

Secret of the Plundered Safe

By EMILE GABORIAU

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

But in the middle of the night all the symptoms suddenly changed for the worse. The pain in the head was succeeded by a fearful oppression, and the sick man thus suffered torture trying to get his breath; daybreak found him still tossing restlessly from pillow to pillow. When the doctor came early in the morning he appeared very much surprised at this change for the worse. He inquired if he had not administered an overdose of morphia. Manuel said that he had put the blister on his master, and the doctor's directions had been accurately followed.

The doctor, after having examined Manuel, and found his breathing heavy and irregular, prescribed a heavy dose of sulphate of quinine; he then retired, saying he would return the next day.

But Manuel grew no better. In spite of the most careful nursing his symptoms changed, but showed no improvement. Each attack was more violent than the preceding.

On the fourteenth day of his illness, after lying in a stupor for several hours, he revived sufficiently to make Louis promise to carry on the ironworks, embraced him for the last time, and sunk back on his pillow in a dying state.

Now, Louis was in reality a millionaire. Two weeks later, having made arrangements with the engineer in charge of the iron works to attend to everything during his absence, he took his seat in the train for Paris. He had sent the following telegram to Raoul the night previous:

"I will see you to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXII.

Although now immensely rich, M. de Clameran resolved to make no change in his style of living, but returned to his apartments at the Hotel du Louvre. Louis' dream, the height of his ambition, was to be ranked among the great manufacturers of France. He was proud of being called "iron-founder" than of his marquisate. Louis now thirsted for the homage of the world. All the badly digested humiliations of the past weighed upon him. He had suffered so much contempt and scorn from his fellow men that he burned to avenge himself. After a disgraceful youth he longed to live a respected and honored old age.

The first interview between the accomplished took place at the Hotel du Louvre. Raoul, having a practical turn of mind, said he thought they both ought to be contented with the result already obtained, and that it would be folly to try and grasp anything more.

"What more do we want?" he asked his uncle. "We now possess over a million; let us divide it, and keep quiet. We had better be satisfied with our good luck, and not tempt Providence."

But this moderation did not suit Louis. "I am rich," he replied, "but I desire more than wealth. I am determined to marry Madeleine. I swear she shall be my wife, and I will love her as my own life; and then, as the nephew of the most eminent banker in Paris, I at once gain high position and public consideration."

"I tell you, uncle, your courtship will involve you in great risks." "I don't care if it does. I choose to run them. My intention is to share my fortune with you; but I will not do so till the day after my wedding. Madeleine's fortune will then be yours."

"You don't seem to anticipate any difficulty in carrying out your wishes," he said, disconcerted; "how are you to account for your suddenly acquired fortune?"

"The banker, his wife and Madeleine must be informed that Manuel of Orleans wished to leave his fortune to our family. Five days hence I will call on M. Fauvel, and confirm the notification sent him by my notary at Orleans that the money deposited in the bank now belongs to me. I will ask him to keep the money until I call for it, as I have no occasion for it at present. You, who are so distrustful, my good nephew, may regard this deposit as a guarantee of my sincerity."

"We will talk of that another time. Go on."

"Then I will go to Mme. Fauvel and say: 'Being very poor, my dear madam, necessity compelled me to claim your assistance in the support of my brother's son, who is also yours. This youth is worthless and extravagant.'"

"Thanks, my good uncle."

"He has poisoned your life when he should have added to your happiness. He is a constant anxiety and sorrow to your maternal heart. I have come to offer my regrets for your past trouble and to assure you that you will have no annoyance in the future. I am now rich, and henceforth take the whole responsibility of Raoul upon myself. I will provide handsomely for him."

"Is that what you call a scheme?" "You will see whether it is or not. After listening to this speech, Madame Fauvel will feel inclined to throw herself in my arms by way of expressing her gratitude and joy. She will refrain, however, on account of her niece. She will ask me to relinquish my claim on Madeleine's hand, now that I am rich. I will roundly tell her, No. She has been promised to me, and I must insist upon this one article of our agreement. This must be the price of my silence. And, to prove that I am not influenced by fortune, I give you my sacred promise that the day after the wedding I will settle on Raoul twenty-five thousand per annum."

