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The Phantom of the Opera

BY GASTON LEROUX

CHAPTER IV.

BOX FIVE.

The first few days which the partners spent at the Opera were given over to the delight of finding themselves the head of so magnificent an enterprise; and they had forgotten all about that curious, fantastic story of the ghost, when an incident occurred that proved to them that the joke—if joke it were—was not over. M. Firmin Richard reached his office that morning at eleven o'clock. His secretary, M. Remy, showed him half a dozen letters which he had not opened because they were marked "private." One of the letters had at once attracted Richard's attention not only because the envelope was addressed in red ink, but because he seemed to have seen the writing before. He soon remembered that it was the red handwriting in which the memorandum-book had been so curiously completed. He recognized the clumsy childish hand. He opened the letter and read:

Dear Mr. Manager:

I am sorry to have to trouble you at a time when you must be so very busy, renewing important engagements, signing fresh ones and generally displaying your excellent taste. I know what you have done for Carlotta, Sorelli and little Jammes and for a few others whose admirable qualities of talent or genius you have suspected.

Of course, when I use these words, I do not mean to apply them to La Carlotta, who sings like a squirt and who ought never to have been allowed to leave the Ambassadeurs and the Cafe Jacquin; nor to La Sorelli, who owes her success mainly to the coach-builders; nor to little Jammes, who dances like a calf in a field. And I am not speaking of Christine Daae either, though her genius is certain, whereas your jealousy prevents her from creating any important part.

All the same, I should like to hear Christine Daae this evening in the part of Siebel, as that of Margarita has been forbidden her since her triumph of the other evening; and I will ask you not to dispose of my box today nor on the following days, for I can not end this letter without telling you how disagreeably surprised I have been once or twice, to hear, on arriving at the Opera, that my box had been sold, at the box-office, by your orders.

I did not protest, first, because I dislike scandal, and, second, because I thought that your predecessors, MM. Debienne and Poligny, who were always charming to me, had neglected, before leaving, to mention my little fads to you. I have now received a reply from those gentlemen to my letter asking for an explanation, and this reply proves that you know all about my memorandum book and, consequently, that you are treating me with outrageous contempt. If you wish to live in peace, you must not begin by taking away my private box.

Believe me to be, dear Mr. Manager, without prejudice to those little observations,

Your Most Humble Servant,
Opera Ghost.

The letter was accompanied by a cutting from the agony-column of the Revue Theatrale, which ran:

O. G.—There is no excuse for R. and M. We told them and left your memorandum book in their hands. Kind regards.

M. Firmin Rihcard had hardly finished reading this letter when M. Armand Moncharmin entered, carrying one exactly similar. They looked at each other and burst out laughing.

"It's harmless enough," observed Armand Moncharmin. "What is it they really want? A box for tonight?"

M. Firmin Richard told his secretary to send Box Five on the grand tier to MM. Debienne and Poligny.

Next morning, the managers received a card of thanks from the ghost:

Dear Mr. Manager:

Thanks. Charming evening. Daae exquisite. Choruses want waking up. Carlotta a splendid common-place instrument. Will write you soon for the 240,000 francs, or 233,424 fr. 70 c., to be correct. MM. Debienne and Poligny have sent me the 6,575 fr. 30 c. representing the first ten days of my allowance for the current year; their privileges finished on the evening of the tenth inst.

King regards. O.G.

On the other hand, there was a letter from MM. Debienne and Poligny:

Gentlemen:

We are much obliged for your kind thought of us, but you will easily understand that the prospect of again hearing Faust, pleasant though it is to ex-managers of the Opera, can not make us forget that we have no right to occupy Box Five on the grand tier, which is the exclusive property of him of whom we spoke to you when we went through the memorandum-book with you for the last time. See Clause 98, final paragraph.

Accept, gentlemen, etc.

"Oh, those fellows are beginning to annoy me!" shouted Firmin Richard, snatching up the letter.

And that evening Box Five was sold.

The next morning, MM. Richard and Moncharmin, on reaching their office, found an inspector's report relating to an incident that had happened, the night before, in Box Five. I give the essential part of the report:

"I was obliged to call in a municipal guard twice, this evening, to clear Box Five on the grand tier, once at the beginning and once in the middle of the second act. The occupants, who arrived as the curtain rose on the second act, created a regular scandal by their laughter and their ridiculous observations. There were cries of "Hush!" all around them and the whole house was beginning to protest, when the box-keeper came to fetch me. I entered the box and said what I thought was necessary. The people did not seem to me to be in their right mind; and they made stupid remarks. I said that, if the noise was repeated, I should be compelled to clear the box. The moment I left, I heard the laughing again, with fresh protests from the house. I returned with a municipal guard, who turned them out. They protested, still laughing, saying they would not go unless they had their money back. At last, they became quiet and I allowed them to enter the box again. The laughter at once recommenced; and, this time, I had them turned out definitely."

"Send for the inspector," said Richard to his secretary, who had already read the report and marked it with blue pencil.

M. Remy, the secretary, had foreseen the order and called the inspector at once.

"Tell us what happened," said Richard bluntly.

The inspector began to splutter and referred to the report.

