

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

## The Auction.

A youth came into the market-space,  
Where throngs the world to sell and buy,  
And fixed the press with his bright eye,  
And cried, while young blood flushed his face.

"A life for sale! Come, who will buy?  
I sell this life for what it brings!  
Then offer of thy precious things,  
O, world! a whole young life I bid high!

"I must have power, wealth and fame  
And love; but for these four I give  
Each brain and heart-pulse which I live.  
Nor other things of self I claim,

"What, yet no bids? My life is strong,  
My heart's pure, my brain is clear—  
Ah, world! 'Tis for no glut I fear,  
If such as these sell for a song.

"Come, then—I offer you the same  
At small price; wealth need I not  
If power, fame and love begot,  
No other things for me I claim."

And while the youth stood there and sought  
To sell his life, the world went by;  
And deeper glowed his eager eye  
And on his brow came lines of thought.

"Ah, well—if, on this present earth,  
I cannot work my little will!  
Let power go. For others still,  
When I am dead, shall know my worth.

"And fame shall lead to power. So,  
A life no longer young, but strong,  
Is going, going for a song—  
Come, world, and make your bid! What, no?"

He spoke, and then with softer eye,  
And calmer voice, and kinder mood,  
He grew a man, as there he stood;  
But ever went the world him by.

"Look, then—I bade the price again;  
Let fame go with the rest—'tis but  
The applause of them we value not  
Which lets us show them our disdain.

"A life for sale! A man's! The same  
In strength and use, if older now—  
Come bid, great world! To thee I bow  
And ask but love—'tis all I claim.

"Oh, dear, dread world, give me but love  
And take my life most freely sold."  
He ceased. The world's great wheels still rolled  
In silence on their iron groove.

When next he spoke, his hair was gray,  
"I sell this life for what it brings,  
I ask not of thy precious things,  
Give me but rest—'tis all I pray."

But still the careless world went by—  
The while his gray beard on his breast,  
He offered now his life for rest,  
And still stood there and did not die.

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The Forgotten Castle of St. Philip  
Alencon.

BY INEZ DEAN.

(Continued From Last Week.)



THE main structure, three stories in height was of stone, and at each end rose towers, pierced with loop-holes. In the centre of the front an arched gateway opened into the inner court. This had formerly been closed by a heavy iron gate, which now lay covered with rust on the ground beside the outer walls. Entering this opening,

they came into a closer view of the crumbling buildings, one of which, a little better than the rest, seemed to be inhabited. Carl went to a door and knocked. A middle-aged woman appeared, and upon his asking if they might look over the castle, replied:

"Oh, oui, Monsieur; I will like much ze plaisir to show you;" and taking down a huge bunch of keys, she led the way towards a large door opposite the great gate.

They followed her, and when the portal was reached and the huge door swung open, they were ushered into a spacious hall, which they were told, had once been the audience room of the castle. Nothing now remained in it but an antiquated carved settle. Near one end, a wide, rough-stone stair-case led to the floor above, and up this they went.

First they entered a spacious room, the grand salon. This was lighted by eight deep and high windows. The furnishing had evidently once been very handsome, but now only a few battered pieces of furniture and scraps of torn tapestries remained of its former splendors. In the centre stood an immense table of carved oak, and on the walls hung several pairs of stag-horns, with here and there what remained of gilt-framed oil-paintings, now cut to pieces and unrecognizable.

From this room opened the picture gallery, a long hall, now destitute of pictures. Light entered by large deep windows, with lozenge-shaped panes of glass.

Crossing a wide corridor opening from the last named room, they ascended a flight of stairs and found themselves in one of the towers. They discovered but two rooms here. One of them, the larger, they entered. Had a whirl-wind passed through it, it could not have looked more completely a wreck. Chairs, tables, settees, —everything, was turned topsy-turvey or broken in pieces. This had originally been a "pink room," as the shreds and faded curtains and tapestries showed. Pushing aside part of a curtain that remained at one of the windows, Edith and Carl were charmed by the beautiful view that lay beneath them. First the terrace and lawn, then a woodland, next the village, and last of all the glistening sea, with the sails of its many crafts gleaming in the rays of the afternoon sun,—truly a picture drawn in nature's loveliest colors. Turning at last to the aged dame, Edith asked:

"Whose room was this?"

"Ah, Mademoiselle," she answered, "it wasze Countess Elise's, poor thing."

