however, was the path narrow; although tortuous, fairly well paved, and no serious mishap befell him, even when he walked forward regardlessly, in feverish haste, beset with the conviction that time meant all in

all, and delay the closing of the tolls and the failure of a desperate adventure. Several times he struck against the stones; once fell hard, but picked himself up; went on the faster, only, after what seemed an interminable period, to stop.

"Am I, can I be mistaken?" But the single star he could see plainest from the bottom of the deep alley, and to which he looked up, answered not the fierce, half-muttered question; coldly, enigmatically it twinkled, and, half-running, he continued his way, to emerge over-suddenly into a cooler well of air, and—what was more to be welcomed!—an outlook whereof the details were in a measure dimly shadowed forth.

On one side the low wall obscured not the panorama below—a ghost-like earth fading into the mist, and nearer, the roof of the auberge des voleurs, a darkened patch on the slope of the rock; but in this direction the man hardly cast a glance. Certain buildings ahead, austere, Norman in outline, absorbed his attention to the exclusion of all else, and toward them, with steps now alert and noiseless, he stole; past a structure that seemed a small salle des gardes whose window afforded a view of four men nodding at a table within; across a space to another passage, and thence to a low door at the far corner of a little triangular spot, alongside the walk and near a great wall. At once the young man put out his hand to the door; tried it; pushed it back and entered. Before him a wide opening looked out at the sky, framing a multitude of stars, and from the bottom of this aperture ran a strand, or rope, connecting with an indistinct object—a great wheel, which stood at one side!

CHAPTER XXII.

The Whirling of the Wheel.

As old as church or cloister, the massive wheel of the Mount had, in the past, played prominent part in the affairs of succeeding communities on the rock. It, or the hempen strand it controlled, had primarily served as a link between the sequestered dwellers, and the flesh-pots and material comforts of the lower world. Through its use had my lord, the abbot, been enabled to keep full the mighty wine-butts of his cellars; to provide good cheer for the tables of the brethren, and to brighten his cold stone interiors with the fresh greens of Flemish tapestry, or the sensuous hues of rug and fabrics from seraglio or mosque. Times less ancient had likewise claimed its services, and even in recent years, by direction of his Excellency, the Governor, had it occasionally been used for the hoisting of goods, wares, or giant casks, overcumbersome for men or mules.

Toward this simple monkish contrivance, the summit's rough lift, or elevator, wherein serfs or henchmen had walked like squirrels in a cage to bring supplies to generations of isolated dwellers, the Black Seigneur had at first stepped impetuously; then stopped, hardly breathing, to look over his shoulder at the door that had been left unfastened. An involuntary question flashing through his brain—the cause of this seeming carelessness—found almost immediate answer in his mind, and the certainty that he stood not there alone—a consciousness of some one else, near, became abruptly confirmed.

"What are you doing, soldier?" A voice, rough, snarling, drew swiftly his glance toward a presence, intuitively divined; an undersized, grotesque figure that had entered the place but a few moments before and now appeared from behind boxes and casks where he had been about to retire to his mattress in a corner.

"What do you want?" repeated this person, the anger and viciousness on his distorted features, revealed in the moonlight from the large opening, like that of some animal unwarrantably disturbed.

"You, landlord of the thieves' inn!" And inaction giving way to movement on the intruder's part, a knife that had flashed back in the hand of the hunchback, with his query, was swiftly twisted from him and kicked aside, while a scream of mingled pain and rage became abruptly suppressed. Struggling and writhing like a wildcat, Jacques proved no mean antagonist; with a strength incredible for one of his size, supplemented by the well-known agility of his kind, he scratched, kicked and had managed to get the other's hand in his mouth, when, making an effort to throw off that clogging burden, the Black Seigneur dashed the dwarf's head violently against the wooden support of the place. At once all belligerency left the hunchback, and, releasing his hold, he sank to the ground.

