GHOST STORIES.

The Shadow of the Reed Pool.

From the French o. (alvite Mendes,

At the close of a rainy day in midsummer my weary horse reached the
summit of a little hill crowned by a
Jump of young pines, and through
the branches of the trees I caught my
first glimpse of the chateau of Les
Aulnes lying in the misty embrace of
the valley.

A was on my way to take possession,
as heir, of this was tomain—abandonoid by my father, for forty years, to the
indifferent care of a steward.

I urged my tired steed forward and
began to descend the slope, The incline of Lie bridle path was steep and
the horse's hoofs slipped periously on
the slimp pubbles along the way. Be
neath the heavy sky the green of the
pines looked black, and they seemed
to stand on my right and on my left
like tall, sombre sentinels who warned
me to retreat, not to advance.

Far bellow in the valloy lay the ancient chateau of Les Aulnes—a square,
gloomy pile, surrounded by a dense
forest, whose depth of darkness was
brown by swaying reeds and rushes,
even in cheather or a still pool overgrown ky swaying reeds and rushes,
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even in cheather or a still pool overgrown ky swaying reeds and rushes,
aversion, which I had always classed
among my father's many morbid
fancies, now took possession of me,
and I found myself, by some fascination, suppathizing with it more and
more as I neared my desti

violently.

But, in a place of a cheery ting-aling-ling to herald warmth and shelter
and willing service, there came two solemin, brasen notes from a deep alarm

bell.

It was already night. I stood alone in darkness and rain, weary and chilled, before the frowning gates which seemed to deny me shelter, and the mournful sound smote on my spirit like a knell tolled for the dead.

I tried to find courage to ring again, but ere I could make up my mind to endure once more the lugubrious sound I saw a light moving slowly toward me from the further end of the court-yard.

me iron ine turther end of the courtyard.

It was borne by a woman's hand.

The candle rays now fell full upon her face and figure, and I saw that she was tall and thin, enveloped rather than clothed in a garment of sad, grey stuff which looked like a soiled shroud. She glided forward with the slow, light step of a spectre. Her face was pale with the pallor of death, her mouth set and coloriess, and a mat of gray, lifeless hair lay low on her foreheats sunkes hair lay low on her foreheats.

She stared smilelessly at me through

the iron grating.
"I am Madame Chartier," she said in a voice at once hallow and harsh like the notee of the slarm bell; "wel-come to your home, monsieur." She thrust an immense key into the rusty look, which turned, after a shricking protect, and opened the

heavy gates just far enough to admit me. This then must be the wife of the old stoward. "I thank you, Madame Chartier," I replied with an effort, "b. I arrive in bad weather."

in bad weather."

"Bad weather, in truth, monsieur."

She led the way toward a little house at the extreme end of the courtyard. The wet grass swept my knees.

"And my horse, madame," I asked as we walked to the house, "who will attend to his needs?"

"I, myself, monsieur, but later."

"You have no servants here to resist you?"

sist you?"
"No, monsieur, of that there is no

need."
"Who then cares for the chateau and the land?" and the land?"
The woman slowly turned her head toward me and gave me a long, curious look.
Then she said wonderingly,
"Land? There is no land here!"
I shuttered

Then she said wonderingly,

" Land? There is no land here!"

I shuttered.

We now entered a room on the
ground floor of a miserable little house
—a room small and ill-smellhig, at
once hot and damp, and badly lighted
by a meagre peat fire. And this was
the room in which I, the owner of the
chateau of Lee Aulnes, was to be received!

Evidently the household beasted but
the one lamp. By its light I now observed a bent figure crushing near the
fire. This was my steward.

Malame Chartier advanced toward
her husband and, shaking him by the
shoulder, said roughly:

"Chartier! Get up! Here is the
new master."

The crouching figure reared itself
uncertainly. I saw another gray and
ghastly face—with the same hollow
eyes and sunken cheeks and a vague,
bloodless line of lips which parted to
give me greeting.

"Welcome to your home, monsieur."

"Velcome was sieur."
I sank into a chair offered me by aladane Chartier, who immediately left the room, taking the lamp with

Afadamo Chartier, who immediately left the room, taking the lamp with her.

"Draw nearer the fire, monsieur," said my steward, "and warm yourself, lest you be ill,"

I obeyed mechanically, although I had never been ill in my life and dreaded nothing beyond the temporary discomfort of my thorough drenching.

