

# Madame Midas

By Fergus Hume

## CHAPTER XXVIII.—(Continued.)

Kitty Marchant heard all this evidence in dumb horror. She now knew that after ruining her life this man wanted her to die a felon's death. Her feet were numb and stretched out her hands in protest against him, but before she could speak a word the place seemed to whirl round her, and she fell down in a dead faint. This event caused great excitement in court, and many began to assert positively that she must be guilty, else why did she faint? Kitty was taken out of court, and the examination was proceeded with, while Madame Midas sat pale and horror-struck at the revelations which were now being made.

Vandeloop further deposed that the bottle Kitty took from his desk was quite full; and, moreover, when the other bottle which had been found in her room was shown to him, he declared that it was as nearly as possible the same size as the missing bottle. So the inference drawn from this was that the bottle produced being three-quarters empty, some of the poison had been used.

The question now arose that, as the guilt of Miss Marchant seemed so certain, how was it that Selina Sprots was poisoned instead of her mistress? But this was settled by Madame Midas, who, being recalled, deposed that Kitty did not know Selina slept with her on that night, and the curtains being drawn, could not possibly tell two people were in the bed.

This was all the evidence obtainable, and the coroner now proceeded to sum up. The jury retired, and the court was very much excited. Every one was quite certain that Kitty was guilty, but there was a strong feeling against M. Vandeloop as having been in some measure the cause, though indirectly, of the crime. But that young gentleman, in accordance with his usual foresight, had left the court and gone straight home, as he had no wish to face a crowd of sullen faces, and perhaps worse. Madame Midas sat still in court awaiting the return of the jury, with the calm face of a marble sphinx. But, though she suffered no appearances of suffering were seen on her serene face. She never had believed in human nature, and now the girl whom she had rescued from comparative poverty and placed in opulence had wanted to kill her. With clasped hands, aching heart, but passive face, she sat waiting for the end.

The jury returned in about half an hour and they were a dead silence as the foreman stood up to deliver the verdict. The jury found as follows:

That the deceased, Selina Jane Sprots, died on the 21st day of November, from the effects of poison, namely, conia, feloniously administered by one Katherine Marchant, and the jury, on their oath, say that the said Katherine Marchant feloniously, willfully and maliciously did murder the said deceased.

That evening Kitty was arrested and lodged in the Melbourne jail, to await her trial on a charge of willful murder.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Of two evils it is always best to choose the least, and as M. Vandeloop had to choose between the loss of his popularity or his liberty, he chose to lose the former instead of the latter.

At last the torture of wondering how much Kitty knew was too much for him, and he determined to go to the Melbourne goal and interview her. So he obtained an order from the authorities to see her and prepared to start next morning. He sent the servant out for a hansom and by the time it was at the door M. Vandeloop, cool, calm and well dressed, came down stairs pulling on his gloves. The first thing he saw when he got outside was Pierre waiting for him with his old hat pulled down over his eyes, and his look of sullen resignation. Gaston nodded coolly to him and the cabby he wanted to go to the Melbourne goal, whereupon Pierre alighted forward as the young man was preparing to enter the cab and laid his hand on his arm.

"Well," said Vandeloop, in a quiet voice, in French, looking off the dumb man's arm, "what do you want?"

Pierre pointed to the cab, whereupon M. Vandeloop shrugged his shoulders.

"Surely you don't want to come to the goal with me," he said, mockingly, "you'll get there soon enough."

The other nodded and made a step toward the cab, but Vandeloop pushed him back.

"Well," he muttered to himself, "I'll have to humor him or he'll be making a scene—you can't come," he added aloud, but Pierre still refused to go away.

This conversation, or rather monologue, was carried on in French, so the cabman and the servant at the door were quite ignorant of its purport, but looked rather astonished at the conduct of the dirty tramp toward such an elegant looking gentleman. Vandeloop saw this and there determined to end the scene.

"Well, well," he said to Pierre in French, "let it be as you wish, and then the dumb man entered the cab, he explained to the cabman in English: "This poor fellow is a pensioner of mine, and as he wants to see a friend of his in goal I'll take him with me."

