The Phantom of the Opera

BY GASTON LEROUX

CHAPTER VIII.

AT THE MASKED BALL.

The envelope was covered with mud and unstamped. It bore the words, "To be handed to M. le Vicomte Raoul de Chagny," with the address in pencil. It must have been flung out in the hope that a passer-by would pick up the note and deliver it, which was what happened. The note had been picked up on the pavement of the Place de l'Opera.

Raoul read it over again with fevered eyes. No more was needed to revive his hope. The sombre picture which he had for a moment imagined of a Christine forgetting her duty to herself made way for his original conception of an unfortunate, innocent child, the victim of imprudence and exaggerated sensibility. To what extent, at this time, was she really a victim? Whose prisoner was she? Into what whirlpool had she been dragged?

Thus did Raoul's thoughts fly from one extreme to the other. He no longer knew whether to pity Christine or to curse her; and he pitied and cursed her turn and turn about. At all events, he bought a white domino.

The hour of the appointment came at last. With his face in a mask trimmed with long, thin lace, looking like a pierrot in his white wrap, the viscount thought himself very ridiculous. Men of the world do not go to the Opera ball in fancy-dress! It was absurd.

This ball was an exceptional affair, given some time before Shrovetide, in honor of the anniversary of the birth of a famous draftsman; and it was expected to be much gayer, noisier, more Bohemian than the ordinary masked ball. Numbers of artists had arranged to go, accompanied by a whole cohort of models and pupils, who, by midnight, began to create a tremendous din. Raoul climbed the grand staircase at five minutes to twelve, did not linger to look at the motley dresses displayed all the way up the marble steps, one of the richest settings in the world, allowed no facetious mask to withdraw him into a war of wits, replied to no jests and shook off the bold familiarity of a number of couples who had already become a trifle too gay. Crossing the big crush-room and escaping from a mad whirl of dancers in which he was caught for a moment, he at last entered the room mentioned in Christine's letter. He found it crammed; for this small space was the point where all those going to supper in the Rotunda crossed those who were returning from taking a glass of champagne. The fun, here, waxed fast and furious.

Raoul leaned against a door-post and waited. He did not wait long. A black domino passed and gave a quick squeeze to the tips of his fingers. He understood that it was she and followed her:

"Is that you, Christine?" he asked, between his teeth.

The black domino turned round promptly and raised her finger to her lips, no doubt to warn him not to mention her name again. Raoul continued to follow her in silence.

As Raoul once more passed through the great crush-room, this time in the wake of his guide, he could not help noticing a group crowding round a person whose disguise, eccentric air and gruesome appearance were causing a sensation. It was a man dressed all in scarlet, with a huge hat and feathers on the top of a wonderful death's head. From his shoulders hung an immense red-velvet cloak, which trailed along the floor like a king's train; and on this cloak was embroidered, in gold letters, which every one read and repeated aloud, "Don't touch me! I am Red Death stalking abroad!"

Then one, greatly daring, did try to touch him . . . but a skeleton hand shot out of a crimson sleeve and violently seized the rash one's wrist; and he, feeling the clutch of the knuckle-bones, the furious grasp of Death, uttered a cry of pain and terror. When Red Death released him at last, he ran away like a very madman, pursued by the jeers of the bystanders.

It was at this moment that Raoul passed in front of the funereal masquerader, who had just happened to turn in his direction. And he nearly exclaimed:

"The death's head of Perros-Guirec!"

He had recognized him! . . . . He wanted to dart forward, forgetting Christine; but the black domino, who also seemed a prey to some strange excitement, caught him by the arm and dragged him from the crush-room, far from the mad crowd through which Red Death was stalking.

They went up two floors. Here the stairs and corridors were almost deserted. Then Christine, whom he recognized by the sound of her voice, closed the door behind them and warned him, in a whisper, to remain at the back of the box and on no account to show himself. Raoul took off his mask. Christine kept hers on. And, when Raoul was about to ask her to remove it, he was surprised to see her put her ear to the partition and listen eagerly for a sound outside. Then she opened the door ajar, looked out into the corridor and, in a low voice, said:

"He must have gone up higher." Suddenly she exclaimed: "He is coming down again!"

She tried to close the door, but Raoul prevented her; for he had seen, on the top step of the staircase that led to the floor above, a red foot, followed by another . . . and slowly, majestically, the whole scarlet dress of Red Death met his eyes. And he once more saw the death's head of Perros-Guirec.

"It's he!" he exclaimed. "This time he shall not escape me!"

