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every confidence in Ganimard. He knew his man, knew that the old detective was not one of those people who excite themselves for nothing.

As a matter of fact, on the evening of that second day, M. Dudouis was called to the telephone.

"Is that you, Chief?" "Is it Ganimard speaking?" Cautious men both, they began by making sure of each other's identity. As soon as his mind was eased on this point, Ganimard continued, hurriedly:

"Ten men, Chief, at once. And please come yourself."

"Where are you?" "In the house, on the ground floor. But I will wait for you just inside the garden gate."

"I'll come at once. In a taxi, of course?"

"Yes, Chief. Stop the taxi fifty yards from the house. I'll let you in when you whistle."

THINGS took place as Ganimard had arranged. Shortly after midnight, when all the lights were out on the upper floors, he slipped into the street and went to meet M. Dudouis. There was a hurried consultation. The officers distributed themselves as Ganimard ordered. Then the Chief and the Chief-inspector walked back together, noiselessly crossed the garden and closeted themselves with every precaution.

"Well, what's it all about?" asked M. Dudouis. "What does all this mean? Upon my word, we look like a pair of conspirators!"

But Ganimard was not laughing. His chief had never seen him in such a state of perturbation, nor heard him speak in a voice denoting such excitement:

"Any news, Ganimard?" "I know the real truth . . . It may be as unlikely as you please, but it is the truth."

He wiped the perspiration from his forehead and, after a further question from M. Dudouis, pulled himself together, swallowed a glass of water and began:

"Lupin has often got the best of me . . . but I have at least gained experience of his manner of play and learned his tactics. Now, in the matter of the tapestries, it occurred to me almost from the start to set myself two problems. In the first place, Lupin, who never makes a move without knowing what he is after, was obviously aware that Colonel Sparrminto had come to the end of his money and that the loss of the tapestries might drive him to suicide. Nevertheless, Lupin, who hates the very thought of bloodshed, stole the tapestries."

"There was the inducement," said M. Dudouis, "of the five or six hundred thousand francs which they are worth."

"Chief, I tell you once more, Lupin would not be the cause of another person's death for anything in this world. That's the first point. In the second place, what was the object of all that disturbance, in the evening, during the housewarming party? Obviously, don't you think, to surround the business with an atmosphere of anxiety and terror, in the shortest possible time, and also to divert suspicion from the truth, which, otherwise, might easily have been suspected? . . . You seem not to understand, Chief?"

"Upon my word, I do not!"

"As a matter of fact," said Ganimard, "it is not particularly plain. I felt that myself, when I put the problem before my mind. And yet, there was no doubt about it that Lupin wanted to divert suspicions . . . to divert them to himself, Lupin, mark you . . . so that the real person who was working the business might remain unknown . . ."

"A confederate," suggested M. Dudouis. "A confederate, moving among the visitors, who set the alarms going . . . and who managed to hide in the house after the party had broken up."

"You're getting warm, Chief, you're getting warm! It is certain that the tapestries, as they can not have been stolen by any one making his way surreptitiously into the house, were stolen by somebody who remained in the house; and it is equally certain that, by taking the list of guests and inquiring into the antecedents of each of them, one might . . ."

"Well?"



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