An instant the intruder regarded the inert form; then, going to the door, latched and locked it with a key he found inside. Having thus in a measure secured himself from immediate interruption without—for anyone trying the door would conclude the wheel-room vacant, or that the dwarf slept there or in the store-house beyond—the Black Seigneur walked to the aperture, and reaching up, began to pay out the rope from a pulley above. As he did so, with feet braced, he leaned over to follow his descent a small ear hanging from the wall perpendicular

planking from the mouth of the wheel-room to the rocks, several hundred feet below.

A sudden slackening of the rope—assurance that the car, at the end of the line, had reached the loading-spot below without the fortifications—and the young man straightened; in an attitude of attention, stood listening. But the stillness, impregnated only with a faint underbreath, the far-away murmur of water, or the just audible droning of insects near the fig-trees on the rocks, continued un-

broken. An impatient frown gathered on his brow; more eagerly he bent forward to gaze down, when through the air a distant sound—the low, melancholy hoot of an owl—was wafted upward.

Upon him at the aperture, this night-call, common to the Mount and its environs, acted in magical manner, and swiftly had he stepped toward the wheel, when an object, intervening, stirred; started to stagger to his feet. At once was the young man's first impelling movement arrested; but, thus forcibly drawn from his purpose, he did not long pause to contemplate; his hand, drawing the soldier's sword, held it quickly at the hunchback's throat.

"A sound, and you know what to expect!"

With the bare point at his flesh, Jacques, dully hearing, vaguely comprehending, could, indeed, guess and the fingers he had involuntarily raised to push the bright blade aside, fell, while at the same time any desire to attempt to call out, or arouse the guard, was replaced by an entirely different emotion in his aching brain. Never before had he actually felt that sharp touch—the prelude to the final thrust. At the sting of it, a tremor ran through him, while cowardice, his besetting quality, long covered by growl and egotism in his strength and hideousness to terrify, alone shone from his unprepossessing yellow features.

"You were brave enough with the soldiers at your beck!" went on a determined voice whose ironical accents in no wise served to alleviate his panic. "When you had only a mountebank to deal with! But get up!" contemptuously. "And," as the hunchback obeyed, his crooked legs shaking in the support of his misshapen frame, "into the wheel with you!"

"The wheel!" stammered the dwarf. "Why—what—"

"To take a little of your own medicine! Parli! What a noble fellow! In with you, or—"

With no more words the hunchback, staggering, hardly knowing what he did, entered the ancient abbot's machine for hoisting. But as he started to walk in the great wheel at the side of his captor, a picture of the past—the times he, himself, had forced prisoners to the wheel, stimulating with jeer and whip—arose mockingly before him, and the incongruous present seemed, in contrast, like a black waking dream.

That it was no dream, however, and that the awakening would never occur, he well knew, and malevolently though fearfully he eyed the rope, coming in over the pulley at the aperture; to be wound around and around by a smaller wheel, attached to the larger, and—drawing up what?

An inkling of the sort of merchandise to be expected, under the circumstances, could but flash through his mind, together with a more vivid consciousness of the only course open for him—to cry out, regardless of consequences! Perhaps he might even have done so, but at that instant—as if the other had read the thought—came the cold touch of a bare blade on his neck; and with a sudden chill, the brief heroic impulse passed.

More stealthily now he began to study his companion in the wheel, while a question, suddenly occurring, reiterated itself in his brain. This man—who was he? And what did he know of the mountebank, or his, Jacques', dealings with the clown? That his captor was no soldier of the rock, or belonged there, the hunchback felt by this time assured, and a growing suspicion of the other's identity brought home with new force to the dwarf the thankless part chance, perhaps, had assigned to him in that night's work. And at the full realization of the consequences, should his surmise prove correct—what must ultimately happen to himself in that event, when unwilling co-operation at the wheel should become known—almost had he again reached the desperate point of calling out; but at that moment a turn in the wheel brought to the level of the aperture, the car. In it, or clinging thereto, were a number of figures who, as soon as the rope stopped, sprang noiselessly to the platform.

