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The Secret of the Old Chateau

By DAVID WHITELEW.

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Vivian Rendon and Eddie Haverton, modern soldiers of fortune, have been gambling with Hubert Baxter, a Londoner, at night. Baxter returns to the home, murders Baxter and hides the body on the roof. While waiting for night to come again in order to make his escape, he finds in a desk a curious old yellowed document telling of a mysterious chest left in the care of one of Baxter's ancestors by a French nobleman, the Marquis de Darnigny, of the Chateau Chauville. The chest has been handed down from one generation of Baxters to another and carefully guarded in the hope that some day its rightful owner will be found. Rendon decides to pose as the missing heir and claim the chest. He goes to France to make some useful inquiries about the Darnigny family. The story recalls the events of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER V.

Another Victim.

As Remy waited in the dining-hall for the Marquis to join him he ran over in his mind their program. With his hands clasped lightly behind his back he paced up and down the long room, his eyes fixed on the wall before him. Suddenly he stopped, then walked swiftly to the paneling of the wall to the right of the fire-place.

The panels were large and plain, with the exception of a minute heading and a carved device at the corners. It was the latter which had caught Remy's eye—a device conventional enough, of a cornucopia discharging its wealth of fruit. It was the carved form of an apple which brought vividly to the young man the scene of the night before.

He advanced his hand to touch it when a voice came from the doorway, and turning quickly Remy saw the Marquis—a new Marquis, looking like a provincial merchant, in a long black frock-coat of coarse fustian, black cloth breeches, stockings and well-worn buckled shoes.

"The carriage waits, Monsieur de Perancourt," he said, smiling, and Remy, glancing from the window, saw drawn up in the courtyard a shabby, covered cart, with broken and patched harness, and filled with cases and boxes packed in straw. This was the first step in the journey to the "Taverne de la Lune" at Pecamp.

"Really, monsieur, it seems to me that the Comedie Francaise lost a likely recruit when Remy Perancourt took to the profession of arms."

The young man, flattered, leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"Come, Monsieur le Marquis, the game's been easy. It's poor sport to make fools of these provincials, these jacks-in-office, who tie a three-colored sash around their shapeless figures and proclaim themselves the friends of the people. They can no more penetrate the curtain of their self-importance than—pah!"

The fugitives had rested since mid-day. They were a few leagues beyond Bolbec, and the sight of the "Croix d'Argent," which lay invitingly back from the road, had proved too attractive to the travel-worn men. The rain had poured down incessantly and pitilessly, and the interminable Normandy roads had been for the last few hours rivers of mud and at points almost impassable. The flat fields of the countryside lay desolate to the horizon and the stately rows of poplars loomed up, gray silhouettes, in the mist.

But the little room of the "Croix d'Argent" told nothing of the dreariness without. The light from the wood fire glinted pleasantly on the dark furniture and on the brass and china of the dresser. It was now past ten and the remains of a meal still littered the table; on the shelf over the fireplace two candles burned steadily in their brass stands.

In the kitchen behind the hostess could be heard humming a love-song, a song which was acting as a lullaby on the Marquis, who, comfortably seated in a corner of the settle, was blinking at the flames. A half-empty bottle of excellent port stood at Remy's elbow. The young man took it up to replenish the glasses.

Suddenly his figure straightened rigidly into an attitude of listening. The song in the kitchen had ceased and a voice, gruff and forbidding, was raised in authority. The listener

running from the little wood, calling to us and asking for a little milk. She was English, citizen, and said she wanted the milk for a little girl who was ill."

The man from Paris was drawing on the boots he had taken off as Remy finished speaking. He was laboring under intense excitement and in his eyes was the fierce look of the animal who seizes its game. His instructions had been explicit. Hereat, his master, looked upon the arrest of the ci-devant Marquis de Darnigny as essential to his reputation, and to the more important capture of the son—and those who helped him to his reward would themselves reap plentifully. So the man from Paris was drawing on his boots.

He jumped to his feet, and snatching his hat from the table, made for the door. He did not see the smile on the face of the man by the fire.