I sat at one side of this dismal hearth and stared at the ghoulish figure crouching at the other. The pale firelight threw strange shadows beneath the haggard eyes and lent a strange color to the colorless cheeks. The silence became intolerable.

"Well, Monsieur Chartier," I said at last, with elaborate cheerfulness. "are you contented here in this old place of mine? May I hope that my lans will not change yours and that I may see you here filling your duties for some time to come?

The man raised his lifeless eyes.

"You will not see me here for long," he replied shortly.

"How so?" I asked with affected regret. "You do not think of leaving Les Aulnes?"

"I, monsieur? I shall never leave this place. Yor will soon go from here!"

"You will soon go from here!" said a hollow voice, like an echo, in

here!"

"You will soon go from here!"
said a hollow voice, like an echo, in my ear.

I turned my head swiftly. Madame Chartier stood behind me. Her strange eyes seemed to menace me.

"My faith!" I ejaculated, mentally, what an uncivl pair! Perhaps, my good people, the conditions may be reversed—you may go and I may stay!" for I had come to Les Atlnes with the determination of restoring the chateau and taking up my residence for a part of the year in the long-deserted halls of my fathers.

Madame Chartier drew an oblong table out from the side of the chimney and began laying it with dishes in silence. She made one or two mys terious pilgrimages into dark corners and then announced in her hollow voice: "Dinner is served."

We seated ourselves at the table in silence. I observed that covers were laid for four persons.

"You expect some one?" I saked.

"Yes, monsieur," said the steward without raising his eyes, "we expect our daughter."

"Ah! You have a daughter?" I oried somewhat gayly. If they had a daughter she must at least be young and the young are not often silent and sad; her face at pleast might brighten this dull place. But the harsh voice of Madame Chartier interrupted and dispelled this pleasant train of thought.

"We have no daughter."

I shivered from head to foot. What singular people!

The dinner was not plentiful, but the assidies my

"We have no daughter."

I shivered from head to foot. What singular people!

The dinner was not plentiful, but it was sufficient for me, since my loct and his wife ate absolutely nother and the sufficient for me, since my loct and his wife ate absolutely nother and the sufficient for me, since my loct and his wife ate absolutely nother harder and the sufficient for me, and the fourth cover remained undisturbed. I asked Monsieur Charter, was the swamps."

"The pallid, greenish faces of the swamps."

"Wes, monsieur, they have the feverall of them. But they suffer least how we, here in the chateau, because they are not so near the swamp."

"Yes, monsieur, they have the feverall of them. But they suffer least they are not so near the swamp."

"Ah, indeed!" I replied shivering again. I have always had a particular

Madame Chartler withdrew to prepare my sleeping apartment; not in the chateau, which long years of neglect had rendered almost uninhabitable, but on the first floor of this house in which they lived. Again I seated myself by the miserable fire and the old steward slipped back into the chair opposite mine. After his wife's departure he leaned forward and said with a sort of pathetic humility.

and that the chair opposite mine. After his wife's departure he leaned forward and said with a sort of pathetic humility.

"Mousieur, you must forgive us this prace! The fover takes our ittle ones while they are yet in the cradle and looses its hold on the men who have spent their wretched lives struggling against it only in the grave, yard. It is the deadly fever of the swamps which poisons the air we breathe and the food we sat. We are born here and live here only to die of it. That is enough to make the heart ad— is it not, monsieur? And we—we are sadder than the others because we have lost Madeleine."

"Your daughter is dead, Monsieur Chartie?" I saked with unfeigned sympathy.
"God alone knows monsieur" said

"Your daughter is dead, Monsieur Chartier?" I asked with unfeigned sympathy.
"God alone knows, monsieur," said the old man, wringing his hands wildly. "For ourselves, we know not what has become of her! Look you, monsieur! Our little Madlelien was sad—very sad and ill. She was as we are. But the birds sing even when they suffer, and Madeleine sang here. I hoped she would resist the plague, and I said often to myself: 'A little while, God willing, and the child shall be taken to live in a town.' For to have seen the roses bloom in her cheeks we would have given our lives—my poor wife and I.
"But she grow pale and yet paler, and she went too often to sit by the water. She loved it, this water—I know not why — this water which is the curse of us all! Often, when the dinner hour cance, we would find her sitting there, in the wet grass—on the very brink of the pool. And she told me ence that the wind among the "Fancy, monsieur, an idea like that!

