TRUTH ABOUT THE CASE

The Experiences of M. F. Goron, Ex-Chief of the Paris Detective Police

Edited by Albert Keyzer

A HOTEL MYSTERY

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"This woman, a wretched spy in the em-

were, on that woman's information, ar-

rested at the frontier, and have not been

"The police are investigating the affair,

There was a moment's silence when

had finished, and then two or three

of the guests remarked that it was a

terrible business. The count remained

silent. He soon after went to bed,

The next morning after breakfast I

sat outside the hotel smoking my

cigarette. The guests were at the

"Pardon me," I said; "I owe you an

apology for interrupting you some-

what rudely last night; but I took the

into what looked very much like &

diatribe against the Russian authori-

ties. You were apparently not aware

that a political spy was sitting within

"Yes, a spy, in the person of that

good-looking girl, Mile. Eugenie Arco.

So, now, you will perhaps accept my

"M. Guibert," he laughed, "I don't know whether to challenge you to

"There is no necessity for either,"

replied. "I am only too happy to

"How did you know she was a spy?"

"No, only strong suspicion. But we

The head waiter was standing at

"I have not seen Mile. Arco this

"She has gone away," the man re-

The count looked puzzled. We

walked a little way down the road,

"I had my doubts about that girl

from the start; she is a bungler, a

suspecting me, a native of Brittany, of

being a Russian Nihilist! Political

you must do it well or it becomes dan-

"Yes, about those unfortunate girls

"Reserve your pity for another oc-

"M. Guibert!" he cried, "I compli

"Well," he laughed, "you would have

"You are very kind. But for every-

After the apy incident the count be-

The countess undoubtedly neglected

Visitors kept pouring in, many of

them members of the so-called "smart

several of the newcomers, and I was

Then a remarkable incident occurred.

The countess had gone on one of

male followers, the organizer of the

party, as usual, being Rene Soudier.

Bright, witty, excelling in all sports,

Soud'r was adored by the women and

popular with the men, except with the

count. The latter disliked him cor-

The party had left after luncheon,

o'clock. At three in the afternoon, as

count walking up and down in front

of the hotel. Something evidently had

gone wrong. The moment he saw me

he gripped my arm and led me to a

cited tone which he tried hard to con-

trol; "M. Guibert, you proved yourself

very shrewd when you dealt with that

Russian girl. Allow me to apply to

you for advice. My wife's pearl neck-

lace has been stolen. Do you mind

The apartments the count occupied

in the hotel consisted of a drawing-

room, his and his wife's bedroom, and

their two dressing-rooms. Marfa, the

"M. Guibert," he began in an ex-

secluded spot in the garden.

accompanying me up-stairs?"

came very friendly and talked freely

body's sake it will be well not to men-

ment you on your perspicacity. May

ask what your profession is?"

"I am a commission agent."

The count noided assent.

to me on many subjects.

made a fine detective."

tion this affair."

her husband.

casion, count. I invented that story.'

"She left early this morning

morning," I called out to him. "I hope

he asked. "Have you any proof?"

shall now have proofs."

honor to lunch with me today."

a yard of you."

apology.

the door.

she is not ill."

and then I said:

"A spy!" he gasped.

and I followed his example.

girls who recently returned to

URRIED meals, taken at im- | Delambre, in the Montparnasse quarpossible hours, are apt to ter, where, in a bedroom on the fifth cause dyspepsia. This I floor, they found the body of a young found out; and Dr. Thibaut, woman stabbed to the heart. On a my medical adviser and piece of paper pinned to her dress the friend, fearing I might not following lines were scribbled in penobey his injunctions, took | cll: the trouble to escort me to a small watering-place in ploy of the Russian police, has for a long the Dauphine, whence, he time past watched young men and girls assured me, I should girls who the Parts universities. Two emerge perfectly cured.

I did not at all relish the idea of beheard of since. There are, we know, othcoming-even for a short time-a fashionable idler. But afterward I farlous work in some of the French wahad reason to be thankful, for the tering places, and their turn will soon adventure I met with added a curious chapter to my experiences. which has created a tremendous sensation among the Russian students here."

