

VOITURE 7
PLACE 15
CLAUDE AVELINE



INTRODUCTION

VOITURE 7 PLACE 15 is a story of such gripping interest and skilful telling that it should need no special recommendation to young readers. It is the tale of a criminal and a detective who outwitted one another in a masterly disguise of their true identity. At the time the book was written, some years before the war, its distinguished author, M. Claude Aveline, can scarcely have imagined how much his own life was later to depend on just such a disguise. Always a sturdy champion of freedom, he helped to found one of the first resistance groups in Paris under the German Occupation. But the Germans grew suspicious of him, and he was forced to hide in a remote village of Eastern France. There he carried on his activity under an assumed name, and had many adventures. On one occasion the Gestapo came to search the house in which he was staying. Going up to the first floor, they opened three out of the four doors on that floor. . . . Claude Aveline was behind the fourth! The next day he slipped away to another part of the country, and later to the North of France, where, after some narrow escapes from our own bombs, he was finally set free.

Aveline's career as a novelist began in 1928 with the publication of *Le Point du Jour*, a delicate study of childhood. Previously he had served a long apprenticeship in publishing, and in literary and artistic criticism. *Le Point du Jour* was followed by *Madame Maillart* and *La Fin de Madame Maillart*, the first two volumes of a semi-autobiographical series which has yet to be completed. They present the picture of a young man forced to spend