But Christine had slammed the door at the moment when Raoul was on the point of rushing out. He tried to push her aside.

"Whom do you mean by 'he'?" she asked, in a changed voice. "Who shall not escape you?"

"Who?" he repeated angrily. "Why, he, the man who hides behind that hideous mask of death! . . . The evil genius of the churchyard at Perros! . . . Red Death! . . . In a word, your friend . . . your Angel of Music! . . . But I shall snatch off his mask, as I shall snatch off my own, and, this time, we shall look each other in the face, he and I, with no veil and no lies between us; and I shall know whom you love and who loves you!"

"In the name of our love, Raoul, you shall not pass! . . ."

He stopped. What had she said? In the name of their love? Never before had she confessed that she loved him. And, in accents of childish hatred, he said:

"You lie, for you do not love me and you have never loved me! What a poor fellow I must be to let you mock and flout me as you have done!"

"You will beg my pardon, one day, for all those ugly words, Raoul, and when you do I shall forgive you!"

The boy stepped forward, staggering as he went. He risked one more sarcasm:

"Oh, you must let me come and applaud you from time to time!"

"I shall never sing again, Raoul!"

"Really?" he replied, still more satirically. "So he is taking you off the stage. I congratulate you! . . . But we shall meet in the Bois, one of these evenings!"

"Not in the Bois nor anywhere, Raoul: you shall not see me again . ."

"May one ask at least to what darkness you are returning? . . For what hell you are leaving, mysterious lady . . . or for what paradise?"

"I came to tell you, dear, but I can't tell you now . . you would not believe me! You have lost faith in me, Raoul; it is finished!"

She spoke in such a despairing voice that the lad began to feel remorse for his cruelty.

"But look here!" he cried. "Can't you tell me what all this means? You are free, there is no one to interfere with you. . . You go about Paris. . . You put on a domino to come to the ball. . . Why do you not go home? . . What have you been doing in this past fortnight? . . What is this tale about the Angel of Music? Some one may have taken you in, played upon your innocence. I was a witness of it myself, at Perros . . but you know what to believe now. You seem to me quite sensible, Christine. You know what you are doing. . . Explain yourself, Christine, I beg of you! Any one might have been deceived as I was. What is this farce?"

Christine simply took off her mask and said: "Dear, it is a tragedy!"

Raoul now saw her face and could not restrain an exclamation of surprise and terror. The fresh complexion of former days was gone. A mortal pallor covered those features, which he had known so charming and so gently, and sorrow had furrowed them with pitiless lines and traced dark and unspeakable sad shadows under her eyes.

"My dearest! My dearest!" he moaned, holding out his arms. "You promised to forgive me . . ."

"Perhaps! . . Some day, perhaps!" she said, resuming her mask; and she went away, forbidding him, with a gesture, to follow her.

He tried to disobey her; but she turned round and repeated her gesture of farewell with such authority that he dared not move a step.

His footsteps took him to that room where he had first known suffering. He tapped at the door. There was no answer. He entered, as he had entered when he looked everywhere for "the man's voice." The room was empty. A gas-jet was burning, turned down low. He saw some writing-paper on a little desk. He thought of writing to Christine, but he heard steps in the passage. He had only time to hide in the inner room, which was separated from the dressing-room by a curtain.

Christine entered, took off her mask with a weary movement and flung it on the table. She sighed and let her pretty head fall into her two hands. What was she thinking of? Of Raoul? No, for Raoul heard her murmur: "Poor Erik!"

Christine began to write, deliberately, calmly and so placidly that Raoul, who was still trembling from the effects of the tragedy that separated them, was painfully impressed.

She wrote on, filling two, three, four sheets. Suddenly, she raised her head and hid the sheets in her bodice . . . She seemed to be listening. . . . Raoul also listened. . . Whence came that strange sound, that distant rhythm? . . A faint sound seemed to issue from the walls . . yes, it was as though the walls themselves were singing! . . . The song became plainer . . . the words were now distinguishable . . . he heard a voice, a very beautiful, very soft, very captivating voice . . but, for all its softness, it remained a male voice. . . The voice came nearer and nearer . . it came through the wall . . it approached . . and now the voice was in the room, in front of Christine. Christine rose and addressed the voice, as though speaking to some one:

"Here I am, Erik," she said. "I am ready. But you are late."

Raoul, peeping from behind the curtain, could not believe his eyes, which showed him nothing. Christine's face lit up. A smile of happiness appeared upon her bloodless lips, a smile like that of sick people when they receive the first hope of recovery.

