

# THE BASILISK.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

I began to feel alarmed as the lights of the lamps and the shop windows shone upon Mary's white face and closed eyes. But as I was upon the point of ordering the driver to stop at the first chemist's shop I observed signs of returning life.

Mary opened her eyes. She started from me with energy, casting a look of piteous resolution at me, which spoke eloquent of the persecution and misery she had undergone.

"Mary," I said, "my darling, you are safe now!"

All the misery, and ten thousand times the dangers I had gone through were as nothing compared with the happiness of seeing the change which came over that beautiful and gentle face when I spoke. There is something very piteous in the sight of the weak standing at bay, the defenceless at last befriended by despair. Some desperate resolution of resistance it was, some impulse of escape at any cost, which prompted her to spring from my shielding embrace, and turned the appealing fear of her eyes into a look of troubled courage. It showed that the limit of endurance had been reached, and that her enemies would no longer have had a passive victim to reckon with. Though if her rescue had been delayed not a little while longer, the instinct of defiance would, in all probability, have been aroused too late.

At the sound of my voice she started, she seized my hands, and looked into my face. Then the revulsion of feeling, from misery to joy, from despair to the certainty of safety, sent such a light into her face that it positively seemed to illuminate the carriage, and to put the bright lights of the shops and of the streets to shame.

There was no time for inquiry or for explanation yet. The time was all too short for the happiness that flooded our whole beings.

"Safe! Safe!" was the burden of the blissful song that was singing in our hearts, and transforming the somewhat dingy flare into a Cinderella's chamber, which would not lose its magic beauty for the striking of all the clocks in all the steeples of Antwerp.

Soon—all too soon now, we clattered up to the door of the Hotel St. Antoine. There the first face I saw was Shaw's and being free from the torturing anxiety of the last few hours, I had time to feel some compunction for the way I had left him. He looked positively ill with an anxiety, and the relief and the exultation which he showed at our safe return warmed my heart toward him more strongly, if possible than before.

Mary was committed to the care of the landlady, and everything was done to conduce to her security and comfort; but, tired as she was, she would not go to bed, and she had joined Shaw and me, and sweetly and thoughtfully thanked our good friend for all that he had done on her and my behalf.

Shaw exercised a little of his professional authority after a while, impressing upon her the necessity of thorough repose after all the dangers and anxieties she had gone through.

I was glad he did so, for I felt that he was right, but I could not bring myself to suggest anything which should shorten the first delightful talk, away from the horrible atmosphere of mystery and crime that overhung Hanover Lodge, free from the fear of Plowitz, and the equally unscrupulous and more dangerous Basilisk.

When Mary had gone I told Shaw my story more in detail. It had been told already amid the excitement and interruptions of a general comparing of notes.

I learnt now that Harper had been searching for me, full of fears for my safety, and that information had been sent over that the mystery of the explosion at Hanover Lodge had not been cleared up, that no trace of any of the inmates could be found, and that no bodies had yet been discovered.

"And what," said Shaw, "do you suppose the Basilisk will do now?"

"I cannot tell; I cannot think at all yet," I answered. "I don't see what she can do, but I feel sure that if she can do us any harm she will; and she is not an enemy to be despised."

"By no means; but she must keep quiet now for a while. Her intimate relations with Plowitz, who was apprehended on a charge quite distinct from the attempted abduction of Miss Fortescue, will prejudice her greatly if she brings herself in any way under the notice of the authorities."

"We must take Mary back to England," I said. "We shall hear no more of Mr. Beaufoy now, and circumstances have made us her guardians."

"Yes," said Shaw; "the sooner we are back in England the better."

And we talked long and late over our plans, arranging finally that Shaw should make arrangements for Mary to stay for the present with his sister, a widow, who had a large and pleasant house at Richmond, where she generally had charge of two or three Indian children. We must then see what could be done to find out the state of her affairs and await the upshot of the police enquiries into the case of Plowitz and the disaster at Hanover Lodge.

Then, with a hearty and congratulatory shake of the hand and with minds free from care and full of hope, we parted, and I slept as a man should who had gone through great suspense and come out triumphant.

In the morning Mary appeared looking, for my joy and surprise, but little the worse for her troubles and fatigues. Joy, hope, and security had wrought a great change in one night of serene rest. Accompanied by Harper and a subordinate, I set out about eleven o'clock for the scene of last night's adventure, to obtain from old M<sup>rs</sup>. Delbruyck all the details we could, with a view to bringing the Basilisk within the grasp of the law. We arrived to find the house deserted and shut up.