As they drove along Vandeloop said nothing to Pierre. They went along in silence, and when they arrived at the goal Vandeloop told the cabman to wait for him and walked toward the goal.

friendship, drew the dead man's salary and bought clothes and a box for me. In the middle of one night I, still disguised as Pierre, slipped out of the window and went up to Black Hill where I found the nugget and brought it down to my room at the Wattle Tree Hotel. Then Vandeloop brought in the box with my clothes, and we packed the nugget in it, together with the suit I had worn at the time of the murder. Following his instructions, I came down to Melbourne, and there disposed of the nugget—no need to ask how, as there are always people ready to do things of that sort for payment. When I was paid for the nugget, and I only got eight hundred pounds, the man who melted it down taking the rest, I had to give six hundred to Vandeloop, as I was in his power as I thought, and dare not refuse in case he should denounce me for the murder of Pierre Lemaire. And now I find that I have been innocent all the time, and he has been frightening me with a shadow. He, not I, was the murderer of Pierre Lemaire, and you can prove it."

## CHAPTER XXX.

Madame Midas, now that Melbourne was so hateful to her, determined to leave it, and sent up to Mr. Calton in order to confer with him on the subject. Calton came down to St. Kilda and was shown into the drawing room.

"It was kind of you to come quickly," she said, in her usual quiet, self-contained manner; "I wish to consult you on some matters of importance."

"I am at your service, Madame," replied Calton, taking a seat and looking keenly at the marble face before him.

"I am going to England," she said.

"After the trial, I presume?" observed Calton, slowly.

"Yes," she answered, hesitatingly; "do you think they will—they will—hang the girl?"

"I can't tell you," answered Calton; "if she is found guilty—well—I think she will be imprisoned for life."

"Poor Kitty!" said Madame, sadly, "it was an evil hour when she met Vandeloop."

A sudden exclamation made him turn his head, and he saw Madame Midas, white as death, staring at the open French window, on the threshold of which was standing a man—medium height, black beard, and a haggard, hunted look in his eyes.

"Who is this?" cried Calton, rising to his feet.

Madame Midas tottered, and caught at the mantelpiece for support.

## (To be continued.)

## A STRANGE ROMANCE.

George Ross and His Private Malayian Colony.

Our favorite story is the one which Mr. Clifford calls "The Romance of a Scot's Family." George Ross, the son of a poor tenant farmer in the Orkneys, went out in a whaler to the China seas, entered the East India company's navy, and ultimately took to shipbuilding. When fortune came to him he went back to Scotland and carried off his whole family to the Cocos Islands, which he annexed as his own. The tale of the colony which he founded there is scarcely inferior in interest to the history of Sarawak. His son was a dreamer, but his grandson was a mighty man of his hands, who turned the settlement of the Cocos Malays into a model commonwealth.

"They have developed much of the Scotsman's love of order, regularity, neatness and cleanliness—all virtues foreign to the race for which they sprang. Their womanfolk, who tyrannise shamefully over the men since George Ross has set his face like a flint against the time-honored practice of wife-beating, indulge every Saturday in a wholesale 'redding up' of their houses, the like of which is not to be seen in all Asia. . . . Their sole lapse from virtue's way appears to be that they are apt to construct and conceal from the sight of their own rulers certain illicit stills—things not unknown in the records of Scotland, but startlingly inappropriate to a Mohammedan people—wherein to brew cocoanut toddy of an exceeding vileness."

It is said to think that the old isolation is likely to disappear, since a cable station is to be erected on the atoll, and strange men and ideas will soon break in upon the island calm. Every one must regret with Mr. Clifford the "loss of the simplicity and the seclusion, which have been the tools in the hands of an obscure Scot's family wherewith to fashion something so near in likeness to the perfect state."

## —London Spectator.

Five Millions for Fake Sevres.

French authorities have figured out that every year more than \$9,000,000 worth of fake Sevres porcelain are manufactured, principally in Germany, at Leipzig, Berlin and Ruhl, and that there is no way of stopping this falsification of a special kind of manufacture of which the French government has long had the monopoly.

The trade mark of the Sevres porcelain has changed with the successive reigns and empires, that of the present bearing the republican insignia. For this reason the German manufacturers produce the fake Sevres porcelain and place on each piece a mark of the olden time, which is no longer a trade mark and thus cannot be prosecuted by the French government.

It is said that most of the German product is sold in America, and that while you can buy a plate of German-made Sevres in Paris for 60 cents, you have to pay as much as \$24 in London and New York for the same stuff.

## —An Exception.

Kulcher—Summer reading, so-called is perilous. The average woman's reading is not productive of any profit.

Marryat—Don't you believe that! When she reads the bargain ads it's productive of profit to the advertiser.

## —Philadelphia Press.

Found the Soles.

Hungry Hiker—Dese here corporations has no souls, Useless.

Useless Urban—Yer off, here, Hung; I felt a pair of dere boots last night, when I was trown off dat freight car, an' de soles was dere, all right, all right.—Toledo Blade.

## LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Love is a raging and tumultuous ocean,  
Where waves, in thousand forms, leap fast and high,  
Friendship, a mountain lake, where no commotion  
Breaks the blue image of the solemn sky.

Love darts from heaven like lightning—Friendship creeps,  
A slowly breaking dawn, o'er hill and plain.  
Inmate Love demands, devours, grasps, keeps,  
Friendship gives all, nor asks for ought again.

—Emanuel Geibel.



## Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, Jim?

"Yes, that was her value—ship and cargo."

"Where did you fall in with her?"

"In the middle of the North Atlantic, and glad enough were we."

"Naturally—she meant money," I said.

"You don't understand," replied the old sailor, quietly. "At that time we weren't thinking of salvage—we'd been adrift eight days in an open boat."

"Tell me the yarn, Jim," I urged.

He had been rolling between his hands some tobacco, with which he presently filled his pipe, and having lit it, he began the narrative.

"It was somewhere in the early 'sixties," he said, "that I was outward bound for Baltimore, on board the ship Knight Errant."

"She wasn't a new vessel by a long way, but for all that, she sailed fairly well, and, what she lacked in modern appointments, she made up for in old craft. To be sure, there was a spell at the pumps every watch, but we felt easy if it did not get worse."

"After leaving the Start we saw no more land, but then the wind headed us off, and for about five weeks it was a dead beat to westward. Of course, no one found fault on that score, since the more days the more dollars is Jack's motto."

"At last the weather began to change. Heavy, jagged-looking clouds swept above the horizon, and I heard the mate tell our 'old man' that the barometer was falling."

"Take the kites off," ordered the skipper.

"In came the royals and the fore and mizen-top-gallant sail, and flying jib. She was beginning to lie down to leeward, and I sprinkled the deck pretty freely. During the afternoon the wind and sea had become still more lively, but she was logging about all she knew under a whole main-top-gallant sail. Every thump of the seas she took square on the bow, and always came up smiling, with the fok'sie head snothered in clouds of flying spray."

"That mate was a fellow to 'carry on.' He was trying to make a passage, d'ye see, and as the skipper never interferred with the canvas, the mate was doing just as he pleased. He was standing near me at the wheel, his weather-eye watching the 'gallant sail leech, and talking to her just as if she were a human: 'Go it, old girl—you've got a tidy keel, anyhow. Ease her a spoke, Jim,' as she gave a rough dive that almost took the wheel out of my grip."

"Aye aye," said I, "but she won't bear this kind longer."

"The chief put his head down the cabin hatchway. 'Getting worse all the time, sir,' he said."

"Then reef her down—reef her down," replied the 'old man,' who was busy with some hobby in his workshop, and when once fairly started at his lathes, left everything else to his officers.

"Didn't it blow that night? From supper time right through to midnight we were reefing, stowing and getting tackles aloft to ease the backstays and braces, until all hands were nigh played out and wet through, since no one dared to look at an ol' skin. After that we had to get the storm-spreaders out of the sail-locker, and bend and set them. It was no laughing matter to hang on to those upright jacksays in a heavy gale, and more than once I felt inclined to let go, for the cold and drenching spume was almost unbearable."

"After we got the sheets hauled aft the vessel seemed easier, but she was drifting badly to leeward, and pitching heavily, for the cargo of coal was just as dead as pig iron."

"That'll do the watch," sang out the mate, and then our side took it in turns to jump below for dry dunnage."

"You should have seen that fok'sie. The main deck seams were on the loose, and leaking like sieves. There wasn't a dry bunk anywhere—the lee ones were nearly afloat."

"Silent as 'figgerheads' the fellows were sitting on the chests—some smoking, the others looking wild. I know then that we were in for a dose of hard times, but it was my own fault, for I had shipped without even a look at the old hooker, and all I said was, 'Serves you right, Jim! You were an old fool!'"

"Upon reaching the deck the second mate sang out to man the pumps, and, after a longish spell at them, he fetched the sounding rod, while the boy brought along one of the binnacle lamps. When the rod was hauled up, and the light turned on it, that sailor-man's face was a picture—you bet!"

"It's all wet!" said he, in a half-alarm, half-doubtful kind of way, 'and, by all that's good, if the line ain't wet, too!'"

"He was new to the ship, like ourselves, and couldn't understand her little fallings."

"Oh," he added, hastily, "that can't be. And with that he put the rod under his arm, worked it rapidly forward and aft till it was dry, and then tried the rod again. On its next appearance the rod was wet as before, but what the mate said I ain't going to tell you. Just then she gave a peculiar, lifeless roll to leeward, and he and the boy shot into the scuppers, till Jack Carter and myself had to knock off pumping to render aid."

