

The Phantom of the Opera

BY GASTON LEROUX

CHAPTER VI.—(Cont'd.)

When Carlotta had finished thinking over the threat contained in the strange letter, she got up. "We shall see," she said, adding a few oaths in her native Spanish with a very determined air. She collected all her supporters, told them that she was threatened at that evening's performance with a plot organized by Christine Daae and declared that they must play a trick upon that chit by filling the house with her, Carlotta's admirers. She had no lack of them, had she? She relied upon them to hold themselves prepared for any eventuality and to silence the adversaries, if, as she feared, they created a disturbance. M. Richard's private secretary called to ask after the diva's health and returned with the assurance that she was perfectly well and that, "were she dying," she would sing that part of *Marguerite* that evening. The secretary urged her, to stay at home all day and to be careful of drafts; and Carlotta could not help, after he had gone, comparing this unusual and unexpected advice with the threats contained in the letter. It was five o'clock when the post brought a second anonymous letter in the same hand as the first. It was short and said simply: "You have a bad cold. If you are wise, you will see that it is madness to try to sing to-night." Carlotta sneered, shrugged her handsome shoulders and sang two or three notes to reassure herself. Her friends were faithful to their promise. They were all at the Opera that night, but looked round in vain for the fierce conspirators whom they were instructed to impress. The only unusual thing was the presence of M. Richard and M. Moncharmin in Box Five. Carlotta's friends thought that, perhaps, the managers had wind, on their side, of the proposed disturbance and that they had determined to be in the house, so as to stop it with their own hands; but this was unjustifiable supposition, as the reader knows. M. Richard and M. Moncharmin were thinking of nothing but their ghost.



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This extraordinary and inexplicable incident filled them with a dread which was the more mysterious inasmuch as for some little while they had fallen within the direct influence of the ghost. They had felt his breath. Moncharmin's hair stood on end. Richard wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "What was going to happen?" "Co-ack!" Their joint exclamation of horror was heard all over the house. They felt that they were smarting under the ghost's attacks. Leaning over the ledge of their box, they stared at Carlotta as though they did not recognize her. That infernal girl must have given the signal for some catastrophe! The host had told them this would come. The house had a curse upon it! The two managers gasped and panted under the weight of the catastrophe. Richard's stifled voice was heard calling to Carlotta: "Well, go on!" No, Carlotta did not go on. . . . Bravely, heroically, she started afresh on the fatal line at the end of which the toad had appeared. An awful silence succeeded the uproar. Carlotta's voice alone once more filled the resounding house: "I feel without alarm. . . . The audience also felt, but not without alarm. . . . 'I feel without alarm. . . . With its melody entwined me—co-ack!' And all my heart sub—co-ack!" The toad also had started afresh! The house broke into a wild tumult. The two managers collapsed in their chairs and dared not even turn around; they had not the strength; the ghost was chuckling behind their backs! And, at last, they distinctly heard his voice in their right ears, the impossible voice, the mouthless voice, saying: "Her singing will bring the chandelier down!" With one accord, they raised their eyes to the ceiling and uttered a terrible cry. The chandelier, the immense mass of the chandelier was slipping down, coming toward them, at the call of that fiendish voice. Released from its hook, it plunged from the ceiling and came smashing into the middle of the stalls, amid a thousand shouts of terror.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LETTER.

That tragic evening was bad for everybody. Carlotta fell ill. As for Christine Daae, she disappeared after the performance. A fortnight elapsed during which she was seen neither at the Opera nor outside. Raoul, of course, was the first to be astonished at the prima donna's absence. He wrote to her at Mme. Valerius' flat and received no reply. His grief increased and he ended by being seriously alarmed at never seeing her name on the program. Faust was played without her. One afternoon he went to the manager's office to ask the reason of Christine's disappearance. He found them both looking extremely worried. Their own friends did not recognize them; they had lost all their gaiety and spirits. They were seen crossing the stage with hanging heads, careworn brows, pale cheeks, as though pursued by some abominable thought of a prey to some persistent torture.


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Architecture.

There is my castle, strong and white and proud, Such as the knights of old were wont to seek. Block upon block of white wind-hammered cloud, Piled in a row upon that far blue peak. There do I house my host of voiceless serfs; Holding with them a grand and knightly court. Hearing their pleas, and righting all their wrongs, Stilling their plaints, presiding at their sport. Over the moat of placid waveless air All day they ride, on plumed palfreys set. Till in the night my dreams foregather there— All the dear dreams that I may not forget. Castle of dreams, — my wayward fancy's prize, Mist in the mist, and driest of air, — Deep in my heart your splendid towers rise — I know, for it was I who built them there! — W. A. Brewer, Jr., in *Youth's Companion*.

