

A Castle Legend

A Story Suggesting That Medieval Landlords Were Sometimes Not What They Should Be

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Tourists steaming up or down the Rhine looking at the ruins of medieval castles on its banks will pass one especially gloomy looking. No matter how bright the day, this castle maintains the same somber appearance. On moonlight nights it stands out against the lighter sky like a black, jagged cloud. People inhabiting that region never pass it or see it in the distance without muttering a prayer or crossing themselves. There is a legend connected with the old ruin that has come down from a time when the castle was in good condition and regularly occupied by its last owner, Baron Muhlenberg.

The baron runs the legend, was one of those feudal lords who lived and whose retainers lived by robbing travelers. Muhlenberg did not descend to taking purses. He was a sort of tax-gatherer. When he saw a merchant carrying a load of goods on a road which ran past the foot of the hill on which his castle was built he would go down and collect a percentage on the value of his wares. He also possessed a large boat moored below his castle on the Rhine, and when he saw a cargo of goods going either up or down the river he would send a force out into the stream to collect transit money. But, by whatever name he called his collections, they were either robbery or piracy.

The baron was unfortunate in his domestic relations. His wife was what in these days we call a nag, and his children quarreled with their parents and with one another. In this way they finally wore him out and a short time before his death made such a clamor, each urging him to leave him or her a large slice of the property he had accumulated, that they nearly drove him mad. Indeed, it is quite likely that they did drive him mad, for on opening his will after his demise they read these words:

I bequeath my castle and all I possess to the devil. My soul I commit to a merciful Providence.

This testament threw the ownership of the castle and the rest of the property into confusion. The courts would have divided it, as in cases where there is no will, but the legal heirs fought each other so fiercely that the estate was never settled. The court of chancery kept control of it and offered the castle for rent. But no one seemed desirous to rent it, and it remained unoccupied for a long while.

One day a man named Siegel went to the court and said that he would rent the castle on a ninety-nine year lease. Such leases were not in vogue at that time, and the master in chancery asked him if he wished to submit to a newly born witch. Siegel declared that he would submit it only to pious people. So the lease was made out, and Siegel was virtually made owner of the property. As for the money the baron had left, that had all disappeared in the litigation brought about by the heirs at law.

The first tenant the lessee put into the castle was Carl von Schomberg, a younger son of a German nobleman. Von Schomberg was an excellent man, and his wife, Hildegard, was a saint. Their landlord promised to make them perfectly comfortable by putting the castle in prime order. A great many repairs were necessary, because since the death of Baron Muhlenberg no one had lived there, and the place was falling into decay. The Schombergs, who were very honorable persons, did not doubt that their landlord would keep his promise and, like many other tenants nowadays, signed the lease and took possession, trusting him to make the repairs at his convenience. He never found it convenient.

The first night young Schomberg and his wife slept in the castle there came a terrible storm that would have rocked the old pile had it not been so solid. But the roof leaked badly, and a stream of water came pouring down on the bed in which the couple lay. The next day Schomberg wrote his landlord, begging him to attend to repairs at once, since he and his wife had suffered much already from the leak.

The letter had hardly been sent before Siegel came up the dellivry, and, meeting Schomberg and his wife in the courtyard, began to abuse them violently for endeavoring to get concessions while they paid so small a rent. Schomberg, who had never spoken an unkindly word to any one in his life, fell into a rage with the man and spoke to him so violently that his wife dragged him into the castle. Then she went out again and told Siegel that they would themselves make all the repairs needed and he need not trouble himself about them.

The landlord went away, but came back occasionally on pretense of assuring himself that his tenants wanted for nothing. This was especially irritating, because they knew that if they should ask him to make any repairs they would call down upon themselves a torrent of abuse. He had a very bad effect on the husband, and after awhile when the wife saw their landlord coming up the hill she would try to get Carl out of the way and receive Siegel herself.

The Schombergs had signed a long lease, for when they went into the

castle they expected to make it their home. They expected to spend their lives there, and to be happy. "You think to buy the castle, do you? You wish to deprive me of my interest in it? Do you know who owns it? Well, I will tell you. Baron Muhlenberg, the last owner, when he died left it to the devil!"

Hildegard was so shocked at this that she crossed herself and cast her eyes up to heaven, muttering a prayer. When she looked again at Siegel she saw him striding away as rapidly as possible. He passed out of the castle and down the hill, disappearing behind a rock. The Schombergs, astonished, followed him to see where he would go, but, though they waited a long while to see him reappear, he did not do so, nor did they see him again that day.

