

THE MYSTERY CLEARED UP;

OR, THE HERITAGE OF MADAME YALTA.

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd)

Maxime saw it was useless to insist. Georget evidently was honest with him. He had lucid moments but his mind was quickly obscured. His brain resembled one of those capricious watches that suddenly stop and start off again when vigorously shaken.

"And the Countess Yalta, did you know her?" he asked suddenly, as he led Georget toward the Avenue de Villiers.

"That I do. She is a friend of grandmamma's."

"Then you go to her house?"

"Oh, very often. It is so pretty, and there are more pictures than at the museum, and she isn't a bit prouder for it, all the countess isn't. Whenever I go there she has served up for me—a queer kind of dish it is—fish roe on bread and butter."

This way of designating the Russian dish caviare, made Maxime smile without diverting him from his investigation.

"What does she talk to you about?" he asked.

"All sorts of things. Wait! the last time I saw her was—all I know is she was ill and received me on a great bed like the one in the Louis XIV. chamber at Versailles. She asked me about M. de Carnoel."

"And could you tell her?"

"I don't know; it seems to me I hadn't seen him for three or four days."

"Would you like to see him again?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then let us go to my uncle's. Vignory, may be, can tell us where he is. For my part I don't know."

"I will go wherever you wish, M. Maxime, but if I once set foot in the office they won't let me off again, and I like better to walk."

"Never fear. They will not keep you. You are free until you can make use of your arm again."

"My arm! I had forgotten that, but it is so; I am one-handed for awhile yet, but I could run errands all the same."

"I answer for it Vignory will not keep you, and that he will receive you kindly too. They are fond of you there—my uncle and my cousin Alice."

"She is so good; is it true she is to marry M. de Carnoel?"

"I believe not. He has left the house."

"But he will soon come back?"

"No one can tell. I am trying to find him."

After this reply the conversation suddenly ceased, to Maxime's great regret. Georget, who had chattered incessantly since he left his grandmother's lodge, now fell into a profound meditation. Maxime looked at him out of the corner of his eye, and from the serious expression on his infantine countenance, he saw that the child was making prodigious efforts to collect his thoughts. Evidently the name of Carnoel had awakened confused recollections. The silence was prolonged, and while they passed down the Boulevard Malesherbes, Georget did not once open his lips. He suffered himself to be led by the Rue de Suresnes, and it was not until he had passed the door of the banker's house that he recovered his speech.

"Hold!" he cried, "that lad has on my vest buttons and cap. It doesn't keep him from looking like a simpleton though."

Maxime did not see fit to inform the boy that the groom in question was his substitute. He excused himself also from making any explanations to the porter who came out of his hole and looked at Georget, come back to life, with a thunder-struck visage.

He found Vignory busy in arranging the papers in the safe, and on seeing Maxime he exclaimed, "What, you again?"

"Again is not very amiable, but I forgive you, for you appear to be over head and ears in work. I will not disturb you long. I only wish to present a lad of your acquaintance. What has become of him?" he added, turning round.

Georget had managed to glide behind him to avoid confronting the cashier, and was crouching

down by the side of the safe. To bring him before Vignory, Maxime had to take the child by the collar.

"So here you are!" exclaimed the cashier, much surprised that Maxime had brought him a boy whom he had accused that very morning of being the author or accomplice of the theft. "You are cured, then? But no, you have only one arm. How is the other?"

"The other is hanging to my neck. I only beat with one wing, but it's all the same, M. Vignory, if you want me."

"Then you don't know that the patron has filled your place?"

"With this great canary bird that I met just now? I suspected as much. Hold!" he cried suddenly, "you have changed the word. It was Mlle. Alice, and now—"

"How do you know that?" asked Vignory, stupefied.

"Because I saw it. And before that there was another."

The nephew and the cashier exchanged significant glances.

"And the trap," continued Georget, "the iron arms which catch thieves? Ah! here they are."