"Oh, do tell us about her," cried Edith, her love of the romantic having already been excited to the utmost by what she had seen of the castle.

"It is a long histoire; you will tire, Mademoiselle," suggested their guide.

"No, indeed; do tell us;" and seating herself in a fine old armchair, now tottering on three legs, while Carl ensconced himself in a window seat, Edith assumed a look of intense interest, and the woman began the sad story of the Countess of St. Philip. Omitting the peculiar French accent and the frequent lapses into her native language, the dame's tale was as follows:—

"Many years ago, sixty or more, my mother came here as waiting maid to the Countess, then a bride of two months. The latter lady had come from France, and her name was Elizabeth La Forte, Countess of St. Philip, but we always called her the Countess Elise. The Countess' maid had died on the passage from France, and partly on account of her beauty and partly from a desire to please the people here by taking a native girl, my mother was chosen to fill the vacant place in the corps of servants of the Countess' household.

"The Countess and my mother were of the same age, eighteen and nearly of the same height, and much alike in feature, save that my mother had more color and a coarser skin.

"The Count's health had failed in France, and he had come to this island as its governor, in the hope of once more regaining strength. The old castle was repaired, and these rooms formed the private suite of the Countess. I have heard my mother say that this room was "like Paradise," with everything that affection and wealth could supply; for the Count felt that to take his bride from the court of France to this desolate little isle, was forcing upon her a sacrifice. But she had cheerfully given up everything for his sake, and seemed very happy in the new home. For a few years all went well. Then the people began to murmur against the new governor and his young wife, complaining of the taxes demanded. One awful night the castle was attacked.

"My mother was a farmer's daughter and had married a peasant in the valley, (though they do say the captain of the French guard wanted her,) so she was fully aware of the dissatisfaction in the town. Fearing an attack, she determined to save the Countess, and had devised a means of escape. It was to get the Countess out of the way before an assault came; for the hatred of the people was centred on her, as they said the Count levied money taxes, in order to satisfy his wife's whims.

"The Count was absent on business in Nova Scotia,—Halifax, —and the people determined to assail the castle during his absence. Alas; the attack came all too soon! My mother, looking from the casement one evening, saw in the dusk forms creeping up the hill. They were near the terrace, and a light from the castle suddenly showed her the gleam of steel. In an instant she divined the meaning of it all. Rushing to the Countess, she besought the latter to make haste, and to put on a gown which mother soon brought from her own wardrobe. At first the Countess refused, but mother begged her to save herself for the love she bore the Count. Just as she was about to comply, there came a shout from the crowd, which had now reached the outer gate and killed the two soldiers on guard there. The Countess delayed no longer. She was soon ready and flying down the stairs, through the corridor and to the old library which you will see when we descend. My mother followed her. Reaching the latter room, they crossed to the opposite end, and there mother lifted aside a piece of tapestry and touched a panel of the wall. It swung back, and before them a narrow staircase descended.

"Down this they felt their way. The passage was so narrow that only one could go at a time, and so dark that neither could see the other, though but a pace apart. After what seemed an interminable length of time, they emerged into the open air, the outlet of the secret passage being in the woods at the rear of the castle. An almost indistinguishable path led from the opening, and along this they made their way, till they finally reached the rocks and the shore.

"My mother led her almost fainting companion to a cavern hollowed in the rocks by the waves. Here she had previously concealed food and a heavy blanket in anticipation of this need. Wrapping the Countess warmly, mother bade her to remain quietly in the cave, and left her. Gliding along through the woods towards the outskirts of the town, mother soon reached her own home and slipped softly in. I was there alone with my brother, both of us too young to appreciate the danger we were in by reason of our mother's connection with the Governor's household. Father soon entered, and he and mother quickly made a bundle of the more portable valuables; and then, father carrying the pack

and mother with brother in her arms and leading me, made their way to the shore. A staunch row-boat was ready, and into this we all stepped. With quick, strong pulls, my father soon had the boat near the cave. Leaping out, he hauled the craft up on the beach, and my mother at once went to the Countess, who was nearly wild with fear and excitement. Half dragging her, mother got her to the boat, and father rowed around the promontory in which was the hiding place. Just beyond this lay a small sloop, her sails spread and ready for a voyage. Giving the signal agreed upon, the small boat was allowed to come alongside, and we were all soon aboard and bound for Halifax. In two days the sloop reached its destination. The Countess was delivered to her husband, who, when he heard of her narrow escape, was much affected, and expressed his gratitude to my parents in the warmest manner.