I went to that little place a few weeks after the execution of Eyraud. the murderer of the luckless Gouffe, a most sensational crime, which for several months kept the whole European press at fever heat. And, in order to escape interviewers and kodak flends, I decided to travel incognito, entaring myself in the hotel books as M. Guilbert; a wise precaution, as I soon discovered.

springs or strolling about, while the The most important guests in our countess had gone on one of her usual hotel where Count M-, a Russian, a peregrinations. Toward two the count fine-looking man of about sixty-five, appeared, and, passing me, gave me and his wife, a pretty woman quite one of his formal nods. I went up to forty years his junior. The countess, a restless young creature, was constantly organizing excursions in the mountains, leaving her husband at home to amuse himself. liberty of stopping you from launching

Two days after my arrival I noticed a newcomer at our table d'hote, Mile. Eugenie Arco, an attractive young woman with dark eyes and jet-black hair. Her hands were small and aristocratic, and her appearance would have been in every way refined but for her ears. These were too large and stood rather far from her head. The girl fascinated, yet at the same time repelled, me.

It had been raining all the morning, and I was in the reading-room glancing at an illustrated paper, when fight or to ask you to do me the a voice near said.

"Pardon me, monsieur, I see you are a Russian." It was Mile. Arco. "No." I replied, have rendered you a slight service."

"I am not." "I thought you were," she continued. "because I saw you reading a

Russian periodical." "I was not reading it," I retorted. "I was only looking at the pictures." "Oh, I see!" she explaimed. But the

look she gave me said she did not be-I did not care to continue the con-

From that moment, however, I noticed she never ceased to observe me, and many a time when I pretended to be asleep in one of the armchairs in the hall her large black eyes were fastened on me as if they were trying novice in the business. Fancy her to pierce my thoughts.

With the officials in the hotel Mile. Arco was a persona grata, for, unlike spying is dirty work; but if you do it most women, who in money matters are inclined to be niggardly, she gerous, especially to the spy. And tipped the waiters and chambermaids that is why I tried to knock the fear most liberally. The manager of the into that young creature by reading hotel and his wife had also taken a out that paragraph last night." great fancy to her, and she was always warmly welcomed by them in Poor things!" their sanctum, where she would sit and smoke cigarette after cigarette. Feeling myself closely watched by

her. I returned the compliment, and noticed that she would repair to the office at those hours when the post came in, and look over the clerk's shoulder at the letters he sorted. And then it struck me that no missive ever came addressed to her, although one afternoon, happening to pass her room at the moment the mald opened her door, I saw her deeply engaged in correspondence, with several letters in front of her.

The next morning, when Mile, Arco left the hotel I went out at the back, made quickly for the post office by another road, and hid myself behind the hedge of an empty cottage opposite. set." I did not like the appearance of I saw her enter the post office and leave it a few minutes later. She glad my cure was drawing to an end. looked up and down the road, and, nobody being in sight, she took a letter out of her pocket, opened it, and her excursions with her male and feread it eagerly.

"Bah," I said to myself, "you are not clever, my girl. A child could have seen through your game. Now we shall have some fun."

That same evening after dinner rain fell in torrents, and most of the guests dially, and rarely or never spoke to were in the drawing-room. A few were him. indulging in a harmless game of cards; two girls were at the plano and was not expected back before 7 singing sentimental songs, and Mile. Arco reclined in a rocking-chair, a I returned from a walk, I saw the lar about him?" book in her lap. The count, a very reserved man, with whom I had thus far exchanged only a few words, was talking to a retired naval officer who had spent some years in Russia.

"Yes," I heard the count say, "we want a thorough change. It is a disgraceful state of things. These grand dukes-

"Talking of Russia," I cut in, "allow me to read to you something

that just happened in Paris." I took a paper from my pocket, and as I unfolded it I noticed the count, whom I had interrupted in the middle of his speech, gaze at me with anything but pleasure.

"Last night," I read, "the police countess' maid, slept at the end of the

"Look at that!" he exclaimed, pointaround.

me to do?"

But Marfa had obtained her mis-

ant. So we waited till she came in. When the count told her of the robbery she looked thunderstruck.

"I swear," she cried, "that when madame went out the bag was safely locked. I did not go into her room after she left."