Maxime, as much agitated as his friend, took the child by the arm and led him toward the closet which the new partner of M. Dorgeres had arranged for his private use.

Vignory understood and followed. They pushed Georget in and shut themselves up with him.

"You have fixed this little hole up nicely. It was so full of old papers there wasn't room for the patron's Newfoundland."

"But you could get in, could you?" asked Maxime, quickly.

"Dame! I'm not as large as the dog."

"Then you did get in sometimes?"

"I believe so—but I'm not very sure."

"Try to remember."

"I do try, but I can't."

Maxime made a sign to Vignory, who went apart with him to one end of the long, narrow closet.

"Well, what do you say to that?" he asked. "Do you think I was right in suspecting this boy of being concerned in the theft?"

"The chap must at least have furnished some indications to the thieves. But that does not prove M. de Carnoel to be innocent," he added, timidly.

"You suppose that he could have had an understanding with Georget—in fact, it is not impossible. Georget was devoted to him."

"And does he know where he is?" asked the cashier in a husky voice.

"He has known, most likely, but has forgotten—like all the rest."

"Do you believe this loss of memory is not acting?"

"If it were, he would not have been so imprudent. He was not obliged to commit himself as he has done. At any rate, it would be well to question him thoroughly. The sight of the safe has brought him to the desired point. If I lose this opportunity, I might never recover it."

"Hey! Georget, what are you thinking about?"

"Nothing," replied the child, "I was just waiting for M. Vignory to send me on an errand."

"M. Vignory has nothing for you to-day."

"So much the worse. I would rather be on the streets than in the waiting-room, though sometimes you can have fun there too. Such droll people come in!"

"We might lay a wager that you play tricks on them."

"Never, M. Maxime. Malicome must have told you that."

"Why Malicome?"

"Because he don't like me. He is wrong. I could have had him sent off and I didn't."

"You!"

"Yes; I had only to tell that he was never at his post, and that in the evening anybody can walk in the office as if it were a mill. I've done it myself."

"Come! you always decamp when six o'clock strikes."

"That's true. I have friends who wait for me before the Madeleine at quarter past six. Still, I'm sure I have stayed here,—at least once,

—when nobody was about. I remember how afraid I was."

"Afraid of what?"

"Of everything. At night the office is only lighted by the gas jet at the corner, the great safe looks like a huge giant, and mice are running under your feet,—it makes your flesh creep."

"They shut you up while you were asleep?"

"Perhaps."

"And you didn't call to them to let you out?"

"I don't know."

"Then you saw no one?"

"No,—no one."

"How did you get out?"

"I don't know."

Maxime stamped his feet with impatience. The exasperating, "I do not know," came back like a refrain to cut short all progress. There was nothing left but to begin again.

Vignory knit his brows and shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you know Col. Borisoff?"

"Col. Borisoff! That I do. I have seen him at least three times. I was here when he came to get a box he had left with the patron. I don't like him, this Borisoff."

"Why?"

"Oh, first, because I don't like Russians. Neither does grandmamma."

"What have they done to her?"

"Many things in former times,—things that I have forgotten; and I don't like the way he talks. One might suppose he was a hand-organ grinding out the Grace de Dieu. What fun I had taking him off that morning! He saw me and began to growl at me, and I might have fared badly if M. Vignory hadn't opened just then."

"M. Borisoff would have done well to give you a lesson," said Vignory. "The patron didn't pay you to make fun of his clients and listen at doors."

Maxime hastened to resume the conversation, fearing that Vignory's ill-humor would spoil everything.

"Bah!" he said, "everybody has a right to laugh a little. And I don't think much of Col. Borisoff either. Did he get his casket?"

"No, for it was not there."

"Some one had taken it away?"

"For certain."

"Who?"

"Wait; let me think. It was now the fog is rising in my head. I had the name and it has flown."

"Ladislas!" said Maxime, at a venture.

