

# 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 Baxter, a prosperous attorney in his London apartments. After their departure late at night Renton returns to the house, 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 Dartigny, of the Chateau Chauville. The chest has been handed down from one generation of Baxter's to another and carefully guarded in 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 Franco to make some needful 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 granddaughter to England, where the chest and document were given to the Baxter family for safe keeping. Now, more than one hundred years later, Hubert Baxter's body is found, but the police find no clue. Meanwhile, Renton changes his name to Baptiste Dartin, and visits Canada; then he presents his fictitious claims to Robert Baxter, new head of the firm, and receives the treasure chest. Robert calls on Stella Benham whose heart is set on making a great success on the stage. She tells him he must wait 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 Baxter a quiet knock 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. In the meantime Eddie Haverton has become the manager of Stella Benham's theatrical troupe and motors to Barchester to see her.

CHAPTER XIII.

**Blackmail.**  
 The long, straggling High street of the cathedral town of Barchester lay solemn in a Sabbath calm. The Barchesters, for the most part, were within doors, but a few who put devotion before digestion were hurrying off in answer to the call of the bell in the gray cathedral tower to afternoon service. At one of the bow-windows of the Angel Hotel, and with the debris of an excellent luncheon before them, Eddie Haverton sat with the manager of the little Theatre Royal, whose decorative facade of red brick was visible a little way up the High street.

The spin out from London had given Eddie an envious appetite, and as he sat there, gazing through the smoke of his cigar over the roofs and spires of the beautiful old town to their background of shadow-stained downs, he felt that the world was a very desirable place—to those who were appreciative and who had the wit to find out its soft places.

He emptied what remained of his liqueur into his cup of black coffee and looked across at the clean-shaven face of the manager.

"So Miss Becham has not gone on to Maystone?"

"No; she and Wally Burns and two of the others are out at Adderbury Hall—oh, of course," and Reggie Danson laughed, "you don't know the good thing."

Haverton looked puzzled. "The good thing?" he queried.

"That's what we call him at the theatre. Pats and pots of money, and a patron of the arts as portrayed at the Theatre Royal, Barchester. He has a lovely place about two miles out on the London road, and he looks in at the show twice or three times a week. Most towns have a man like him, else I don't know what some of the actors would do for beer."

"What then, call a 'dog'—eh?"

"No, Mr. Haverton, that's just it. Mr. Dartin's no 'dog.' He just likes to be around with the crowd, and doesn't mind paying for the privilege. I imagine he came into his money suddenly and had some sort of an idea that the county would take him up. Lord! he didn't know the Barchester crowd. They won't look at him, and, as he likes company, he finds it at the theatre."

"What's on to-day, then—garden party?"

Reggie Danson laughed. "That's the sort of thing—lobster

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house. The party rose to their feet with murmured sympathy, but he waved them aside. They watched him enter through the French windows into the dining-room.

Once inside the house Dartin showed little sign of illness in his movements. He gazed rapidly round the room, his brain working shrewdly. On side-table a photograph of himself, taken a year previously, stood in a silver frame. Vivian whipped it up and hid it away beneath his coat. Then he hurriedly mixed and drank a brandy-and-soda.

As he put the glass down the distant sound of a hooter came to him from the direction of the road. Another hurried look around the room, then the man leaped upstairs to his bedroom, from behind the curtains of which he watched the arrival of the newcomer.

And Mr. Eddie Haverton, when he joined the members of his company on the lawn, expressed his regrets that Mr. Dartin, who, as Wally had told him, had done them so remarkably well, was not there to meet him.

"I receive his thanks. Then, with a little sigh, he sank into a chair beside that of Miss Stella Benham.

"It was some months since he had set eyes on the girl, and he could not but admit to himself that there was a difference in her. He could not say that she had actually lost any of her beauty; there was nothing that would not be quickly remedied by a holiday and happiness.

"It was a different life from the one she had imagined. The little flat shared with her mother—the dainty little mother who had found it beyond her strength to tour with her daughter, whom she now saw at such long intervals—compared disastrously with the dingy lodgings changed each week. The men she was thrown into touch with, too—decent enough fellows, good-hearted to a fault—were so different to Robert Baxterer, whose serious gray eyes and clear-cut face were seldom absent from Stella's thoughts. Small wonder that the emptiness of her life and anxiety over her own suggested year of probation were reflected in the girl's looks.

"I'm afraid, Miss Benham, that the rest of the tour will be dull after all this. Your best does things uncommonly well!"—Eddie stopped suddenly and sniffed the air; then he turned to Burris: "Where did you get that cigar?" he asked.

The little comedian looked surprised at the abruptness of the question.

"Why, Mr. Haverton, it's one of Mr. Dartin's. There's a box inside—shall I—"

"No, no, Wally, thanks; it reminded me of a man I knew on a who smoked them—La Remabas, I think the name of the brand was; they—"

Eddie Haverton broke off and sat gazing across the stream into the freshness of the woods on the opposite bank. Barker came over the grass carrying a dainty tea-table. He was sorry to say that his master was not much better. If he would excuse him he would not resign them. A little sleep in a darkened room with entire quiet was all that was needed. No, there was no necessity to send for a doctor; his master was used to these attacks. Mr. Dartin hoped that his guests would make themselves quite at home—really, there was nothing to worry about.

As the man rolled off his message Eddie watched him narrowly. Into his eyes came a curious look. "It was strange that the illness of Mr. Dartin should synchronize so with his arrival. The cigar, too—he didn't remember having seen one of the little-used brand since—Eddie turned suddenly on Stella.

"I suppose you didn't have prawns in aspic for lunch—eh, Miss Benham?" he asked abruptly.

