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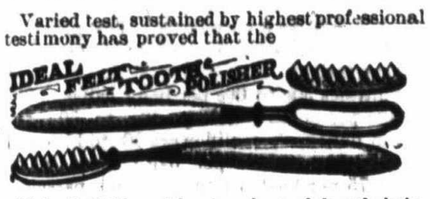

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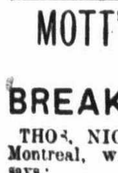

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CHAS. E. WRENSHALL, Principal.

The San Marco Rubies

By M. E. W. S.

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In the course of the examination of Victor Gregoire, alias Polenta, the Sinclairs and myself, and the waiting maid Maddalena, were of course summoned as witnesses.

So the early spring months found us all in Paris; Emily, her aunt and father keeping the deepest seclusion, the princess and her suite occupying grand apartments on the Champs Elysees, the jewels tracked and mostly found, Victor Gregoire guilty beyond all doubt. I was established in a modest studio, and trying to do some work, for all this attention to other people's business had not improved my slender fortune. Every day I saw Emily, who was now almost exclusively a nurse to her father, who was getting very ill, and near to his end. The shock to poor Miss Sinclair of finding out that Victor Gregoire and Mr. Polenta were the same had nearly killed her. So she was merely another burden.

But Euphrosyne was equal to the task. She lived up to that character which I had seen written in her face the first day. Every day Cesare sent her flowers and sent to inquire for her, but she would not see him. One day however came to us suddenly with the intelligence that the colonel was much worse, and Miss Emily begged that I would come immediately.

I went at once to receive the last words of the unfortunate gentleman with whose forlorn fortunes I had been so accidentally mixed. They were a request to me to befriend these poor women whom he left behind him. We were interrupted in this sad discourse by the arrival of a letter. It must be given to the colonel immediately; a special messenger had brought it; it admitted of no delay.

"Let me see it," said the dying man. "I know what it is! But it comes too late!" The black border and the black seal had spoken loudly to his vanishing senses. His nephew, Lord Greyston, had been ill for several days—he had died! The younger man had gone first, and his heir lay breathing his last upon his pillow.

"Come here, Emily," said he. "I have

"Come here, Emily," said he.

been a very poor father to you, but I have done you one great service. I have lived twenty-four hours longer than my nephew! You are a rich woman. Kiss me. I die Lord Greyston, and you are my sole heiress."

And so saying the poor old snobbish and disreputable half pay officer, gambler, and chevalier d'industrie lay back and died.

Victor Gregoire was convicted, and Col. Sinclair—no, I should say Lord Greyston—was buried on the same day.

I had been confronted once with Mr. Polenta during the process of his trial. I had no idea or wish to see him again. His expression as he heard that I had first sketched him in the hospital ward of the prison, and had then been the means of bringing him to justice, was not an amiable one, but on receiving a note from him requesting an interview just before he was to leave for the galleys, I felt it due to Emily to go and hear what the wretch had to say.

Like most doomed men, he was calm and even cheerful. He said that what he most regretted was the spoiling of an admirably laid plan. He had been on the track of the San Marco jewels for years, and the episode of the Sinclair acquaintance was but to him one of those pieces of good fortune which always come, as he said, to adventurous spirits. When he had first met me he thought from my earnest gaze that I had seen him somewhere in his checkered career, and he had sometimes honored me with the belief that I too was like himself a soldier of fortune, perhaps one worthy of his confidence. That idea having been chased from his mind, he then condescended to use me as his unconscious dupe, my studio offering him unusual facilities. The exchange of the Russia leather bags was of course very easy to him in the confusion of leaving the studio. The placing of the bracelet in Emily's bag he had accomplished in the confusion attending the downfall of the picture, which naturally drew away Maddalena's attention.

"I had not forgotten her caricature of me either," said Mr. Victor Polenta Gregoire.

"But," said I, "how did you dare to stay twelve hours in Venice, as you did, after the commission of your crime?"

"Because," said this cool hand, "I accompanied the ladies to their respective apartments, and saw Maddalena put her supposed treasure in a trunk which she locked up, and then I knew her whole attention would be required by the afflicted young lady. I then went with Miss Sinclair and her niece across the house to their humble rooms, with the bag of jewels in my hand. Miss Emily was in tears, and had forgotten all about her water colors. Miss Sinclair was, I trust, engrossed in my unworthy self. It was not difficult for me to hide the little Russia leather case behind a pillar in the dark hall while I took my leave.

"Then, as a few hours' delay in Venice was indispensable to my subsequent plans, I could not avert suspicion better, even supposing it were aroused, than by remaining where I was. It would have been impossible, had I been arrested in Venice, for Madame la princesse to recover her jewels, or for the suspicion to attach to me. In one hour they were on their way to Paris, and there I should have escaped, but for your fortunate habit, sir, of remembering a face, and from your honorable practice of making a portrait of a man without his own consent. However, I bear no malice. All these things are luck—mere luck; the stars were against me. As you seem, however, to have the welfare of the Sinclair family at heart, I ask you to do them a service. Miss Sinclair has written me many letters—I would like to return them to her, and express to her my sense that she is a gentlewoman. She was sincerely attached to me, I believe!"

So this hardened villain had a soft spot in his heart—one grain of honor left in a seared conscience! I declare I was touched as he gave me a card with a few words written on it, to take to his mother.

"Go to this number if you please," said he. "Ask for Madame Gregoire. Tell her I shall see her in five years. She is very old, but she must wait till I come out. Bid her keep up a good heart, and to give you a packet of letters she will find in my escritoire."

"Monsieur Gregoire," said I, "for this I thank you."

And I left behind me a man who was no longer a man, but a number—a convict sentenced to the galleys.