"Yes, that is it," cried Georget, clapping his hands.

"And the lady?"

"The lady—what lady?"

"The one that owned the horses that Ladislas trained; you spoke of her to me."

Georget began to reflect, and replied slowly:

"I did not see the lady. Ladislas was alone."

"Think well. It was, perhaps, the same who left the Rink with me. You know I met there a woman; that I came away with her, and that you followed us."

"Don't tell me that, M. Maxime; that mixes me all up."

"Then let us go back to Ladislas. He didn't like Borisoff, as he stole his box?"

"Borisoff is a brigand."

"Good! But what did he do to Ladislas?"

Georget put his hands over his forehead, but made no answer.

"I cannot," he murmured, with a despairing expression. It is over. I know nothing more."

Maxime was desperate. He saw that his friend thought the scene ridiculous, and still doubted the good faith of the boy. Vignory in this affair could not be impartial.

He thought of his vanished rival who was still formidable, and cursed the fever of investigation that had taken possession of Maxime Dorgeres.

"What good is to be done by bringing up all this?" he thought; "and what use can be made of the testimony of an idiot?"

And drawing Maxime aside, he said in his ear:

"What are you hoping to arrive at? That this frightful game knew and aided the thieves is evident, but what of it? For my part, I have seen enough of Georget. Take him where he came from, and let us talk of this no more."

"So be it," replied Maxime, a little piqued. "Come, Georget," he added, pushing the child toward the door. Vignory made no effort to detain him. The friends shook hands and separated without another word. Vignory resumed his verification of accounts. Maxime passed through the office and went out with Georget.

He was by no means of the same opinion as his uncle's partner—this

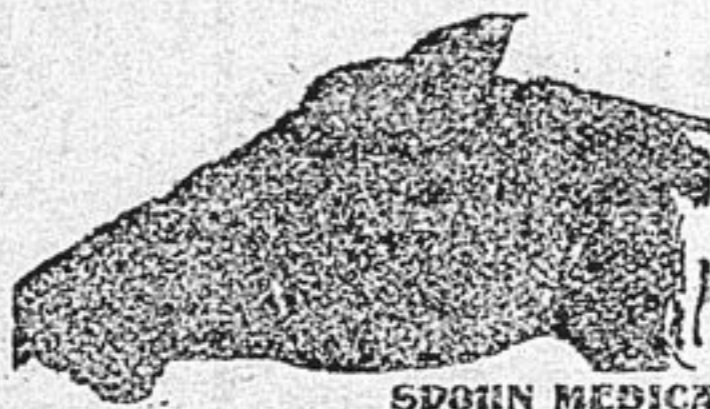
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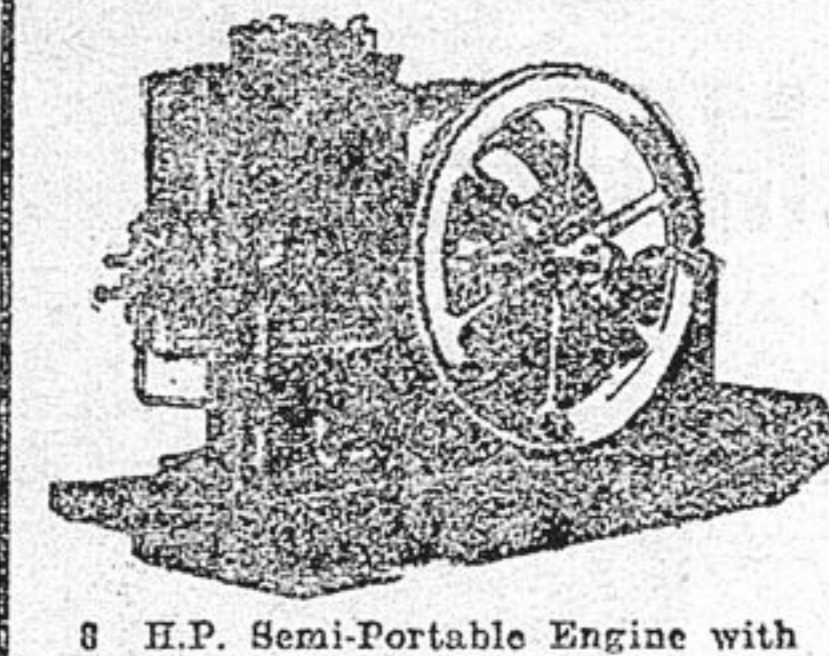
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headstrong Maxime. The boy's silence on certain points served only to stimulate him in the chase after discoveries; urged him forward in pursuit without regard to where it would lead, and without respect of persons. He had an unexpected meeting in the gateway with Mlle. Dorgeres, guarded by the inevitable Mme. Martineau. She had grown paler, but was still lovely, and her sweet face brightened as she perceived Maxime and Georget.