Louis expressed himself with such convincing candor that Raoul, an artist in knavery, was charmed and astonished. "Beautifully done," he cried, clapping his hands with glee. "That last sentence will create a chasm between Madame Fauvel and her niece. The promise of a fortune for me will certainly bring my mother over to our side."

"I hope so," said Louis, with pretended modesty. "But remember you must seem to receive any assistance from me. You must declare that you will leave all privations, want, famine even, rather than accept a sou from a base man whom you hate and despise. But you know exactly what you are to say. I can rely upon you for good effect."

"No one can surpass me when I am interested in my part."

"But this disinterestedness need not prevent you from resuming your dissipations. You must gamble, bet, and lose more money than you ever did before. You must increase your demands, and say that you must have money at all costs. You need not account to me for any money you can extort from her."

"I can promise you, no time shall be wasted."

"Now listen to what you are to do, Raoul. Before the end of three months you must have exhausted the resources of these two women. You must force from them every franc they can raise, so that they will be wholly unable to procure money to supply your increasing demands. In three months I must find them penniless, absolutely ruined, without even a jewel left."

Raoul was startled at the passionate vindictive tones of Louis' voice as he uttered these last words.

"The day on which you lead Mme. Fauvel and her niece to the extreme of the precipice, pointed out its dark depths, and convinced them that they are irretrievably lost, I shall appear, and rescue them. Why, it will be the crowning scene of such grandeur, such lofty magnanimity, that Madeleine will be touched, will forget her past enmity, and regard me with favorable eyes. When she finds that it is her sweet self, and not her money, that I want, she will soften. No true woman can be indifferent to a grand passion. I don't pretend to say that she will love me at first; but, if she will only consent to be mine, I ask for nothing more."

Raoul was shocked at this cold-blooded perversity of his uncle, but Clameran showed his immense superiority in wickedness, and the apprentice admired the master.

"You would certainly succeed, uncle," he said, "were it not for the cashier. Between you and Madeleine, Prosper will always stand; if not in person, certainly in memory."

"I don't mind Prosper or attach any importance to him."

"But she loves him."

"So much the worse for him. Six months hence she will despise him. He is already morally ruined, and at the proper time I will make an end of him socially. With your aid I will so cover him with disgrace and infamy that Madeleine will drive every thought of him from her mind, and her love will turn to hate."

Louis' tone of rage and vengeance startled Raoul and made him regard the affair in a worse light than ever.

"You have given me a dastardly role to play," he said, after a long pause. "Still, I have never been rich enough to be honest, but I must say it goes hard with me to torture two defenseless, frightened women and ruin the character of a poor fellow who regards me as his best friend. It is a low business."

"You are the most absurd, ridiculous fool I ever met," cried Louis. "An opportunity occurs for us to make an immense fortune. All we have to do is to stretch out our hands and take it when you must needs prove refractory, like a whimpering baby. I suppose you prefer theft on a small scale, stealing by dribbles. And where will your system lead you? To the almshouse of the police station. You prefer living from hand to mouth, supported by Mme. Fauvel, having small sums doled out to you to pay your little gambling debts."

"I am neither ambitious nor cruel."

"And suppose Mme. Fauvel dies to-morrow. What will become of you? Will you go cringing up to the widower and implore him to continue your allowance?"

"Enough said," cried Raoul, angrily interrupting his uncle. "I never had an idea of retreating. This arrangement suits me very well."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Reaching Paris at 9 o'clock in the evening, not by the Lyons road, as he had said, but by the Orleans train, M. Verduret hurried up to the Archangel, where he found the cashier impatiently awaiting him.

"You are about to hear some rich developments," he said to Prosper, "and see how far back into the past one has to seek for the primary cause of a crime. All things are linked together and dependent upon each other in this world of ours. Valentine de la Verberie is published in 1896 for the secrets of 1840. Nothing is neglected or forgotten, when stern retribution asserts her sway. Listen."

As Prosper listened to the narrative of events happening twenty years back it sounded more like romance than a statement of plain facts. All these ingenious explanations might be logical, but what foundation did they possess? Might they not be the dreams of an excited imagination? M. Verduret did not finish his report until 4 o'clock in the morning; then he cried with an accent of triumph:

"And now they are on their guard, and sharp, wary rascals, too; but they won't escape me. Before a week is over, Prosper, you will be publicly exonerated and will come out of this scrape with flying colors. I have promised your father you shall. And now what have you been doing during my absence? Have you heard any news?"