"No matter," said Harper; "we shall be able to lay hands on them."

We then proceeded to the house where Plowitz had first taken Mary, and found there the small traveling trunk which was all she had been allowed to bring with her.

"Well," said I on our return, "we had better cross by to-night's boat."

"You can't be very well," said Harper, unless you're going to let the whole thing drop."

This I was quite willing to do, though the desire of seeing condign punishment inflicted upon all who had had a share in this fiendish scheme was very strong. Shaw at first advised strong measures, but Mary was evidently ill at ease, and she should be again on English ground, and this time among friends.

"What does it matter?" I asked. "Plowitz is accounted for without our interference. The Delbruycks were only instruments in the hands of Miss Beaufoy. She will scarcely be able to harm us again. She can never return to England."

"And Mr. Beaufoy?" said Shaw.

"He has covered the traces of his illegal practices with the ruins of his house. He

will not be heard of again. What will his safety be worth now Plowitz is captured?"

"But he would be well to see him," said Shaw—"to make him give some account of his stewardship of Miss Fortescue's affairs."

"That doesn't matter," said Mary nervously. "I would rather not see him again—ever!"

"But I should," said I. "It is very important that we should see Mr. Beaufoy somehow."

At this moment the door was thrown open and a waiter announced:

"A gentleman to see mademoiselle!"

And with a disagreeable smile upon his face, faultlessly dressed, and looking the picture of prosperity and influential respectability, Mr. Beaufoy strode into the room. He was accompanied by an official-looking individual, a Belgian. There was a moment of silence on our part from astonishment. Mary shrank back between Shaw and me and put her hand in mine.

"I am come," said Mr. Beaufoy, "to fetch my ward, Mary, got ready at once, my dear, to come with me. And you, sir, you will have a very awkward task in justifying your conduct. Perhaps you will have the goodness to give what explanation you can of your proceedings."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### PARRIED.

The audacity of the man confounded me. We had to a great extent reckoned without our host, and Mr. Beaufoy, for whatever reason, was evidently determined to brazen out his position as Mary's guardian.

The contrast between his firm, erect, business-like bearing, the commanding kindness which he knew so well how to assume, and the extreme terror and repugnance exhibited by the girl whom he claimed, was the most eloquent appeal for protection that helplessness could make. She shrank away from her guardian, a manifestation which in no degree modified his affectation of saucy towards her, though he spoke as usual in a tone of distinct command.

"Come, my dear," he repeated; "you must get ready at once, as we leave Antwerp immediately."

The habit of submission was so strong in her, the helplessness of her position at Hanover Lodge had so entered into her soul, that Mary, with a look of piteous appeal, began to move towards the door.

"Stay!" I said. "I do not allow Miss Fortescue to leave this place except of her own free will and at her own request."

Mr. Beaufoy shut his eyes and smiled seraphically.

"Come, Mary," was all that he said. "I put my arm round her to reassure her. And as your business is not with me or Dr. Shaw, perhaps you will be good enough to leave the room."

"I have business both with you and Dr. Shaw," he said, "business which will be extremely unpleasant for both of you. I have been compelled to place the matter in the hands of the police, but the inconvenience which will result from your detention is due to your interference in matters in which you neither have or ever will have any concern."

The official who accompanied Mr. Beaufoy explained with perfect politeness that he must trouble us to accompany him. Mr. Beaufoy, a gentleman whose wealth and position were in themselves a guarantee of his bona fides, had charged us with unlawfully taking his ward from her proper guardian. Shaw and I demurred. We offered guarantees, references, sureties—anything to avoid leaving Mary again in the power of her enemies.

The position was most trying. No charge whatever could be substantiated against us; but it was obvious that Beaufoy had laid an information against us in order to take Mary away while we were temporarily unable to help her. The commissary was unwilling to be harsher with us than he was absolutely obliged to be, but it was equally evident that Mr. Beaufoy had impressed him with an idea of his importance and position, which prejudiced him very strongly in his favour.

Shaw and I held a hasty council of war. "We ought to see Leverett at once," Shaw suggested.

I proposed to the commissary that we should send for an English solicitor. He seemed inclined to wait until morning on the matter, but Mr. Beaufoy strongly objected, and held a whispered conference with the official.

"You can see Mr. Leverett at leisure, but you must really come with me at once," he said firmly.

"And meanwhile," said Beaufoy, "I shall remove my niece to more becoming lodgings. To be living in a hotel with companions but two young men is not the sort of thing which I consider desirable for a young lady, who is in the position of a daughter to me."

