

# 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 Menoul, 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 Menoul 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, and sank 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's 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 accomplices 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! In the first place, I madly love her; 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, disconcertedly; "how are you to account for your suddenly acquired fortune?"

"The banker, his wife and Madeleine must be informed that Menoul of Oloron 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 Oloron 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 scorn to receive any assistance from me. You must declare that you will have 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 acting."

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

"But this disinterestedness need not prevent you from resuming your dissipated life. 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's 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 our drama. I will play my part with 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's 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 dribblets. And where will your system lead you? To the almshouse or 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."

Finally, after long debate and much recrimination the matter was arranged, and they shook hands before separating.

This was the cruel scheme. How it was executed to the final point of forcing Mme. Fauvel to assist Raoul in robbing her own husband's safe we have seen.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Reaching Paris at 9 o'clock in the evening, not by the Lyons train, 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 you 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 clenched 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 letter!"

"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 hours.

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 should 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."

"RAOUL."

"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. Gypse, who had been instructed by M. Verduret, stationed herself at the keyhole of the study door, and saw all that was occurring.

M. Fauvel laid the pistol on the mantelpiece, and nervously reread 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, Gypse 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 Drawn 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.

# IN THE REALM OF RELIGION



## A Modern Saint.

"I think if I were in her place I should want to be told," said the voice of the old doctor.

"But she is so young!" replied her mother, and her voice broke into a sob.

"Yes, she is young," said the doctor, "but she has character, and I think the truth will help her to adapt herself to her life. She will get well the faster for being told the truth. Bad as it is, it isn't the worst."

So the wise doctor's advice was taken, and the 14-year-old girl was told that she would recover from the terrible illness, but that when she went from her sick room it would be with her pretty, girlish figure twisted into the ugly form of the humpbacked woman. Could she bear it? At first it seemed a doubtful battle.

The little invalid was silent for hours at a time. The tears came often, and her depression of spirit reacted unfavorably on her frail body.

But there came a day when the girl's whole nature gathered itself to meet the inevitable. From that time there were no tears, no complaints, no apparent thought of herself. She absorbed herself in others. Her room became the center of the whole house. The children brought their joys and their sorrows to her. There was always cheer and to spare.

Years went by, and at school and college the humpbacked girl made many friends. When she came to be a teacher, no room in the great public school was so popular as hers. The number of girls who "took a fresh start" under her influence was legion. There seemed to be no limit to her activity and her interest. Although her strength was often taxed to the utmost, her enthusiasm never flagged.

She had the true missionary spirit. Wherever outside her own small circle there was a soul that needed light and guidance—whether it was in the slums of her city, in a mining town in Arizona, or in the heart of China—there the warmth of her nature reached out to that soul and gave help.

She died at home at the age of fifty. The city had never seen such a funeral. There was no display of flowers or of music, but the great church was thronged to the street with friends who mourned her, and for whom the world would be forever a better place that she had lived in it. It was a triumphant funeral—as if for a conquering hero. Who should say that she was not one.

The battle had been set in the girl's sick room, when she was first told the terrible truth. It had been waged year after year. If there was ever defeat, it was covered by a new victory before it was known. No crusader was ever more loyal. No missionary was ever more self-forgetting.—Youth's Companion.

## India.

Most eloquently and pathetically do these figures set forth the intellectual and spiritual needs of India, containing one-fifth of all the earth's inhabitants:

Forces of darkness:  
30 centuries of Hinduism.  
288,000,000 population,  
246,000,000 unable to read or write.  
40,000,000 women secluded in zenanas.

27,000,000 widows.  
6,000,000 under 14.  
2,500,000 wives under 10.  
250,000 widows under 14.  
14,000 widows under 4.  
50,000,000 outcasts (pariahs).

Forces of light:  
100 years of Protestant Christianity.  
50 years of enlightened British rule.  
25,000 miles of railroad.  
25,000 miles of irrigating canals.  
50,000 miles of macadamized roads.  
53,000 miles of telegraph.  
5,000,000 students in 150,000 schools.  
30,000 university students.  
122 hospitals, 164 dispensaries, 184 physicians, 65 leper asylums.  
84 translations of the Bible.  
18,000 Protestant missionaries.  
391 branches of Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A.

397 societies of Christian Endeavor.  
2,923,349 Christians, Protestant and Catholic.—Reformed Church Record.

## Courage.

The greater part of the courage that is needed in the world is not of a heroic kind. Courage may be displayed in everyday life as well as on historic fields of action. The common need is for courage to be honest, courage to resist temptation, courage to speak the truth, courage to be what we really are, and not to pretend to be what we are not, courage to live honestly within our means, and not dishonestly upon the means of others.

## No Christ, or No Home.

In the city of Kuang-uen, Si-chuen, which is said to be a specially idolatrous city, a woman recently burned all her idols and her ancestral tablet

at the grave of her deceased husband, who during his lifetime forbade her destroying the idols. When she became released from his yoke she embraced her earliest opportunity of giving effect to her long cherished desire. The position of women in China being what it is, it is not often easy for them to follow their convictions when they are out of harmony with those of their husbands. When the question of believing the gospel is involved, it is frequently a choice between home and religion.—China's Millions.

## Do Not Fret.

Let us not live fretful lives. God will never stretch the line of our duty beyond the measure of our strength. We ought to live with the grace of the flowers, with the joy of the birds, with the freedom of wind and love. Without question this is God's ideal of human life. We are expected to do no more than we can do with the time granted us, with the tools, the material, and the opportunity at our disposal. We serve no Egyptian taskmaster who watches to double the tale of bricks, but a generous Lord who waits to make our duty our delight.—Rev. William L. Watkinson.

## Open the Doors.

You close your doors and brood over your own miseries and the wrongs people have done you; whereas, if you would but open those doors, you might come out into the light of God's truth, and see that His heart is as clear as sunlight toward you. If you would let Him teach you, you would find your perplexities melt away like the snow in the spring till you could hardly believe you ever felt them.—George Macdonald.

There is a current popular belief that a child will grow out of his bow-legs, and for that reason treatment is often neglected, to the little patient's detriment. It is true that there is a natural tendency to spontaneous straightening of bowed legs, but the tendency is frequently thwarted by the weight of the child. It is better, therefore, never to depend upon nature's healing efforts, but to assist these and accelerate them by properly conducted manipulations, which are made just as one would straighten a bent stick. The mother should carry them out under the doctor's instructions at regular hours three or four times a day. The child ought also to wear properly fitted braces to support the legs, and especially the knees, while it stands and runs about.

In neglected cases in adults, when the bones are set, an operation is the only remedy. The operation consists in forcibly breaking the bones, or in dividing them with a chisel, and then keeping them in splints until they have set in a straight position. But this operation is an avoidable misfortune, happily, if the case is conscientiously taken in hand early in life and under the supervision of the physician.—Youth's Companion.

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