"Seigneur, we hardly dared hope—" "We obeyed orders, but—"

Gazing through the spokes of the wheel, and listening to their whispered exclamations, any lingering doubt as to who his captor was could no longer be entertained by the hunchback. These new-comers took no pains to conceal it; even when the dwarf's presence became known to them and unceremoniously was he dragged forth—they displayed a contemptuous disregard of him as a factor to interfere, not calculated to dull the edge of his apprehension! Too late now might he regret that pusillanimity that had caused him to draw back from an immortal role; already was the car again descending!

It came up loaded; went down once more, reappeared. On the little platform now were more than a dozen men assembled, but to Jacques this force looked multiplied. Amid the confusion of his thoughts, vaguely could he hear orders given; caught something about the need for quiet, haste, overpassing the guard; then saw the door open, and the men, like shadows, go out; leaving him a

No; with two black figures; ominous; armed. He could see the glitter of their weapons, and ventured to move his thick tongue, when, fiercely silenced, he crouched down; waited, with hands clenched, an interminable period; until faintly from afar sounded the note of a night-bird.

Roughly jerked to his feet, between them he walked to the door; heard it close; stepped out into the night. Many times had he made his way between wheel-room and guard-house, but now the route seemed strange,

and, looking around near the structures at the entrance to his dungeons Jacques shook his head as if to rid his brain of some fantasy. But the scene did not change; the guard-house remained—familiar; unlike, with unknown faces peering from it, and an



"Seigneur, We Hardly Dared Hope—"

imperious voice issuing commands to him, once unquestioned commander here!

And comprehending what was being said, he struck his breast violently; with curses would have answered that the keys were his own; the dungeons, too, and what they held, and that he would never lead them there; never open these doors! But this grim, savage, determined band beat down his arms, and his courage; and, with the shadow of the grave again before him, the dwarf walked on; past the stable into the guard-house, where familiar forms once had been seated, and into the passage leading to the dungeons beyond.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

FARM PRICES DECLINE.

Producers Getting Less for Their Crops on Account of Great Yields.

Washington, Oct. 10.—Farm prices of the important crops declined 6.5 per cent between September 1 and October 1 against a decline of 2.5 per cent in the same period last year, and a decline of 3.1 per cent during September of the past four years.

The Department of Agriculture reported that 10 days ago the average of farm prices of corn, wheat, oats, barley, rye, flaxseed, potatoes, tobacco, cotton and hay, representing three-fourths of the value of all the crops, was about 6.8 per cent lower than on October 10, 1911; 9 lower than in 1910; 1.5 per cent lower than in 1909, and 1.1 higher than in 1908 on like dates.

The average prices on October 1 compared with three years ago were respectively: Corn 76 cents and 67 cents per bushel; wheat 83 and 94 cents a bushel; oats 33 and 41; barley 54 and 53; rye 70 and 72; buckwheat 69 and 75; flaxseed, \$1.47 and \$1.22; potatoes 51 and 64 cents; hay \$11.76 and \$10.93 per ton; cotton 11 and 12 cents a pound; butter 25 and 25; chickens 11 and 11 cents per pound; eggs 22 and 22.

These figures do not take into account the tenths of a cent. Butter increased six-tenths and chickens two-tenths, while eggs declined one-tenth of a cent in the three years.

\$100 Reward, \$100.

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.

Wreck on Road—No One Injured.

A special train from Florence passed through here at 10 o'clock Friday morning taking the through Pullman from the north to Augusta. The through train from the north was delayed by a wreck near Fayetteville and the regular train did not wait on it, an extra train being run out to take the Pullman on to Augusta. The only information obtained of the wreck was that the passenger coach was derailed. No one was injured.

A Log on the Track

of the fast express means serious trouble ahead if not removed, so does loss of appetite. It means lack of vitality, loss of strength and nerve weakness. If appetite fails, take Electric Bitters quickly to overcome the cause by toning up the stomach and curing the indigestion. Michael Hessemer of Lincoln, Neb., had been sick over three years, but six bottles of Electric Bitters put him right on his feet again. They have helped thousands. They give more blood, strong nerves, good digestion. Only 50 cents at Sibert's Drug Store.

MAN INJURED IN DITCH.