The patience of the police official, who could get no encouragement for his polite nature from Mr. Beaufoy, began to wear an end. The dispute between Shaw and Mr. Beaufoy waxed hot, and the commissary, apparently scandalized by the words I addressed to the ultra-respectable guardian of the young lady, went to the length of summoning aid, and making something of a display of force. To avoid being forcibly conveyed through the streets to the police-station we were obliged to give a promise to accompany him immediately, and the myrmidons who had mysteriously answered to his summons withdrew.

"Let us send this at once to Leverett!" said Shaw, pencilling a small note, and ringing for a waiter.

"What can Leverett do for you? Nothing for some days, I imagine," said Mr. Beaufoy, with a faint smile of malice.

"He can do more than you think. He knows already a good deal about your friend Plowitz."

"My friend Plowitz!" said he, with an ill-dissembled start of alarm.

I observed that the police-officer gave a sudden and keen glance at him as I mentioned the name.

"Your friend and fellow-worker," I went on. "The man to whom you entrusted your niece—the man from whom we saved her."

"This sort of talk will not improve your position, my friend," he observed sarcastically.

Shaw's note was gone, and there was nothing to delay our departure, our renewed separation from Mary. Any minute of time we could gain would be valuable.

"Do you know," said I, addressing the police-officer, "that this gentleman, who affects not to know Plowitz, entrusted this lady to his keeping, to be taken abroad by him, to be forced into a union with him? That my friend and I, wishing to save the lady from this persecution and tyranny, followed them, and rescued her! Plowitz is well known to the police. If you lose sight of this man, you will lose a prize second only in value to Plowitz himself."

The commissary looked perturbed and astonished. Mr. Beaufoy did not delude in any sort of an explanation. His calm tones carried weight with them, and reassured the perplexed official:

"Your knowledge of Belgian criminals supplies you with materials for wild libels. We shall meet again soon in court."

He advanced towards Mary, who white and terrified, had been keeping out of his

way. The commissary at the same time made a peremptory sign for us to accompany him.

"Mr. le Commissaire," I said very gravely, "I give you fair warning. If you lose sight of that man now, you will very likely never see him again. You will have to let my friend and me go very soon. This charge is a ruse to get us out of the way. Meanwhile Mr. Beaufoy escapes. Watch him, at least, until Plowitz is examined. You will regret it if you don't."

"Plowitz again!" said Mr. Beaufoy impatiently; "what does all this talk of Plowitz mean?"

"It means, sir, I said, "that your accomplice, Blitz, or Plowitz, was arrested yesterday."

Mr. Beaufoy's face turned ashy white. He evidently imagined that Plowitz had got safe away, though he was strong in the communications of the syndicate, and they were spoiled by the good fortune that had long attended their efforts at baffling the police.

"Now," said I to the commissary, "if you cannot allow us to remain at liberty for the present, you can see, perhaps, that this man may require a little looking after. Lose sight of him nor this lady."

Mr. Beaufoy very quickly recovered himself, and addressed the officer.

"You know my address," he said courteously and calmly. "My poor niece must be removed at once from this place, associated with such trying scenes."

The commissary invited us once more to start. The situation was perplexing and undignified. Losing patience, or, more probably, finding a relief from the perplexities of his position in bluster, he summoned one of the waiting maids, and Mr. Beaufoy and I, the most law-abiding of men found ourselves each between two active little policemen. The moment Beaufoy saw us secured, he took Mary by the hand, and led her towards the door. She followed, stunned by the sudden relapse into the old slavery.

"Keep up your heart, Mary," I said. "You will be well watched."

I felt that the commissary was not likely to overlook my caution, for it could do no possible harm to observe it, and there might very well be some truth in my charges.

Beaufoy turned a look of venomous rage upon me.

"Silence, sir!" he hissed. "You, at least, are not likely to see her again."

And with a hard glare he threw the door open, and gazed with malicious enjoyment upon the group.

Then, to my inexpressible joy, the face of Harper was seen at the door, and a number of people with him. In a second, before he could realize what was happening, Mr. Beaufoy was seized and handcuffed, and a sense of surprise and suspense fell on all in the room.

Mr. Beaufoy was the first to break it.

"What," he gasped, livid with rage and fear—"what is the meaning of this?"

"The meaning is, sir," said Harper quite cheerfully, "that you are charged with being an accomplice in Blitz's coining speculation, and with being an accessory to the murder of Hardy."

A consultation between Harper and the Belgian official now took place, the upshot of which was that Shaw and I were allowed to remain where we were, on our undertaking to be at hand when wanted. Mr. Beaufoy was led away in a state of speechless collapse, and with Mary still in our safe-keeping, a delicious feeling of security and prospective happiness stole over me once more.

