

Secret of the Plundered Safe

By EMILE GABORIAU

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

As he spoke M. LeCoq took from his desk and unrolled a large sheet of drawing paper. On this paper was photographed the door of M. Fauvel's safe. The scratch was indicated with great exactness.

"Now," said M. LeCoq, here is our scratch. It runs from top to bottom, starting from the hole in the lock, diagonally, and from left to right; that is to say, it terminates on the side next to the private staircase leading to the banker's apartments. Although very deep at the keyhole, it ends in a scarcely perceptible mark."

"Yes, patron, I see that."
"Naturally you thought that this scratch was made by the person who took the money. Let us see if you were right. I have here a little iron box painted with green varnish like M. Fauvel's safe; here it is. Take a key and try to scratch it. The paint is very hard, my friend, and yet that on the safe is still harder and thicker. So you see the scratch you discovered could not have been made by the trembling hand of a thief letting the key slip."

"Whew!" exclaimed Fanferlot, stupefied; "I never should have thought of that. It certainly required great force to make the deep scratch on the safe."

"Yes, but how was that force employed? I have been racking my brain for three days, and only yesterday did I come to a conclusion. Let us examine together and see if our conjectures present enough chances of probability to establish a starting point."

M. LeCoq abandoned the photograph and, walking to the door communicating with his bedroom, took the key from the lock, and, holding it in his hand, said:

"Come here, Fanferlot, and stand by my side; there, very well. Now, suppose that I want to open this door, and you don't want me to open it; when you see me about to insert the key what would be your first impulse?"

"To put my hands on your arm and draw it toward me so as to prevent your introducing the key."

"Precisely so. Now let us try it; go on." Fanferlot obeyed; and the key held by M. LeCoq, pulled aside from the lock, slipped along the door, and traced upon it a diagonal scratch, from top to bottom, the exact reproduction of the one in the photograph.

"Oh, oh, oh!" exclaimed Fanferlot, in three different tones of admiration, as he stood gazing in a reverie at the door.

"What a man you are! I see the scene as if I had been present. Two persons were present at the robbery; one wished to take the money, the other wished to prevent its being taken. That is clear, certain, and it proves that I am correct in thinking the cashier innocent."

"How so?"
"Because, at perfect liberty to open the safe whenever he wished to do so, it is not likely that he would have brought a witness when he intended to commit the theft."

"Well reasoned, Fanferlot. But on this supposition the banker would be equally innocent. Look for the real rogue, the one who opened the safe, and stole the notes, and who is still at large, while others are suspected."

"Impossible, patron—impossible! Don't you know that M. Fauvel and his cashier had keys, and they only? And they always kept these keys in their pockets."

"On the evening of the robbery the banker left his key in the secretary."

"Yes; but the key alone was not sufficient to open the safe; the word must also be known. That name was 'Gypsy.'"

"Which is the name of the cashier's cousin. Now keep your eyes open. The day you find a man sufficiently intimate with Bertomy to be aware of all the circumstances connected with this name, and at the same time on a footing with the Fauvel family which would give him the privilege of entering M. Fauvel's chamber, then, and not till then, you will discover the guilty party. On that day the problem will be solved."

"We shall certainly succeed if you interest yourself in the case."

"Yes, I am interested in it, and during the last four days I have discovered many important facts. But listen to me. I have reasons for not appearing in this affair. No matter what happens, I forbid you mentioning my name."

"I will obey your instructions and be discreet."

"I shall rely upon you. Now, to begin, you must carry this photograph to the judge of instruction. Explain to him as if it were your own discovery, what I have just shown you; repeat for his benefit the scene we have just acted, and I am convinced that this evidence will determine him to release the cashier. Prosper must be at liberty before I can commence my operations."

Fanferlot was joyously picking up his hat to go when M. LeCoq checked him by waving his hand, and said:

"I have not finished. You know how to drive a carriage and manage horses? Very well. As soon as the judge dismisses you return home immediately, make yourself a wig and the complete dress of a valet; and, having dressed yourself, take this letter to the agency on the Rue Delorme. The agent will send you to M. de Clameran, who is looking for a valet, his man having left him yesterday."

"Excuse me if I venture to suggest that you are making a mistake. This Clameran is not the cashier's friend."

