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# CASE 113

By EMILE GABORIAU.

## CHAPTER I.

ON the Paris evening papers of Tuesday, Feb. 28, 1895, the following announcement appeared:

"A great robbery, committed against one of our most honorable bankers, M. Andre Fauvel, caused intense excitement this morning throughout the neighborhood of the Rue de Provence. The robbers with extraordinary skill and boldness succeeded in making an entrance to the offices, in forcing the lock of a safe that has heretofore been considered impregnable and in getting away with the enormous sum of 350,000 francs in bank notes. The police, immediately informed of the robbery, displayed their accustomed zeal, and their investigations have been crowned with success. Already, it is said, one P. B., a clerk in the bank, has been arrested, and there is every reason to hope that his accomplices will be soon overtaken by the hand of justice."

But this time the newspapers were inaccurate in their information. The sum of 350,000 francs certainly had been stolen from M. Andre Fauvel's bank, but not in the manner described. The following are the facts as they were related with scrupulous exactness at the preliminary examination:

The banking house of Andre Fauvel, 87 Rue de Provence, is an important establishment and, owing to its large force of clerks, presents very much the appearance of a government department. On the ground floor are the offices, with windows on the street, protected by strong iron bars, disconcerting all burglarious attempts. M. Fauvel's private office is on the first floor over the offices and leads into his private apartments. This private office communicates directly with the bank by means of a narrow staircase, which opens into the room occupied by the head cashier. This room, which in the bank goes by the name of the "cashier's office," is proof against all attacks, no matter how skillfully planned. Fastened in the wall by enormous iron clamps is a safe, a formidable and fantastic piece of furniture, calculated to fill with envy the poor devil who easily carries his fortune in a pocketbook.

The safe is opened by a curious little key. But this is the least important part of the mechanism. Five movable steel buttons, upon which are engraved all the letters of the alphabet, constitute the real power of this ingenious piece of furniture. Before inserting the key into the lock the letters on the buttons must be in the exact position in which they were placed when the safe was locked. In M. Fauvel's bank, as everywhere, the safe was always closed with a word which was changed from time to time. This word was known only to the head of the bank and the cashier. They each had also a key. There was but one danger—that of forgetting the word which was indispensable.

On the morning of the 28th of February the employees were all busy at their various desks about half past 9 o'clock when a middle aged man of very dark complexion and military bearing, in deep mourning, presented himself in the office adjoining the safe, where he found five or six employees. He asked to see the cashier. He was told that the cashier had not yet arrived and that the cash room was not opened till 10 o'clock, a notice of which was posted in the entry.

"I thought," he said in a tone of cool impertinence, "to find some one here ready to attend to my business, having arranged the matter with M. Fauvel yesterday. I am Count Louis de Clameran, an iron maker at Oloron, and have come to draw 300,000 francs deposited in this bank by my late brother, whose heir I am. It is surprising that no orders were given about it."

Neither the title of the noble man-

### Whose Say-so is Best?

With nearly all medicines put up for sale through drug stores, one has but to make the maker's say-so alone as to their curative value. Of course, such testimony is not that of a disinterested party and accordingly is not to be given the same credit as if written from disinterested motives. Dr. Pierce's medicine, however, forms a single and therefore striking exception to this rule. Their claims to the confidence of invalids does not rest solely upon their maker's say-so or praise. Their ingredients are matters of public knowledge, being printed on each separate bottle wrapper. Thus invalid sufferers are taken into Dr. Pierce's full confidence. Scores of leading medical men have written enough to fill volumes in praise of the curative value of these several ingredients entering into these well-known medicines.

Amongst these writers we find such medical lights as Prof. Finley Killingswood, M. D., of the same city; Prof. John A. Schuler, M. D., of Cincinnati, Ohio; Prof. John King, M. D., of Cincinnati, Ohio; Dr. G. W. Coe, of New York; Dr. Harlow of Jefferson Medical College, of Pa., and Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription cure the worst cases of female weakness, prostratingly, is not retrograde, induces irregularities, cures painful periods, dries up disagreeable and weakening drains, some of which are pelvic attacks and a multitude of other diseases peculiar to women. Near in mind to the "Favorite Prescription" of a regularly educated physician of large experience in the cure of women's peculiar ailments, who frankly and confidently takes his patients into his full confidence by telling them just what his "Prescription" is composed of. Of no other medicine put up for women's special ailments and sold through druggists, can it be said that the maker is not afraid to deal thus frankly, openly and honestly, by letting the patient using the same know exactly what she is taking.

