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, his 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 thieft, 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 protege 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 creature 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 Jouffroy. 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 recognised 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 concerned 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.)

Sir Wirfrid Laurier keeping Socia. Engagements with a Taxicab

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The Farm

BLOODY MILK.

Blood may escape with the milk when the udder has been injured by blows, also when it is congested or inflamed, when the circulation through it has been suddenly increased by richer and more abundant food, or when the cow is under the excitement of heat. The frothing up and assuming a pink tinge is often the first sign of red-water, and it may result from the eating of acid or irritating plants. Deposits of tubercle or tumors in the udder or induration (hardness) of the gland, may be efficient causes, the irritation caused by milking contributing to draw the blood. Finally there may be a reddish tinge or sediment when madder or dogwood has been eaten.

In milk which becomes red after it is drawn it may be due to the presence in it of the micrococus prodigiousus. This also grows on bread, and is the explanation of the supposed miracle of the 'bleeding host'.

The treatment will vary with the cause. In congested glands give one pound of Epsom salts, and daily thereafter one-half ounce saltpetre; with a dram of chlorate of potash; bathe the bag with hot or cold water, and rub with camphorated lard. If the food is too rich or abundant it must be reduced. If from acid plants, these must be removed from pasture or fodder. Induration of the udder may be met by rubbing with a combination of iodine ointment one part, soft soap two parts, or mercurial ointment and soap may be used. Careful milking is imperative.'

It is sometimes recommended to milk the cow before the udder becomes much distended. Milk several times a day if necessary. It is also recommended to give internally a tablespoonful of a mixture of powdered sulphate of iron, four ounces; of granulated sugar, one pound; mix these well together and give one tablespoon of the mixture once a day. If the udder seems to be much inflamed bathe it with warm water for a few minutes at a time every time you milk.

CHARCOAL FOR POULTRY.

Pure charcoal, or the charred wood from the stoves, when fresh is an excellent aid in arresting bowel complaint and is both simple and harmless. Where the hens have not had a variety, parched grain partly burnt affords an agreeable change and serves nearly the same purpose as charcoal. Oats, corn, wheat or even bran, will be readily eaten by hens when they have been regularly fed on a sameness of diet and such food will greatly aid in arresting diarrhoea or other bowel disorders. In experiments made to determine the benefits of charcoal feeding, if any, four turkeys were confined in a pen and fed on meal, boiled potatoes and oats, and four others of the same brood, were at the same time confined in another pen and fed daily on the same articles, but with one pint of finely pulverized charcoal mixed with their food. These had also a plentiful supply of broken charcoal in their pen. The eight were killed, and there was a difference of one and one-half pounds each in favor of those supplied with charcoal. They were the fattest, and the meat was superior in point of tenderness and flavor.

SOIL FOR POULTRY YARD.

Many attempts to raise poultry fail because the poultry-houses and yards are located in situations that are unsanitary from every point of view. It is impossible to raise chickens on a site that is wet. In towns and cities it is not always possible for the poltry raiser to get the kind of a site he wants, but this is not usually the case on farms, except very small farms that are so located that they have the drainage from higher areas. One small poultry farm was successively used by not less than three poultry raisers, who made a failure of it because there was too much water on and in the soil. It was finally abandoned as a poultry farm merely because its drainage was not right.

CLOVER AS A FERTILIZER.

The Wisconsin Experiment Station found that by plowing under a green crop of clover on sandy soil a yield of 241 bushels of potatoes was obtained, 197 bushels when 10 tons of manure was applied; 192 bushels when 700 pounds of commercial fertilizer was used, and 174 bushels when nothing was fed to the land. In the case of sandy soil it shows that clover is a very valuable crop. It not only furnishes nitrogen to the soil, but its roots and stems are the means of supplying much humus.

AN EXCITING RIDE.

Experience of a Traveller on the Andes.

In going over one of the mountain roads, on the way to the crest of the Andes, the traveller has need of steady nerves. A passage in "The Andean Land," by Mr. C. S. Osborn, describes the journey.

The road is narrow and rocky and rutty and steep, with no walls to speak of except tumble-down ones that increase the danger by their false suggestion of safety, and in one place the wagon would fall two thousand feet if it should roll off the edge of the mountain.

The road has no graceful sweeps or round, easy curves as it takes its way up the Titanic heights, but rather it zigzags like the teeth of a saw, ascending in short stretches and doubling back at sharply acute angles, leaving very little room for a team and wagon to turn in when driven slowly and carefully and two abreast.

Now imagine, if you can, the horses driven madly in a gallop, no trot; that would be slow; but in quick, short, jerky jumps, such as the mustang-like animals would make under the saddle when pressed.

The short, high coach follows the cavorting horses, jerking, careening and springing like a small boat sailing into a wildly chopped sea.

You perceive that the wheels are strong, and the springs, too, and the whole rig evidently intended for chariot-racing.

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