

The Ghost of Lochrain Castle

OR THE UNDERGROUND SYNDICATE.

BY MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON.

Author of "The Lightning Conductor," "Princess Passes," Etc.

She did not expect to sleep, but fatigue overcame her, and from puzzling over the mystery in waking thoughts, she began heavily striving to decipher it in a tangled maze of dreams. As before, she slept until broad daylight, but it was earlier than on the previous day, and when she awoke, she thought that she would have time before the coming of the servant with breakfast to venture on some explorations. But they were even more brief than she expected, for as she had supposed there was no way of mounting higher than her own room. The stone staircase that had once wound on above, had been built up with brick, which formed a solid wall. On the floor below, the door of the room under hers was not locked, and a glance showed that there was no mystery there. The wainscoting had been pared long ago by some person of bad taste, and not being renewed evidently for many years, it had fallen into bad repair. A few pieces of old furniture and some empty packing boxes and rolls of carpeting were the sole contents of the room, and all were plainly visible in the bleak light which streamed through the two uncurtained windows. From the room on the ground floor, came sounds of hammering, and Elspeth guessed that the carpenter, who, according to the housekeeper, had his quarters there, was already at work. It was more than improbable that there should be any visible means of communication with the upper floors, in a room used as a carpenter shop, and if there were a secret one, it would not be possible for her to seek it while the carpenter was at work. Altogether, the girl's exploring expedition did not last ten minutes, and she gleaned nothing from it, save one thought, which struck her as somewhat significant. Why, she asked herself, had this one—the one she occupied—been kept in repair, while the others had been

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with the fascinating roll of the "r." "You must tell me about yourself," I would rather hear you talk than write more letters."

Elspeth demurred at first on the plea of wasting time, but the countess laughed, and said she found it more amusing to waste time than to do more other things, that was what time was for to be wasted by nice people, such as they both were. So the girl was drawn into talk about herself, as she had been by John Kenrith, though in a very different way, and at last was led on, before she quite knew what she was doing, to discuss the people she had met in the hotel.

The countess was enthusiastic in praise of Lady Hilary Lambert, but did not like the mother, and Elspeth was only just prudent enough to exclaim, "Neither do I!" However, her face must have been expressive, for the countess said: "Ah, I see you agree with my opinion, though you are too wise to say so in words. You are only a young girl, quite a child, yet I see you have a remarkable insight into human nature. It is a great gift. What a pity men have not got where women are concerned! And the nicer the man's mind, the less he seems to know of women. There's good Mr. Kenrith, for instance, I have not ever met him yet, but I have eyes, and already I see that Lady Lambert intends to marry him."

"I hope she won't!" exclaimed Elspeth, lured out of her prudence.

"So do I, for his sake, though I do not know him. They say she is horrible poor, and in debt. It is her mother who is the real villain. He is sort of man, at all. Cannot you as it seems you are helping him in some important work—find a way of warning him against such a schemer?"

"I don't see how I possibly could," said Elspeth.

"It is a pity. But perhaps you are too young to undertake such a diplomatic mission. By and by I shall know him, perhaps, and then I shall try to do it so cleverly that he will not even know it has been done. Only, unfortunately, I fear he has been in some manner looking for you. He looks at me with cold eyes, which do not seem to see me at all, and I am not quite used to that."

"I should think not," Elspeth replied.

"Do you care, speak kindly of me to the gentleman. I fancy your mother would like to know if he would have weight with a man like Mr. Kenrith. Perhaps he thinks I grudge him the blue diamond which was once in my dead husband's family, but I don't. I am glad for him to have it, for I believe he is a good man. But I should like to know if he has the diamond as he is so beautiful as those who have seen it. It is such a strange mischance that I never have. If he shows it to you, you will describe it to me afterwards, won't you?"

"Of course I will," answered Elspeth.