The voice without a body went on singing; and certainly Raoul had never in his life heard anything more absolutely and heroically sweet, more gloriously insidious, more delicate, more powerful, in short, more irresistibly triumphant. He listened to it in a fever and he now began to understand how Christine Daae was able to appear one evening, before the stupefied audience, with accents of a beauty hitherto unknown, of a superhuman exaltation, while doubtless still under the influence of the mysterious and invisible master.

The voice was singing the Wedding-night Song from Romeo and Juliet. Raoul saw Christine stretch out her arms to the voice as she had done, in Perros churchyard, to the invisible violin playing The Resurrection of Lazarus.

The strains went through Raoul's heart. Struggling against the charm that seemed to deprive him of all his will and all his energy and of almost all his lucidity at the moment when he needed them most, he succeeded in drawing back the curtain that hid him and he walked to where Christine stood. She herself was moving to the back of the room, the whole wall of which was occupied by a great mirror that reflected her image, but not his, for he was just behind her and entirely covered by her.

Christine walked toward her image in the glass and the image came toward her. The two Christines—the real one and the reflection—ended by touching; and Raoul put out his arms to clasp the two in one embrace. Sut, by a sort of dazzling miracle that sent him staggering, Raoul was suddenly flung back, while an icy blast swept over his face; he saw, not two, but four, eight, twenty Christines spinning round him, laughing at him and fleeing so swiftly that he could not touch one of them. At last, everything stood still again; and he saw himself in the glass. But Christine had disappeared.

He rushed up to the glass. He struck at the walls. Nobody!

Which way, which way had Christine gone? . . Which way would she return?

Would she return? Alas, had she not declared to him that everything was finished? And was the voice not repeating:

"Fate links thee to me for ever
and a day!"

To me? To whom?

Then, worn out, beaten, empty-brained, he sat down on the chair which Christine had just left. Like her, he let his head fall into his hands.

"Who is this Erik?" he said.

(To be continued.)

Hon. Cecil Forester

who has inherited the unique right of keeping his hat on in the presence of the English King. This privilege comes down to him from the time of Henry VIII. The amusing part of the story is that young Forester cares not a whit for this hat-right, and says that the only time he ever was in the presence of the King was in a ballroom. And then he wasn't wearing a hat!

Ancient Yet Modern.

Foot corns are so called because of a resemblance to a corn or barley that can be picked out. Three hundred years ago corns were treated precisely as they are to-day and a recipe of 1620 says: "Corns on the feet are to be wet or soaked and rubbed with a pencil of caustic every evening upon retiring. If large, corns should be cut out or at least pared with a sharp knife. If a corn hangs by a small neck it should be tied with a silk string and it will come away. To stop the pains of a corn cover the corn with a piece of adhesive plaster with a hole cut through it so that the corn may be pressed and as the corn rises add more adhesive plasters cut like the first."

The wood of the red or Norway pine is heavier, harder and more resinous than white pine, but it is used for the same purpose.

ECLIPSE FASHIONS
Exclusive Patterns
by Hazel Bryce

TWO-PIECE COSTUME APPROVED BY SMART WOMEN.

Two-piece sports and tailored costumes are things of much more elaboration as far as fabric is concerned, than those worn earlier in the season, which were usually developed in jerseys and crepes. Now the modish attitude is towards making these costumes in crepe satins and velvet, or a combination of both. In the model pictured here satin has been chosen for the new finger-tip length blouse and velvet for the skirt. The velvet was employed to fashion the snug-fitting collar, cuffs and trimming-bands. The skirt is joined to a bodice top and has two inverted plaits at the front to add freedom and the latest flared movement. The diagram shows just how to put the dress together, and No. 1243 is in sizes 16, 18 and 20 years (34, 36 and 38 inches bust). Size 18 years (36 bust) requires 4⅛ yards 36-inch, or 2⅝ yards 54-inch material. The bodice top of skirt requires 1¼ yards 36-inch additional lining, or with ribbon straps over the shoulders ⅞ yard. Price 20c.

Our Fashion Book, illustrating the newest and most practical styles, will be of interest to every home dressmaker. Price of the book 10 cents the copy.

Diary in Cipher.

Just a hundred years ago was published the world's most extraordinary work. It was by a great public figure named Pepys—pronounced "Peeps."

Half of each night he sat up writing, till he almost went blind—writing the queerest work that has ever occurred to man. This was a Diary of the real truth about himself and everyone else, but written in cipher so that nobody could read it.

Pepys tells us how he bribed, and took bribes, how he got drunk and was sorry next morning; how he once struck his wife and then kissed her and made it up.

