

# Secret of the Plundered Safe

By EMILE GABORIAU

## CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

Prosper foresaw the result of this conversation. He quietly placed his hat on the table, to show that he had no intention of attempting to escape, and passed into the adjoining room. Fanferlot also went out, but not before the commissary had made him a sign, and received a nod in return. Following the teller closely, he slipped into a dark corner, took a seat, and pretended to doze off.

Bertomy took a seat in the chair of an absent clerk, with his usual manner, which surprised the beholders—the frigid haughtiness which keeps even sympathizers aloof—and had made him disliked in the bank. But he presently stopped playing with a pencil, and drew toward him a sheet of paper, upon which he scribbled a few lines.

"Ah!" thought the Squirrel, whose hearing and sight were wonderfully good in spite of his profound sleep, "eh! eh! he makes his little confidential communication on paper, I see; now we will discover something positive."

His note written, Prosper folded it carefully in the smallest possible size, and after furtively glancing toward the detective, who remained motionless in his corner, threw it across the desk to little Cavillon with this one word:

"Gypsy!"

All this was so quickly and skillfully done that Fanferlot was confounded, and began to feel a little uneasy. A minute or two later Prosper was called into the main office, where the commissary gravely informed him that he was under arrest.

## CHAPTER III.

It was Fanferlot's duty to take the prisoner to prison, but he asked his principal to let him proceed in another direction. He wanted to secure the note of Bertomy's which he knew to be in Cavillon's charge. The easiest way was to arrest him, but he might refuse to betray who the "Gypsy" was, and, on second thought, the detective concluded to dog the envoy until he could catch him in the act of delivering the note. This was but play to the detective. Fanferlot waited a long time, but did not wait impatient. Finally, about one o'clock, he saw Cavillon rise from his desk, change his coat and take down his hat.

"Very good!" he exclaimed, "my man is coming out."

In another moment the clerk came forth, and after a slight hesitation in choosing the shortest route, he darted off at such a smart pace that the Squirrel had much to do to keep up with him. On reaching the Rue Chaptal Cavillon suddenly stopped and entered the house numbered 39.

He had scarcely taken three steps up the narrow corridor when he felt a touch on his shoulder, and, turning abruptly, found himself face to face with Fanferlot. He recognized him at once, and turning very pale, he looked around for means of escape. But the detective barred the passageway. Cavillon saw that he was fairly caught.

"What do you want with me?" he asked, in a voice tremulous with fright.

"You will be kind enough, my dear monsieur," said Fanferlot, "to excuse the great liberty I take; but I wished to say that M. Bertomy threw you a note this morning. And I am sure you will be kind enough to give it to me."

"Never!" exclaimed Cavillon; and, believing the moment favorable, he suddenly attempted to jerk his arm from under Fanferlot's and escape. But his efforts were vain; the detective's strength was equal to his suavity.

"Don't hurt yourself, young man," he said. "If you persist in being so obstinate, I shall call two policemen, who will take you by each arm, and escort you to the commissary of police; and, once more, I shall be under the painful necessity of searching your pockets, whether you will or not."

Cavillon was devoted to Prosper, and willing to make any sacrifice in his behalf; but he clearly saw that it was worse than useless to struggle any longer, as he could not have time to destroy the note.

"I am in your power," he said, and then suddenly drew from his pocketbook the unlucky note and gave it to the detective. Fanferlot trembled with pleasure as he unfolded the paper. Then he read as follows:

Dear Nina—Follow my instructions instantly, without a moment's hesitation. On the receipt of this note, take everything you have in the house and establish yourself in furnished lodging at the other end of Paris. Do not appear in public, but conceal yourself as much as possible. My life may depend on your obedience. I am accused of robbery, and am about to be arrested. Take with you five hundred francs, which you will find in the secretary. Good by.

"PROSPER.

"This Madame Nina Gypsy is doubtless a friend of M. Bertomy?" he then asked; "and she lives here?"

"You know it well enough, as you saw me go in."

"Exactly; and which floor, if you please?"

"On the first."

During this colloquy, Fanferlot had folded up the note, and slipped it into his pocket.

"A thousand thanks, monsieur, for the information; and, in return, I will relieve you of the trouble of executing your commission. With your permission, I will myself take this note to Madame Gypsy. Now, you had best take my advice and return to your business."

The poor fellow had no sooner turned the corner of the street than Fanferlot

entered No. 9, gave his name to the porter as Prosper Bertomy, went upstairs, and knocked at the first door he came to. It was opened by a servant.

