

# THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP;

OR, THE HERITAGE OF MADAME YALTA.

## EXPLANATORY PREFACE.

M. Claude Justus Dorgeres was a rich banker, living in the Rue de Suresnes, Paris. He was a widower, and had a charming daughter, Alice, his only child. In his employ were two young men, Jules Vignory, the cashier, and Robert de Carnoel, the secretary. Maxime Dorgeres, the banker's nephew, was an intimate friend of both, and spent most of his time at his uncle's house. The banker held a soiree on every Wednesday, which his most intimate friends were invited to attend. One evening Maxime and Jules Vignory, when entering the gate about 10 o'clock, saw two men waiting within, who rushed past them into the street, as soon as the gate was thrown open. They descried, as they ascended the steps, a light in the safe-room, and on entering, found that the safe had been tampered with. A small lamp had been left lighted in the room, and a pool of blood was on the floor. The safe was furnished with an ingenious piece of mechanism, which would seize by the wrist any one who tampered with the lock without knowing the combination. In this vise was a woman's hand, and it had been cut off by the thief herself or her accomplice, rather than be held and caught. On the floor was a turquoise bracelet that had fallen from the severed hand, and was forgotten in the excitement. The cashier's intention was to call the banker at once, but Maxime objected, saying that with the bracelet as a clue he would discover the thief. He threw the hand into the Seine, and it was found a few days after in a fisherman's net, and sent to the morgue. The next morning it was stolen, and the mystery became more involved than ever. M. Dorgeres wished his daughter to marry Jules Vignory, his cashier, whom he intended making his partner. The girl loved Robert de Carnoel, the secretary, and told her father so. The young man was a marquis, of a family that had lost their fortune, and M. Dorgeres did not think he possessed the commercial instinct. Hence his objection.

One morning Col. Borisoff, a Russian, entered and told M. Dorgeres that he wished to withdraw 1,400,000 francs and a casket that he had deposited in his safe the next morning. The banker replied that there would be no delay, as there were three millions placed in the safe that morning. This was said in the presence of Carnoel. On the departure of Col. Borisoff M. Dorgeres offered a commission in Egypt to M. de Carnoel, in order to separate him from his daughter, but the young man promptly refused, and resigned his position. That night a second attempt was made on the safe, and when Col. Borisoff returned next morning his casket was gone. Fifty thousand francs were also abstracted, but as the rest of the millions were untouched, it was plain that the thief only wanted the casket and a sufficient sum of money to take him across the French frontier. Robert de Carnoel was seen to leave the house on the night of the robbery at 11.30 p.m., half an hour before the watchman came to the safe-room. He and the cashier, Vignory, and M. Dorgeres were the only persons who knew the combination. The conclusion was that he was the thief or was in collusion with the thieves. He had declared that he was going to America or the antipodes, never to return. Col. Borisoff inserted an advertisement in a Paris journal, under an assumed name, offering great inducements to investors in some mines in Colorado. He was visited by Robert de Carnoel, who told him he had fifty thousand francs to invest, which he received a few days before from an anonymous debtor of his father. Col. Borisoff charged him with the theft, and held him imprisoned in his house, under a strong guard. He threatened to deport him to Siberia, which he could do, as he held a commission from his government which enabled him to send by enclosed van messages to Russia under guard. This van would not be opened at the frontier, and nobody would ever know what became of Carnoel.

But the young man stoutly protested his innocence.