At this question Prosper turned crimson. But he knew that it would never do to keep silent about his imprudent step.

"Alas!" he stammered, "I read in a newspaper that Clameran was about to marry Madeleine, and I acted like a fool."

"What did you do?" inquired Verduret, anxiously.

"I wrote an anonymous letter to M. Fauvel."

M. Verduret here brought his clinched fist down upon the little table near by, with such violence that the thin plank was shattered. His cheerful face in an instant clouded over.

"What folly!" he exclaimed, "how could you go and ruin everything?"

He arose from his seat, and strode up and down the room, oblivious of the tenants below, whose windows shook with every angry stamp of his foot.

"It was night, monsieur," he hesitatingly said, "and having a violent headache I took a walk along the quay, thinking there was no risk in my entering a cafe; there I picked up a paper and read the dreadful announcement."

"Did you not promise to trust everything to me?"

"You were absent, monsieur, and you yourself might have been surprised by an unexpected—"

"Only fools are ever surprised into committing a piece of folly," cried M. Verduret, impatiently. "To write an anonymous letter! Do you know to what you expose me? Breaking a sacred promise made to one of the few persons whom I highly esteem among my fellow beings. I shall be looked upon as a liar, a cheat—I who—"

He abruptly stopped, as if afraid to trust himself to speak further; after calming down a little he turned to Prosper and said:

"The best thing we can do is to try and repair the harm you have done."

As M. Verduret had anticipated, Prosper's letter had a terrible effect upon M. Fauvel. It was a terrible blow to a man whose life hitherto had been an unbroken chain of prosperity, who could recall the past without one bitter regret, without remembering any sorrow deep enough to bring forth a tear.

What! his wife deceive him! And among all men, to choose one vile enough to rob her of her jewels, and force her to be his accomplice in the ruin of an innocent young man! After a long and painful meditation the banker finally decided to wait, and watch his wife. There was one simple means of ascertaining whether the diamonds had been pawned. If the letter lied in this instance he would treat it with the scorn it deserved. If, on the other hand, it could prove to be true! Hurrying into Madame Fauvel's room in her absence, he opened the door of the chiffonier, where she kept her jewels.

The last dozen or more leather and velvet boxes, containing superb sets of jewelry which he had presented to her, were gone! Twelve boxes remained. He nervously opened them. They were all empty. The anonymous letter had told the truth!

Nothing but death could wipe out an injury of this nature. But the very bitterness of his resentment enabled him to restrain himself until the time for punishment came. With grim satisfaction he promised himself that his acting would be as successful as theirs.

The next day he reaped the fruit of his prudence. Among the letters which his valet brought him at noon was one bearing the postmark of Vesinet. He carefully opened the envelope and read:

"Dear Aunt—It is imperatively necessary for me to see you to-day; so do not fail to come to Vesinet. I will explain why I give you this trouble, instead of calling at your house."

"I have them now!" cried M. Fauvel, trembling with satisfaction at the near prospect of vengeance.

Eager to lose no time, he opened a drawer, took out a revolver and examined the hammer to see if it worked easily.

He imagined himself alone, but a vigilant eye was watching his movements. Gypsy, who had been instructed by M. Verduret, stationed herself at the keyhole of the study door, and saw all that occurred.

M. Fauvel laid the pistol on the mantelpiece, and nervously resealed the letter, which he then took to the box where the letters were usually left, not wishing any one to know that Raoul's letter had passed through his hands. He was only absent two minutes, but, inspired by the imminence of the danger, Gypsy darted into the study and rapidly extracted the balls from the revolver.

"Thank heaven!" she murmured; "this peril is averted, and M. Verduret will now perhaps have time to prevent a murder. I must send Cavallion to tell him."

She hurried into the bank, and sent the clerk with a message, telling him to leave it with Mme. Alexander, if M. Verduret had left the hotel.

(To be continued.)

Origin of the Monetary Names.

"There has been a scarcity of small change of late," said C. M. Binghamton, for 40 years with the United States Treasury Department. "All sorts of reasons are assigned to explain this condition, but, whatever the excuse, it is vexatious. However, it is not so bad now in the way of exchanges as it was in the olden times."