"Why do you always interrupt me?" said M. LeCoq, imperiously. "Do what I tell you, and don't disturb your mind about the rest. Clameran is not a friend of Prosper's, I know, but he is the friend of Prosper's brother-in-law, Raoul de Lagors. Why so? Whence the intimacy of these two men of such different ages? That is what I must find out. I must also find out who this ironmaster is, who lives in Paris, and never goes to attend to his furnaces. Through you I will have an eye upon him. He has a carriage; you are to drive it, and you will soon be able to give me an account of his manner of life, and of the sort of people with whom he associates."

"You will be obeyed. Where shall I report to you?"

"I will call on you every day. Until I tell you differently don't step foot in this house; you might be followed. If

anything important should happen send a note to your wife, and she will inform me. Go, and be prudent."

The door closed on Fanferlot as M. LeCoq passed into his bedroom. In the twinkling of an eye he had divested himself of the appearance of a police officer. He took off his stiff cravat and gold spectacles, and removed the close wig from his thick black hair. The official LeCoq had disappeared, leaving in his place the genuine LeCoq whom nobody knew—a handsome young man, with a bold, determined manner, and brilliant, piercing eyes.

Meanwhile Fanferlot did not run, but flew, toward the Palais de Justice. At last he was now able to convince some one that he, Fanferlot, was a man of wonderful perspicacity. His hopes were not deceived. If the judge was not absolutely and fully convinced he admitted the ingenuity of the whole proceeding.

"This decides me," he said, as he dismissed Fanferlot. "I will make out a favorable report to-day; and it is highly probable that the accused will be released to-morrow."

He began at once to write out one of those terrible decisions of "Not proven," which restores liberty, but not honor, to the accused man; which says that he is not guilty, but does not say he is innocent.

CHAPTER IX.

Prosper had been languishing in his lonely cell for nine days, when on Thursday morning the jailer came to inform him of the judge's decision. He was conducted before the officer who had searched him when he was arrested; and the contents of his pockets, his watch, penknife and several articles of jewelry were restored to him; then he was told to sign a receipt.

He was next led across a dark passage, and almost pushed through a door, which abruptly shut upon him. He found himself on the quay; he was alone; he was free, but only acquitted after due trial would restore him to his former position among men.

Having arrived in front of Gypsy's house, he hesitated to cross the threshold. He experienced the timidity of an honest man who is suspected of a crime; he feared to meet a familiar face. However, as he could not remain all day on the pavement, he went in. The jautier uttered a joyful exclamation on seeing him.

"I am delighted to see you again!" he said. "I felt that you would come back as white as snow. When I read in the newspapers that you were accused of robbery I said to every one, 'He is innocent!'"

"Madam has no doubt, left here?" he said; "do you know where she has gone?"

"No, monsieur. On the day of your arrest she sent for a cab, put all her boxes into it, and drove away without saying where she was going. Since then we have heard nothing of her. When your father left this morning at 8 o'clock he told me that one of his friends remained, whom I was to look upon as the master until your return. You know him, doubtless, a stout man, about your height, with red whiskers."

Prosper was greatly astonished. A friend of his father occupying the house! What did that mean? However, he concealed his surprise.

"Yes, I know him," he said. Then, rapidly ascending the staircase, he rang his own bell.

The cashier did not recollect having seen him before.

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance," said the man, with a bow. "That you are surprised to see me here, you were about to observe. I can easily understand. Your father intended to introduce me to you, but he was obliged to leave for Beaucourt this morning. I am glad to say he went away as convinced as I am that you have not taken a son belonging to M. Fauvel. This letter," continued the stout gentleman, "will serve as an introduction, I hope."

The cashier took the letter, opened it, and as he read his face brightened and the blood returned to his cheeks. Having finished the letter, he held out his hand to the stout gentleman, who shook it warmly.

"My father tells me," said Prosper, "that you are one of his best friends. He tells me to place implicit confidence in you and to act entirely on your advice."

"Just so. This morning your father said to me, 'Verduret—that is my name—Verduret, my son is in a painful position. You must get him out of it.' I answered, 'All right, I will do my best.' Now the ice is broken, let us discuss the question. What are you going to do?"

"What am I going to do? I am going to find out the wretch who has caused my ruin, and hand him over to justice—to revenge myself."