"We scolded her, but of what use

"Fancy, monsieur, an idea like that!

"We scolded her, but of what use to scold? For, after all, she had no distraction, the dear, little one! In other, happier countries where the warm sun shines and the sweet winds blow, the children of the poor may gather flowers and hunt for birds; nests; they can, sometimes, catch the swift squirrels or the pretty wooddoves and teach them to understand what one says to them and to love like human things. Have I not seen juic tures of all this in the market places?

"But here, we have no flowers but the pale water-lillies of the pools. The birds would fear to nest in these low, black, slime-covered trees, and we have no doves, only sometimes a raven comes. The hearts of children ory out for something and my poor child loved the black water of the Reed Pool, monsieur, because there was nothing else. Sometimes at night we heard the windows of her

child loved the black water of the Reed Pool, monsieur, because there was nothing else. Sometimes at night we heard the windows of her bed-chamber softly opened—it is the room over this, where you will sleep

to-night.
"'Go thou to sleep, Madeleine,' I
would ory, 'dost thou not fear the
night air from the swamp?'
"'No, I have no fear,' she would
answer.

"No, I have no fear, she would answer.
"Or again—' Madeleine, what dost thou see in the darkness of the night?"
"One star in the sky,' she would say, ' and one on the breast of the Reed Pool!

say, 'and one on the breast of the Reed Pool!'

"Now fauly, monsieur, an idea like that!

"But there came a morning, when Madeleine could not be found by the Reed Pool nor in her little bed-chamber. The bed was smooth and the Pillows were untouched by her pretty head. The mother went through the village like one distructed, but no one had seen Madeleine. We waited through that day, and through the next and the next—and, monsieur, I—I wait still, but the mother has no longer hope.

through that day, and monsieur, I —I wait still, but the mother has no longer hope.

"Since them a whole month has passed, and you may pardon us, monsieur, that we are sad."

Monsieur Chartier covered his face with his hands.

This then was the explanation of their seeming churlishness. I reproached myself for my hasty conclusions, and with sincerest sympathy pressed the hands of my poor steward and bade him good night.

The room in which I was to sleep was a box of a place, the walls covered with a mouldy paper, a little iron bed in one corner, and two chairs, stiffly placed, one at each side of a walnut armoire. The portrait of a young girl, Madeleine, without doubt, hung opposite the single window, and that was all.

I retired immediately but I slept not.

The steward's story had indelibly impressed me with a certain amount of his own sadness and predisposed my mind to heavy thoughts. Then I felt all my absurd dread of fevers stealing over me, I rose and closed the window. Finally I slept, how long I do not know, but I awakened with a start.

"What is it!" I cried. "Who calls?"

I was oppressed by a sense, not of the had a same threat

with a state.

"What is it!" I cried.

calls?"

I was oppressed by a sense, not of
absolute danger, but of some threat
ened misfortune, and I could have
sworn that I was not alone. The
lamp still burned on the table. I
covered the tiny apartment with one

swift glauce. I was alone, undoubtedly; no one had spoken my name or disturbed my slumber.

I was alone—with the portrait. From my bed, where I realized I should sleep no more that night, I gazed long at this portrait. It was that of a young girl, delicately formed, singularly pale, and roosed entirely in white. The pose of the slight body expressed great languor, but the eyes seen I to burn with an ardent light and, unlike the eyes of most portraits, which meet those of the beholder, were t_ned from mine and gazed intently, even eagerly, in the direction of the window.

Before going to bed I had not observed this peculiarly live expression in the eyes of this inanimate face.

As one will, involuntarily, follow the interested glance of some person near, I turned my eyes in the direction taken by those of the portrait. The casement was cuttainless and my bed was so near the window that without moving or turning my head I could see through the glass the formless shadows of the forest and a single star which burned in the darkness of the night.

When I looked again at the picture of Madeleine I noticed the oyes seemed more exper and alive than before, This, however, was explained by the fact that, having gazed into the darkness for a moment, all objects in the lighted room would seem more vivid by comparison.

But what I could not explain so easily was an abourd impulse to rise,

ness for a moment of the property of the prope

the complete darkness of the little room.

Something light aul swift and passing outward, fanned my cheek, Some winged thing of the night, I thought—and I leaned far out of the window. The shadows were profound. The sky was low and black. The immense trees seemed to detach themselves from the surrounding darkness and stand out black even against blackness. In a rift of the clouds above them gleamed a single star, and here and there beneath their shadows I saw a restless, steely light.

