

The Secret of the Old Chateau

By DAVID WHITELAW.

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Vivian Renton and Eddie Haverton, modern soldiers of fortune, have been gambling with Hubert Baxenter, a prosperous attorney, in his London apartments. After their departure late at night Renton returns to the house, murders Baxenter 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, the contents of which lead him to the possession of a mysterious chest left in the care of one of Baxenter's ancestors by a French nobleman, the Marquis de Dartigny, of the Chateau Chauville. The chest has been handed down from one generation of Baxenters to another and carefully guarded, but the hope that some day its rightful owner will be found. Renton decides to pose as the missing heir and claim the chest. He goes to France to make some useful inquiries about the Dartigny family. The story of the mysterious chest goes back to the troubled days of the French Revolution and the escape of the Marquis and his little granddaughter to England, where the chest and document were given to the Baxenters for safe keeping. Now, more than one hundred years later, Hubert Baxenter's body is found, and the police find no clue. Meanwhile, Renton changes his name to Bastian Dartin, and visits Canada, then he presents his fictitious claims to Robert Baxenter, new head of the firm, and receives the treasure chest. Robert calls on Stella Benham whose heart is set on making a great success out of a stage. She tells him to wait until a year for her answer. Dartin is at first greatly disappointed to find only a paltry thousand pounds in the chest. He is relieved to discover later a large key and a parchment telling where the real treasure is hidden. Giving Baxenter a quaint locket and chain which he found in the chest, Dartin goes to France. By posing as an artist he gains admittance to the Chateau Chauville, and in a secret vault finds an immense fortune in gems, gold and rare pictures. With his new wealth Dartin establishes himself on a fine estate in England. His aristocratic neighbors will not receive him and he is forced to rely for society on visiting theatrical troupes. While entertaining Stella Benham, her manager, Eddie Haverton, appears.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd.)

Eddie raised his hat as the motor slid away down the level road, standing there until a spur of the downs hid it from sight, then turned and slipped into the shelter of the little plantation of firs which surrounded the lodge gates. He remembered that the lawns facing the dining-room windows terraced down to the edge of a tiny stream, and that beyond that were woods, to which a little rustic bridge led. From where he stood he could see Barker clearing away the tea things, and awaiting his opportunity, Eddie made his way, keeping as far as possible in the shadow of the shrubberies, to the section which the woods promised.

From their leafy shelter he was able to get a good view of the house, and, more particularly, of the windows of the dining-room. He knew very well in his own mind that the "sunstroke" of the owner of Adderbury Hall would soon yield to the treatment of his guests' departure. It was pleasant, too, for the town-bred man to be waiting here, pleasant to see the trees in their robes of Spring, and the masses of primroses, dying off now to give place to the hyacinths which shimmered in patches of powder-blue around him. The house itself showed no signs of life, save a clatter of crockery which came from what were evidently the kitchens.

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"It's from Robert, mummy—there's no letter, only a card. With many happy returns from your pal, Bobby. He just gave the paper a flick. I thought he would have been here; he never missed before." Stella took the card and looked at it with the old-fashioned look across the table as she spoke. Mrs. Benham took it and hid it by her plate while she searched for her glasses.

Her daughter had her head bent over her correspondence, which, this being the morning of her twentieth birthday, was proportionately large, or she would have noticed the look of wonder which quickened in Mrs. Benham's eyes as she peered through her spectacles at the crest engraved on the locket. Robert had at first intended giving Stella Mr. Dartin's gift to him at once, but on second thought had decided to wait until the girl's birthday, so that it could not be said that he was showing signs of weakening in their compact.

"It's very charming, Stella—and quaint. I wonder where Robert bought it? It looks as though it might be an heirloom of some old family. I—" and Mrs. Benham hid her lip and glanced covertly over to her daughter. For the rest of the meal she was very quiet.

It was a glorious morning in late May and the sunshine flooded the little dining-room of the flat. It sparkled merrily on the silver coffee-servant and lent an added glory to the brown head bent over the letters. By a happy coincidence Stella had been able to spend the week with her mother, the company having an engagement at one of the big suburban theatres, which was within a short cab-ride from Belenden Mansions.