"What a dear child you are!" cried the countess, patting her hand, and giving her a charming smile, with dark eyes alight. Still, Elspeth asked herself afterwards if she had said anything which might give the impression that she knew of Kenrith's having brought the diamond to Lochrain with him. She remembered how Lady Lambert had exclaimed against his imprudence in mentioning it before a stranger, therefore she supposed the presence of the jewel in the house would not be spoken about. However, on reflection she decided that she had committed no imprudence; and as Countess Radepolski was a rich woman, with many remarkable jewels of her own, her interest in Mr. Kenrith's blue diamond could not possibly be a dangerous one.

The following day, as it happened, the subject of the diamond was brought up, and the girl had an opportunity of keeping her promise to the countess, if she would.

[To Be Continued.]

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I could hardly drag myself across the floor. I could not sweep the carpet. If I went for a drive I had to tie down when I came back. If I went for a mile or two on my wheel I was too weak to lift it through the gateway, and last time I came in from having a spin I dropped utterly helpless from fatigue. My father would give me no peace until I procured Psychine, knowing it was excellent for decline or weakness. I must say the results are wonderful, and people remarked my improvement. Instead of a little, pale, hollow-cheeked, listless, melancholy girl, I am today full of life, ready for a sleigh ride, a skating match, or an evening party with anyone, and a few months ago I could not struggle to church, 40 rods from my home. I have never had the slightest cause to fear any return of the disease.

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SAGE'S NEPHEW AND HIS \$50,000

One of the Legacies at Least Is Producing Comfort.

NEARLY ALL SPENT ALREADY

But It Has Been Put Into Land—From Poverty to Comparative Affluence.

Chicago, Feb. 4.—Elizur Sage, one of the nephews of the late Russell Sage, has just come into the possession of \$50,000 left him by his multimillionaire uncle. To Elizur \$50,000 is great wealth. He has spent his life as a poor tenant farmer, giving half his crop to a grasping landlord and trying to make ends meet on the other half.

Elizur Sage is buying land with his money. He lives across the line in Jasper County, Indiana, two hours' ride from Chicago. Having been a tenant farmer, he is not going to overlook a chance to become a landlord and take half the other fellow's crop. Nobody ever knew a tenant farmer, suddenly grown rich, even to buy a new hat unless he paid for his first farm. If all the Sage money is spent as thriftily and wisely as the share of Elizur is being spent, there will be no worry upon the part of Uncle Russell's economical spirit.

Elizur was poor. He does not deny it, for the reason that he also is thrifty. His was that miserable poverty that settles over its victims like a black cloud, darkening their present lives and obscuring their promises of a future. If the world owes every man a living, he has seen many days when he wished the obligation could be canceled with a little more regularity. His outlook on more than one occasion has been as dreary as an Indiana swamp, and it wasn't much brighter than that just before the check came.

"Fifty thousand dollars," mused Elizur. "That sure is a pile of money."

"Ain't it, though?" put in his wife, who stood watching him as he twirled the check in his fingers.

"Much as the President gets in a whole year," added his daughter Esther, who now has the real piano of her girlhood dreams.

"Put us on Easy street," chuckled Russell, the son, who was named after his illustrious uncle.

And put them on Easy street it did. No more grindstones for Elizur Sage's nose. No more drudgery for Elizur Sage's wife. No more poverty and hardship for Elizur Sage's children.

First Thing Was to Buy a Farm. Elizur has bought a farm. In fact he has bought three farms and is thinking of buying another one. These farms are not Indiana truck patches; they are quarter-sections of good rolling prairie. For one of them the newly-rich Russell, who has the former Wall street king paid \$17,000. For another he paid \$15,000 and for the third, which is rougher than the others, he let go of \$6,000. With the \$12,000 yet remaining of the pitance from Russell Sage's pile that made him a rich man Elizur intends to buy still another farm.

By the time he gets this done he figures the rent will begin to arrive in sufficient volume to keep him and his family in comfort the rest of their days. In the meantime he sits in the kitchen of one of the best homes in Russell, which he has rented temporarily, and smokes his corn-cob pipe and he listens to the propositions of those who are anxious to assist him in the management of his fortune.