"Is Madame Gypsy at home?"

The groom hesitated; seeing this, Fanferlot showed his note, and said:

"M. Prosper told me to hand this note to madam, and wait for an answer."

Fanferlot was ushered into a little room, furnished in blue and gold silk damask. Heavy curtains darkened the windows and hung in front of the doors. One of the door curtains was pushed aside, and Madame Nina Gypsy stood before him.

## CHAPTER IV.

Madame Gypsy was quite young, small and graceful, with dark complexion and tiny hands and feet. Long curling silk lashes softened the piercing brilliancy of her large black eyes; her lips were full, and her teeth very white. She was ravishing. Her beauty was so startling that the dazzled detective was speechless with admiration.

"Well," he said to himself, as he remembered the noble, severe beauty of Madeleine, "our young gentleman certainly has good taste—very good taste. Two perfect beauties."

After scrutinizing him from head to foot with undisguised contempt, Madame Gypsy said, haughtily:

"What do you want?"

"I am charged, my dear madam," he answered, in his softest tone, "by M. Bertomy, to give you this note. I may be so bold as to claim him as a friend."

The detective slowly drew Prosper's note from his pocket, and, with a bow, presented it to Madame Gypsy. At a glance she read its contents. She turned very red, then very pale.

"Explain yourself," she cried. "What does all this mean? Do you know anything about the contents of this note?"

"Alas! yes, madam; he is accused of taking thousands from the bank safe."

"Prosper steal!" she cried; "what a stupid idea! Why should he steal? Is he not rich?"

"M. Bertomy is not rich, madam; he has nothing but his salary."

"But," she insisted, "I have always seen him have plenty of money; not rich—then—He committed this robbery in order to gratify my extravagant whims."

"Very likely."

"No," she cried, "I regret to say that Prosper would never have stolen for me. One can understand a man robbing a bank to obtain means of bestowing pleasure and luxury upon the woman he loves; but Prosper, who is my cousin, does not love me; he never has loved me. I know what love is. Once I was beloved by an affectionate, true-hearted man, and my own sufferings of the last year make me know how miserable I must have made him by my cold return. Alas! we must suffer ourselves before we can feel for others. No, I am nothing to Prosper; he would not care if—"

"But, then, madam, why—"

"Ah, yes," interrupted Nina, "why?"

You will be very wise if you can answer me. For a year have I vainly sought an answer to this question, so sad to me. He promised my dead mother he would always care for me, and has been a true brother, impoverishing himself probably for my extravagant whims."

Madame Nina was overcome by thoughts of the past, and tears silently coursed down her cheeks. But her despair was only momentary. She started up, and, her eyes sparkling with generous resolution, she cried out:

"But I love him, and I will save him! I will see his master, the miserable wretch who dares to accuse him. I will haunt the judges, and will prove that he is innocent. Come, monsieur, let us start, and I promise you that before sunset he shall be free, or I shall be in prison with him."

"I am at your command, fair lady. Let us go if you desire it; only permit me, while there is yet time, to say that we are very probably going to do great injury to Monsieur Bertomy."

"I cannot remain here inactive, without attempting to contribute in some way to his safety."

"You have it in your power, madam," he said, "to render a great service to him. Obey him, my child," said Fanferlot, in a paternal manner; "it is your duty, your sacred duty."

"Oh, I understand now! Fool that I was for not seeing it before! My presence here, where I have been for a year, would be an overwhelming charge against him. An inventory of my possessions would be taken—of my dresses, laces and jewels—and my luxury would be brought against him as a crime. He would be asked to tell where he obtained so much money to lavish all these elegancies on me."

"That is true, madam."

"Then I must flee, monsieur, at once! Did not M. Bertomy say to the other end of Paris?"

"I know of a hotel, but it might not suit you. It is not elegantly furnished like this room, but upon my recommendation you would be treated like a queen, and, above all, concealed. It is on the other side of the river, Quay Saint Michel, the Archangel kept by Madame Alexandre."

"Here are pen and paper; write your recommendation."

He rapidly wrote, and handed her the letter.

"With these three lines, madam, you can make Madame Alexandre do anything you wish."

Madame Gypsy was about to send for a hack, but Fanferlot said he was in a hurry, and would send her one. He

seemed to be in luck that day, for a hack was passing the door and he hailed it.

"Wait here," he said to the driver, after telling him who he was, "for a little while, the person who is coming down with some trunks. If she tells you to drive her to Quay Saint Michel, crack your whip; if she gives you any other address, get down from your seat and fix your harness. I will keep in sight."