But in the ointment of the girl's birthday joy was one little fly. She had hoped that Robert would remember and perhaps take advantage of the day.

True, he had remembered; but the little card beside her plate was not very satisfactory. Stella wanted more than that. She had known Bobby now for three Mays, and on her other birthdays he had always been the first to greet her—had always been over there by the door, a great bunch of roses in his hand. Perhaps Stella missed him more this morning than any time in the last months, than any time which had been anything but one of happiness to the little actress.

She had first met Robert Baxenter at a river party at Cookham, and the young people had been drawn together at once. The scene of the party had been suited to the occasion, the broad sweep of the river, the shelving masses of foliage, the little rush-fringed path, the meadows dotted with part buttermilks, and when the punts slid homeward under the moon Robert and Stella knew in their hearts that they mattered a great deal to each other. There was something in the stern, good-humored seriousness of the solicitor which attracted the girl, and she, too, soon found that his delight rested with the charming little butterfly who laughed at him and who teased him to distraction.

Within a month Robert Baxenter was a regular caller at the flat. Stella thought now with longing of the "big brother" lectures he used to read her, lectures that grew in seriousness as the man's love took possession of him. How she had teased him and tormented him! She pictured him sitting over there in the wicker chair by the window and she wished that he were there now.

She came back from her dreams with a little sigh. Mrs. Benham had left the room, and Stella finished her breakfast in anything but a birthday state of mind. She remembered with irritation that there was a "call" at eleven that morning to try over the new songs. She thought of the others who would be there—Wally Burns, with his cheery, witticisms; Ada Clairton, with her violent scents; Derrill, with his swelled head and artificial voice; the bullying manager, and—

With a start she saw that the clock pointed to half-past ten and she hurried into her mother's room to big her good-bye. As she entered Mrs. Benham turned guiltily and closed a little drawer of the dressing-table hastily. Stella noticed nothing, for she threw her arms round the dainty little figure and kissed her.

"Good-bye, mummy darling! I feel like swearing. I really do—it's a rotten, rotten day."

Stella accompanied each adjective with a stamp of her little shoe, and with another kiss, she was gone.

At eleven o'clock Mr. Robert Baxenter presented himself at Belenden Mansions. He carried in his hand a magnificent bouquet of white roses.

"Come in, rehearsal, I think she said theatre—a rehearsal, I think she expected to go to rehearsal."

Robert placed the flowers carefully upon the piano and smiled.

"Do you you think she minded, Mrs. Benham?"

Mrs. Benham returned the smile.

"My dear Robert, I never express an opinion on things I know nothing about. But, never mind Stella, I want to speak to you about something else—about this."

Robert took the chain and locket Mrs. Benham held out to him.

"Oh, there's quite a romantic history attached to this, Mrs. Benham; it's been in—"

"Don't tell me yet, Robert. Now I want you to look at this," and Mrs. Benham held out for the solicitor's inspection an antique signet-ring of dull gold. He crossed and carefully compared one glance and carefully compared the two ornaments. They were in each case much worn and indistinct, and Robert knew that there were many coats of arms in the French nobility which had the star-shaped band at the top of their shields, but there were other points in the devices of the locket and ring that made the man feel sure in his own mind that they were identical. He raised his head and looked at Mrs. Benham.



Woman's Interests

Eliminate the Fly in Its Breeding Place.

To kill flies by "swatting" is very slow work and poor office work, to say the least. It is true that a great number can be exterminated in this manner, but it is hardly worth while. If a waterpiped burst in your basement and started to flood your cellar you would not start to bale it out. The first thing you would do would be to stop the leak, and then set about mopping the basement of water. So why resort to swatting the fly when they are breeding faster than you can possibly stop them?

The thing to do first, is to find out where they are breeding and then either dispose of it or else kill those that are propagating there. After that is done you can swat them if you wish, or apply other remedies that are better. Of course, if few flies are bothersome by all means swat them if you wish, but don't try to rid the entire house in this manner. If you spend all of your time doing this and nothing else, you could not kill the progeny of one pair of flies, to say nothing of the tens of thousands that are breeding in many places on the farm.