"Come, citizen, the rain has ceased and the moon is up. Show me the road now. There is little time to lose. I may start to-night."

The two men passed out through the kitchen of the inn. The rain had indeed stopped falling, but a boisterous wind showered the drops from the trees and scattered the white petals of the apple blossoms. The moon, mist-ringed, showed through a stormy mass of clouds as Remy took his companion by the arm and led him across the orchard to where, behind a hedge, the pale light showed the ruts and puddles of the high-road.

"I can point you the direction from that rising ground in the corner yonder. We should see the lights of Bolbec from there. You are a stranger in these parts, citizen?"

The other did not answer and they made their way between the apple trees until they reached the corner indicated by Remy. Here a low, flat wall separated the orchard from the road.

"Allow me, citizen." The younger man held out his hand. "Step up. I will follow you—so."

As the little man leaned on Remy's arm the latter stepped nimbly aside and, losing his balance, the man from Paris fell heavily to the ground. The next moment Remy, with his hand pressed tightly over his victim's mouth, was, with a skill and celerity which denoted practice, binding the arms of the servant of the republic with the tricolor scarf he had taken from the fallen man. Then, propping the trussed figure against a tree, he sat on the wall and laughed.

"So, my little Jaquelin—that will make nine since the 15th of August—no, don't shout, it's quite useless." As Remy spoke a gust of wind swept the orchard, meaning and rustling dismally through the branches. "Besides, it would only hurry matters—you would die a little earlier—that's all."

The man against the tree bent his eyes on Remy.

"And your reputation. I knew you as soon as you entered the room yonder. Remy de Perancourt knows most of the Public Safety men."

For a moment surprise drove the fear from Jaquelin's eyes.

"You are one of Gaspard de Darnigny's men?"

The man on the wall made a sardonic bow.

"At your service, citizen. We are a merry band, are we not? We pay in the coin we receive. 'Kill, kill,' yells the Tribunal, and 'Kill, kill,' say we. You have often wanted to meet Gaspard, eh—he whose lieutenants strike where they find? Why did you not call on the performer, Caron, at the corner of the Rue des Canettes?—what a rich haul you would have had! I am telling you this, Jaquelin, because secrets are safe with you forever. To-night you go to your tribunal."

"You would kill me here—a bound man? Monsieur, you are a soldier—your honor—"

Remy slid down from the wall and brought his eyes very close to those of the informer. A new note had taken the place of the banter in his voice.

"Yes, you are bound; I would per-

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Imposing Heights.

Among other big things, the British Empire contains the tallest mountains in the world, particularly Mount Everest, of which the native name is Chomolungkar, the "Lady of the Snows," and which is supposed to be the loftiest mountain in the world.

Very little is known of Everest, though its next neighbor, Mount Kangburi (24,015 feet), was climbed so long ago as 1882. Mr. Graham, who achieved this feat, also climbed Jabonai, another peak of 21,400 feet—that is nearly 6,000 feet higher than Mount Blanc.

The Himalayas contain the tallest mountains in the world, but it is in the Andes of South America that we are to find the greatest number of peaks over 20,000 feet in height. In Bolivia are the Cordilleras de la Paz, of which twelve peaks, all together, tower more than four miles towards the sky.

Farther north, in Ecuador, are twenty volcanoes in one cluster, all covered with perpetual snow. The lowest of these volcanoes are still active, and eleven out of the twenty have never yet been climbed.

The highest of the South American Andes is supposed to be Aconcagua, 23,805 feet.

But the Andes, between the Isthmus of Panama and Cape Horn, can show no fewer than 288 peaks, which are more than 10,000 feet in height, 138 over 15,000, seventy-nine over 19,000, and forty-two over 20,000 feet. The four biggest all exceed 23,000 feet.

The Andes possess another record, in the shape of the highest road in the world. This is the famous Oroya Road, in Peru, which pierces the mountains by the Crucecero Tunnel at a height of 15,654 feet. This is almost the same level as the topmost summit of Europe's highest mountain, Mont Blanc.