A loud noise down-stairs announced the cavalcade had returned from their suddenly, "I repeat, I am particularly excursion. The countess entered the hotel and her husband went quickly ber. Yet, at the same time, I dread up to her. I strolled down the road disclosures that might-that mightleading to the station, when a car- possibly cause annoyance to the riage drove up and a man jumped out, countess. My wife is young, very shouting:

"Goron, Goron! How are you, old chap?"

It was Dr. Thibaut, "Hold your tongue, you stupid!" 1 said. "What do you mean by bawling out my name? Have you forgotten quaintance only since we came here. that I am M. Gulbert? I hope the driver has not heard you."

"That's all right," he rejoined; "he's as deaf as a post. I have taken a week's hollday. I want to spend it that out? I have my reasons for askwith you here, after which we will return to Paris together. What do you say to this arrangement?"

"You have come at a good moment," I remarked: "there is plenty of excitement at the hotel;" and I related to him the story of the robbery. His eyes sparkled with delight,

"That will be glorious sport to witness." he laughed.

went straight to his wife's dressing- knock at my door. To my surprise her husband says, I gather she is con- hatred of him and his desire to sadthe count entered.

"Pardon my intruding upon you," he ing to a dressing-bag on the floor, its sighed. "I am very much annoyed. lock forced open, and many of the This police commissary is not makthings it had contained scattered ing any headway. He clings to the idea that the maid committed the "The countess," he continueud, deed, or that she is an accomplice; kept her jewelry locked in that. The and he thinks he is on the right trail. thief or thieves must have sneaked in M. Guibert, I must discover the culafter she left. What do you advise prit, and am willing to offer a reward that may tempt any one to help me in "I think you had better walt for my search. The hotel proprietor sugthe countess' return before taking any gested me writing to M. Goron, asking steps; she will not be long. In the him to come to our assistance, as meantime you might question the these local detectives seem unable to clear up the mystery."

"It is useless to write to M. Goron." tress' permission to go for a donkey- I replied. "Remember that this is beride to the monastery a few miles dis- youd his sphere of action; and that with the work on his hands in Paris you cannot expect him to attend to crimes committed in the provinces."

"I dare say you are right," groaned the old gentleman, "besides-

He stopped, and moved uneasily in his chair.

"M. Guibert," he burst out rather

anxious to lay my hands on the robtoo inclined to give her friendship to you would defeat all my plans." people of whom she knows very little. Look at that noisy crowd who follow her on her long rides or drives. Who are they? She made their ac-Some of the women of that set are as bad as the men. There is that Soudier always dangling after her. What is he? Who is he? Can one find ous way." ing you this "

"I do not know the man any more find out all about him through my Paris friends.

"Please, M. Guibert, do this for me. shall be deeply grateful." "Frankly, do you think of him in

connection with the robbery?" "I suspect that whole fast gang, and

committed the deed."

"I have a theory," said Thibaut, "that the countess knows the thief, mise because-

"Because she loves him?" "Yes."

"These things do occur."

"What about the man with the shaven upper lip? I have not seen him within the last few days."

"No: but I have," Thibaut gazed at me intently for a

few moments.

clue. What is it?" "My dear Thibaut, you have halfin, I foresee a disaster."

"Is it as serious as that?"

I want to avoid." "Can I help you?"

"Yes, by not asking me any quesremain M. Gulbert to the end. No body, including M. Julien, must know young, and inexperienced; and only I am Goron. An indiscreet word from

"You can rely on me." "I know I can. When, as I hope, I shall have brought my task to a satisfactory ending you shall know all the details of the case. This much I will ously disappeared; I shall try to have it spirited back in the same mysteri-

A week after the foregoing conversation a cab drove up at the door of the hotel. Thibaut's and my luggage than you do, but it will be easy to was hoisted on the top; and we shook hands with some of the guests, includ- in the darkness, but I felt sure he ing the count, who witnessed our de-

> parture for Paris, Half-way to the station we met the countess on her bicycle, some 50 yards

ahead of her party.

"Bon voyage, M. Guibert!" she "For you, perhaps, you heartless | feel certain one of them is the thief shouted, her face beaming with joy,



The poor lady sat motionless Her very lips turned white.