The Reed Pool! I remembered that Madeleine had gazed from this little window to gaze on this water as I gazed now. Yes! There was the star on its breast—a single point of warmer light.

I know not why but I trembled and

I cazed now. Yes! There was the star on its breast—a single point of warmer light.

I know not why, but I trembled and grew cold as I looked from her little window on the sky with its one star, the trees, and the pool.

Btrange, still, death-giving water! It slept yet it lived. I divined the ceaseless agitation looked in its bosom as betrayed by the incessant oscillation of its reeded surface. What dark dreams possessed, what visions tormented it beneath the green manule time had thrown half across its face? Hark to the moaning of the wind among the rushes on its banks! What strange things had they whispered to Madeleine to turn her heart from those to whom sine was dear? The moon looked coldly out from a black mass of clouds and I saw the closed hiles trembling far out on the black pool.

What evil fascination lay in its marshy depths? My soul found its darkest shadow

closed hiles trembling far out on the black pool.
What evil fascination lay in its marshy depths?
My soul found its darkest shadow reflected in this black mirror into which I gazed as though bound by some spell, indefinable as irresistible. And now by the bank nearest me, where the rushes grew rank with the dash bending to every breath of the night wind, something seemed to gather shape and form beneath my straining syes.

The moon showed her face fitfully between the clouds' thick curtains, but there, there by those gnarled and twisted trees whose shadow lay heavily over the rushes, I could distinguish something which was not shadow. But what it was I could not tell.
Was it the spectre of the pool?
Had the tormented spirit freed itself from its marshy fastness to lie cradled among the swaying reeds?
What was this huge body and enormous head, these terrible, twisting arms that reached out as if to tear me from the window and drag me down from the unknown horror of their embrace?
I tried to close my eyes and shut out the terrible vision! It held my gaze through some mysterious power stronger than my will.
And yet over all my fear I was consious of a sense of especiancy. My very atitiude, as I leaned forward with my fascunated gase fixed upon the shadow oradled upon the pool, was one of breathless attention.
And now something rapid, furtive, white, and seemingly windblown,

my fascinated appears as a shadow orasided upon the pool, was one of breathless attention.

And now something rapid, furtive, white, and seemingly wind-blown, moved between me and the spall of the shadow, and I knew my expectation would be realized.

An instant, and the woman—or her spectre—paused, turned and faced my window. A pale ray shot from the

moon and rested on the paler face. I recognized it—the face of the portrait—the face of Madelenn!
There was time but for that one brief glance when the figure turned and hurried on toward the pool.
The wind must have changed, for the rushes, which had swayed over toward my casement, now bent their restless heals to meet her with swift feet, and toward her the swifu nameless shadow stretched its writhing arms.
Madeleine paused again, hesitated, trembled as if seized by violent emotion.

tion.

Now she swayed foreward as if to clasp the hideous spectre which beck-oned her on. ned her on.

Now she shrank back as if terror-

Now she shrank back as it introstricken.

But auddenly she started rapidly forward and pursued her course without further hesitation until she was but a fine, fleeting streak of white beneath the black shadows of the distorted trees, and I knew she must stand where the earth slipped loosely into the water.

On the very brink she stood white and still.

the water.

On the very brink she stood white and still.

God! What would she do?

The moon drew the clouds across her face. A single star burned in the sky and a single star burned in the sky and a single star burned in the surface of the pool.

The rushes swayed in the night winds.

And I did not dream! What I speak, I saw.

The girl's figure stood immobile, white against the night. Once only she turned with outstretched hands toward her home and a great hope filled her heart that she would return. But a dark wave swepted over the tufted rushes, the shadow rolled its huge head and raised its arms in menace, and then—

Then she put out her young arms to meet it, and all in her white garments, like the garments of a bride or one dead, she slipped into i.s hideous embrace.

I saw the water rise to her slender hips and then to her white bosom, and

embrace.

I saw the water rise to her slender hips and then to her white bosom, and then to her white face.

I saw the rushes quiver and the pale star tremble.

then to her white, white faco.

I saw the rushes quiver and the pale star tremble.

I saw the thing shudder convulsively and its frightful head roll from side to side and its huge body lash the shores of the pool. Then its writing arms uplitted and enfelded her, and the pale star died on the black breast of the pool and night unfurled her shadowless mysteries.