"Exactly; and have you any clew to the guilty person?"

"None, and yet I shall succeed, for a man who devotes his whole life to the accomplishment of a task cannot fail."

"Well said, M. Prosper. I fully expected such would be your intention, and I have already been looking into the case. I have formed a plan. To begin with, you must disappear."

"Disappear?" cried the cashier, indignantly. "Disappear! that would be a confession of guilt, would authorize the world to say that I am hiding so as to enjoy undisturbed the stolen fortune."

"Well, what then?" said Red Whiskers. "Did you not say just now that the sacrifice of your life was made? You have an enemy? Some petty imprudence will betray him. But while he sees you standing on the watch he will be on his guard. Let us reflect on the course you should pursue. Now listen. You have a friend, M. de Lagors? Who is this fellow?"

"M. de Lagors, monsieur," said Prosper haughtily. "Is M. Fauvel's nephew; a wealthy young man, handsome, intelligent, cultivated, and the best friend I have."

"Humph!" said M. Verduret. "I shall be delighted to make the acquaintance of one adorned with so many charming qualities. I must let you know that I wrote him a note in your name asking him to come here, and he sent word that

he would be here directly. I must see this young man. Also I have arranged and will submit to you a little plan of conversation."

A ring at the front door interrupted M. Verduret.

"Adieu to my plan; here he is, remember, Prosper," said M. Verduret, in a warning tone, "not one word to this man about your plans, or about me. Pretend to be discouraged, helpless and undecided what to do."

And he disappeared behind a curtain as Prosper ran to open the door. Prosper's portrait of M. de Lagors had not been an exaggerated one. So handsome a face and manly a figure could only belong to a noble character. His first impulse was to throw himself into Prosper's arms.

"Your letter, my dear Prosper," said Raoul, "made me almost ill, I was so frightened by it. I asked myself if you could have lost your mind. Then I left everything to fly to your assistance, and here I am."

Prosper did not seem to hear him; he was preoccupied about the letter he had not written.

"You must not feel discouraged," continued M. de Lagors. "You are young enough to commence life anew. Your friends are still left to you. Rely on me. I am rich, half of my fortune is at your disposal."

"Thanks, Raoul," he said, with emotion, "thank you. But unfortunately all the money in the world would be of no use now. I have made no plans yet. My mind is too confused for me to think."

"I will tell you what to do," replied Raoul, quickly; "you must start afresh; until this mysterious robbery is explained you must keep away from Paris. It will never do for you to remain here. I have been talking about you to Clameran. 'If I were in Prosper's place,' he said, 'I would turn everything into money and embark for America; there I would make a fortune and return to crush with my millions those who have suspected me.'"

"I will think it over," Prosper finally forced himself to say. "I will see. I would like to know what M. Fauvel says."

"My uncle? I suppose you know that I have declined the offer he made me to enter his banking house, and we have almost quarreled. I have not set foot in his house for over a month; but I hear of him occasionally. My uncle, they say, is more distressed by this affair than you are. He does not attend to his business, and wanders about as if he had lost every friend on earth."

"And Mme. Fauvel, and—?" Prosper hesitated—"and Mlle. Madeleine, how are they?"

"Oh," said Raoul, lightly, "my aunt is as plump as ever. As to my handsome, icy cousin, she cannot bring herself down to common matters, because she is entirely absorbed in preparing for the fancy ball to be given day after to-morrow, by the Jandillers. She has discovered, by the Jandillers, a foreigner who has suddenly appeared from no one knows where, who is making a costume of Catherine de Medici's maids of honor; it is to be a marvel of beauty!"

Excessive suffering brings with it a sort of dull insensibility and stupor; and Prosper thought that there was nothing left to be indicted upon him.

"I must leave you now, my dear Prosper; on Saturday I will see these ladies at the ball, and will bring you news of them. Now, do have courage, and remember that, whatever happens, you have a friend in me."

(To be continued.)

ARE TREATED LIKE SERFS.

Servants in Russia Cannot Testify in Court Against Their Masters.

Although serfdom was abolished in Russia many years ago by the first Nicholas, the conditions of the working people there have not greatly improved. The lot of the domestic servant is especially hard. He is hired for one year and is told exactly what his particular duty is to be. He then sticks to that one duty. As long as each servant faithfully performs the special duties of his position all is well, but the neglectful butler or cook or coachman is sent by the employer with a written note to the police judge, who, after carefully investigating the complaints, has a right to order bodily punishment or to write a bad mark in the book kept for this purpose.