Frau Schomberg gave birth to a boy, her first child. Not long after this son came Siegel appeared one day and offered his congratulations. Schomberg, finding him apparently in a good humor, ventured to mention the matter of repairs. All the tenants' plans to make the castle habitable had failed. He had employed workmen to fix their sleeping room, but after the job was finished the roof leaked worse than before. A foundation wall that supported one of the towers having crumbled, Schomberg attempted to prop it up and in doing so brought a part of the tower down about his ears.

Whatever he touched gave way. He told his landlord of his bad luck and asked him if he would not at least make habitable the room occupied by the newborn babe and its mother, explaining that both needed warmth. Siegel said that nothing would give him more pleasure. He would go at once to examine the apartment to see what was needed.

Schomberg took him up to the room where his wife was lying in bed, endeavoring to keep warm under the clothing, while the babe slept in its cradle. Siegel went to the cradle to see the child and took him up in his arms. Then, with a look of malicious triumph, he turned and moved toward the door. Schomberg seemed rooted to the spot, having no power to stop the fiend from carrying away his child.

"Help! Holy mother!" cried Hildegard, and in a moment the father dashed forward, and Siegel dropped the babe on the floor. Schomberg took him up and was so anxious to know if it had been injured that he ceased to regard the would-be kidnaper. When Schomberg and his wife, being satisfied that their child was unharmed, looked again for Siegel he had disappeared.

One day a priest came up to the castle and told Schomberg that Siegel had admitted at the confessional how badly he had treated his tenants, had repented and had been given absolution. He had sent the priest to his so-called that he was the sole owner of the castle and had made a deed for it to Schomberg and his wife forever. All that was needed was that they should sign a receipt for it. The couple were pleased at this, for since the castle cost them nothing they could well afford to employ a priest to absolve them and put it in repair and live comfortably in it for the rest of their days.

Schomberg signed the receipt, and Hildegard was about to do likewise when it occurred to her to read it. She did so and found nothing but an ordinary receipt. She took up the pen she had laid aside and was about to write her name under that of her husband when she noticed that the priest had not a cross on his person.

"Father," she said, "how is it that you wear no crucifix?"

The priest seemed surprised and said he had omitted to put it on.

"I have a crucifix that I will give you," said Hildegard.

She went to her bureau and, taking from it a crucifix, came back, holding it up that the priest might see it. He trembled and shrank away like a whipped spaniel. Schomberg and his wife looked at each other wondering why, listening to the footsteps of the man as he went quickly down the staircase. He had dropped the deed and left the un-signed receipt on the table.

"He was no priest," said the husband, "but the devil, who came here for some unholy purpose."

They took up the deed and read it carefully. Hidden among a number of legal phrases they found a consideration for the castle, and that consideration was their son when he should reach the age of twelve years.

Dropping on their knees, they gave thanks to heaven that they had been spared being trapped in this nefarious transaction, then rising determined that they would no longer live in a castle that had been willed to the devil. So the next morning Hildegard took the babe and went away, followed by her husband as soon as he could remove their effects. They were not sorry to leave an abode in which they had had so much trouble and where they had been so near losing their babe.

That same night a black cloud arose in the west, advancing toward the castle. It had the shape of the shoulders and head of a man with the arms outstretched, and when it reached a point over the castle the arms seemed to be drawn together, the gigantic being bending down as if to engulf it. Then a bolt shot from the cloud, striking one of the towers, and when the thunder had rolled away among the neighboring hills the old pile was left the ruin it has remained till the present day.

Such is the legend connected with this old ruin—a legend that goes to show that in former times there was as much treachery and villainy as there is now.

IMPORTS AT NOTABLES

Dr. J. A. Holmes, Director of the Bureau of Mines.



To lessen if possible the perils of mining is the object of the national mine safety demonstration to be held at Pittsburg on Oct. 26 and 27. In the last ten years 30,000 mine workers have been killed and 75,000 injured, and to find some remedy for this awful slaughter is the problem the federal bureau of mines, under the leadership of Dr. Joseph A. Holmes, its director, will attempt to solve. The bureau will be assisted by the American Red Cross society, the United Mine Workers of America and the Pittsburg Coal Operators' association.

Demonstrations of mine emergencies and of the various life-saving devices and mine rescue appliances will be given by experts in the use of oxygen helmets, rescue carts and other apparatus designed for use in gas and smoke-filled mines. They will also be demonstrations of skill and speed in digging from coal mines. Fifty thousand miners are expected to attend, and President Taft will be present to witness the demonstrations.

Director Holmes is a native of South Carolina and is fifty-two years old. He was educated at Cornell university and for thirty years has been a professor and lecturer on geology in North Carolina universities. Since 1907 he has been in charge of the United States geological survey laboratories for testing fuels and structural materials and chief of the branch for investigating mine accidents.