The girl gave a little laugh.

"Why, Mr. Haverton, you're quite a detective. Yes, we did have prawns in aspic, but it can't be that which upset Mr. Dartin; we all had some."

"No, it's not that; I didn't mean it in that way—I—I was thinking of something else. I say, you people," he turned to the others, "it's hardly the thing to impose on Mr. Dartin's hospitality. If you like I'll tell my chauffeur to run you round to Ellingham; it's a lovely drive. The road cuts through the downs. I'm going to walk back; there are a few ideas I want to work out—besides, I don't get half enough exercise. Wally, come up to the house to find Barker, and send our farewells up to Mr. Dartin."

He took the little comedian by the arm and set off across the lawn. When he spoke it was in a whisper.

"Tell me, Wally, what kind of a man is this Mr. Dartin, talk-sir?"

"Oh, it's hard to—wait, there's a photo of him in the dining-room, here, through these windows—nice room, what!—well that's funny!"

Haverton had advanced into the room. He wheeled round on Wally.

"What is it?"

"Why, the photo. It was here at lunch, on this little table—I saw it—"

Eddie thought for a moment. He was smiling.

"Do I understand you, Wally, that Mr. Dartin's photograph was here at lunch and has been removed since?"

"Absolutely."

"Well, never mind. Come, they'll be waiting for us," and the two men hurried after the rest of the party, who, having made a hasty tea, were gathered round the car, which stood near the gates.

(To be continued.)

## Woman's Interests.

**To Make Ice Cream.**

To be successful in making ice cream, remember that liquids should have cooled off before being placed in the can and that the proportions of ice and salt for freezing (one part of salt to three parts of ice) should never vary. The salt water must not be drawn off until the mixture is frozen, for it is after the ice begins to melt and brine appears that freezing takes place. The ice used for freezing should be placed in a heavy bag and pounded with a wooden mallet until broken into convenient sized pieces. The handiest implement for packing the ice and salt in a freezer is a garden trowel; its curving shape fits it for the packing process.

Clean the can very carefully after using and keep it in a dry place where it will not rust. Before using the can again, scald thoroughly, no matter how carefully it was cleaned before being put away. Empty the tub, rinse and place it where it will not dry out and fall to pieces.

The best ice cream is made by scalding half the cream and dissolving the sugar while the cream is hot. When raw cream is frozen the flavoring is not so prominent, and the cream has a frozen, snowy taste and is not so smooth and velvety; but raw cream sweats in making to nearly double the original bulk, so that the cheaper creams are usually made without scalding.

Evaporated cream can be used when fresh cream is unavailable, one large-sized can equaling five cupsful of milk or cream. Plain milk can also be used and has a somewhat richer taste if the milk is converted into junket before being made into ice cream.

Vanilla ice cream, which is most generally liked, is made thus: Put a pint of cream, one-half pound of sugar and two inches of vanilla-bean, cut in small pieces, into a double boiler. Allow to boil ten minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the fire and with a blunt knife scrape into the cream the seeds and the soft part of the bean, mix thoroughly with the cream and set to cool. If the vanilla-bean is unavailable, use two table-spoonfuls of vanilla extract, added when the cream is cool. When quite cold add another pint of cream; pour into the can, put on the cover, fasten the crank and give it a turn to see that all is right. Put in a layer of ice about three inches deep, then a layer of salt an inch deep, and continue to alternate ice and salt to the top of the can; turn the crank slowly and steadily until it goes pretty hard. If properly packed it will take from twenty to twenty-five minutes to freeze.

It is not well to freeze too quickly. When the mixture is frozen remove the crank, wipe the lid, take it off carefully, so that no salt falls into the can, remove the dasher and scrape it off and with a wooden paddle or mush stick beat steadily for ten minutes to make the cream smooth. Put in the lid, place a cork in the hole where the dasher was, brush the edges of the lid with melted fat, which will harden as it chills and seal any crevice through which brine might enter. Drain off the water in the tub, repack in salt and ice, cover with paper, and then with a piece of carpet. Start away in a cool place an hour or two to harden and ripen. These directions answer for ice creams of all flavors.

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unclean. If in washing the refrigerator hot water is used, steam condenses on the walls and keeps the air moist for several days. Poor circulation of air will also produce moisture.

The easiest and most satisfactory way of keeping the refrigerator clean, is to wipe up every spot with a damp cloth as soon as anything is spilled. Once a week a thorough washing can be given, using water of average temperature, to which a little baking-soda has been added. A cloth dampened in this solution and wrung quite dry is used to wipe off the walls and shelves, which should then be dried with a soft towel. After being washed in this manner, it is left dry as well as clean.

The drain-pipe can be taken out and washed in hot soapy water with a long-handled brush. When the pipe has cooled off it can be placed back in the refrigerator.

Should the ice melt before more can be added, the food should be taken out at once or it will spoil. When more ice is added, better results are obtained if the air in the refrigerator is well cooled before the food is again placed on the shelves.

Avoid opening the refrigerator except when absolutely necessary. By making a note of the things needed for the preparation of a meal, most of the food required can be taken out of the refrigerator at the same time.

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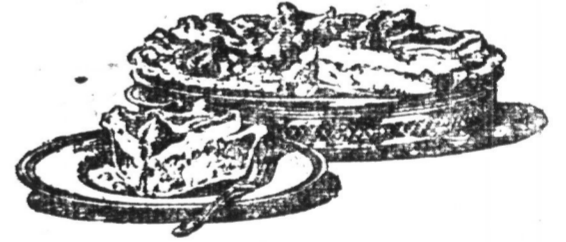
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