Having dressed for dinner, we found the guests in the hall eagerly discussing the affair, trying to extract particulars from the waiters and chambermaids. All at once there was a hush, for the door of the manager's room opened, and out came the count and his wife followed by a stout, redfaced, short man with gray whiskers.

"That's M. Julien, the police commissary," some one said behind me.

"I wonder," whispered Thibaut, "how that M. Julien will set to work?" "So do I. With your permission, however, I shall remain in the background. M. Julien, fortunately, does not know me, but one of his subordinates might; and I do not want to depart from my position of spectator. This is M. Julien's domain. I also see new faces. Look at that close-shaven youth with the flower in his buttonhole. Do you notice anything particu-

"No, I don't." "Look again."

"I see nothing except that he gives me the impression of being a cad." "Watch his mouth."

"Well, he seems to want with his teeth to catch something on his upper "Yes, his moustache. It must have been there quite recently, and he is

not yet accustomed to its absence." "It seems strange." "This may not be of any import-

ance, but if I were M. Julien I should take note of it." For two days I heard no news about

ness!" the robbery, and was wondering how things were progressing, when I was

man, but not for the count and | I hinted at this to M. Julien, but he | and threw a rose into our carriage, apparently thinks that well-dressed placed it in my buttonhole and gave ladies and gentlemen cannot commit a sigh of relief.

crimes." The next morning we heard that M. Julien was looking for a man, a waiter, discharged from the hotel for dishonesty, who, on the afternoon of the robbery, had been seen loitering near of the station when Thibaut called the house. He had since disappeared; out: and, as he had been on friendly terms with Marfa, M. Julien would certainly curred. You, too, must be anxious to have arrested the girl if the countess had not interposed and vouched for her innocence.

In accordance with my promise to the reply I received concerning Soudier was:

"Heavily in debt. Loose morals. Raises money wherever he can."

When I communicated this to the count his eyes lit up with a cruel fire. "This confirms my suspicions, M. Guibert. Remember my words-Soudier is the thief."

Thibaut was waiting for me downstairs. remarked to me.

"Very much so. M. Julien is ob-

"And the countess? You don't mention her. What does she say?" "I have not exchanged a word with

"I suppose that sigh has something to do with the case," said my observant friend.

We had the compartment to ourselves, and the train was scarcely out

"And now please tell me all that ocunbosom yourself," he added with a

mischievous smile. "Oh, I shall conceal nothing. But, although I did not act in an official the count I had written to Paris, and capacity, the story is of a delicate na-

ture and I must request you not to divulge it." "I give you my word."

"It is a strange business, and was even deeper than I conjectured. The first thing that struck me as odd, when the count took me to his wife's dressing-room, was that forced lock of the dressing-bag; I wondered who the lunatic thief could be who lost preclous time over that lock, when, with "Affairs seem at a standstill," he an ordinary penknife, he could have

cut the leather in less than a minute. "You will, however, understand my stinate. He keeps a close watch on difficulty, not having had charge of Marfa, and in the meantime he is the case, and not having been-like searching for a poor devil of a waiter. the police commissary—able to inves-The count is jealous, and would, if he tigate closely and question those likecould, at once clap the handcuffs on ly to throw light upon the matter. I the fascinating Soudier. The guests had to be guided partly by reasoning. eye one another suspiciously, and so partly by intuition; and the inferences robbery.

vinced that a stranger to the place die him with the robbery rather told against the former, and gave rise to ugly presumptions. I am, however, as you know, a pretty good reader of whom she does not want to compro- character, and I dat not believe the count capable of a vidany. There remained the countess, with whom during my stay at the hotel I had not exchanged half a dozen words. Do you remember my three days' absence?" "Yes: I guessed you had gone to Paris."