He stepped across the street, and stood in the door of a store. He had not long to wait. In a few minutes the loud cracking of a whip apprised him that Madame Nina had started for the Archangel.

"Aha," said he, gayly, "I hold her, at any rate."

## CHAPTER V.

At the same hour that Madame Nina Gypsy was seeking refuge at the Archangel, so highly recommended by Fanferlot, Bertomy was being entered on the commitment book at the police office.

Since the moment when he had resumed his habitual composure, he had not faltered. But when he was ordered to empty his pockets on the table, and they began to search him, his eyes flashed indignation, and a single tear dropped upon his flushed cheek.

The search would have, perhaps, been carried to the most ignominious lengths, but for the intervention of a middle-aged gentleman, who wore a white cravat and gold spectacles, and was sitting quite at home by the fire. He started with surprise, and seemed much agitated when he saw Prosper brought in by the officer.

In spite of his own troubles, Prosper could not help seeing that he kept his eyes fastened upon him. This man, treated with all the deference due to a superior, was no less a personage than M. Lecocq, the celebrated member of the detective corps. When the men who were searching Prosper were about to take off his boots, saying that a knife blade might be concealed in them, M. Lecocq waved them aside with authority and said:

"You have done enough."

He was obeyed. All the formalities being ended, the unfortunate cashier was taken to a cell; the heavily barred door was swung to and locked upon him; he breathed freely; at last he was alone.

While his whole past was the object of the most minute investigations, Prosper was in prison, in solitary confinement. Five days passed; and the wretched man, tortured by sufferings which quickly break the spirit, sunk into the depths of despair.

On Monday morning, at one o'clock, an hour when the jailer never came, he heard the heavy bolt of his cell pushed back. He ran toward the door. But the sight of a gray-headed man standing on the sill rooted him to the spot.

"Father," he gasped, "father!"

Prosper's astonishment at seeing his father was instantly succeeded by a feeling of great joy. Without reflecting, impelled by tender feeling, he was about to throw himself on his father's bosom. M. Bertomy harshly repulsed him.

"Do not approach me!" he exclaimed. He then advanced into the cell, and closed the door. The father and son were alone together—Prosper, heartbroken, crushed; M. Bertomy, angry, almost threatening.

"You, too," Prosper bitterly cried. "You—you believe me guilty? Oh, father! You overwhelm me, at the moment when I need all my courage; the victim of an odious plot."

"Victim!" cried M. Bertomy, "victim! Dare you utter your insinuations against the honorable man who has taken care of you, loaded you with benefits, and had insured you a brilliant future? It is enough for you to have robbed him; do not calumniate him."

"For pity's sake, father, let me speak."

"I suppose you would deny your benefactor's kindness. Yet you were at one time so sure of his affection, that you wrote me to hold myself in readiness to come to Paris and ask M. Fauvel for the hand of his niece. Was that a lie, too?"

"No," said Prosper, in a choked voice, "no."

"That was a year ago; you then loved Mademoiselle Madeleine; at least, you wrote me that, and the thought of the pure, innocent girl whom you loved did not prevent your entering upon a path of crime."

"Ah, father, you do not know that I was suddenly banished from Madeleine's presence; that I was compelled to avoid her. I became desperate. I sought oblivion, and found shame and disgust. Oh, Madeleine, Madeleine! Everything is against me!" he exclaimed, "but no matter. I will justify myself or perish in the attempt. Human justice is liable to error; although innocent, I may be convicted; so be it. I will undergo my penalty; but people are not kept felons forever."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, father, that I am now another man. My life, henceforth, has an object—vengeance! I am the victim of a vile plot. As long as I have a drop of blood in my veins I will seek its author. And I will certainly find him; and then bitterly shall he expiate all of my cruel suffering. The blow came from the house of Fauvel, and I will live to prove it."

A thousand conflicting emotions seemed to rend the old man's heart. He had resolved to leave, as he had entered, stern and angry; he had not the cruel courage. His heart was breaking. He opened his arms and pressed Prosper to his heart.

"Oh, my son!" he murmured, "heaven grant you have spoken the truth."

(To be continued.)

## Coffee-Drinking in Brazil.

Brazilians are great coffee drinkers. Numerous cups are drunk each day by the average man and woman. The beverage is made very strong and very sweet. It produces an exhilaration of a more intense and lasting kind than beer. Those addicted to this habit become very restless and scarcely able to sit still or stand still even for a moment.