CLIPSE FASHIONS



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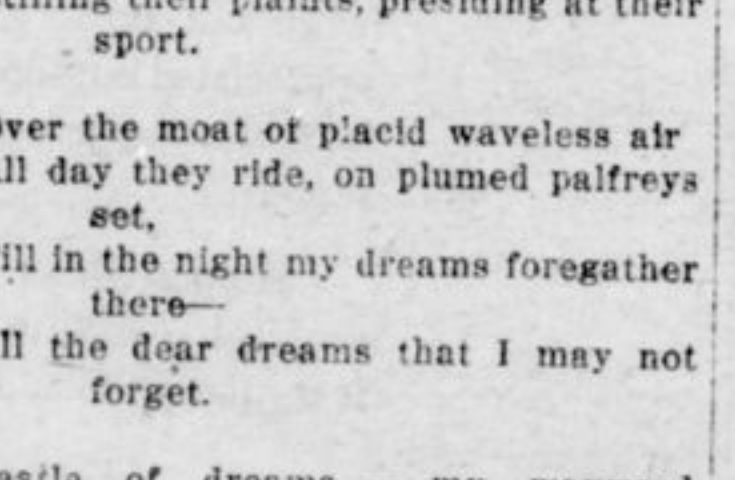
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The Value of a Poor Memory.

Do you belong to that class of people who have great difficulty in recalling the things that have happened? With them, events and plans seem to occupy no permanent place in their minds. Such things fade away in the mist of the past. Now, what is the value of such a memory? If there were a market place where such things were bought and sold, how much would one bid for a memory that did not work? Nevertheless, such a memory has a value. For instance, in driving a car you get in a tight place, this non-functioning memory does not flash before your eyes at the horrible automobile accidents that you have seen or read about. It keeps the coast clear, and enables you to act collectedly. Then, too, the embarrassing and unfortunate memories of the past are pretty much eliminated from your daily experiences. But, notwithstanding these advantages, if there is anyone who has trouble with an over-working memory, and could exchange it, you undoubtedly would be glad to make a deal with him.

Sentence Sermons.

It is Always Safe—To wait a little longer before you give a stranger your confidence. —To refuse to repeat a slander whose truthfulness you are not sure of. —To be polite no matter how irritating the other party may be. —To take the time that extra good work requires. —To be the first to offer the apologies. —To keep an open mind—you may even learn from a fool. —To go more than half way in patching up a quarrel.

Children's Laughter.

No plunging sea-birds swept the bay. At evening when I crossed the shore; The silver sickle of the tide Soundless gathered his crescents wide; About the rocks an austere stillness lay. But in my ears a lightsome sound Disturbed the peace, for on the sands, Where children in their games had chased Each other, little feet had traced Their random scampering pattern on the ground. —David Cleghorn Thomson.

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STORIES OF WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE

A Viceroy's Lament.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Edward Wood will find the etiquette of viceregal life less irksome than the first Earl of Lytton, who complained in one of his letters from India that "the worst part of being a Viceroy is that I cannot be for one second alone."

"I sit in the privatest corner of my private room, and if I look through the window there are two sentinels standing guard over me. If I open the door there are two jemadar couching at the threshold. "If I go up or down stairs an A.D.C. and three unpronounceable beings in white and red nightgowns, with dark faces, rush after me. If I steal out of my house by the back door I look round and find myself stealthily followed by a tail of fifteen persons."

Well Matched.

The well-known humorous writer, Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, relates the following story about his friend, Sir James Barrie, whose shyness, he tells us, is proverbial. Once, says Mr. Jerome, a beautiful but nervous young lady was taken by him in to dinner. With the fish course Barrie broke the silence. "Have you ever been to Egypt?" The young lady was too startled to answer immediately. It was necessary for her to collect herself before replying. While waiting for the entree, she turned to him. "No," she answered in nervous tones. Barrie made no comment. He went on with his dinner. At the end of the course, curiosity overcoming her awe, she turned to him again. "Have you?" A far-away expression came into Barrie's great, deep eyes. "No," he replied. After that they both lapsed into silence.

Needlessly Alarmed.