"You guessed right. I arrived there in the early morning, and two hours later I knew that the countess' father, "Goron," he cried eagerly, "you've a broken-down absinthe-drinker, was discovered something. You have a clerk to a money-changer and moneylender in the Boulevard St. Martin, who was once seriously compromised guessed the truth. Yes, I scent a in a case of stolen bonds. I took a mystery, and I wish to clear it up; cab, and slowly drove past the place, but not from professional pride. It is when I saw our friend with the shavfrom a sense of duty, for, unless I step en upper lip emerge from the office, small traveling bag in his hand, and jump on a 'bus, His name, I was told "It may become so. That is what at the hotel, is Ballu. I did not hesitate a second. I had seen through the window that the principal's private room at the back was empty, and that tions, even when I absent myself, Un- in the office were only a young man derstand me well, Thibaut. I must behind a desk and a girl at a typewriter. I went in and asked for M.

-, the countess' father. "'He has left us,' said the clerk.

"Returning to the station, I saw Ballu on the platform, and, unseen by him, we both arrived at the hotel at the same time.

"I had already noticed that although Ballu and the countess never extell you. The necklace has mysteri- changed a word when others were present, their eyes often met, and when on the night of my return we sat down at the table d'hote a hardly perceptible sign passed between them. Keeping them both well in sight, I saw Ballu at 9 o'clock stroll toward the end of the garden. He disappeared had gone to the little summer-house

facing the tennis-lawn, "I soon arrived at the back of the little wooden structure, and felt relieved when I heard some one move inside. Half an hour later there came a light step. It was the countess. Their conversation, carried on in whispers, did not last many minutes. Ballu's voice sounded hard, almost threatening, while that of the countess was imploring. Although I could not catch every word they said, I heard quite enough to be able to reconstruct the whole case. The moment to act had arrived.

"The following morning as the countess crossed the hall I walked up to her and said:

"'Please go to the library. I want to speak to you at once.'

"She gave me a look of surprise and fear, and entered the room.

"'Madame,' I said, 'to you and you alone I will divulge who I am. I am M. Goron, chief of the Paris detective force. My object is to help you. I know your father has appropriatedor is accused of having done somoney belonging to his employer, M. H-. I know you wanted to save him, and, not having the ready cash, you handed to M. H-, through his inderstudy, M. Ballu, your pearl neck lace as security. In order to do this you have—probably at this man's suggestion-made it appear you had been robbed. M. H-, being afraid to dispose of the pearls, is now pressing you to redeem them, and for a larger sum than your father owes him. Am I right?"

"The poor lady sat motionless. Her very lips had turned white.

"'Fear nothing,' I continued; 'I am here to save you. But you must promise to follow my instructions implicitly. Will you?'
"'Yes,' she whispered.

"'Very well. Can you invent a reason that will satisfy your husband why you should go to Paris, return ing the following day?"

"She nodded.

"Then leave tomorrow early by the express, having first wired to M. H--- to make an appointment at his office. Go there straight, Tell him you have seen me-letting him, of course, think I am in Paris-and that you have come to me for advice. Explain that you know from me that his attitude toward you places him in a serious position, from which he can extricate himself in one way only. Having agreed to let you refund him the money due to him by your father -always supposing that story to be true-he must at once return you the necklace, on your promise to pay him a fixed sum on account every month. You can manage that, can you not?"

"'Yes, M. Goron,' she said, putting her hand on mine, 'I will.'

"'Hush! Don't pronounce my name. Should that fellow H--- make any fuss, you can tell him he will soon hear from me.'

"She went, and returned the following evening. I purposely stood at the door as she passed out of the diningroom, when she slipped a note into my hand. Here it is:

"'H— accepts. Promises to return thing tomorrow by B—. God bless you." "Before we left I had the satisfaction of knowing that Ballu had re-

turned the necklace, and that it was once more in her possession." "When she threw that rose?"

"Yes." "And the count? How will his wife explain the reappearance of the neck-

lace?" "She will manage that, Women have inventive brains.

"And the great Julien?"

"Ah! The great Julien will, till the do the hotel officials. What a ghastly I drew were that the necklace had not end of his days, believe it was Marfa mess they are making of this busi- been stolen, and that either the count who stole and returned the pearls; or the countess-possibly both-had while the count will think the same reasons for spreading that story of the thing of Soudier. But Julien cannot now arrest innocent people in connec-"I assure you I never for an instant | tion with that case. And it was that were called to a house in the Rue passage on the same floor. The count aroused in the morning by a loud her on the matter. But from what suspected Soudier; and the count's my dear Thibaut, I wanted to avoid."