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The Lady OF THE Mount By FREDERIC S. ISHAM

CHAPTER I—Countess Elise, daughter of the Governor of the Mount, has chance encounter with a peasant boy.

CHAPTER II—The "Mount," a small rock-bound island, stood in a vast bay on the northwestern coast of France.

CHAPTER III—Young Desaurac determines to secure an education and become a gentleman; sees the governor's daughter depart for Paris.

CHAPTER IV—Lady Elise returns after seven years' schooling, and entertains many nobles.

CHAPTER V—Her Ladyship dances with a strange fisherman, and a call to arms is made in an effort to capture a mysterious Le Seigneur Nola.

CHAPTER VI—The Black Seigneur escapes.

CHAPTER VII—Lady Elise is caught in the "Grand" tide.

CHAPTER VIII—Black Seigneur rescues, and takes Lady Elise to his retreat.

CHAPTER IX—Seigneur and a priest at the "Cockles."

CHAPTER X—Sanchez tells Desaurac that Lady Elise betrayed him, but is not believed. The Seigneur plans to release the prisoners at the Mount.

CHAPTER XI—Lady Elise pleads with her father to spare the lives of condemned prisoners.

CHAPTER XII—Elise discovers that her savior was the boy with the fish.

CHAPTER XIII—Sanchez, the Seigneur's servant, is arrested and brought before the governor.

CHAPTER XIV—Lady Elise is rescued from the Mountbank.

CHAPTER XV—Disguised as a peasant Lady Elise mingles with the people and leads some startling facts.

CHAPTER XVI—A mysterious Mountbank starts a riot and is arrested.

CHAPTER XVII—The Mountbank is locked up after making close observations of the citadel, and is afterwards summoned before the governor's daughter.

CHAPTER XVIII—The governor enters the room during the interview with the Mountbank.

CHAPTER XIX—As a miserable buffoon, the Mountbank is released by order of the governor.

CHAPTER XX—A gleaming warning of that unwanted intrusion.

CHAPTER XXI—A gleaming warning of that unwanted intrusion.

CHAPTER XXII—A gleaming warning of that unwanted intrusion.

the recollection his own response evoked; then turned; walked on, and



Twelve O'clock, and All's—

a few moments later, his call, suddenly remembered, rang, belated, in the drowsy air: "Twelve o'clock and all's well!"

A sword and a blade; A drab and a jade—

The words, scarcely begun, above his breath, died away on the seeming soldier's lips, as the watcher on the bridge, looking down to follow first the departing figure of the old custodian, crossed quickly to the opposite window, and from this point of vantage, gazed up after the young man rapidly vanishing in the track of the moonlight.

At the head of the steps, which without further incident or interruption, he reached, the Black Seigneur, stepping to the shadow of a small bush against the wall, glanced about him, with knit brows and the resolute manner of one who has come to some definite conclusion, he left the spot of observation, almost the apex of the Mount, and plunged diverging to the right.

From glint and glimmer to darkness unfathomable! For some time he could only grope and feel his way, after the fashion of the blind; fortunately, however, was the path narrow; although tortuous, fairly well paved, and no serious mishap befell him, even when he walked forward regardlessly, in feverish haste, beset with the conviction that time meant all in all, and delay the closing of the toils and the failure of a desperate adventure.

Several times he struck against the stones; once fell hard, but picked himself up; went on the faster, only, after what seemed an interminable period, to stop.

"Am I, can I be mistaken?" But the single star he could see plainest from the bottom of the deep alley, and to which he looked up, answered not the fierce, half-muttered question; coldly, enigmatically it twinkled, and, half-running, he continued his way, to emerge over-suddenly into a cooler well of air, and what was more to be welcomed—an outlook whereof the details were in a measure dimly shadowed forth.

On one side the low wall obscured not the panorama below—a ghost-like earth fading into the mist, and nearer, the roof of the auberge des voleurs, a darkened patch on the slope of the rock; but in this direction the man hardly cast a glance. Certain buildings ahead, austere, Norman in outline, absorbed his attention to the exclusion of all else, and toward them, with steps now alert and noiseless, he stole; past a structure that seemed a small salle des gardes whose window afforded a view of four men nodding at a table within; across a space to another passage, and thence to a low door at the far corner of a little triangular spot, alongside the walk and near a great wall.

At once the young man put out his hand to the door; tried it; pushed it back and entered. Before him a wide opening looked out at the sky, framing a multitude of stars, and from the bottom of this aperture ran a strand, or rope, connecting with an indistinct object—a great wheel, which stood at one side!

CHAPTER XXII. The Whirling of the Wheel. As old as church or cloister, the massive wheel of the Mount had, in the past, played prominent part in the affairs of succeeding communities on the rock. It, or the hempen strand it controlled, had primarily served as a link between the sequestered dwellers, and the flesh-pots and material comforts of the lower world. Through its use had my lord, the abbot, been enabled to keep full the mighty wine-butts of his cellars; to provide good cheer for the tables of the brethren, and to brighten his cold stone interiors with the fresh greens of Flemish tapestry, or the sensuous hues of rugs and fabrics from seraglio or mosque. Times less ancient had likewise claimed its services, and even in recent years, by direction of his Excellency, the Governor, had it occasional use been used for the hoisting of goods, wares, or giant casks, over-cumbersome for men or mules.