"That heavy roll told its own story just as truly as the sounding rod. There

was a slight of water below, and, although she was lying so heavily on the lee bilge, there was still sufficient water to cover the rod, and that meant at least four feet."

"Wake her up, boys—let's get her dry," cried the mate, trying to look bold, and maybe thinking we had not seen the tell-tale. "Give us a song," said he; but it wasn't likely that any one felt like a lark or a lark over her nest in the morning."

"The mate kept on talking and cheering us up all the while, but when you see a man like that you can bet your bottom dollar he's feeling as yourself—if not more so. Anyhow, that's a way all sailors have, and you can't rid 'em of it to save your life."

"Up and down, and up and down went the pump handles, till our arms ached again, and the deck was smothered in bilge water every time the vessel reeled to windward. Such bilge water!"

"With the first streaks of daylight we saw the mesa she was in. The swishing of the water amongst the coal was steering out all the fine stuff and driving it into the scrub, till you would have said we'd been scurrying down a coal mine. Four solid hours those pumps kept heaving out their grimy slush, and, when we were relieved, I just flopped down on the hatch-combings—coal muck or no."

"Some of the fellows were expecting a cup of hot coffee to cheer them up."

"By the merest fluke we slid from the broken water and tumbled into the hollows, where the silence and calm were awful, and overheard a mass of low-lying, flying clouds. Not a word spoke the men, but their salt sea eyes never blinked while watching those white-crested monsters, rising astern, and instantly obeying every order from the 'old man.'"

"Steady, now—pull all!"

"And out ripped the sail overhead, and the boat was surrounded with seething foam. How we watched for the dawn! Those hours seemed ages of anxiety—and still we lived!"

"It's coming, men!" cried the skipper, cheerily, as on toppling a sea, the eastern horizon was touched with a dull, gray light, and many lips said, solemnly, "Thank God!"

"After that things seemed more hopeful, and the crew began to talk. Food and water were served out, but the discovery that the gale had broken put new life into us. The sea still ran high, but the skipper ordered the hands to cease work, and directly afterwards the 'watch below' were snoozing like rabbits."

"That day and the next were passed in safety, for the sea slowly went down, till the boat was slipping along easily, but never a vessel did we sight. We'd been blown a long way south and out of the track of ships."

"On the third night it commenced to blow again, and somewhere near midnight, as we judged, two of the hands suddenly began to shout—'A sail! A sail!'"

"Sure enough there loomed against the sky the outlines of a vessel under all sail, and with one voice we hailed her. We were to leeward, and the breeze was strong. She never heard us, and you may, perhaps, understand our feelings when again left alone upon that sea!"

"Next day it was blowing hard, and we were forced to run. By that time the food and water were well nigh gone; but while there's life there's hope, and so all kept a stiff upper lip."

"During the next couple of days we had one biscuit apiece, but the seventh day out, so to speak, saw all the grub and water gone; but not one whisper of discontent was heard. During that night the wind abated considerably, and we had some sleep. At daybreak the sea was comparatively smooth, and it was on that eighth day after leaving the wreck that there happened one of the most remarkable boat races I ever knew."

"As the light strengthened our range of vision became more extensive and suddenly a great shout awoke the watch below. We sprang up, thinking of collision, or land, or, indeed, anything other than the reality."

"About two miles on our starboard bow there lay a semi-dismantled ship, deep in the sea, and evidently quite helpless."

"For her the skipper instantly shaped a course, and all eyes eagerly awaited some sign of life on board the stranger."

"She's abandoned," said the mate.

"What is she?" inquired the skipper.

"French," replied the chief.

"I believe so."

"But immediately after the words were spoken the mate yelled fit to wake the dead, and pointed toward a large vessel lying about three miles under our lee, while between her and the Frenchman was a large boat pulling rapidly toward the wreck."

"The excitement of the mate was intense."

"Look at that boat, men!" cried he. "If those chaps get aboard that derelict we'll lose as fine a salvage as ever dropped across our bows. What say ye—it is only a matter of half an hour's hard pull!"

"With a hearty compliance, we double-banked the oars, while both mates helped all they knew, and even the old man became highly excited in the contest."

"The strange boat was slipping along

at a snare pace; but you must remember that twenty-five men were crowded into ours, and only about half those could find room to pull, while our opponents were flying light and hadn't been staring on one biscuit a day.

"Bully, boys! Stick to it," cried the mate. "We'll all be happy to-morrow and there's plenty of grub on board the Frenchee. Easy starboard—pull port!"

"And, with that the skipper took us along in the ship-shape style."