In great Russian households often from twenty to fifty servants are kept, and even the middle-class families have from two to four. The pay of these servants varies according to the line of work. While the "chiefs" in the kitchens of wealthy families often receive \$1,500 a year, a cook in an ordinary citizen's employ gets no more than \$60 a year, and a maid of all work never gets more than \$25 a year. At Easter every servant gets a present, generally a suit or dress.

Every other Sunday the servants in a Russian household are entirely free. Their work stops Saturday night after supper, when the servants leave the house not to return until the next Monday morning. The employers never ask where or how the free time is spent.

Russian servants will pilfer. Since Russian ladies leave everything to the care of the servants, the latter do as they please.

The men servants smoke cigars belonging to their masters and pay frequent visits to the wine cellars of the house, but a gentleman would consider it "demeaning" himself to prosecute a servant for this.

The Russian servants will talk about fellow servants, but never about their employers. Even when they quit one place and take service in another family they would never mention anything about their former masters. This discretion goes so far that even the law considers it in Russia the law excludes servants as witnesses against their former or present employers, so long, at least, as those servants are not suspected of having taken part in the crime.

There are only two powers in the world, the sword and the pen; and in the end the former is always conquered by the latter.—Napoleon.

QUEER STORIES

The oldest graduates of Yale and Harvard are ministers.

A Japanese bride gives her wedding presents to her parents as a slight recompense for the trouble they have taken in bringing her up.

The power of an engine in India is sometimes given in elephant instead of horse-power, an elephant-power being equal to twenty-two horse-power.

In England, the annual consumption of Southern fruit amounts to fifteen pounds per head. In Germany it averages not quite three pounds per head.

The average passenger haul on steam railways has increased from twenty-three to twenty-seven miles since electrical lines have been competing for suburban business.

The botanical papers report that De Vries, the great Dutch experimental evolutionist, has by long continued selection produced a variety of clover which has normally four leaves.

India was in possession of a steel secret once, which is lost now. This was the inlaying with gold of steel blades in such a manner that the strength of the blade was not impaired nor its temper spoiled.

An investigation of the Obi and Yenesei Rivers, made under the auspices of the Russian government, has revealed the fact that these streams are navigable by ocean steamers for a distance of 1,000 miles from their mouths.

A Chelsea (England) hospital is mourning the loss of a bequest of \$6,000 through a legal informality. The testator signed his will in his bed room, and the witnesses thoughtlessly carried it into another room before signing it, thus making the document invalid.

An English watchmaker has just finished making a tiny watch in the form of a shirt stud. Its dial is two-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, and it is to be worn with two other studs. By turning the upper stud the watch is wound, while by turning the lower one the hands are adjusted.

More than 8,000 women are employed in the various government offices in Washington, 2,044 of whom have entered the service after competitive examination. Nine hundred of them are paid salaries ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,800 a year, the others being paid the compensation of ordinary clerks—\$900 to \$900 a year.

"Consolation money" in Great Britain now amounts to thousands of pounds annually. The first sum noticed was on March 30, 1780, when \$1,800 was carried to the public account in consequence of a note received by the chancellor. The writer with troubled soul implored him, "as an honest man, to consider the money the property of the nation, and to be so just as to apply it to the use of the state in such a manner that the nation may not suffer by its having been detained, and thus to ease the conscience of an honest man."

INSURES HER LIFE FOR A CLUB.

Chicago Woman Evolves a Strikingly Original Plan of Finance.

Mrs. Pauline Harriette Lyon, secretary of the Woman's Athletic Club, of Chicago, has evolved a strikingly original plan to provide the club with a permanent and palatial home of its own. She has had her life insured for \$350,000 and with the policy as collateral a Chicago banker will advance the amount, which will be used in addition to \$200,000 already on hand for the erection of a magnificent 12-story clubhouse. Forty members of the club, which includes Mrs. Emmons Blaine, Mrs. J. Ogden Armour, Mrs. Harold McCormick and others of equal social and financial prominence, have agreed to pay the premiums on the insurance. The club will have a natatorium, gymnasium, recreation rooms, libraries, fountain room, bowling alleys and numerous sumptuous apartments for Chicago's select women and will be the best fitted club of the kind in existence.