Mary, when not in the presence of any of the Hanover Lodge associations, quickly recovered her spirits, and showed the capacity for happiness which had been so cruelly kept in check heretofore.

I pleased ourselves with plans for the future, and said good-night, full of hope once more.

Then Shaw and I had a quiet talk over it all again.

"All will be well now," he said. "The clouds are drifting away."

"But there is one cloud, dark, and threatening, and dangerous," he asked quickly.

"The Basilisk! We have not heard the last of her yet."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### NEMESIS.

Anxious as we were to leave these associations of crime and danger, we found it impossible to get away for several days, but at length we had satisfied the requirements of the Belgian police, and were at liberty to depart. No news had been received of the Basilisk since the night of the attempted murder. I felt easier in mind as the days passed by. Plowitz and Mr. Beaufoy were both safe in custody, and, whether to avoid danger to herself or to evade the necessity of giving evidence, it seemed probable that Miss Beaufoy would not venture to trouble us. These few days of security had been very happy ones, marred only by the necessity of attending to the demands of the authorities for information on various points connected with the arrests. Shaw had meanwhile made arrangements for Mary's reception by his sister at Richmond, and we had taken measures for putting her interests under the care of the Court of Chancery. The evening of our departure had arrived. We were to cross by the night-boat to Harwich. I was sitting alone, thinking things over and making plans for the future, in the large sitting-room which we had occupied, when a waiter appeared and announced a lady.

I rose with a feeling of apprehension. There stood against the clear twilight sky, leaning the low old-fashioned window, a tall dark figure, ghost-like and silent. It was she at last—the Basilisk. She advanced towards the light of the fire, and I could see once more the marvellous light of those eyes—witching, cruel, unholly.

She came to me, and I saw that she smiled a smile neither of malice nor of deprecation. Simply the imperial smile of a proud but gracious woman. The spell was strong still. But I thought of her relentless hate, I saw the gleam of the murderer's knife, and I felt steeled and safeguarded against any wiles or treachery.

I did not speak, but looked at her coldly, questioningly.

"You are surprised to see me?" she said. "I am surprised that you can come to me like this," answered she—"that you can come calmly smiling to one whose blood might have been on your soul."

"You have not understood me," she said. "I do not tolerate opposition, even from those I love."

"And you would do worse than kill those you love," I said with anger and scorn.

"You would do horribly injure the helpless and innocent to strike at those you love. God save me from love such as yours!"

She turned pale, and bent her head a moment. When she looked at me again the soft light had not returned to her eyes, though she still smiled.

"You have not dealt kindly with me," she said in a subdued voice.

As she spoke she drew a step nearer to me. "The memory of those terrible days would have been the prelude to an impassioned outburst; the sudden motion of the arms concealed beneath her long cloak would have heralded one of those terrible appeals where pride goes down before despair, and despair is graced with more than

all the majesty of pride. With the Basilisk it was not so. The sudden action contradicted the sad softness of the voice, and I detected the gleam of a concealed dagger, or the flash of a hidden revolver. She checked her impulse, however, whatever it might have been, and went on in her low melodious voice:

"It was an unhappy day for me when I saw you first. It was an unhappy day for you when you saw me first. It was long ago. You loved me then without knowing why. That love—a boy's tempestuous folly—cost you your sight. Then it so fell out that our positions were reversed. Had you remained in darkness y you might have been the means of changing all my life. But you saw—too much, and you loved another!"

"Did she not love me more?" You hate me for pursuing my end in my own way. You should respect me rather. You made your choice. I do not think it was a wise one."

"Why bring up the past again, Miss Beaufoy?" I said. "It is not long past, but it is dead, and well that it is dead. It was a past of misery, of horror, of cruelty, of crime."

"It is over for you, but it is not over for me," she said. "We shall not meet again. But I came to ask a favour of you after all."

I was touched—who could fail to be—by the humility of this glorious criminal, and I promised to fulfil her request if I could.

"You go away to-night?"

"Yes."

"I should like to see Mary before you go."

"I felt a chill of dread as she asked this. I do not think that is possible. Mary has gone through so much, the sight of you might have an injurious effect upon her."

I spoke firmly, but as kind as I could.

"Do not be afraid," she said with a little smile. "It is not quite a selfish desire. I would make some amends to Mary for the past, and there are some things in relation to her property which it would be to her advantage—and to yours," she added gravely "that she should learn."