(To be continued.)

The Farm

SALT FOR DAIRY COWS.

Good dairymen advise giving cows all the salt they want by placing it where the cows may help themselves. They claim that salt is a necessity if cows are expected to keep healthy and give milk and lots of it. Some dairymen are careless in this respect, however, and salt when they think of it, often no more frequently than once a week.

Experiments have been made at the Wisconsin Experiment Station by Professor Babcock to ascertain what influence salt has upon the health and milk producing ability of cows. He found that in every case where cows had been deprived of salt they exhibited an abnormal appetite for it, but in no case did the health of the animal as shown by the general appearance, the live weight, or the yield of milk appear to be affected until they had been deprived of salt longer than two or three weeks. The period of immunity varied with individual cows from less than one month to more than a year.

In every case where salt was withheld a condition of low vitality was finally reached, in which a sudden and complete breakdown occurred from which recovery was rapid if salt was supplied. This stage was marked by loss of appetite, a general haggard appearance, lusterless eyes, a rough coat and very rapid decline in both live weight and yield of milk.

The breakdown was most likely to occur at calving time or immediately after, when the system was

weakened and the flow of milk large. In general the cows, giving the largest amount of milk were the first to show signs of distress. They all suffered less in pasture than when confined to the stable.

The behavior of the cows in the trial indicated that their food contained sufficient chlorine to maintain them in good health while dry for an indefinite period, and it seems probable that under conditions existing in Wisconsin a dry cow or steer would suffer no great inconvenience if given no salt except that contained in the normal ration. Professor Babcock calculated that the ration given in the experiments contained chlorine equivalent to about .75 of an ounce of salt per day and he assumed that this is the minimum amount of salt required per 1,000 pounds of live weight to sustain an animal that is not producing milk. If this amount is not present in the food it should be supplied directly. In addition to this a cow should have enough salt to compensate for the chlorine in the milk produced. It is recommended from this experiment that dairy cows in Wisconsin be given at least one ounce of salt per day, exceptionally heavy milkers requiring more.

The uniform results obtained with all the cows in the trials indicate beyond question that salt in addition to that obtained in the food is absolutely essential to the continued health of a dairy cow while producing milk.

LEAD POISONING.

Lead poisoning in cattle usually takes place during the remodeling of buildings, painting of water tanks, fences, etc., or even while painting houses, painters thoughtlessly scrape out the old paint pot and dump it out into the barn yard where cattle have access to, the result being that within a short time one or more animals are noticed to have a loss of appetite, shortage of milk, a depressed look, and later excited condition.

If permitted to run loose they are apt to go around in a circle, moan, press the head against fences or walls, indicating that the brain is affected, grate their teeth and act as if they were mad.

While the treatment for lead poisoning is very unsatisfactory, it would be advisable to keep lead and paints out of the reach of cattle, rather than permit them to come in contact with it and expect to save cattle thus afflicted. —Dr. David Roberts.