Sick women are invited to consult Dr. Pierce, by letter, free. All correspondence is guarded as sacredly secret and womanly confidences are protected by professional privacy. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

How to preserve health and beauty is told in Dr. Pierce's Common Sense Medical Advice. It is Prof. H. W. H. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y., 31 one-cent stamps to cover mailing only; in cloth binding 50 stamps. Dr. Pierce's Peppermint Cure constipation, even a paper was misplaced. The safe was open, and on the top shelf lay several rouleaux of gold, overlooked or disdained by the thieves. M. Fauvel, without troubling himself to examine anything, took a chair and ordered his cashier to be seated. He had entirely recovered his equanimity, and his countenance wore its usual kind expression.

"Now that we are alone, Prosper," he said, "have you nothing to tell me?" The cashier started, as if the question surprised him. "Nothing, monsieur, that I have not already told you."

"What? Nothing? Do you persist in asserting a fable so absurd and ridiculous that no one can possibly believe it? It is folly! Confide in me. It is your only chance of salvation. I am your chief, it is true, but I am, above all, your friend—your best and truest friend. I cannot forget that here fifteen years ago you were entrusted to me by your father, and ever since that day have I had cause to congratulate myself on possessing your faithful service. Yes, it is fifteen years since you came to me, I was then just commencing to build my fortune, and you have seen it gradually grow step by step from almost nothing to its present size. As my wealth increased I endeavored to better your condition, you who, although so young, are the oldest of my clerks. At each inventory I increased your salary."

Never had Prosper heard his chief express himself in so feeling and paternal a manner. Prosper was silent with astonishment.

"Answer" pursued M. Fauvel. "Have I not always been like a father to you? From the first day my house has been open to you. You were treated as a member of my family. My niece, Madeleine, and my son looked upon you as a brother. But you grew weary of this peaceful life. One day a year ago you suddenly began to shun us, and since then—"

The memories of the past thus evoked by the banker seemed too much for the unhappy cashier. He buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

"One can confide everywhere to his father without fear," resumed M. Fauvel. "A father not only pardons, but forgets. Do I not know the terrible temptations that in a city like Paris beset a young man? There are some inordinate desires which break down the firmest principles. Speak, Prosper, speak!"

"What do you wish me to say?"

"The truth. An honorable man may yield to temptation, but his first step toward atonement is confession. Say to me: Yes, I have been tempted, dazzled. The sight of these piles of gold turned my brain. I am young. I have passions."

"I!" murmured Prosper. "I!"

"Poor boy!" said the banker sadly. He paused, as if hoping for a confession, which, however, did not come.

"Come, Prosper, have courage. Make a clean breast of it. I will go up stairs. Go again to the safe. I am sure that in your agitation you did not search thoroughly. This evening I will return, and I am sure that during the day you will have found, if not the 350,000 francs, at least the greater portion of it. And neither you nor I will tomorrow remember anything about this false alarm."

M. Fauvel had risen and was about to leave the room when Prosper arose and held him by the arm.

"Your generosity is useless, monsieur," he said bitterly. "Having taken nothing, I can restore nothing. I have searched carefully. The bank notes have been stolen."

"But by whom, poor fool? By whom?"

"By all that is sacred, I swear that it was not by me."

The banker's face turned crimson. "Miserable wretch," cried he, "do you mean to say that it was I?"

Prosper bowed his head and did not answer.

"Ah, it is thus, then," said M. Fauvel, unable to contain himself any longer. "You dare—Then between you and me, M. Prosper Bertomy, justice shall decide. God is my witness that I have done all I could to save you. You will have yourself to thank for what follows. I have sent for the commissary of police. He must be waiting in my study. Shall I call him?"

Nothing in the cash room bore evidence of the entrance of burglars. Everything was in perfect order. Not

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Sept. 19th, 1905.—w3m

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