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STRANGE SECTS OF OLD LONDON

PAGAN CREEDS AND 300 CHRISTIAN BODIES.

"Seventh Day Baptists," "Peculiar People," "Sandemans" and "Shakers."

The Londoner who cannot find a creed and a church to suit him must be very difficult to please; for, on the evidence of a well-known bishop, "it is possible in London alone to worship every Sunday for more than five years in a church belonging to a different sect or professing a different faith."

In the East End, for example, the Mohammedan—who, among many strange beliefs, includes that of a Judgment-day fifty years in duration, after which both good and bad must cross a bridge thinner than a hair, stretching over the mouth of the lower regions—has his mosques. The Chinaman burns his incense-sticks in two joss-houses; and the Buddhist whose misty-gazed heavens number between four and five hundred, in which his stay is limited to ten billion years, conducts his strange worship.

Religions of the East.

There is a Malayan temple within a short distance of St. George's Street, East! In Bloomsbury the Parsee prostrates himself before the sun; and there is a Mormon mission in Islington. Zoroastrianism, the cult of the late Dr. Dowrie, is represented by a modest upper-room; while it is said there are houses in London where the worship of ancestors is practised, and where sumptuous feasts are spread for their enjoyment in the silent hours of the night.

Such are a few of the pagan creeds which have a footing, however slight, in the world's capital; while of Christian sects the number is said to fall little short of three hundred. Among the least-known of them are the Sandemans, an offshoot of the Glasites who separated from the Scottish Kirk some two centuries ago.

Among the articles of faith of the Sandemans is abstinence from blood and things strangled, and from all amusements in which chance plays a part. They attend the Holy Communion once a week; are great believers in the virtue of love-feasts, and have an amiable practice of dining at one another's houses between morning and evening services on Sunday.

Another little-known religious body is that of the "Seventh Day Baptists," who believe that Saturday and not Sunday should be observed as the Sabbath, and who usually conduct their services, so few are their numbers, at one another's houses.

No Use for Doctors.

The Peculiar People, whose fortunes have been so chequered, still survive in the East of London, and practise their strange creed with a loyalty deserving, one cannot help thinking, of a better cause. Founded in London eighty years and more ago, they have no faith in doctors, relying for cure (in medical cases) on anointing with oil by their elders, and in the efficacy of unceasing prayer and careful nursing. The members of this sect are almost exclusively poor, struggling people; and they bear an excellent character for morality and Christian charity.

Another curious sect is that known as "Coklers, or Cogelers, a nickname said to be derived either from cocoa, their favorite beverage, or from the "Book of Cople," which they are said to hold in veneration. This name, however, is not recognized by the members, who prefer to be known as the "Lord's people."

Founded a couple of generations ago by William Sirgeod, a Walworth shoemaker, the "Lord's people" have (or had, not long ago), their headquarters at Lexwood, in Surrey, where they had a co-operative shop and farm; while their meeting-houses are at Walworth and Croydon.

Joanna Southcott, the Devonshire seeress, who professed to be a prophetess and who issued 6,400 sealed papers to her followers, at prices ranging from twelve shillings to a sovereign, each "seal" guaranteed to secure salvation, has still her followers in London. Some of these strange documents still survive, and are much treasured by their owners. They contain these enigmatical words: "The sealed of the Lord—the Elect Precious Man's Redemption. To inherit the Tree of Life—To be made heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ."

Not a Success.

Another sect which still has its members in London is that of the "Shakers," which, like the Peculiar People, has had a stormy career. This community, who christened themselves the "Children of God," was founded nearly two centuries ago by James and Jane Wardley, who were joined later on by Anne Lee, a woman who declared that she was the final incarnation of the Deity.

This singular claim found many supporters, especially in the East End of London and in Battersea. In 1872 the members of this sect formed a colony in the New Forest on land purchased for them. Although they led busy and blameless lives, they were unable to support themselves. After enduring much hardship they were evicted, and for a time led sordid and wretched existence in sheds.