The early Italians used cattle instead of coin. A person would sometimes send for change for a 1,000-pound bullock, when he would receive a 25-pound sheep, or, perhaps, if he wanted very small change, there would be a few lambs sent back. The inconvenience of keeping a flock of sheep at one's banker's led to the introduction of bullion.

"People often wonder where certain monetary names came from. I'll tell a few of them."

"Formerly every gold watch weighed so many 'carats,' from which it became usual to call a silver watch a 'turnip.'"

"Troy weight" is derived from the extremely heavy responsibility which the Trojans were under to their creditors.

"The Romans were in the habit of tossing up their coins in the presence of their legions, and if a piece of money went higher than the top of the ensign's flag it was pronounced to be 'above the standard.'"—Louisville Herald.

Long Draw Out.

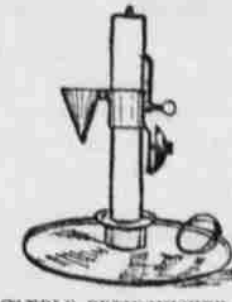
Wife—Did you notice how full of his subject our pastor was this morning?

Husband—Yes; and I also noticed how slow he was in emptying himself of it.



Candle Extinguisher.

A great many people who live in the larger cities and towns, and therefore can obtain gas for lighting and heating purposes, do not realize that there are many who live in the country or the outer sections of the cities who still have to depend on candles or lamps to furnish artificial light. The novel contrivance shown in the illustration will be of especial interest to the latter, but it should, nevertheless, on account of the simplicity and



CANDLE EXTINGUISHER.

novelty of the arrangement of the parts and the unique way in which they work, is interesting to others. There is always great danger in carrying a lighted lamp, especially in going up or down stairs, and so many people realize this danger that they prefer to use candles. The device shown here is simply an extinguisher for candles, being adjusted to extinguish the candle after a predetermined amount of the light has been consumed. An alarm bell is attached to the extinguisher, so that it may be sounded a few minutes before the extinguisher can operate to enable the user to adjust it. The cap on the left of the handle is in the form of a hollow cone, pivotally hinged to the cylindrical bracket which is secured to the candle. A small prong projects upward from this bracket, resting against the candle, while another pivot pin on the opposite side presses into the candle a short distance above the prong. This pivot pin works in connection with a striking head for the bell, so that when the candle burns to the pivot pin the latter is released, permitting the head to strike the bell. When the candle burns further down to the prong, a coiled spring releases the cup, which rises and descends over the flame of the candle, extinguishing it.

George Stevenson, of Dunedin, New Zealand, is the patentee.

Storm Shield for Carriages.

Driving, when the weather is fine and clear, is certainly beneficial to old and young alike, and also an exceedingly pleasant recreation for those who are fortunate enough to be able to enjoy such pastimes. It is also a pleasure, when the weather is propitious, to those who are compelled to drive around from place to

place on business, but on rainy or stormy days it is entirely a different matter, as it is practically impossible to keep dry and comfortable. For doctors and others whose duties necessitate their going out in the carriage every day, no matter what the weather may be, the storm shield shown in the illustration would be of great value. The construction is such that it can readily be attached or detached from a buggy top, and when lowered excludes the rain and wind, at the same time giving the driver free access to the reins outside the storm shield. This shield can be made of any suitable material and is supported on uprights, as shown in the picture, fastened by means of hooks on the tops and sides. A rubber drawing string in the bottom of the shield holds it taut. On the front of the buggy top two hooks are placed, to which the shield can be attached by means of straps when not in use, and also when the occupants of the carriage desire to get out.

Edward S. Lynd, of Orleans, Ind., is the patentee.

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An Honest Opinion.

Mineral, Idaho, Nov. 14.—(Special.)—That a sure cure has been discovered for those sciatic pains that make so many lives miserable, is the firm opinion of Mr. D. S. Colson, a well known resident of this place, and he does not hesitate to say that cure is Dodd's Kidney Pills. The reason Mr. Colson is so firm in his opinion is that he had those terrible pains and is cured. Speaking of the matter he says:

"I am only too happy to say Dodd's Kidney Pills have done me lots of good. I had awful pains in my hip so I could hardly walk. Dodd's Kidney Pills stopped it entirely. I think they are a grand medicine."

All Sciatic and Rheumatic pains are caused by uric acid in the blood. Dodd's Kidney Pills make healthy kidneys and healthy kidneys strain all the uric acid out of the blood. With the cause removed there can be no rheumatism or sciatica.