Became Famous Years Ago. Elizur Sage first gained notoriety a few years ago when he borrowed \$50 from his millionaire uncle and put up a first-class outfit to secure a loan. Elizur was living in the little town of Channahon, Ill., at that time, and had managed by dint of hard work and close management to save enough to build a house on some ground that had been given him by his father. The new house was almost completed when Elizur and his wife discovered that \$20 would be needed to buy some trimmings that were to be installed before it could be used as a home. To get this money Elizur wrote to his uncle.

In a week a reply, with a check, was received, and out of that little transaction, by which his relative was enabled to finish his house, there grew an incident that did much to make Russell Sage one of the most ridiculed men of his time. This was nothing less than the knowledge that to secure the million-dollar mortgage, he gave a mortgage on his newly-built house. The money was borrowed for a period of three months, and all of that time Russell Sage's nephew paid interest at the regular Wall street rate of 6 per cent. When this evidence of the money shark's penuriousness became known, a flood of denunciation was directed against him from all over the country. Newspapers sent correspondents to Channahon to verify the story, and there was hardly a publication or minister of prominence in the land by whom the act was not denounced as one unworthy of Shakespeare's Jew.

Asked to Pose as a Freak. As a sequel to the advertising he received as a result of the negotiations with his uncle on that occasion, Elizur and his family were tendered several opportunities to exhibit themselves with theatrical companies and in museums. All of these offers were declined, however, as Elizur figured it was not his cue to jar the wealthy one's sense of the fitness of things by any such indiscreet conduct as was suggested by the eager theatrical and museum promoters.

This Sage heir has discovered since his uncle died that the courthouse square needs some flower beds, and that Rensselaer is without a public drinking fountain, and that this church needs a new pulpit, and that one needs new stained glass windows. Elizur said he had all the money his uncle ever saw or signed for he could

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spend it all in Rensselaer in twenty-four hours.

"I pay no attention to them," said Elizur. "I've got myself to look out for, and that keeps me busy. Just because a man gets a little money I don't see why everybody should be chasing after him or why that makes him any different from anybody else. I would be a fool and also poor again if I took up with all these propositions and that's the reason they don't have any effect on me."

BI-PARTISAN NEWSPAPER

Published in Switzerland—Each Half Vituperates the Other.

London, Feb. 4.—Gruningen, a locality of 1,200 inhabitants in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, boasts of a single newspaper which, although it serves both political parties, at the same time performs its functions to general satisfaction. The Wochenblatt gives pages 1 and 2 to the Conservative Liberals and pages 3 and 4 are the domain of the Socialists.

The two parties stand on a footing of avowed hostility and pelt each other with the strongest terms of abuse. Pages 3 and 4 are filled with arguments refuting statement made on pages 1 and 2, and vice versa.

As for the conductor of the paper, M. Wirz, he soars serenely above parties and only asks to see the number of his subscribers increased.

RUSSIAN TORTURE CELLS

Cruel Treatment of Revolutionaries by Czar's Secret Police.

Berlin, Feb. 4.—Horrible tortures are inflicted by Russian officials on prisoners in Riga jail, according to a harrowing story which is published here. The writer, a Russian political prisoner, gives the names of 16 persons who have been tortured. There is a special torture chamber, he says, where these horrors take place every night except Sundays in the presence of police officers and spies. Sometimes high officials and local nobles attend the modern inquisition. Baron Raden and Baron Rekke are named as having countenanced the torture system.

The object of the inquisition is to extract from prisoners the names of their friends and "accomplices." The victim is brought nude into the torture chamber, and if he refuses to give the names required of him he is stretched on a rack and flogged with a rubber stick. Hundreds of blows are sometimes given, and often salt is applied to the wounds.

Made unconscious under this treatment, the prisoner is then revived and the names again demanded of him. If he still refuses the second series of tortures begins.

His nails and his hair are torn out and his hands and feet pierced with long pins.

A third refusal is followed by the tearing of pieces of flesh from the victim's body and knocking his teeth out and indescribable cruelties.

A young prisoner named Gruning, says the writer, went through the whole series of tortures, which lasted three weeks. Having obstinately withstood the inquisition throughout, Gruning was at last court-martialed and shot. His face had been horribly mutilated, his beard had been plucked out and his hair turned gray by suffering. The torturers had also broken his spine and several ribs.

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