Toward this simple monkish contrivance, the summit's rough lift, or elevator, wherein serfs or henchmen had walked like squirrels in a cage to bring solace to generations of isolated dwellers, the Black Seigneur had at first stepped impetuously; then stopped, hardly breathing, to look over his shoulder at the door that had been left unfastened. An involuntary question flashed through his brain—the cause of this seeming carelessness—he found almost immediate answer in his mind, and the certainty that he stood not there alone—a consciousness of some one else, near, became abruptly confirmed.

"What are you doing, soldier?" A voice, rough, snarling, drew swiftly his glance toward a presence, intuitively divined; an undersized, grotesque figure that had entered the place but a few moments before and now appeared from behind boxes and casks where

he had been about to retire to his mattress in a corner.

"What do you want?" repeated this person, the anger and viciousness on his distorted features, revealed in the moonlight from the large opening, like that of some animal unwarrantedly disturbed.

"You, landlord of the thieves' inn!" And inaction giving way to movement on the intruder's part, a knife that had flashed back in the hand of the hunchback, with his query, was swiftly twisted from him and kicked aside, while a scream of mingled pain and rage became abruptly suppressed.

Struggling and writhing like a wild-cat, Jacques proved no mean antagonist; with a strength incredible for one of his size, supplemented by the well-known agility of his kind, he scratched, kicked and had managed to get the other's hand in his mouth, when, making an effort to throw off that clinging burden, the Black Seigneur dashed the dwarf's head violently against the wooden support of the place. At once all belligerency left the hunchback, and, releasing his hold, he sank to the ground.

An instant the intruder regarded the inert form; then, going to the door, latched and locked it with a key he found inside. Having thus in a measure secured himself from immediate interruption without—for anyone trying the door would conclude the wheel-room vacant, or that the dwarf slept there or in the store-house beyond—the Black Seigneur walked to the aperture, and reaching up, began to pay out the rope from a pulley above.

As he did so, with feet braced, he leaned over to follow in its descent a small car along the almost perpendicular planking from the mouth of the wheel-room to the rocks, several hundred feet below.

A sudden slackening of the rope—assurance that the car, at the end of the line, had reached the loading-spot below without the fortifications—and the young man straightened; in an attitude of attention, stood listening. But the stillness, impregnated only with a faint underbreath, the far-away murmur of water, or the just audible droning of insects near the fig-trees on the rocks, continued unbroken.

An impatient frown gathered on his brow; more eagerly he bent forward to gaze down, when through the air a distant sound—the low, melancholy hoot of an owl—was waited upward.

Upon him at the aperture, this night-call, common to the Mount and its environs, acted in magical manner, and swiftly had he stepped toward the wheel, when an object, intervening, stirred; started to stagger to its feet. At once was the young man's first impelling movement arrested; but, thus forcibly drawn from his purpose, he did not long pause to contemplate; his hand, drawing the soldier's sword, held it quickly at the hunchback's throat.

"A sound, and you know what to expect!" With the bare point at his flesh, Jacques, dully hearing, vaguely comprehending, could, indeed, guess and the fingers he had involuntarily raised to push the bright blade aside, fell, while at the same time any desire to attempt to call out, or arouse the guard, was replaced by an entirely different emotion in his aching brain. Never before had he actually felt that sharp touch—the prelude to the final thrust. At the sting of it, a tremor ran through him, while cowardice, his besetting quality, long covered by growl and egotism in his strength and hideousness to terrify, alone shone from his unprepossessing yellow features.

"You were brave enough with the soldiers at your beck!" went on a determined voice whose ironical accents in no wise served to alleviate his panic. "When you had only a mountebank to deal with! But get up!" contemptuously. "And, as the hunchback obeyed, his crooked legs shaking in the support of his misshapen frame, 'Into the wheel with you!"

"The wheel!" stammered the dwarf. "Why—what—"

"To take a little of your own medicine! Pardi! What a voluble fellow! In with you, or—"

With no more words the hunchback, staggering, hardly knowing what he did, entered the ancient abbot's machine for hoisting. But as he started to walk in the great wheel at the side of his captor, a picture of the past—the times he, himself, had forced prisoners to the wheel, stimulating with jeer and whip—arose mockingly before him, and the incongruous present seemed, in contrast, like a black waking dream.

That it was no dream, however, and that the awakening would never occur, he well knew, and malevolently though fearfully he eyed the rope, coming in over the pulley at the aperture; to be wound around and around by a smaller wheel, attached to the larger, and—drawing up what?