To begin with, there are at least eight generations of flies in this latitude. At the end of a month one fly will have given rise to many millions of progeny, while at the end of the summer the number of offspring will be unbelievable. It is well known that a female fly may deposit one hundred and fifty eggs at a time and as she has been observed to make four deposits we conclude that a single fly is capable of laying six hundred eggs. When these hatch and reach maturity we will assume that half of them are males and half females, which gives us at the end of the first generation just fifty egg-laying females. At this rate there will be produced at the end of the eighth generation, about 1,875,000,000 adult flies.

Now if some real ambitious person would undertake the job of killing these flies with a fly-swatter he would find quite a job ahead of him. If he would kill them at the rate of one every fifteen seconds, or four a minute, working twenty-four hours a day he would have taken the lives of 5,760 as a day's work, while at the end of a year his record would be 2,102,400 flies. But this only gets rid of the progeny of one pair of flies. Think of the vast numbers that are present early in the season and if each of these are as prolific as the one just mentioned, it would be an endless job.

The uselessness of swatting flies is then very apparent and should not be depended upon alone. Kill the flies where they breed. The earlier they are exterminated the fewer there will be to contend with later and every week's delay means just so many more to be taken care of later on. Protect the garbage and other refuse from the flies and give them no chance to come in contact with it. The manure, if it cannot be otherwise disposed of, can be treated with chemi-

cals that will exterminate the maggots and at the same time will not injure the manure for fertilizer purposes.

Roasting Ears in Mid-Winter.

That sounds good, and here is how you may have them, almost as nice and fresh as the day they were picked. Gather the ears the same day they are to be canned. Remove all husk and silk, then put in boiling water and cook for ten minutes. Next blanch by immersing in cold water for several minutes. Use half-gallon fruit jars, fill them as full as possible with the ears of corn, then finish filling them by pouring in cold water. To each half-gallon of the canned roasting ears add two teaspoonsful of salt. Now put on the rubbers and lids and screw down as tight as possible with the hand, place them in the boiler with enough cold water to cover the lids, and after the water is brought to the boiling point continue to keep it boiling for three hours, then take the cap wrench and screw the lids down perfectly tight.

When the roasting ears are to be served remove from the can, place in a bread pan and set in the oven until warm, then serve with seasoning to suit the taste. This is a thoroughly tried recipe. We have used it in our home for two years.—J. C. B.

Suggestions for Harvest Time.

When preparing meals for threshers and other harvest hands I do not make the mistake of trying to have too much variety at a meal. I find it is better to serve a few dishes, well cooked, than a large number carelessly prepared.

I try to have most of the baking done beforehand. A fruit cake will keep for weeks, while doughnuts and cookies may be made several days before using, if they are kept in a tightly covered jar. I prepare enough pie crust at one time to last for two or three weeks. Mix the flour, lard, and other ingredients together. Then, when pie is wanted in a hurry, I have only to add water to as much of the dough as is needed.

Threshers like some kind of tart fruit to cut the dust from their throats. Cherries, plums, or jelly serve this purpose. If you have pumpkins at harvest time, instead of stewing pumpkins for pies in the usual manner, try this way: Cut pumpkin in halves, and scoop out the insides; place on a pie tin with a little water, and put in the oven. When done, the rind can be peeled off very easily. When the pumpkin is mashed it is ready for use.

Good Molasses Cookies.

If a real thin molasses cookie is desired, let the dough stand for several hours, or even over night, before rolling out and cutting. The dough will then have become firm and solid and can be rolled out very thin. Cookies thus made can be kept a long time.—Mrs. W. B. S.

Photographing Your Teeth.

Teeth nowadays are likely to be suspected of almost anything in the way of mischief. If you have any sort of ailment not easily accounted for, your physician tells you to consult your dentist.

Tooth-roots are often affected, or even abscessed, without attracting special attention to themselves. If that is the case, they are a source of danger. The dentist takes a few X-ray pictures, to make sure; or perhaps he sends you to an X-ray laboratory to get a complete set of "shadowgraphs" of your jaws. They are not pretty at all.

"I'm afraid that tooth will have to come out," says the dentist. Hard luck. But there is no help for it. You register resignation, and are privileged to make a choice between two methods. You may have local anesthesia, or you may take gas.