In the employ of M. Dorgeres was a boy of thirteen named Georget, the protegee of the Countess Yalta, a wealthy and eccentric Russian princess. Georget's father was taken a prisoner by the Russians in the Crimean war; and had saved the life of the countess' father in a bear hunt while in the interior of Russia. Hence her interest in the lad, whom she placed in M. Dorgeres' establishment. He lived with his grandmother, Madame Piriac. One evening at the Rink, Maxime Dorgeres, who was still in quest of the bracelet, met a club friend, M. Villagos, a Hungarian doctor, who did not practice his profession, and who was a particular friend of the Countess Yalta. M. Villagos directed his friend's attention to a beautiful lady, evidently a foreigner, who was skating with exquisite grace around the arena. Maxime watched his opportunity, and escorted her home, a long distance through lonesome streets. She gave her name as Madame Sergent, and invited her escort to call on her at the expiration of a fortnight. On taking leave of her, Maxime was surprised to find little Georget at his heels to inform him that he was pursued by three men with the evident intention of robbing him. He called a cab and escaped. On the way home Madame Sergent felt the bracelet on Maxime's wrist, which he always carried, lest it should pass out of his possession before he had found the owner. She inquired minutely concerning it, but received no satisfactory information. The next morning Maxime called at the house of Madame Sergent. The door was opened by a huge-whiskered man with the manners of a boor and temper of a bear. He said no such person lived there, and slammed the door in Maxime's face. Meantime Mlle. Dorgeres received surreptitiously a letter from her lover, Robert de Carnoel, appointing a meeting with her in the Bois de Boulogne previous to his leaving France. But as he was now imprisoned, it was impossible for him to keep his promise, and Alice could not divine the cause of his absence. While endeavouring to find some means of escape the first night of his imprisonment, Robert de Carnoel discerned, through a window, a figure making signs to attract his attention. Having replied by waving a small lamp, the figure disappeared. It was the boy Georget. One evening Maxime went to the variety theatre, where he saw the beautiful Madame Sergent in a box. She was accompanied by the burly boor who had treated Maxime so unceremoniously when he called at her residence. After a while the man left the box and started for home. Maxime improved this opportunity to proceed to the box, where the lady remained. He was specially anxious to renew her acquaintance, as he had just been told by a friend that she saw the mysterious bracelet worn by this lady at a supper some time before. Madame Sergent told him the man whom he had seen was not her husband, and that she detested him. He had a passion for gambling, and he had gone to join a party. Maxime invited the lady to supper. He soon noticed that it was not her hand that had been left in M. Dorgeres' safe. The question of the bracelet was again discussed in much detail, both parties seeking to extract all the information possible from one another. The lady asked to examine it, and admitted that it once was hers. While thus engaged, the ferocious boor who had accompanied her to the theatre burst into the room where the pair were dining, and in the excitement that ensued, the lovely Madame Sergent disappeared through the door, carrying the bracelet with her. And Maxime went home to reflect at his leisure upon the new situation.

## CHAPTER I.

A month has passed. The thaw has come and the New Year too; but Maxime has not seen again the Countess Yalta. Neither has he seen again the inexplicable crea-

ture who carried off the accusing bracelet. The day after the abruptly-ended supper, he waited all the morning for Blue Beard's seconds, but none appeared. In the afternoon, forgetting the doctor's wise counsels, he recruited two brave youths and despatched them to Rue Joffroy. They found the doors closed against them; reiterated appeals to the bell having proved unavailing, they were compelled to return without fulfilling their mission.

The day following, Maxime went in person to the house of the ogre, but his success was no greater. The obliging porter opposite recognized him, and came out for the express purpose of informing him that the bear had decamped; that he had not been seen for thirty-six hours; that the neighbors, who detested him had signified to the commissary of police that some crime must have been committed in that house; and that the commissary had searched it from garret to cellar. They had not discovered the least skeleton nor anything which indicated that it had been a scene of violence. It did not appear that it had been used even, or that any one had slept in its sumptuous beds. The conclusion of the inquest was that the unknown had gone as he came, no one knew why; but as the furniture he had left sufficed to pay the rent, there was no cause for his occupying any further attention.

Maxime not acknowledging himself beaten went to see the owner, who told him that having signed a lease of nine years and paid three in advance, he had no reason to concern at the departure of his tenant. The name of this tenant was composed of so many consonants and so few vowels, it was impossible for a French tongue to pronounce it, and M. Maxime Dorgeres now found himself at his wits' end. The best-informed viveurs, those who had all Paris on their fingers' end, had been unable to give him any information concerning this shooting star, who had blazed one or two evenings and disappeared without leaving a track.