"In a moment the mate was on her deck cheering and laughing like a boy and singing out to the strange crew that we were much obliged, but didn't require their services."

"I firmly believe they thought we were ghosts, till the mate began to yell. You see, they couldn't understand where we had come from, so sudden-like, there being no vessel visible, only theirs and the prize. Anyhow, they asked so many questions that we were obliged to reply; and then they went away, singing out about 'Smart Yankees!' and other rubbish, till the mate fairly laughed at them."

"That is how we won a prize of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and I don't suppose such a windfall is ever likely to come my way again."

"But how did you get her home, Jim?" I asked.

"Home!" cried he. "We didn't go home, but took her safely into Bermuda, and from there found a passage home in a steamer."

"She was a Frenchee, homeward bound, with a valuable East India cargo. With care and several spare spars, we rigged some jury-masts and took her safely to an anchorage, as I said."

"Of course, there was a deal of law over the salvage; but at last the case was fairly settled. I got a tidy bit for my share, and with that I set my wife up in a little grocery store, where she finds a deal to occupy her time, while I'm at sea."—Golden Days.

## TO PROTECT THE ALLIGATOR.

Legislators and Officials of Florida. Active to Save Him.

The legislature of Florida and most county and city officials have taken up the legal cudgel in behalf of the alligator inhabiting the beautiful streams of the State. There was a time when they were everywhere captured or shot and dragged away with impunity. They were becoming extinct when communities took up the alligators' battle. It was argued that, with the gator killed off, Florida's streams would lose much of what makes them picturesque to the tourist.

So it was made illegal in most parts of the State to kill or capture a partly or full grown alligator. The gators seem to be aware, too, of what has been done in their behalf. Now they will permit you to row or they will stand for your launch passing close alongside as they lay sleepily sunning themselves on the bank of a stream.

And they scarcely deign to turn their huge heads and cast an eye in your direction as you glide along. The wild duck is protected on Tampa Bay and on other large bodies of the waters of Florida by similar legal enactments. Yet in some large streams of the State the alligator is a prey of those who would seek their capture.

They are taken unharmed mostly at night time. A bull's-eye lantern is used. Its rays are turned full on the alligator, who slowly but surely follows the light until he can be lassoed, pushed ashore and tossed into a wagon to be hauled away and sold as a zoo, museum or circus attraction.

## KUKLUX WAS THIRSTY.

Drank Three Buckets of Water Before He Had Enough.

There was three o'clock on the 15th of one night, and I bowed the whistle, says Sally Rowe Wells in the Metropolitan in reminiscences of the Kuklux Klan. Uncle Zeke he peeped out an' when he saw dey did clobber an' banged on de' wid de butt ob dar pistols! He' old woman she tof' him to open de door, an' not make no 'spite 'bout it, or dey'd kill him. So he open de do', an' he trembled so he couldn't hardly stan' up. Den de fust ghost he say he mighty thirsty, an' he tell Uncle Zeke to bring him some water de de spring. He too scared to 'fuz, an' he bring him de big cedar bucket full an' his best dipper. De ghost took'en de bucket an' frew de dipper on de ground; den he raise it to his mouf an' drank, an' drank, an' drank, den he han' it back, an' he say to bring him some mo' right quick; Uncle Zeke, he scared so bad he couldn't hardly walk, but he bring it full ag'in, and bless de Lord, Miss Bertha, he dun drink dat up like he done de fust one, an' he han' it back an' tell him to get some mo' as quick as he can.

Uncle Zeke he ain't hardly able fer to go de spring dis time, an' he ain't scarcely got de strength to bring it; but dat ghost he drink every drop up, an' dat made three buckets he done drink. Uncle Zeke he scared so bad now he hatter set down, an' when de ghost han' de bucket back that time, he kinder sigh contented and full, an' he say to do orders, 'I was killed at Chickamauga, an' haven't had a drop of water since, den dey rid off, an' Uncle Zeke he say he guess he had his chance."

Could Not Stop His Speech.

One of the justices of the Supreme Court tells of a young lawyer in the West who was trying his first case before Justice Harlan.

The youthful attorney had evidently conned his argument till he knew it by heart. Before he had proceeded ten minutes with his oratorical effort, the justice had decided the case in his favor and had told him so. Despite this, the young lawyer would not cease. It seemed that he had attained such a momentum that he could not stop.

Finally Justice Harlan leaned forward, and in the politest of tones said, "Mr. Blank, notwithstanding your arguments, the court has concluded to decide this case in your favor."

We, the people, are very fond of believing we are running things when we are not.

When a man begins to lose his hair the less he has the better it looks to him.



"YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THAT FORK'SIE."