An inkling of the sort of merchandise to be expected, under the circumstances, could but flash through his mind, together with a more vivid consciousness of the only course open for him—to cry out, regardless of consequences! Perhaps he might even have done so, but at that instant—as if the other had read the thought—came the cold touch of a bare blade on his neck; and with a sudden chill, the brief heroic impulse passed.

More stealthily now he began to study his companion in the wheel, while a question, suddenly occurring, reiterated itself in his brain. This man—who was he? And what did he know of the mountebank, or his, Jacques', dealings with the clown? That his captor was no soldier of the rock, or belonged there, the hunchback felt by this time assured, and a growing suspicion of the other's identity brought home with new force to the dwarf the thankless part chance, perhaps, had assigned to him in that night's work. And at the full realization of the consequences, should his surmise prove correct—what must ultimately happen to himself in that event, when unwilling co-operation at the wheel should become known—almost had he again reached the desperate point of calling out; but at that moment a turn in the wheel brought to the level of the aperture, the car. In it, or clinging thereto, were a number of figures who, as soon the rope stopped, sprang noiselessly to the platform.

"Seigneur, we hardly dared hope—" "We obeyed orders, but—" Gazing through the spokes of the wheel, and listening to their whispered exclamations, any lingering doubt as to who his captor was could no longer be entertained by the hunchback.

These new-comers took no pains to conceal it; even when the dwarf's presence became known to them and unceremoniously was he dragged forth—they displayed a contemptuous disregard of him as a factor to interfere, not calculated to dull the edge of his apprehension! Too late now might he regret that pusillanimity that had caused him to draw back from an immortal role; already was the car again descending!

It came up loaded; went down once more, reappeared. On the little platform now were more than a dozen men assembled, but to Jacques this force looked multiplied. Amid the confusion of his thoughts, vaguely could he hear orders given; caught something about the need for quiet, haste, overpowering the guard; then saw the door open, and the men, like shadows, go out; leaving him alone.

To be Continued

JUST A LITTLE SMILE



Chinese Politeness.

Etiquette requires in Chinese conversation that each should compliment the other and depreciate himself and all his belongings. A missionary who has just returned heard the following conversation:

"What is your honorable name?" "My insignificant appellation is Ying Su."

"Where is your magnificent palace?" "My contemptible shack is at Lung Pi."

"How many are your illustrious children?" "I have five vile, worthless brats."

"And is your distinguished wife enjoying good health?" "The old hen is pretty well."

A Bargain Offer. "Comin' this way agin?" asked the justice of the peace, after he had fined Jimpon \$50.

"I'm afraid I'll have to," said Jimpon ruefully.

"Waal," said the justice, stroking his chin whisker reflectively, "perhaps I'd oughter tell ye that we sell a return fine ticket for \$75, entillin' ye to immunity from arrest on the way back."—Judge.

Views of the Tipsters. "Why is it," asked the curious guest, "that poor men usually give larger tips than rich men?"

"Well, suh," said the waiter, who was something of a philosopher as well, "looks to me like de po' man don't want nobody to find out he's po, and de rich man don't want nobody to find out he's rich."—Youth's Companion.

NO CHANCE.



Judge—Go out and arrest that man for speeding. Constable—But, his car has broken down, and he's trying to fix it. Judge—Then go out and arrest him for obstructing the highway.

Finnleky. Some motorists kick At the gasoline odor; They'd like it to smell Like an ice cream soda.

Scholastic Flippancy. "And now," continued the professor of history, "permit me to mention a tireless worker in the great cause of humanity—"

"Attireless worker?" interrupted one of the seniors; "pardon me, professor, but if you are referring to Lady Godiva, she was attired in her luxuriant hair."

A Fabulous Age. Spratts—Miss Elder is much older than I thought. Hunker—Impossible. Spratts—Well, I asked her if she had read Aesop's fables, and she said she read them when they first came out.—Home Journal.

Another Progressive. "Why are you here again? I have told you that you cannot have my daughter. Isn't that sufficient?" "No, sir. I am in favor of the recall of parental decisions."

Would Have Inside Information. Gibbs—My memory is getting to be awful. Why, two hours after dinner I can't remember what I've eaten. Dibs—You would if your wife was as poor a cook as mine.

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January Travel Bulletin

To the south Homeseekers' excursions are announced for January 7th 21st, and February 4th and 18th. They furnish low rates for a most attractive southern tour. Southern tourists fares every day with longer limits; many of these tours include going one way and returning another.

Denver, Colo, National Stock Show, Jany. 20th to 25th—Special rates January 18 to 20.

LINCOLN, NEB.—Great Convention of Organized Agriculture, Week of January 20 to 24. Twenty-two Societies meet for the advancement of Nebraska Agriculture.

Corn Improvers Combined Apple and Corn Show State Horticultural State Swine Breeders State Dairyman Nebraska Horse Breeders Dairy Cattle Breeders State Live Stock Improvers Nebraska Rural Life Many others.

Home-seekers Excursions To the west and northwest First and third Tuesdays during 1913. Very low rates to the Big Horn Basin, Wyoming, Colorado, the far west and northwest, including the Pacific coast

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