The well-known author, Mr. H. G. Wells, will never willingly submit himself to an interview. One day recently, while he was walking in a country lane near his home, he espied a keen-visaged, alert-looking man coming quickly towards him. The stranger looked every inch a journalist, and firmly convinced that he was about to be interviewed, Mr. Wells dodged aside down a convenient bridle-path. But the stranger would not be shaken off, and foggily followed his quarry down the path, through a broken hedge, and across a meadow, at last running him to earth behind a haystack. Resigning himself to his fate, the author turned and faced his tormentor. "Glad you've come to anchor at last, old man," said the latter cheerfully. "Please tell me where I can find a pub. I'm dying for a glass of beer."

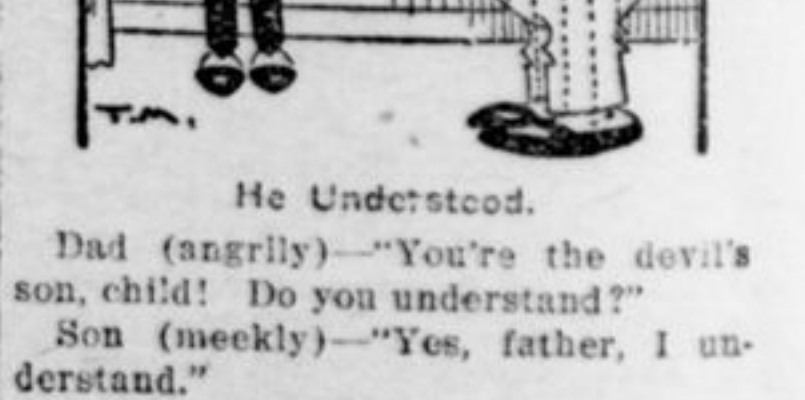
A Monotonous Diet.

Mr. Joseph Keating the playwright and novelist, was born and brought up in a Welsh colliery village, where he toiled hard at manual labor all his early days. He was a member of what was known locally as the "Irish Colony," and he tells an amusing story illustrative of the primitive style of living that had performed to put up with. The humble boater (he says) was a staple dish in poor times. A good-natured Irish lodger asked his landlady to read out his bill to him when he was paying her for his week's board. She put on her spectacles, held up the piece of paper, and began: "Monday morning, breakfast, one boater. "Monday, dinner, two boaters. "Monday, supper, one boater. "Tuesday morning, breakfast, one boater. "Tuesday, dinner, two boaters. "Tuesday, supper, one boater. "Wednesday, morning, breakfast, one boater. Wednesday, dinner, two boaters. "Wednesday, supper, one—" "Ma'am," he interrupted, "blot out the boaters, and put down a whale!"

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Sh-h-h!



You mustn't make a sound of one whose thought He shapes in space! To stand a look, but stand Not—let him hear!

The Holiday Invitation.



Don't forget the "bread and butter" or the "thank you" letters that should be sent after being entertained. Just now these are especially in prominence because, during the vacation periods, scores of persons have received delightful hospitality from their friends, which requires acknowledgment. There is an abundance that is most keenly felt immediately after being entertained that creeps into notes sent promptly. It is partly for this reason that business find immediate response as to their hospitality especially delightful. It is also for the same reason that guests find the prompt writing of the notes pleasant. While everything is fresh in one's memory, notes are not actually hard to write, though they may seem to be, if a person is not a ready writer. Once the writing materials are out and the note begun, it almost writes itself!

DELETED NOTE DIFFICULT.

It is the delayed notes that are the difficult ones. Then two things must be expressed, first the "thank you" part and then the excuse or reason for the tardiness. It is apt to be most difficult to make graceful excuses, then to express one's thanks, particularly as the usual reason for the delay is nothing but a reluctance to write. The desire to keep this thought out of the letter cramps the ready flow of appreciation. A person usually objects to writing a business letter that the hospitality was graciously extended and so hesitates to express the gratitude. But it is not sufficient to warrant the immediate writing of a "thank you" letter. Excuses have to be made and sometimes they are quite appropriate "made up."

TARDY BETTER THAN NONE.

But if the note has not been sent, be sure that it goes even though it is delayed. A tardy note of thanks is a hundredfold better than no note at all. Before starting the letter, show a few moments for thinking over the words, recalling all the good times you have enjoyed together. Let the letter express something of this. Do not make profuse excuses, but let the little you do say be to the point. The more excuses carry the load, and it is usually true, that there was no real worth while reason for the tardiness, that procrastination alone was responsible. Either say so frankly and let it go at that, or give the outstanding excuse. Most persons have at one time or another done the ungracious thing of