Mixed with the bad there is a lot of good.

We read how really fond he was of his wife, and how it troubled him to grieve her—when he had been found out! We read also how he set out to reform this and that scandal. For, thinking that the Diary could never be read, Pepys put down the truth.

That long after his death somebody would patiently work out the cipher, was the last thing Pepys expected. Still, it gave us in a way the world's most human book.

A Hobo.

What is a hobo? The popular answer would probably be "a tramp." Not so! There are certain nice distinctions to be observed. A hobo is a migratory worker—a man, like the harvest hand in the West or the lumberjack in the North woods, who moves from place to place, as work offers. A tramp, on the other hand, is a migratory loafer, and a bum a stationary loafer. One should be careful in such matters.

HIS MAJESTY'S HOBBY

The Finest Collection of British Empire Stamps in the World is Kept in an Upper Room in Buckingham Palace. It Was Built Up by its Royal Owner.

H. M. King George takes stamp-collecting very seriously, and when one of the finest collections of postage stamps in the world came under the auctioneer's hammer recently it was only natural that his Majesty should be represented at the sale.

This remarkable collection, whose disposal drew philatelists from all parts of the world to London, was discovered in the attic of a Mayfair mansion. The stamps were bought in the 'sixties for less than £40, and when put up for auction brought in no less than £5,359.

Empire stamps figured largely in the collection, prominent among them being a block of stamps from Ceylon which cost the original collector 5s., and which realized £650. A block, or unbroken sheet, of stamps preserved intact is much more valuable than the same number of single stamps.

Doubtless it was the Empire stamps which interested the King. Though he has often been described as a "collector of foreign stamps," you could look through all the 300 leather-bound volumes that hold his collection without finding a single stamp of a foreign country. His Majesty is actually a collector of Empire stamps, and his stamp library is regarded as the finest of its kind in the world.

Among the King's Treasures.

At times parties of philatelists have visited the Palace to see this wonderful collection, which is kept in an upper room of Buckingham Palace. When they have done so the King has been there, seeking for fresh information on the subject of which he is already a master.

So keen is the King on philately that if he is missing during any of his rare hours of leisure when in residence, some member of his family will say:

"He is sure to be in the stamp-room."

One of the King's greatest bargains is an early Mauritius stamp which he bought years ago for £1,400, and which is to-day worth 4,000 guineas. It is a relic of the days when an old watchmaker struck the stamps of Mauritius singly with a hand-die.

His Majesty is very proud of a section devoted to "errors" and curiosities." Typical of this section is a stamp on which "pence" is spelt "pence."

Royalty Leads the Way.

The collection also includes relics of days when small, outlying parts of the Empire ran out of stamps of a particular value. In such circumstances it was the custom to use a stamp of the next highest value, printing the new value over it in black. In one case this overprinted value was put on upside down, making the specimen a curiosity and error in one.

Many of the curiosities and errors relate to stamps of current issue and bearing the King's own head. One might mistakenly imagine that examples of such mistakes would be offered to his Majesty, but it is the duty of the examiners to destroy every stamp that is not entirely correct, and only those that have escaped their vigilance get on the market.

Even if such stamps were offered to the King, it is certain that he would refuse them. He prefers to get his specimens as other people get theirs by purchase and exchange.

It was the King who started a stamp fashion that has become popular everywhere—that of collecting in blocks of four. When he can do so his Majesty always buys in this way.

A block of four is four stamps torn off the sheet not in strip fashion, but so that they are two wide and two deep. They are rare, because in the old days it was the custom of post-offices to serve quantities of stamps in strips.

VICTORS ALL!

The two greatest poisons in life are fear and worry. If these could be eradicated—and they can—then never once need we falter. These poisons affect the blood, dim our outlook, hasten death and disease.

For success we need to enter into relationship with all conquerors and conquering things. Things that promote uplifting thoughts and hopes that the constructive will bring us to the positive principles which defy everything that is destructive.

The challenge is always there, and we ought to accept it and win through.

It is always true that love is stronger than hatred, and goodwill is always a stimulating factor. Malice will corrode and tear down, whilst love is always a savour to life. Meet hatred with hatred and you will degrade yourself; meet it with kindness and you become elevated, and also the one who bears you hatred. It is a wonderful fact, but it is real.