The local anesthesia is all right after it has got well started; but to produce it requires several preliminary punches with a hypodermic syringe deep into the gums. It is a painful business. When enough of the nerve-deadening stuff has been squirted into your gums, you are all right; you don't feel the yank of the forceps much.

Probably you make up your mind to try the gas next time. It is really much better, though likely to make you feel rather nervous beforehand. The operator's way of determining when you have reached the requisite degree of unconsciousness is to poke his forefinger gently into a corner of your eye. If you do not respond by screwing up the lid defensively, he picks up his forceps.

That eye reflex is not infallible. It is a good idea to ask the operator to step on the gas right hard before he uses the forceps; if he doesn't use enough of it, you may not become quite as unconscious as you want to be.

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The Strike of the Sunfish.

How to break a strike of sunfish we may learn from Mr. W. R. MacLraith. The situation as he describes it in Field and Stream was this: Here was Medina Lake, sixteen miles long by half a mile wide, full of submerged forests and unquestionably full of fish. But when the hot weather came they all went on strike. They simply would not bite.

I was at my wit's end. Without sunfish for bait there would be no bass; without bass there would be no fish in the pan. The little fellows held a strategic position. Seated under an old cedar, I gazed across the opal waters and thought of home. Again I was a boy bringing home the cows. Just over the worm fence of half-rotted rails that separated the pasture from the meadow the hay stood in cocks ready to be taken to the barn.

Then I had it! "Hay" had suggested "barn," and "barn" had suggested "wasps." I could break that strike, for had I not that very morning passed a nest of those hot-headed warriors? I was astonished that I had not thought of them at once, for in my barefoot days wasps grubs were known as "dead medicine" for sunfish.

When I returned with that nestful of fat grubs I expected a water carnival, and I was not disappointed. On the thin fly hook I lowered a large, fat grub toward the pool. I think the sunfish saw him coming and recognized him. He had scarcely touched the water when the fish made a rush. The first one (to arrive was soon popping on the cliff beside me, while the other fish were milling about below as if talking it over among themselves.

They swam round in groups, in pairs and singly, waiting for the next detectable morsel. I let down another fat grub into the water. There was a rush! They shouldered and elbowed one another! But of course only one fish could get it. From that time on the fun was fast and furious.

Plants That Feel Pain.

Scientists have discovered that, just as there is a circulation of the blood in man, so there is a circulation of the sap in plants. It has been discovered, too, that plants are capable of movement.

This movement shows itself in different ways. The simplest form is seen in those flowers which follow the sun in its course through the summer skies. It is due to no act of will on the part of the plant, but simply to the fact that the parts turned towards the sun grow more quickly than the rest; hence stalks are lengthened in that direction, and the plant itself keeps facing towards the sun.

When the sun has set, movements of a different kind take place. Such flowers as the evening primrose open, whilst others which have been expanded all day close their petals as darkness draws on.

As a rule, those flowers which depend for fertilization upon the action of day insects, such as bees and butterflies, close at dusk. But many flowers attract nocturnal insects—moths, earwigs, and beetles—and these have formed the habit of remaining closed all day and opening after the sun has set.

We find a still more wonderful kind of movement in the leaves of certain plants. If you look at the common clover at night, you will find that its leaves are folded down flat—in fact, the leaves are asleep! The beet, lupin, and mimosa all take their rest at night. The last can feel pain, for if we pinch one of the leaves, those near it will curl up immediately.

The more we investigate, the more convinced we become that plants have some kind of consciousness. A leaf placed on top of an onion shows, as it is killed by the heat, all the spasmodic movements of a dying animal.

Pumpkin Flour.

There is about to appear on the market a new food product, pumpkin flour. It will be sold in half-pound cans or cartons.

The stuff is put up in California, being prepared from dehydrated pumpkins, ground and boiled. It is meant particularly for use in the making of pumpkin pies, and its inventor claims for it all the qualities of fresh pumpkin.

The youngest man to receive the rank of field marshal was the Duke of Connaught, who received this honor when just over fifty-two years of age. Among the paradise fish found in China, the male blows bubbles until a sticky froth floats on the surface of the water; to the under-surface of this he transfers the eggs as soon as they are laid, guarding them from destruction by his mate.

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