Opal Fossil of a Shark.

Since they were first discovered the famous opal fields at White Cliffs, N. S. W., have yielded many curious fossils, particularly those of prehistoric marine life. But the latest discovery is a most extraordinary one, and will prove of the deepest interest to the scientific world.

It is that of a fossilized, or rather opalized, member of the shark family, which was found on block No. 6, at a depth of thirty-five feet from the surface. The Sydney press says that the specimen measures 3 feet 6 inches from the snout to the tip of the tail. The body is in seven sections, the circumference of the largest of which (the head and shoulder portion) is eighteen inches; each section is six inches in length.

The deeply indented eye-sockets show plainly, "and thin veins of purple opal encircle the fish from tip to tip." At the mouth these veins make an oblong and clearly defined course, though the continuity is occasionally broken. No particulars as to weight are given, but as the fossil has been sent to London these and other matters of interest will soon be determined. It was purchased from the finders by an opal buyer.

Two Missouri Towns.

When the presidential struggle between Clay and Jackson was at its height it is related that a band of emigrants from Kentucky and the then other Western States commenced to settle on the north side of the Missouri River and called their county Clay and the county seat Liberty.

At the same time another lot of emigrants from Virginia and other Southern States pitched their tents on the south side of the Big Muddy and called their county Jackson and the capital Independence. And so it remains to this day. Clay stood for liberty and Jackson for independence.—Oak Grove (Mo.) Banner.

Soul Row.

"Madam, your husband has been murdered and robbed."

"Just my luck! I forgot to go through his pockets last night!"—Town Topics.

Richard Croker recently sent a message from Wantage, England, saying he was rapidly forgetting all he knew about New York politics.

Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soil; and the heart of man knoweth none more fragrant.—Homes Ballou.

The banana produces to the acre forty-four times more food than the potato and 130 times more than wheat.

Some of the beauties of Persia decorate their faces by painting figures of animals and insects upon them.

RUSSIAN PRACTICE WITH LAND MINES.



In the battle of Liao-Yang and in the general engagement in the vicinity of Mukden the Russians attempted to check the Japanese advance by mining the ground over which the assailants were expected to charge. Several attacks upon Port Arthur were repulsed in like manner. The above picture shows the effect of an explosion of a land mine.

Most Miserable of Men.

Entombed in a grim castle on the outskirts of Lisbon are some of the most miserable men on earth. These are the inmates of Portugal's prison of silence. In this building everything that human ingenuity can suggest to render the lives of its prisoners a horrible, maddening torture is done. The corridors, piled tier on tier five stories high, extend from a common center like the spokes of a huge wheel.

Man Against Man.

When Senator Hanna, as chairman of the National Republican Committee, was conducting the campaign in 1900 he was annoyed by a man who applied for the position of messenger at the national headquarters. The man

called to see the Senator four days in succession to present his application and urge his claims.

After his fourth visit Senator Hanna sent for the man who was serving as messenger. "You saw that man who was here just now?" inquired Hanna.

"Yes, sir," said the messenger. "Do you know what he wants?"

"No, sir."

"Well, he wants your place, and if I see him again he will get it."

Senator Hanna never saw the persistent applicant again.

Every girl should have a long braid so that when her brother wants to pull something, the cat's tail will get an occasional rest.



Mrs. Rosa Adams, niece of the late General Roger Hanson, C.S.A., wants every woman to know of the wonders accomplished by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—I cannot tell you with pen and ink what good Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound did for me, suffering from the lils peculiar to the sex, extreme lassitude and that all gone feeling. I would rise from my bed in the morning feeling more tired than when I went to bed, but before I used two bottles of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, I began to feel the buoyancy of my younger days returning, became regular, could do more work and not feel tired than I had ever been able to do before, so I continued to use it until I was restored to perfect health. It is indeed a boon to sick women and I heartily recommend it. Yours very truly, MRS. ROSA ADAMS, 819 12th St., Louisville, Ky."—\$2000 forfeit if original of above letter proving genuineness cannot be produced.

FREE MEDICAL ADVICE TO WOMEN.

Don't hesitate to write to Mrs. Pinkham. She will understand your case perfectly, and will treat you with kindness. Her advice is free, and the address is Lynn, Mass. No woman ever regretted having written her, and she has helped thousands.