## Baked Apple Dumplings.

Take a quart of flour and work into it a spoonful each of butter and lard. Wet it with a pint of buttermilk containing a spoonful of soda; roll out and cut out circular pieces, using a saucer to determine the size. Have ready some pleasant sour apples and place as many of the slices upon one half of the crust as the other will cover; wet the edges and press them together. Place the dumplings in a baking tin as soon as prepared, prick them with a fork and bake until the apple is cooked. Serve with a hot sauce, or sweetened and flavored cream.

## Caramel Custard.

Turn one-fourth of a cup of sugar into a stewpan, and stir it over the fire until it becomes liquid and brown. Scald a cup and a half of milk, and add the browned sugar. Beat two eggs thoroughly, add to them one-half cupful of cold milk, and turn the mixture slowly, stirring constantly that no lumps form, into the scalding milk. Continue to stir until the custard thickens. Set away to cool and serve in glasses.

## How to Roast Green Corn.

To properly roast green corn, remove all the husks, rub the ears with butter, and season with pepper and salt. Then lay the ears side by side in a flat pan—a dripping pan will do—and put into a very hot oven. Occasionally change the ears in the pan and turn them over, so that they will brown evenly. When sufficiently brown they must be served at once.

## Oatmeal Bread.

Set a sponge over night, as for white bread, and in the morning work into it two cups of slightly salted wheat flour and two cups of oatmeal, with a spoonful of molasses. Knead long and hard, and set to rise. When very light, make into loaves and set in a warm place for an hour or until light. Bake in a steady oven. Cover with paper the first half hour.

## Citron Cheese Cakes.

Boil near a quart of cream; when cold add the yolks of four eggs, well beaten; add this to a curd; blanch and beat two ounces of almonds, about half a dozen bitter; beat them with a little rose water; put all together, with three or four Naples biscuits, some citron shredded fine; sugar to taste; puff paste.

## Tomato Pickles.

Slice a gallon of unpeeled green tomatoes and six large onions and mix. Stir into these a quart of vinegar, a cup of brown sugar, tablespoon each of salt, pepper and mustard seed, a half tablespoon each of ground allspice and cloves. Stew all until the tomatoes are very tender, put into glass jars and seal.

## Spiced Plums.

For seven pounds of plums take three and one-half pounds of brown sugar, one pint of vinegar, one ounce each of cloves, allspice and mace, and two ounces of cinnamon, putting the spice in a thin muslin bag. Cook slowly until the juice is a thick sirup.

## Grape Preserves.

Pulp and boil the grapes until the seeds loosen. Run through a sieve, boil half of the skins in a very little water, put pulp and the boiled skins together, and for every pint of grape add a pound of sugar. Boil the whole for fifteen minutes.

## Rice Muffins.

Into a cup of cold boiled rice beat a quart of milk, three beaten eggs, a tablespoonful of shortening and enough prepared flour to make a soft batter. Pour into greased muffin tins and bake in a quick oven. Serve at once.

## Cottage Cheese Sandwiches.

Rub cottage cheese smooth with a little cream and to every cupful of it add a tablespoonful of minced chives. Mix well and spread between thin slices of buttered, crustless white bread.

## Blackberry Jam.

Allow half a pound of good brown sugar to every pound of fruit; boil the whole together gently for an hour, or till the blackberries are soft, stirring and mashing them well. Put in small jars and tie down.

## Canned String Beans.

String both sides of the beans. Boil until tender in salted water, pack in jars, boil up the liquid and fill the jars to overflowing, sealing immediately.

## Suggestions for the Housewife.

Rub all rusty places on iron with kerosene oil.

In purchasing tinned goods always look whether the head of the tin is concave, a bulging appearance being indicative of decomposition.

# Ayer's

Impure blood always shows somewhere. If the skin, then boils, pimples, rashes. If the nerves, then neuralgia, nervousness, depression. If the

## Sarsaparilla

stomach, then dyspepsia, biliousness, loss of appetite. Your doctor knows the remedy, used for 60 years.

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We like to divine others, but do not like to be divined ourselves.—Rochefoucauld.

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A prominent Southern lady, Mrs. Blanchard, of Nashville, Tenn., tells how she was cured of backache, dizziness, painful and irregular periods by the use of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—Gratitude compels me to acknowledge the great merit of your Vegetable Compound. I have suffered for four years with irregular and painful menstruation, also dizziness, pains in the back and lower limbs, and fitful sleep. I dreaded the time to come which would only mean suffering to me.

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