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 telling 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 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 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, 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 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 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 Baxente 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 seclusion 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 toilettes 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.

The sun had reached the top ridge of the western down, and was staining the sky with orange and rose and glory. The air was cool here under the trees, and perfumed with mosses, and alive with the vespers of birds and the tiny hum of insects.

For perhaps an hour the man paced up and down between the beech trunks before he noticed that a rose-colored light was shining out from the dining-room, and Eddie knew that his waiting was over. He recrossed the bridge and walked quickly over the darkening lawns. Avoiding the gravelled paths and keeping to the grass borders he approached the house.

He could make out Vivian quite clearly. He was seated at a desk looking through some papers, and the watcher by the window could see plainly from his face that he had not yet entirely recovered from his recent shock. Eddie stood for some time studying the features and figure of his late friend, then pushed open the glass door.

"Good evening, Vivian," he said quietly; "headache gone?"

The man at the desk gave one great start as he wheeled round in his chair; then in a moment his nerve returned to him. It seemed to Vivian as though he had known that he would hear the voice that now spoke to him and he felt a vague relief that suspense was to give place to action. He rose and looked steadily at the intruder.

"You—Eddie? Come right in—have something?"

He pushed the decanter and syphon across the table.

"Yes, Vivian, it's me—surprised to see me, eh?"

The man standing by the desk gave a short laugh.

"Not at all, Eddie; I have been expecting you since—er—about four o'clock. Do help yourself; it's whiskey."

Eddie mixed himself a drink and held it up in salutation.

"Not surprised, eh?" he said as he put down the glass on the table. "Perhaps you are pleased?"

"No, Eddie, I can't say I'm pleased. You see, I wanted the identity of Vivian Renton to disappear for ever—"

"And the memory of Mortimer Terrace to fade away and gradually die, eh?" interrupted Eddie.

Vivian turned on the speaker. His eyes glistened, but he was quite cool. He took a cigarette from a silver box on the desk and tapped it in the palm of his hand.

"As to that, my dear boy, I fear nothing, whether I had a hand in that affair or not doesn't affect you. You and I are in the same boat there. Of course, Eddie, I suppose it's blackmail—I remember that used to be your strong game!"

Eddie flushed at this.

"I'm living straight now, Vivian," he said; "but we are old pals and you seem to have struck it rich. I'm only moderately well off."

"Exactly, Eddie. As I said, I suppose it's blackmail! You can have what you want in moderation. I can spare it. But, understand, I admit nothing about Mortimer Terrace. I'm thinking of some of the other exploits in which I worked alone, but which you knew about. Have another drink."

Eddie, nothing loath, did as Vivian suggested. He looked as though he needed it. Things were not turning out quite as he had imagined they would. He had expected something rather more from his entrance. His keen sense of the dramatic suffered.

"I say, Vivian, I think you are putting rather a hard construction on a friendly call," he said after a little pause. "I tell you I'm going straight—have been for three years; but I'm thinking of marrying and—and I want my wife to have all she wants. I am only worth a few thousands, and I thought, for the sake of old times—"

"Oh! cut it short, Eddie. I've heard all that before—leading up to a 'loan,' eh? Wasn't it a loan we got from young Lord Derricsay in that club in Soho? No, Eddie, business is business, and matters need no mincing with me. I'm going to write you out a cheque for five hundred pounds. Every half-year I will send you a like cheque. Now, listen. If ever the identity of Vivian Renton is revived these payments cease. I don't care whether it's your doing or not—they cease."

"Really, Vivian, you're a brick. I didn't expect—" Eddie stopped as he saw that the other had drawn out his cheque-book and was writing.

"There you are, Eddie. I'll walk down with you to the town if you like. I've had rather a headache—sunstroke in China, you know," with a little laugh. "By the way, I'm sorry I'm such a poor hand at a disguise."

Eddie folded up the slip of pink paper and put it in his waistcoat pocket.

"The disguise, dear boy, is excellent. I'd have passed you in the street any day. But there's not twenty men in London who smoke 'La Rebenas' cigars— and I understand that prawns in aspic still hold their fascination over you—remember them at Scott's? Mr. Dartin, I felt rather ashamed of you this afternoon—I did really. Nerves are like some other things—they get rusty if you don't use them."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Crest.

Stella Benham held the glittering object away from the multitudinous folds of tissue paper in which it had been wrapped, and the corners of her pretty mouth drooped ever so little. From over the coffee-urn Mrs. Benham waited for information.

"It's from Robert, mummy—there's no letter, only a card 'With many happy return, from your pal, Bobby.'" The girl gave the paper a final shake. "I thought he would have been here; he's never missed before," and Stella handed the slender chain with the odd-shaped locket across the table as she spoke. Mrs. Benham took it and laid 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 bit 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-service 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 Bellenden 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—he 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, those months which had been anything but ones 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 gold-dusted with buttercups, all had had their part in the romance, 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 he, too, soon found that his life's 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 some new songs. She thought of the others who would be there—Wally Burns, with his cheap witticisms; Ada Clairton, with her violent scents; Derril, 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 Bellenden Mansions. He carried in his hand a magnificent bouquet of white roses.

"Come in, Robert. Stella's at the theatre—a rehearsal, I think she said it was. I rather think she expected you to breakfast."

Robert placed the flowers carefully upon the piano and smiled.

"Do—do 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 the window after one glance and carefully compared the devices on 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 starred 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.

(To be continued.)

Minard's Liniment for Burns, etc.

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Woman's Interests

Eliminate the Fly in Its Breeding Place.

To kill flies by "swatting" is very slow work and poor efficiency, 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 waterpipe 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 ridding 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 need be, but don't try to rid the entire house in this manner. If you spent 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 1,875,000,000,000 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 chemicals 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 teaspoonfuls 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.

Suggestings 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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Principal Honey Plants of Eastern Canada.

Alsike and white clover stand out as far the most important honey plants of Eastern Canada, noted regions for these being nearly the whole area south of and including the Ottawa River valley, the St. Lawrence River valley, the St. John River valley, certain marsh lands in Nova Scotia, and around Lake Timiskaming and Lake St. John, especially where the soil is limestone or clay. These plants have made commercial beekeeping very profitable in many places. The better part of the great clover honey belt of North America lies within the boundary of Canada.

Other important sources of nectar in Eastern Canada are buckwheat, along the north shores of lake Erie, and down the St. Lawrence River valley almost as far as the city of Quebec; basswood, in the same general region as buckwheat, but extending farther north; several species of goldenrod and aster, particularly in the Maritime Provinces; wild radish in the Annapolis valley, N.S.; sweet clover where grown for seed in southern Ontario and fireweed and wild raspberry in the north.

The best species of goldenrod for honey are Solidago rugosa (wet ground), S. squarrosa (rocky ground), S. puberula (sandy ground), and S. graminifolia, a weed in Nova Scotia.

Among honey plants of minor importance may be mentioned blueberry (throughout), milkweed, viper's bugloss and boneset (mainly in southern Ontario).

In spring, breeding in the hive is are followed by dandelions and, in the orchard districts, by fruit bloom. In the Lower Ottawa valley, if the weather is showery and then warm about the last week in May, dandelion yields nectar heavily. In the Annapolis valley fine weather also brings supplies from apple blossom.

During a recent night, fifty men and sixteen women were found sheltering under arches or wandering homeless in London streets; a similar census in 1914 showed 296 men and seventy-six women.

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The Strike of the Sunfish.

How to break a strike of sunfish we may learn from Mr. W. R. MacIlrath. 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 wasp 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 diappointed. 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 flopping 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 delectable 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 downwards instead of being spread out 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 oven 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 bolted. 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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