Governor Aldrich of Nebraska. Governor Chester B. Aldrich of Nebraska, who took a prominent part in the discussion before the recent conference of governors in New Jersey, was elected chief executive of his state as a progressive Republican. On the question of interstate traffic rate regulation he attacked the attitude of the federal courts toward measures passed by state legislatures. In the course of his address he said: "The states, so far as they are concerned, find too much sympathy and tolerance on the part of the federal courts in this country on behalf of the railroads." And again, "It is becoming quite the thing



of late for some courts to arrogate to themselves all of the authority that has been vested in the several states and in congress."

Governor Aldrich is a native of Ohio and will be forty-nine years old next November. He was educated in the common schools and at the Ohio State university. He is a lawyer by profession and entered politics as state senator in 1900. He framed and had passed the commodity freight reduction law, reducing freight rates 15 per cent on 85 per cent of commodities shipped in Nebraska. This was the first effective freight rate law ever passed in the state. He represented the state in the federal convention and helped to secure the passage of the new constitution.

A private dinner in the Queen's Hotel in Glasgow, Scotland, on Oct. 15, was the scene of a murder. The victim was a man named James McNeill, who was stabbed to death by a man named James McNeill. The man who had stabbed him quickly disappeared and the victim was placed in a cab and driven to a hospital, where he died a few hours later. The police then made an inquiry and learned how the murder was deliberately decided upon and savagely executed. The workman himself did not know that his life was staked on a game of billiards.—Paris Cor. London Telegraph.

Scottish Accent Too Much For Him. The only real blot on my visit to Glasgow, says a writer in the London Sketch, is my total inability to speak with a Scottish accent. I rather pride myself, as most people do, on my vocal imitative facilities, but I confess to all the world here and now that I cannot imitate the Scottish accent. My Irish is beautiful; it would make an Dublin weep. My American is quite good; I could nearly always get anything that I wanted in the shops if I had the money. Anybody can talk Welsh who cares to substitute "p" for "b" and "t" for "r." But the Scottish accent eludes me. Sometimes I speak a little Scottish, tentatively, to the policeman or the tram conductor or the shopkeeper. The policeman draws their staves, the tram conductor stops their trams, and the shopkeepers put up their shutters. I am not sure, but I rather think that I shall abandon the unequal struggle.

She Was Perfidious. A huge package once reached Mr. Walter Scott from a young lady in America for which he had to pay \$25 expressage. It contained a manuscript play and a letter from the fair author requesting Scott to read and correct her work, write a preface and an obituary notice for its production at Drury Lane and negotiate with a publisher for the copyright. That was his first night. He had not even opened the package, charged with a similar postage, when he had not even grown wiser by experience, paid the charges and opened the parcel. Out came a stipulated copy of the play and a second letter from the authoress, stating that as the weather had been stormy and she feared something might have happened to her former manuscript she had thought it prudent to send him a duplicate.

New Centipede Walk. An animal which has been discovered in the peculiar very modes of centipedes and millepedes to determine the manner in which these animals manage to see their surroundings and feel their way about is gradually and being brought to light. It has been found that the legs move in groups of waves, each wave including a definite number of legs. The number of waves included in the length of the body is constant for each species. In millepedes the waves of each side are synchronous, in centipedes they are alternately alternate, giving rise to beautifully coordinated movements. The difference may be explained by suggesting that the millepede moves like a walking horse, the centipede like a trotter. Chicago Record-Herald.

A Pleasant Surprise. A young man in Indianapolis ran his heart sick as he pulled from his small box a letter of the wedding invitation type. That was the letter he had received this season, and he had begun to wonder whether he had any friends left in the single state.

"Another five dollar bill passed to me," he murmured.

Then he opened the envelope, and it was only the announcement of a wedding that had taken place the week before. And he found in the same cover a check for \$5.

It was then that he recalled a boy made with a friend years before. The conditions were that the one first married should pay the other \$5.—Indianapolis News.

And Upside Down at That. "Where does this train stop next?" asked the nervous traveler on an uncertain railway.

"Well, boss," replied the porter, "dar's three washouts in some bad track right along here, an' she's liable to stop mo' any place mo' any minute."—Washington Star.

Experienced. "That trained nurse is quite remarkable. She made a man I know cough up a brass tack at the hospital."

"That's nothing to what she can do. She made the young doctor sneeze and gagged to cough up a diamond ring."—Baltimore American.

Diplomatic. Young Man—So Miss Ethel is your oldest sister, who comes after her? Small Brother—Nobody ain't come yet, but he says the first fellow that comes can have her.—Exchange.

A Kiss for. Lady—Susan, I've come down to help you. Susan—A such kiss for me? Susan—No, I'm not a kiss for you.

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