I fell, cold and shaking, to the chamber floor.

Oh horrible death! To drown in that dark and noisome water! To feel the dank [rushes sweep one's cheek and lie against the theat! To drown one's feet and the bending reeds alip from one's hopeless hands.

Oh God! was that a arr?

No. no! Who could cry out when the black water filled the mouth and stole away the breath!

To drown-to die-without a single cry!

Oh, horrible! horrible!

To drown—to die—without a single cty!
Oh, horrible! horrible!
At last I found strength to rise and light my lamp. I turned a fearful glance toward the portrait of Made-leine. Then I fell, senseless, on the hod.

glance toward the potrait of Madeleine. Then I fell, senseless, on the bed.

I had seen that in place of the eager, ardent living-beyond gaze directed toward the window, the eyes in the portrait were now east down.

Morning came. I avoided the window and the portrait. I went to the table silent and distressed. Not a word was spoken until the end of the sombre meal. Then Monsieur Chatter asked me at what hour I would like to go over the estate.

"Immediately," I responded, "as I intend leaving Les Aulnes as early as possible to-day."

The manner in which my steward and his wife received this abrupt statement betrayed no surprise. As we passed out of the court, I observed a huge ruin at the other side of the Reed Pool.

"What is that?" I asked Chatter. "All that romains of the old chapel, monsiour. It is both dangerous and unsightly, but your father would not have it torn down because of a fine old window which still stands in the wall nearest the Chateau. One can see it easily from here, because of the light behind it from the holes in the roof. It is one of the holy Apostles with the arms raised in supplication to God."

I followed the direction of Monsieur Chartier's finger and the remainder of

win the arias raised in supplication to God."

I followed the direction of Monsieur Chartier's finger and the remainder of his words came to me as though I had neard them in a dream—

"At night when the moon rises behind the ruin, the reflection of the saint's figure is thrown across the Reed Pool. God forgive us, monsieur, but it is indeed an awful, a terrible thing to see!"

I drew a deep breath of rellef, and yet the weight was not litted from my spirit.

spirit.

A large piece of linen fluttered over the grass, and brushed against one of my knees.

"The poor mother grave forget."

"The poor mother grows forgetful," said Chartier. "We shall lose
our linen."
And the white figure—light andswift lwhy not a piece of linen
blown by the wind?
When one nervous—
But the face?
Ah the face! I knew it was the
face of the portrait—the face of the
mysterious Medelaine.

That night I left for Paris.

That night I left for Paris.

Three years passed. I sold Les Aulnes to an Industrial Society which purposed draining the marshes through out the whole unhealthy district of—

I spent some months in travel, and gradually the haunting memory of that night of horrors epont on the old es' to ceased to pursue me through stepless hours. One morning at Paris I picked up a daily paper and chanced upon a paragraph relating to the work of drainage at Les Aulnes. The country was graphically described, and before my eyes rose those pallid faces against the background of hideous green, the sombre shadows of the twisted trees, the mystery of the Reed Pool. I read on: "Among the many pools on the estate proper is one which has long been famous in the superstition of the country. It is said that each night a horrid spectre of huge proportions hes cradled among the reads on its surface. Persons of intelligence accounted for the apparition as the shadow of a saint's figure carried where the moon can no longer play tricks behind it, the hideous shadow still lay by night on the surface on the pool. The mysterious marsh has now been made to yield its spectre to the society which has undertaken the drainage of the country, but the discovery of a skeleton deeply imbedded in the black mud where the rushes grew thickest along the margin of the pool, has not lessened the popular superstition. Examination proved the skeleton to be that of a young woman, and appearances indicated that it had lain about three years in this strange grave."

The paper fell from my hands.

Madeleine I

grave."
The paper fell from my hands.
Madeleine!

Great God!

It was she—the poor little one!
And I had been powerless to stretch
out a hand to save her—I, who had
watched her go down to her awful
doath

out a hand to save hor—i, who have watched her go down to her awful death,
Wait! What was this?
These broken words—this pathetic voice—this sad old face? The father of Madeleine—M. Chartier—and I seemed to hear him saying. "That was a month ago, monsieur, and you may forgive us that we are sad."
I closed my eyes, shuddering.
I had then seen not one spectre, but two, on that memorable night in the chateau!
The grid was dead when I reached Les Aulnes!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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