So Maxime, discouraged, ended by believing that Madame Sergent had never made part of the demimonde; that in conjunction with the Carpathian bear she had played a comedy of which he had been the victim, and that she had supped with her too confident admirer for the sole purpose of getting possession of the bracelet. She had succeeded and he should never hear of her more. The trail was lost—the birds were flown. They had gone to rejoin the thief who could now sleep tranquilly. She had regained possession of her hand stolen from the morgue, and of the jewel which had adorned that guilty hand.

Though not indifferent to his defeat, Maxime consoled himself with no great difficulty. His business of police agent was brought to an end, but he had not had time to acquire a taste for this pursuit of criminals, upon which he had entered so passionately. And then his mind was elsewhere. Since he had known this strange countess he had thought only of her, had thought of her all the more because he had not seen her again. He had gone every day to the Avenue de Friedland mansion to receive a bulletin of the health of the countess.

The Hungarian seemed now to be encouraged. Madame Yalta had entered upon convalescence, and it was no insignificant flattery to the young man's vanity to learn that she spoke of him and expressed a desire to see him.

Changes have taken place—many changes in the household of M. Dorgeres. Vignory has been elevated to the dignity of partner, and better still, his patron has given him official authority to pay his addresses to Mlle. Alice, who does not repel his advances.

She also is much changed. After a few days of seclusion following her drive to the Bois, she told all to her father. Joseph, the too complaisant valet de chambre had nearly been turned away, but she succeeded in winning his pardon. Cousin Maxime, on the contrary, has risen considerably in his uncle's esteem, who is under infinite obligations for his well-advised intervention.

To her confession Alice added a declaration which delighted M. Dorgeres. She said, henceforth Robert de Carnoel did not exist for her, and that she was ready to follow in all respects the paternal counsels. The banker profited by the occasion to urge the claims of the cashier, and she offered no objection to this pretender. She asked only for time to know him, but exacted also of her father that no steps should be taken against

M de Carnoel, and that his name should not be mentioned in her presence. These conditions were readily accepted. Vignory now dines every evening with M. Dorgeres. Mlle. Alice has even begun to appreciate his good qualities and to accord him a welcome. No one can doubt that this state of affairs will speedily end in a marriage; and this denouement is the more probable, as a month has passed and Robert de Carnoel has given no sign of life. Col. Borisoff had had several conversations with the banker, and it was agreed between them that the affair of the theft should be abandoned. The colonel had accepted the loss of his casket, and is interested in the future happiness of Mlle. Dorgeres. The father is grateful for his good conduct and his friendly sentiments. He would even have invited him to his Wednesday soirees but for Alice's opposition. The colonel recalls sad memories, and she positively refused to see him.

There is yet another change in the household of the banker.

Georget's place has been filled by a little peasant boy whom M. Dorgeres brought from his native town to run errands in his offices. One December day, Georget did not appear, nor the day following.

On the third day the banker received a letter from the Widow Piriac saying that her grandson was dying.

M. Dorgeres, who had a kind heart, repaired immediately to Rue Cardinet, where he learned that the child had been picked up the night before on the Boulevard Courcelles, his arm broken and skull mashed; that he was delirious and his life in danger. The shock he had received had been so great that he had lost his memory, and was not in a condition to recount what had happened to him.

Such was the condition of affairs when Maxime Dorgeres went out one morning, according to his daily habit, to inquire for Madame Yalta.

(To be continued.)

## SWEARING BOX.

May Be Found on Many London Bar Counters.

In many public houses at the corners of mean streets in London there are boxes on the bar counters which have a peculiar use.

They are called "swearing boxes" and when any customer annoyed at the bad weather, for example, or by some remark from an acquaintance, derogatory to his facial features or to the reputation of his ancestors, gives vent to an unparliamentary expression, he has to pay a fine by dropping a penny—or in case of a very violent expression as much as threepence—into the slit of the box.