Washington Reams Has Back Injured When Earth Caves in on Him.

Thursday a few minutes before noon Washington Reams, colored, was somewhat bruised and his back was sprained when, in working in the ditch which the men are digging for the gas pipe, the earth caved in on him burying him up to his waist in the rock and dirt of the street. He was speedily dug out and medical attention was given him, but he was still feeling too sore from the occurrence to be at work Friday.

The accident occurred on Hauser Street just opposite the Sumter Bottling Works where the men are engaged in putting in the gas main. The surface of the earth is covered with rock to depth of six inches at this point and it was the falling rock which covered and bruised him.

Alfalfa.

To make alfalfa a success in the South, it would be advisable for so valuable a crop, patience and a proper preparation of the seed bed.

In May broadcast one bushel of cow peas and 15 pounds of hairy vetch, mixed, per acre. Having inoculated the seed just as you are ready to sow, each with a different bacteria; before you plant break up the land thoroughly with a turn plow, and if soil use lime, if poor use stable manure or bone meal, not acid phosphate, 200 pounds to the acre.

First of August you will be able to get enough hay to double pay you for the expense so far. By the first of October you will have second growth of peas and vetch making a fine lot of humus to turn in green. On this you might broadcast all available stable manure or compost. Plow this in with turn plow and if stiff land follow each turn plow furrow with a subsoil, a common bull tongue will do. Then broadcast 1500 to 2000 pounds of lime, shell lime if possible or such lime as has no "Magnesia," harrow this in with a disk harrow, for lime works downward. Allow it to remain 30 days; harrow again not deep.

Now get the purest alfalfa seed you can, inoculate it yourself with the proper bacteria. Plant on a cloudy day or early in the morning or late in the evening.

By December you will have a good stand of healthy plants, and even if the plants are small you will be surprised to see what fine healthy and numerous roots they have; your alfalfa will be in fine shape to stand the winter and in the spring to take on a rapid growth and get ahead of weeds and grass.

Get good pea seed, good vetch seed and good alfalfa seed and good Nitro-Germ Bacteria different kind of each, and be sure and get good lime. Do not buy inoculated seed from dealers, or use inoculated soil, if it has to be transported any distance; in either case the germs have been destroyed.

Remember the nodules on your peas and vetch, though a different kind, have been storing nitrogen in your land all the summer, making it richer, and when you plant your alfalfa you are planting in an enriched seed bed containing all the ingredients necessary for alfalfa or any succeeding crop, even cotton.

By inoculation you have assisted nature in her work, by increasing the nodules on each plant manifold, and these nodules are drawing from that great warehouse, the atmosphere, all the nitrogen they can and storing in the soil, making the growing crop more healthy and vigorous. It is true they live on the saccharine matter in the growing crop, but they pay it back twofold in the way of nitrogen or ammonia.

Thos. S. Sumter.

Avoid Sedative Cough Medicines.

If you want to contribute directly to the occurrence of capillary bronchitis and pneumonia use cough medicines that contain codeine, morphine, heroin and other sedatives when you have a cough or cold. An expectorant like Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is what is needed. That cleans out the culture beds or breeding places for the germs of pneumonia and other diseases. That is why pneumonia never results from a cold when Chamberlain's Cough Remedy is used. It has a world wide reputation for its cures. It contains no morphine or other sedative. For sale by all dealers.

Marriage License Record.

A marriage license was granted to Jerry Harrison and Maggie Wells, colored, Friday morning.

Saved by His Wife.

She's a wise woman who knows just what to do when her husband's life is in danger, but Mrs. R. J. Flint, Braintree, Vt., is of that kind. "She insisted on my using Dr. King's New Discovery," writes Mr. E. "for a dreadful cough, when I was so weak my friends all thought I had only a short time to live, and it completely cured me." A quick cure for coughs and colds. It is the most safe and reliable medicine for bronchitis, croup, whooping cough, quinsy, tonsillitis, hemorrhages. A trial will convince you. 50c and \$1.00. Guaranteed by Sibert's Drug Store.