Men who have thought in all ages and climes have come to know this truth. There is a Persian sage who said: "Always meet petulance with gentleness, and perverseness with kindness. A gentle hand can lead even an elephant by a hair. Reply to thine enemy with gentleness. Opposition to peace is sin." But he says: "If a man foolishly does me wrong I will return him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." The Chinese have this proverb: "The wise man avenges injuries by benefits." Whilst the Hindu believes: "Return good for evil, overcome anger by love, hatred never ceases by hatred but by love."

Now the question is: Can this be practised in a world like ours? I can imagine someone saying: "Ys, this is all very well in theory, but if you had to live where I do and among the people I have to meet, you would say less about love and more about holding your own and getting your own back!"

But we were talking about success and the successful, and if one is to return evil for evil and railing for railing he is not successful neither is he trying to win success.

Every man can decide for himself in these things, and if a man will win, he can, in anything and everything. It is his privilege and the power is within. Never mind whether you have tried and failed. Try again.

You were not able to walk the first time you put your foot to the ground, and you had not conquered the "winged art" when you learned the shorthand alphabet. You had to try much and often; and if one will determine that he will beautify his corner of the world by his kindness and sympathy he will do it.

Psychologists say that if we learn to concentrate on anything we shall attract that thing to us, whether it be wealth, health, beauy, power, or God; and these things spell victory. If you are passed in the race, don't give up running, for you are not beaten. Whilst life courses in your veins you are not on the losing side. The Old Book says: "All things are possible to him that believeth." Then whatever your task, whether it be learning a language, or pursuing business, or domestic worries, believe that you can and you will.

The Inverted-Jar Trick.

Lay a lemon on the table and place a jar upside down over it. The problem is to pick up the jar and place it on another table—with the lemon still inside it.

Persons who attempt to perform this feat will try to scoop up the lemon. But that is not allowed. The jar must be mouth down all the time.

The real method of performing the trick requires a little practice, but the knack is soon acquired.

Take hold of the jar and whirl it rapidly about. The lemon will speed around inside the jar, and as soon as it is traveling at a good rate carry the jar over to the other table, whirling it all the time. Set it down and the lemon will still be inside.

True in Their Case.

Hubby (complainingly) — "Women seem to think they're head and shoulders above men."

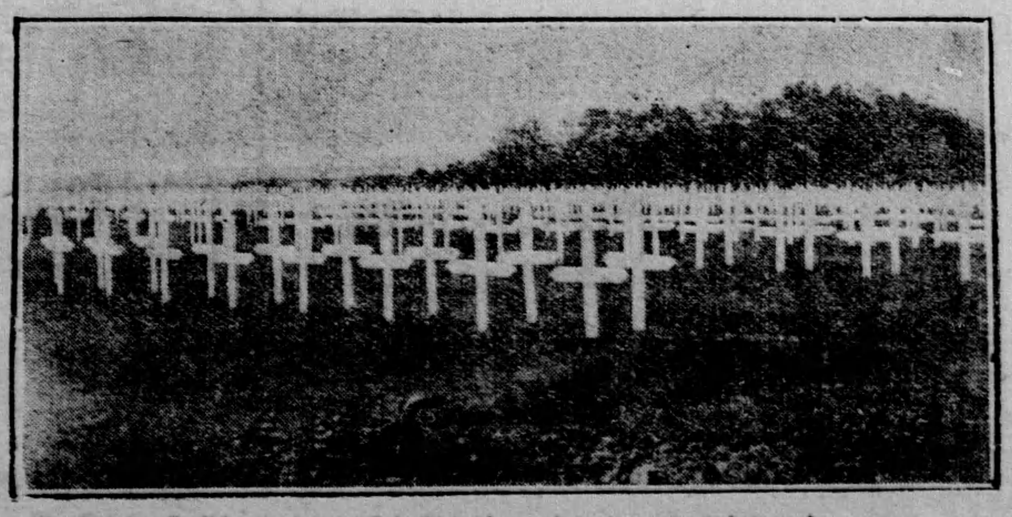
Wifie (shortly)—"Well, it's sometimes quite true!"

A Famous Hymn.

The hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," was composed at Wrexham in 1819. On Whit-Sunday in that year Dr. Shipley, Dean of St. Asaph and Vicar of Wrexham, preached a sermon in his church on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Heber was son-in-law to Dr. Shipley and was on a visit. The doctor, on the previous Saturday, asked Heber to "write something for them to sing in the morning," and in a few minutes Heber produced the hymn now so well known all over the world.

India's Industrial Growth.

India is now the eighth largest industrial country in the world, according to reports presented at a recent meeting of the East India Association in London.



The Canadian-English cemetery at Saloniki is shown above in a recent photograph.