

them, these daring spies who have risked their lives in Paris in order to send word daily to their countrymen.

He has expected to see Germans, and the shock is therefore all the more severe. Not one of them would be taken for a Teuton upon the streets. They are apparently Frenchmen, but the manner in which the Northern tongue is spoken proclaims their true nationality.

Captain Tom sees much in that one look. The man upon whom his startled eyes fall first of all is a prominent officer connected with the defence of the city, one of Trochu's right hand men, and upon whom suspicion has never once fallen.

One of the others the American also recognises, while two are total strangers. He believes he would know them again, though.

Strange greetings pass between them. The nun has vanished, perhaps retiring through the dark corridors to the convent, her mission done. Mickey McCray stands there with a blank look upon his face. It is astonishing how foolish the Irishman can appear when he desires.

The men watch him suspiciously, but Linda sees all fears at rest by declaring that Mickey cannot speak or understand more than a word or two of the German language, so that his presence would not interfere with their consultation.

With that they launch forth, plans are discussed, comments made upon the defences and weak points in the French lines, and confidences exchanged concerning the positive end that now seems so near at hand.

Little do they suspect that a pair of ears are drinking in every word eagerly. Captain Tom has allowed himself to be brought here for this very purpose. He is French in heart, though an American by birth, and in this bitter war between Gaul and Teuton all his sympathies are with the race of Lafayette, his grandfather's personal friend.

What he hears may cause these four men to be shot some fine morning at the city gates, or under the French ports. The chasespots of the National Guard have sent more than one spy to his long account since the siege of Paris began.

Presently the talk becomes personal. The officer in authority demands to know how the American comes here, and what are his

relations with the government. His tone intimates that he would also like to understand what concern Linda has in his welfare.

She tells much of the story—at least they know that Captain Tom is a secret agent of the French.

This seems to be enough. Captain Tom hears a peculiar click-click. It sets his teeth on edge, knowing that this means the drawing back of a revolver's hammer.

'It is only a question of expediency,' says the confidant of Governor Trochu, for it is he who has drawn the weapon.

In a moment it will touch the ear of the American—a pressure of the finger and his doom is sealed. Still he moves not; his wit is simply astounding, since almost any man must have sprung into life at such a menacing peril.

Captain Tom is ready to take the risk. He banks upon a human emotion, and that is love. Nor has he made a mistake.

Mickey McCray has drawn a long breath, and is just on the point of hurling himself upon the general in his impulsive, Irish way, when his quick eye notes something. A small, white hand has clutched the weapon of the officer, and with the firmness of iron turned it aside.

'What would you do, madman?' asks Linda, looking into the man's face. He mutters an exclamation.

'Rid the world of a dangerous man—one who has given our people much trouble I am sure. Come, Linda, release my weapon. It is but the fate of a spy at any rate.'

'You forget, general, he is my prisoner, not yours. I choose to spare his life.'

'I believe you are in love with him,' cries the other, with some show of passion.

'You are at liberty to believe anything you like. This man saved my life. I shall not see him injured by you.'

Her manner is superb. Captain Tom never came so near being in love with her as he does at this moment, when she keeps the eager revolver of the traitor general from ending him.

'Do you know what I've a great notion to do?' rates the man, grinding his teeth.

'Let us hear, general.'

'To tear my hand away from your clasp and finish him where he lies.'

'You will not do it, general. I will tell you why. It is because you are a coward,

and you know that I would avenge such an act on the spot.'

He shivers under the look of this woman, for she has spoken words of truth. Although daring much in his capacity of a spy in the councils of the French leaders, he dares not arouse Linda Dubois to do her worst.

'Would you shoot me?' he asks, reproachfully.

'Try me and see.'

With that she casts his hand from her, and at the same time draws a small revolver from her bosom.

The man looks into her face, sees something there that tells him to beware, and puts away his own weapon.

'As a favour to you, *ma belle*, I spare the American's life, but if he lives let him beware how he crosses my path.'

Her lip curls in derision, for Linda has a very poor opinion of this man, by whose side she has worked in the interests of her king.

'Depend upon it, Captain Tom is able to take his part, as you will find to your cost if ever you run across him,' she replies.

'But why have you brought him here?' he continues, watching her suspiciously.

'I have my reasons. Listen, and I will tell you as much as I choose. In the first place I wished you all to recognise my zeal in behalf of our cause, for, although I will not allow you to murder this brave man in cold blood before my eyes, it is, nevertheless, my intention that he shall no longer be of service to the enemy.'

'By making him your husband, Linda, you might take him into camp,' suggests the general, with a sneer.

She ignores his presence, or at any rate pays no heed to his words.

'I have brought him here for another reason. If our plans hold good, in two days more the German engineers will have succeeded in reaching the catacombs in their underground operations; then, while the darkness of night hangs over all, whole brigades will pass through to appear with the rising sun in the centre of Paris, whose doom will then be sealed. For reasons of my own, I desire that this man, my prisoner, general, should be secreted in this tomb at that hour.'

'You do not say what your reasons are; perhaps I can guess them.'

'You are at liberty to do as you please,'

she replies, coldly. 'As for myself, I have been warned to leave Paris inside of twenty-four hours; when the gates shut to-morrow night at seven my fate is sealed if I am found.'

'And they know you to be a spy? This is singular forbearance. Ah, I see, you owe it to him.'

'That is why I save his life. I have some sense of gratitude if I am Linda Dubois.'

'What favour do you wish to ask of me?'

'You are quick to guess that I desire anything! Still it is true. Can you spare a couple of your men? Francois at least will no longer dare to show himself upon the streets.'

'I see you have heard of his narrow escape. He has become alarmed. The rope was very near him a few hours ago. Jacques also is a marked man. Both are at your service.'

'A thousand thanks. I wish to leave them with my man to watch over the American. They are faithful.'

'As true as the magnet to the pole,' declares the general, while to himself he adds, 'so far as my personal interests are concerned.'

'Then I accept your offer, general. Give them orders to obey me, while I speak to Mickey.'

The officer took his men aside; by accident they are close to the form upon the rock, so that Captain Tom hears every word that is spoken, and it may be set down as certain that he listens with the deepest attention, since the conversation so closely concerns his interests.

'Listen, Francois, Jacques. I will leave you to guard this American. See to it that by morning he is a dead man.'

'How shall it be done?' asks the fellow called Francois, who hates Captain Tom on his own account, since he has recognised in him the man who turned the fury of the populace from Myra upon himself in the streets of Paris.

He has hardly recovered as yet from that terrible peril, and will never forget his fright.

'It will be easily accomplished. Pretend that he is trying to escape, fall upon him, and give him the knife.'

'And if the Irish devil interferes—'

The general shrugs his shoulders:

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