MRS. P. H. LYONS.

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Miss Nellie Holmes, treasurer of the Young Woman's Temperance Association of Buffalo, N. Y., strongly advises all suffering women to rely, as she did, upon Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—Your medicine is indeed an ideal woman's medicine, and by far the best I know to restore lost health and strength. I suffered misery for several years, being troubled with menorrhagia. I would often wake from restless sleep, and in such pain that I suffered for hours before I could go to sleep again. I dreaded the long nights that I suffered for hours before I could go to sleep again. I consulted two different physicians, hoping to get relief, but finding that their medicine did not seem to cure me, I tried your Vegetable Compound. I am glad that I followed her advice, for every ache and pain is gone, and not only this, but my general health is much improved. I have a fine appetite and have gained in flesh. My earnest advice to suffering women is to put away all other medicines and to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."—MISS NELLIE HOLMES, 540 No. Division St., Buffalo, N. Y.

Miss Irene Crosby, prominent in Social Life in East Savannah, Ga., adds her testimonial to the value of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.



DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—It always gives me pleasure to find an article of real value and unquestioned merit. I have found Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound well calculated to relieve and cure the various troubles arising from irregularities and menstrual pains. Much suffering could be spared if we only paid more attention to proper living and diet, but as long as women do not do this, your Vegetable Compound has come to the front as a true friend in need. I have been very pleased indeed with the relief it has brought me. I find that I have perfect health now, and that my mind is also more clear and active since I used your Vegetable Compound. It has been of great benefit to me, and I gladly recommend it. Very sincerely yours, MISS IRENE CROSBY, 313 East Charlton St., East Savannah, Ga."

Remember that every woman is cordially invited to write to Mrs. Pinkham if there is anything about her case or symptoms she does not understand. Mrs. Pinkham's address is Lynn, Mass. Her advice is free, and is cheerfully given to any ailing woman who asks for it.

\$5000 FORFEIT if we cannot forthwith produce the original letters and signatures of above testimonials, which will prove their absolute genuineness. Lydia E. Pinkham Med. Co., Lynn, Mass.

Cause and Effect.
"Now, that is what I like to see," observed the rural merchant to the proprietor of the great department store. "All your clerks are full of vim and energy."
"Yes," replied the proprietor with a sarcastic smile. "We close at noon to-day and they are getting ready to go out."
Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Heredity.
Binks—Speaking of heredity, do you remember Forrester, who bought some wild land and turned it into a farm?
Winks—Yes, he was the inventor of a very effective stump puller.
Binks—Just so. Well, his son is a very successful dentist.

Muscular Faith.
Mrs. Meeker—I don't take any stock in these faith cures brought about by the laying on of hands.
Mrs. Strongum—Well, I do. I cured my little boy of the cigarette habit in that way.

Miseries of Wealth.
Binks—There is a man who can afford to hang his overcoat on a fifty-dollar nail rack, instead of suspending it from a hall in the wall.
Winks—How do you know?
Binks—His overcoat is humpbacked.

ABSOLUTE SECURITY.

Genuine Carter's Little Liver Pills.

Must Bear Signature of *Dr. J. C. Wood*

See Fac-Simile Wrapper Below.

Very small and as easy to take as sugar.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

FOR HEADACHE. FOR DIZZINESS. FOR BILIOUSNESS. FOR TORPID LIVER. FOR CONSTIPATION. FOR SALLOW SKIN. FOR THE COMPLEXION.

Price 25 Cents. GENUINE MUST BEAR SIGNATURE OF DR. J. C. WOOD. Purely Vegetable. *Dr. J. C. Wood*

CURE SICK HEADACHE.

CASTORIA

For Infants and Children. The Kind You Have Always Bought

Bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Wood*

So Convenient. Mrs. Urban—How you must enjoy living in the country. I suppose you can get all the fresh fruit and vegetables you want.
Mrs. Annex—Oh, yes. Such a nice pedler comes out from the city three times a week.—Brooklyn Life.

PISO'S CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.

It cures where all else fails. Most Coughs, Whooping Cough, Hoarseness, Asthma, etc. Use in time. Sold by druggists.