In a certain public house on the outskirts of London there is one of these swearing boxes, but the peculiarity of this particular public house is that it is almost entirely frequented by women. They belong to a factory on the other side of the way, and unfortunately find that their work tends to constant thirst. One would imagine that among women a swearing box would be an unnecessary article of furniture, but in this case it is in frequent use.

## ENGLISH SERVANTS' MENU.

Allowed So Many Pounds and Ounces a Head, a Week.

The English custom of allowing so many pounds and ounces of food a week to servants is practically unknown in this country. The Queen contains the following explicit figures in regard to servants' allowances:

"The usual allowance for tea is a quarter of a pound a head a week, and as long as the servants keep within this I should not bother much about when they have their tea; butter, half a pound a head a week for eating purposes; sugar, from half a pound to a pound a head weekly; cheese from half a pound to a pound a head weekly, according to whether you allow meat for supper or not.

"The cocoa you would reckon separately from the tea, as you allow it instead of beer; the amount of this required depends greatly on the quality of the cocoa, but with a good brand you would allow a teaspoon or rather under to each cup, so that if the servants have it once a day you would reckon two ounces a head a week. For met the usual allowance is from one-half to three-quarters of a pound a head a day, the latter including bone; anything beyond seven pounds a head weekly indicates waste or dishonesty."

## CURE FOR CONSUMPTION

MAYBE ONE HAS BEEN FOUND IN SNAKE POISON.

Philadelphia Physician Has Been Experimenting With It With Much Success.

Dr. Thomas J. Mays, of Philadelphia, Penn., has been experimenting with the poison of rattlesnakes as a cure for consumption, and with much success, he says. Dr. Mays is a well-known authority on consumption, and is one of the few men who have had successful results in treating pulmonary tuberculosis with drugs. He is medical director of the Philadelphia Clinic for the Home Treatment of Chest and Throat Diseases.

The use of croctalin, as rattlesnake poison is scientifically known is not exactly new, but up to this time it has not been used by many of the local doctors. It is the dry residue of the salivary secretion of the American rattlesnake, and is secreted from the poison gland. It is administered hypodermically, with a combination of glycerine and distilled water. The injections are given about

ONCE A WEEK TO START,

and, after the treatment has been used for some time, increased.

Dr. Mays says: "It has long been my conviction that the chief and fundamental factor in the immediate causation of pulmonary tuberculosis lies in a disturbance of that part of the nervous tract which is known as the respiratory centre and its outgoing nerves, and that any agent which possesses the requisite power of influencing this nerve area from a central direction will, in properly directed doses, tend to correct this lesion, and alleviate, if not cure, this disease.

"My own experimental study of this substance, undertaken a number of years ago, led me to believe that it profoundly affects the cerebro-spinal nervous system, and especially that part of the spinal cord which comprises the respiratory centre and other closely allied functions.

"The hypodermic injection of croctalin is one one-hundredth of a grain, although it is often advisable to begin with one two-hundredth of a grain, or even a smaller amount, and it is essential to increase the dose to

ONE-FIFTIETH OF A GRAIN,

or, even more, and repeat it at frequent intervals in cases where quite a number of injections have been made.

"The back of the forearm has been selected as the site of the hypodermic administration of the drug. The immediate effects after the injection of croctalin are a burning, stinging pain at the seat of the injection, with generally tingling and darting sensations toward the shoulder. The pain is not severe, and is of short duration.

"The cough and expectoration, the two very harassing features in every case of phthisis, almost without exception, yield readily to the action of this drug, whether administered subcutaneously or internally, or both. The patient has a decided increase in strength from the very beginning of the treatment. This has been so evident and so constant that it is seemed almost anomalous in the absence of an increase in flesh."

WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES.

"John!" she exclaimed, jabbing her elbow into his ribs at 2.17 a.m. "did you lock the kitchen door?" And John, who is inner guard, and was just then dreaming over last evening's lodge meeting, sprang up in bed, made the proper sign, and responded, "Worthy Ruler, our portals are guarded." Oh, he hit the title right, even if he was asleep.



"Well! of all the nerve!"—Life.