"Well, but what were those people laughing at?" said Moncharmin.

"They must have been dining, sir, and seemed more inclined to lark about than to listen to good music. The moment they entered the box, they came out again and called the box-keeper, who asked them what they wanted. They said, 'Look in the box: there's no one there, is there?' 'No,' said the woman. 'Well,' said they, 'when we went in, we heard a voice saying that the box was taken!'"

"However, when the people arrived," roared Richard, "there was no one in the box, was there?"

"Not a soul, sir; not a soul! Nor in the box on the right, nor in the box on the left; not a soul, sir; I swear! The box-keeper told it me often enough, which proves that it was all a joke."

"Oh, you agree, do you?" said Richard. "You agree! It's a joke! And you think it funny no doubt?"

"I think it in very bad taste, sir."

"And what did the box-keeper say?"

"Oh, she just said that it was the Opera Ghost. That's all she said!"

M. Richard, from gloomy, became furious.

"Send for the box-keeper!" he shouted. "Send for her! This minute! This minute! And bring her into me here. And turn all those people out!"

The inspector tried to protest, but Richard closed his mouth with an angry order to hold his tongue. Then, when the wretched man's lips seemed shut for ever, the manager commanded him to open them once more.

"Who is this 'Opera ghost?'" he snarled.

But the inspector was by this time incapable of speaking a word. He managed to convey, by a despairing gesture, that he knew nothing about it, or rather that he did not wish to know.

"Have you ever seen him, have you seen the Opera ghost?"

The inspector, by means of a vigorous shake of the head, denied ever having seen the ghost in question.

"Very well!" said M. Richard coldly.

The inspector's eyes started out of his head, as though to ask why the manager had uttered that ominous "Very well!"

"Because I'm going to settle the account of any one who has not seen him!" explained the manager. "As he seems to be everywhere, I can't have people telling me that they see him nowhere. I like people to work for me when I employ them!"

Having said this, M. Richard paid no attention to the inspector and discussed various matters of business with his acting-manager, who had entered the room meanwhile. The inspector thought he could go and was gently—oh, so gently!—sidling toward the door, when M. Richard nailed the man to the floor with a thundering:

"Stay where you are!"

M. Remy had sent for the box-keeper to the Rue de Provence, close to the Opera, where she was engaged as porteress. She soon made her appearance.

"What's your name?"

"Mame Giry. You know me well enough, sir; I'm the mother of little Giry, little Meg, what!"

"Never heard of her!" the manager declared. "But that's no reason, Mame Giry, why I shouldn't ask you what happened last night to make you and the inspector call in a municipal guard . . ."

"I was just wanting to see you, sir, and talk to you about it, so that you mightn't have the same unpleasantness as M. Debienne and M. Poligny. They wouldn't listen to me either, at first."

"Im not asking you about all that. I'm asking what happened last night."

Mame Giry turned purple with indignation. Never had she been spoken to like this. She rose as though to go, gathering up the folds of her skirt and waving the feathers of her dingy bonnet with dignity, but, changing her mind, she sat down again and said, in a haughty voice:

"I'll tell you what happened. The ghost was annoyed again!"

Thereupon, as M. Richard was on the point of bursting out, M. Moncharmin interfered and conducted the interrogatory, whence it appeared that Mame Giry thought it quite natural that a voice should be heard to say that a box was taken, when there was nobody in the box. She was unable to explain this phenomenon, which was not new to her, except by the intervention of the ghost. Nobody could see the ghost in his box, but everybody could hear him. She had often heard him; and they could believe her, for she always spoke the truth.

"But you have spoken to the ghost, my good lady?"

"As I am speaking to you now, my good sir!" Mame Giry replied.

"And, when the ghost speaks to you, what does he say?"

"Well, he tells me to bring him a footstool!"

"Tut, tut! A ghost asking for a footstool! Then this ghost of yours is a woman?"

"No, the ghost is a man."

"How do you know?"

"He has a man's voice, oh, such a lovely man's voice! This is what happens: When he comes to the opera, it's usually in the middle of the first act. He gives three little taps on the floor of Box Five. The first time I heard those three taps, when I knew there was no one in the box, you can think how puzzled I was. I opened the door, listened, looked; nobody! And then I heard a voice say, 'Mame Jules'—my poor husband's name was Jules—'a footstool, please.' Saving your presence, gentlemen, it made me feel all-overish like. But the voice went on, "Don't be frightened, Mme. Jules, I'm the Opera ghost!' And the voice was so soft and kind that I hardly felt frightened. The voice was sitting in the corner chair, on the right."

"And what did you do?"

"Well, I brought the footstool. Of course, it wasn't for himself he wanted it, but for his lady! But I never heard her nor saw her."

"Eh? What? So now the ghost is married!" The eyes of the two managers traveled from Mme. Giry to the inspector, who, standing behind the box-keeper, was waving his arms to attract their attention. He tapped his forehead with a distressful forefinger, to convey his opinion that the widow of Jules Giry was most certainly mad, a piece of pantomime which confirmed M. Richard in his determination to get rid of an inspector who kept a lunatic in his service. Meanwhile, the worthy lady went on about her ghost, now painting his generosity:

"At the end of the performance, he always gives me two francs, sometimes five, sometimes even ten, when he has been many days without coming. Only, since people have begun to annoy him again, he gives me nothing at all. . . ."