"Can you not tell me?" I asked.

"And yet you refuse my simple request! Do not be unreasonable. I will tell Mary herself, or no one."

"In my presence?"

"Certainly. It must be in your presence."

It would save a lot of possible trouble if we could get some light voluntarily thrown upon the state of Mary's property, and I reflected that there was really no reason for refusing this last request. I rang, and sent a message asking Mary to come to us.

Miss Beaufoy remained standing, a tall, dark figure, unrelieved even by the whiteness of her hands, for she kept them folded beneath her cloak. The clear twilight had given place to night, and the glow of the fire gave only a partial and baffling light. The influence of the mysterious figure oppressed me, and I lit the candles, disclosing the splendid eyes and the pale perfect face more clearly. We spoke no further word.

I took the door, opened, and like fresh spring air Mary Fortescue brought the atmosphere of innocence and love into the darkening room.

She shrank rather from her kinswoman, but overcame the instinct and advanced to her, trembling a little, but bravely eyeing her in the strength of her recovered freedom.

"Mary," began Miss Beaufoy, "I have come to make matters more equal between us."

"It doesn't matter," said Mary; "nothing matters now. The past is past, and the future is all bright."

The Basilisk smiled a very threatening smile.

"I have come to make some amends," she said, and then, as she entered into a statement, clear and concise, of some details of Mary's position and property.

The information would be most useful, and I was at loss to account for her generosity. Perhaps it was unfair to seek a motive. A generous impulse was not foreign to such a nature as hers, especially in here yesterday who sneezed three times just as hard as he could, all because I touched the 'sneezing spot.' It must be a very small nerve that tickles the nostril."—*Albany Journal*.

Mark A. Miller, Trav. Agt, Erie R. R. writes: "Suffered with pleuro-pneumonia; one bottle of Red Star Cough Cure, ensured my recovery." At Drug-gists.

What Caused It All.

"The ills we have in this world, dear friend," said the minister at the bedside of a sick man, "are largely due to ourselves. We have no more right to defy the laws of Nature than those of Divine Providence. To what do you attribute your present illness?"

"I caught cold while being immersed in the river," replied the sick man feebly.—*New York Sun*.

Don't You Know.

that you cannot afford to neglect that catarrh! Don't you know that it may lead to consumption, to insanity, to death! Don't you know that it can be easily cured? Don't you know that while the thousand and one nostrums you have tried have utterly failed that Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy is a certain cure! It has stood the test of years, and there are hundreds of thousands of grateful men and women in all parts of the country who can testify to its efficacy. All druggists.

There's many a man as has got a colleg education that goes through life without findin' out how ter invest it.

A Life Made Miserable.

By dyspepsia is scarcely worth the living. A capricious appetite, heartburn, puzzling nervous symptoms, increased action of the heart after eating, sinking in the abdomen among the successive *indicia* of this harassing complaint. Two things only are needful for its removal. A resort to Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, and persistence in its use. These remedial measures being adopted, a cure is certain. Taking immediately before or after meals, this great stomachic promotes secretion of the gastric juice, the natural solvent of the food. The nervous and bilious symptoms consequent upon chronic indigestion disappear, as the complaint gradually yields to the corrective and invigorating influence of the Bitters. Appetite returns, sleep becomes more refreshing, and a sequent the body is efficiently nourished, muscular power increases, and the mind grows sanguine. Use the Bitters for chills and fever, and rheumatism.

When time hangs up its scythe there'll be no mower.

Money Makers.

don't let golden opportunities pass unimproved; there are times in the lives of men when more money can be made rapidly and easily, than otherwise can be earned by years of labor. Write Hallett & Co., Portland, Maine, who will send you, free, full particulars about work that you can do, and live at home, wherever you are located at a profit of at least from \$5 to \$25 daily. Some have made over \$50 in a single day. All is new. You are started free. Capital not required. Either sex; all ages.

We kin git a heap of information from a animal. Nobody never see a dog tryin ter chew two bones ter once.

A Good Thing to Know.

Moxie is the only plant known that will give immediate, vigorous strength and produce no reaction. In fact some doctors say it is the only Nerve Food known. It looks so now. It is made into a perfectly harmless beverage neither stimulant or alcohol and will remove the tired-out nervous feeling and the effects of stimulants at once. Every druggist keeps it.

Good God!" I exclaimed, horror-struck.

"I am surprised to see me?" she said. "I am surprised that you can come to me like this," answered she—"that you can come calmly smiling to one whose blood might have been on your soul."

"You have not understood me," she said. "I do not tolerate opposition, even from those I love."

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