"My mother had planned the entire escape, and father had aided her in carrying it out, although the suddenness of the attack had almost frustrated the arrangements.

"The assaulting party were angry when they found no one on whom to vent their spite; for the servants, too, had all fled at the first alarm. But the rabble soon discovered the wine vaults, and after making themselves crazy with strong drink, they proceeded to create the havoc you have seen on all sides. They seemed to have known by intuition that these were the Lady Elise's rooms, for they left almost nothing whole here. A company of soldiers from Halifax was dispatched to the island, and upon their arrival many of the chief rioters were arrested and afterwards hung or shot.

"The Count and Countess never returned to their once happy home. But you may be sure they did not forget my parents. When they sailed for France, my father was made warden of the castle, which meant a good round pension. Nothing was removed or disturbed, except the personal effects of the inmates, and year by year the building has fallen into the decay you see. A year after the attack my father and mother returned and took up their abode, where I now live, in the warden's house.

After her return to France, Countess Elise, sent my mother a miniature of herself, which I will show you when we return. Also, every year on the anniversary of that night, my mother received a sum of money as long as she lived. That is all, Mademoiselle."

Carl and Edith looked out of the window in silence. They had listened to the French woman's story as they would have attended the reading of some old-time romance of the Reign of Terror. It seemed impossible to them that the scenes of the French Revolution could find counterpart in even an American dependency of France, but evidence of the truthfulness of the old dame's story were everywhere about them.

Finally, rousing herself from the reverie in which the tale had left her, Edith requested that they be shown the secret passage. The woman led them down the stone stair-way and across the hall to a door which they had passed when going up. This was the entrance to the library. It had evidently been only a library in name, for the few book-cases contained still fewer books, all now musty and discoloured. Scarcely noticing their surroundings, the visitors followed their guide to the opposite side of the room; and sure enough when Carl pressed the panel indicated to him it swung creaking inward and disclosed to them the dark and narrow stair-way.

Edith's adventurous spirit was aroused by the sight; and though a little frightened at her own daring, she suggested that they descend. Nothing loth, Carl accepted the proposal without hesitation, stipulating, however, that they be preceded by a light, as there could be no telling what pitfalls might have been made by the process of time. Procuring and lighting a candle, the woman led the way down the steps. Edith willingly grasped the hand which Carl who went next, extended to her; and in this order they proceeded through the dark and damp tunnel. It was a relief that they at length beheld, over the shoulder of their guide, a gleam of day-light. They soon emerged through the vine-covered aperture that formed the entrance to the passage, and were drawing in a breath of the fresh air of the woodland. The good dame led them back to the castle by a circuitous path, and to her lodge. A bright girl of seemingly twenty was standing in the doorway. She greeted the dame as "Maman," and the latter introduced her as "My married daughter, Elise, named for the Countess, Mademoiselle." Then while Carl and Edith conversed with the daughter, the mother entered the house and soon returned with a box of carved rosewood. Opening this she took out a beautiful gold locket of immense size and showed her visitors a picture of the Countess Elise contained therein.

The features were of remarkable loveliness; soft lustrous black eyes; dark, wavy hair; full red lips; and a high forehead, were the chief attractions of the face. The head was poised upon a neck and shoulders of shapely contour, and just the edge of a lace dress was visible. The box contained also a ring set with rubies and small diamonds, and many other little articles of the Countess' which she had given her maid.

Before the young New Englanders were allowed to depart, their hostess insisted on giving them a taste of wine, from that which remained in the castle vaults, supplemented with some queer little French cakes.

Thanking the woman for the trouble she had taken in their behalf, they drove slowly back to the town. Their story being told, all the family wanted to visit the castle; but as their steamer left St. Philip early on the following day, time did not allow them. The trip down the coast was uneventful, though protracted. They reached Boston two weeks later, feeling that "the Provinces" had well repaid their visit.

Edith spent some weeks with Grace on their return home; and she and Carl took many more rides together, but none so prolific of adventure as the drive to the Castle of St. Philip Alencon. And Carl now carries a locket with the picture of a lady in it, but it is not that of the Countess Elizabeth; it is—but you can guess who.