(To be continued.)

Belgian settlers in the Congo are training elephants as transport workers. These beasts show great intelligence, themselves adjusting harness which has become misplaced and putting on the brake when the load goes downhill.

Among the books with unhappy endings are cheque-books.

Minard's Liniment for stiff muscles.

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This trade mark is on every package. Please look for it to be sure you get the genuine Kraft Cheese.

31-25

ISSUE No. 47—'25.

NURSES

The Toronto Hospital for Incurables, in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education, and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and traveling expenses to and from New York. For further information apply to the Superintendent.

ECLIPSE FASHIONS

Exclusive Patterns by Hazel Bryce

AN UNUSUALLY GRACEFUL MODEL.

This is the smartest of frocks for daytime wear, so cleverly designed that its flaring panels give movement to the silhouette and add to its gracefulness. The shirred panels are topped with pockets fashioned of oriental embroidery, which are securely held to the frock by a row of small gilt buttons. The same embroidery is used to face the front opening and the collar, which serves a dual purpose, in that it can be worn buttoned up to the neck with the aid of gilt buttons and tiny loops of braid. The long sleeves are gathered into a narrow band at the wrist and extend into the neck, forming a yoke at the shoulders. A narrow belt is tacked at the top of the pockets and ties in the centre back of the frock. No. 1226 is in sizes 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust. Size 38 bust requires 3¾ yards of 36-inch, 2½ yards of 54-inch material for the dress without panels; or 5⅛ yards of 36-inch, or 3⅞ yards of 54-inch for the dress with panels. Price 20 cents.

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A Manitoba Handbook.

The statement issued recently by J. H. Evans, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Manitoba, that there had not been a single crop failure in Manitoba this year has attracted a great deal of attention to the agricultural possibilities of that province, and many inquiries are being received by the Natural Resources Intelligence Service of the Department of the Interior for information. To meet this demand, a new edition of the Branch's handbook, thoroughly revised, has been issued, and may be had on request. A vast fund of information is contained in the handbook, each phase of the province's development being separately dealt with, while the opportunities which await the settler or the visitor are clearly shown. Manitoba is making rapid progress, both industrially and agriculturally, and to those who are interested in Canada and its several provinces this handbook of Manitoba supplies the information in a readable and interesting form.

Found a Real Home.

Recently a children's institution was moving from one building to another and they did not care to have go through all the excitement of flitting. A woman in the suburbs was asked to board the child for a fortnight and this she consented to do. When the time came for the baby to go back to the institution, the woman let it get as far as the door and then compleely broke down and begged to adopt it as her own. The result is that the baby is now permanently and satisfactorily provided for. This is capable of repetition and Social Workers are well advised in seeking out suitable foster homes.

When hoarse use Minard's Liniment.

Faggots for the King.

A very curious old ceremony was performed recently at the Law Courts of London.

It consists in handing over to the ing's Remembrancer by the solicitor of the City Corporation two faggots, the old time "rent" for a plot of land granted to the City of London by King John in 1211.

At the same Court the Rembrancer is solemnly presented with six horseshoes and sixty-one nails. These represent the rent for a plot of ground on the site now occupied by the Law Courts, and which was originally possessed on these terms by a farrier named Le Brun, whose duty it was to shoe the horses and repair the armour of the knights who fought in the tournaments held there in medieval times.

Tuning Fork Tests Nose.

A Danish physician, Dr. Skovman, tests for suspected sinus infection with a tuning fork; he stands the instrument before the point to be tested, and judges from the resonance whether the cavity contains fluid or is empty.

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Comes to you fresh, clean and full-flavored.

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Glycerine Defies Frost.

A national survey among users and suppliers of motor cars to ascertain the advantages of glycerine as an anti-freeze substance indicated that yellow distilled glycerine is a satisfactory anti-freeze compound.

As a thank-offering for his son's recovery a Brooklyn contractor is about to build a huge structure, containing hotel, church, bank, stores, etc. Ten per cent. of the profits will be devoted to missionary work.

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Just Dip to Tint or Boil to Dye

Each 15-cent package contains directions so simple any woman can tint soft, delicate shades or dye rich, permanent colors in lingerie, silks, ribbons, skirts, waists, dresses, coats, stockings, sweaters, draperies, coverings, hangings—everything!

Buy Diamond Dyes—no other kind—and tell your druggist whether the material you wish to color is wool or silk, or whether it is linen, cotton or mixed goods.

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On a raw winter's day you wouldn't venture out without a good overcoat to keep out the cold. But your *inside* wants keeping warm as well.

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The very feel of it will make you want to own it. It balances so nicely, seems to be just right. The handle is rigid and does not tip around like a hinged handle. That means no slipping, scalded hands or accidents. See how you fill it? You lift the hinged lid and can fill it right under the tap or by dipper because the opening is at the side, not the centre.

Most important, these new up-to-date kettles cost no more than the old fashioned kettle.

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