I had no difficulty in finding Madame Gregoire, or in gaining possession of Miss Sinclair's letters. It struck me, however, that the grim old French hag received my communication from her son with more pleasure than pain.

The young English heiress stood in no need of friends; but in the midst of newly found relatives and anxious and affectionate cousins, who found "their dear Emily" suddenly so attractive, she turned to me, and begging of me to help her to bear prosperity as I had helped her to bear adversity, she made me her chosen friend and adviser

She claimed the "Euphrosyne," and hung it in her own beautiful picture gallery, amid the kindred treasures she had not known. Next to it was that of a superb young soldier; the ill fated colonel in his youth, and not far off hung a pretty young simpering beauty, poor Miss Sinclair.

Emily had been on her own ground a year, the respected, honored, and rich young woman, with a name, a title, and an estate, before we saw the San Marcos again. Then in great state came the Princess and her son and daughter to London, and old Dr. Sebastiani, with more wrinkles about his eyes than ever; and the Princess made an offer in due form for Emily's hand for the young Prince Cesare, and it was accepted in due form. I have an idea that her Majesty's mailbags had been freighted with missives all through this year of mourning, and that Prince Cesare had not waited for his mamma except in form.

On the day of her wedding Emily was presented with a share of the San Marco rubies.

"I would give you the tiara," said Madame Mere, "but that was not found. The robber contrived to hide that; and it has escaped the police."

Emily, however, refused to wear any ornament but one. That was the bracelet which had led to her arrest, to whose keeping was again entrusted the portrait of Cesare.

And the titled relatives who were ready to give away Euphrosyne, and to see her become a princess, were all declined, and an American artist led her to the altar.

It was not until years after that I found out that at the last moment of his free existence Victor Gregoire had made a tool of me, and that the card I carried to his mother had revealed to her and to a choice set of associates the whereabouts of the missing tiara. I dare say that on that one fragment of the splendid equipment of jewels known as the San Marco rubies Mr. Polenta, alias Victor Gregoire, is now living in virtuous ease and retirement.

At any rate, considering all things, although I am the favored friend of both the Princesses di San Marco, I shall never choose to quarter with my coat of arms a red Russia leather traveling bag.

THE END.

Slavery in Africa.

"I paid a visit to Sayol's camp. A scaffolding of beams at its entrance was ornamented with fifty hewn off right hands. Musket shots later on proclaimed that the leader of this gang was practicing musketry at his prisoners. Some of my men told me that the victims of this cruelty had been cut up immediately to furnish a cannibal feast; for Tippoo Tib's auxiliaries from the Lomami, the Bene Kalebwe and the Batelela are cannibals." Reading these words one would think that they were part of some romance, due to the vivid imagination and genius of Mr. Rider Haggard; but no, they are, alas! an actual narration of facts witnessed by the famous African traveler, Lieut. Wissmann, and related by him in a paper read before the Royal Geographical society on the 25th of June, 1888. It may be urged by some that surely this horrible and diabolical conduct of Sayol, the lieutenant of Tippoo Tib, is a solitary and isolated instance, and that other slave dealers do not behave so atrociously. It may, perhaps, be the worst case which has up to the present been witnessed and described by a European, but it is unfortunately only a fair sample of what is daily occurring in tropical Africa, where murder and rapine are destroying whole tribes of negroes, the few and scanty survivors being dragged away as slaves. According to Cardinal Lavigerie, Africa is every year drained of 2,000,000 human beings by the slave trade. Not a tithe of these ever come to be domestic slaves, "who after all are not so badly off" as is so commonly said by people who wish to plaster over the prick their conscience gives them when they say they are not the neighbor of the oppressed negro, and, like the priest and the Levite, pass by on the other side. For every slave they carry off the slave raiders murder about twenty, and of those they do drive away not a fifth come into the hands of the humane (?) slave owners of Morocco, Fez, Tuat, Tripoli and Arabia. The ivory trade has been blamed with causing most of the slave hunts in central Africa. This is no longer the case. In several regions the stock of ivory is nearly or quite exhausted, and still villages are hourly burned and their inhabitants murdered or put into slave chains, clogs and forks. The only difference is that now, the able bodied men being no longer required for the painful and laborious work of ivory porters, they, along with the aged of both sexes, are slaughtered in cold blood, while their wives, sisters, daughters and young children are dragged away to become the servants, concubines, and worse, of depraved and debauched mongrels.—The National Review.

A French Painter of Cats.

Eugene Lambert, the distinguished French artist, who has made such a great reputation as a painter of cats, is a fat faced man with a large mustache that resembles the whisker of the domestic animal he loves so well. In the yard belonging to his house the artist has a splendid collection of living models. One of his cats is tricolored, in black, white and yellow, and it appears that this variegated fur is never found except among the female species. According to the artist, a male of this shading would bring four thousand pounds in England. Lambert's cats are treated with great care by their master. Their corner of the yard is inclosed by an open work separation, inside of which are benches where the animals can repose, meditate and give themselves up to the pleasures of the toilet. Their beds consist of baskets of different dimensions placed on a shelf raised a few inches from the ground. The room in which they sleep is warmed in winter and always kept at the same mild temperature. Lambert's large studio walls are covered with studies in which the cat is represented in all its forms.

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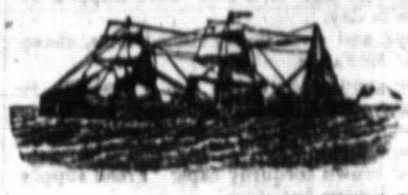

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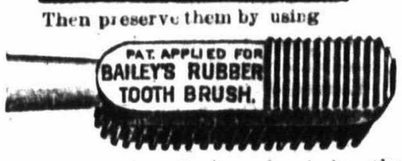

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