

The Crime of the Boulevard

By Jules Claretie

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"I have only to remain you to your cell," said the magistrate. "We will hunt for the other man."

Dantini in his turn said in an ironical tone, "And you will do well!"

M. Ginory made a sign. The guards led out their prisoner. Then looking at the chief, while Bernardet still remained standing like a soldier near the window, the magistrate said:

"Until there are new developments, Dantini will say nothing. We must look for the man in the sombrero."

"Necessarily," said M. Leriche.

"The needle!" The needle! And the haystack!" thought Bernardet.

The chief, smiling, turned toward him. "That belongs to you, Bernardet."

"I know it well," said the little man, "but it is not easy. Oh! It is not easy at all!"

"Bah. You have unearthed more difficult things than that. Do it up brown. There is only one clew—the hat."

"They are not uncommon, those hats, M. Leriche. They are not very bad hats. But yet it is a clew. If we live, we shall see."

He stood motionless between the bookcase and the window, like a soldier carrying arms, while M. Ginory, shaking his head, said to the chief, "And this Dantini—what impression did he make on you?"

"He is a little crack-brained," replied the chief.

"Certainly. But guilty—you believe him guilty?"

"Without doubt."

"Would you condemn him?" he quickly asked as he gazed searchingly at the chief. M. Leriche hesitated.

"Would you condemn him?" M. Ginory repeated insistently.

The chief still hesitated a moment, glanced toward the impassive Bernardet without being able to read his face, and he said:

"I do not know."

CHAPTER XIII.

"I do not know," thought Bernardet as he returned home. "What one knows very well indeed, what one cannot deny. Oh, that would be impossible! Is that on the retina of the dead man's eye, reflected there at the supreme moment of the agony? Is there found the image of this Dantini, his face, his features—this man, in a word, denounced by this witness which is worth all other witnesses in the world? This assassinated man cast a last look upon his murderer as he called for aid—a last cry for help in the death rattle. And this man says, 'I do not know.' But the dead man knew, and the kodak knows also. It has no passion, no anger, without hate, because it registers what passes; fixes that which is fleeting."

Bernardet was obstinate in his conviction. He was perfectly rooted in it. What if he had not persisted in believing that photography would reveal the truth? What weighty reason, what even acceptable one, was there which obliged Dantini to remain silent in the presence of the examining magistrate and his registrar—in the secret interview of an examination—when in order to escape a prison, an accusation, he had only to speak two words? But if Bernardet said nothing was because he had nothing to say? If he had given no explanation, was it because he had none to give? An innocent man does not remain silent. If at the instant when M. Ginory pressed the ivory button, the other day the man had been able to deny a charge, he would not have done it? One knew the secret reason of criminals for keeping silent. Their best reason is their guilt.

Only it seemed now certain that Dantini, although guilty, had an accomplice—without doubt, the man with the sombrero, the seller of the portrait. Where could he now be in hiding?

"Not easy," Bernardet repeated the words, "Not easy; no, not easy at all to run him out of his rabbit hole."

The woman in black, the visitor, would be another important clew. On this side the situation seemed a simple one. Or was this woman also an accomplice, and would she remain silent, hidden in the province? Or would the death of Rovere draw her to Paris, where she might be recognized and become a witness for justice?

But the days passed. What was called the mystery of the Boulevard de Clichy continued to interest and excite the public. Violent and perplexing parliamentary discussions could not distract attention from a crime committed in broad daylight, almost as one might say, in the street, and which made one doubt the security of the city, the efficiency of the police. The fall of a ministry, predicted each morning and anticipated in advance, could not thrust aside morbid interest in this murder.

The death of the ex-counsel was a grand actuality.

Jacques Dantini thus became a dramatic persona. The reporters created legends about him. Some declared him guilty and brought up in support of their conviction some anecdotes, some tales from the clubs, given as proofs; others asked if the suppositions were sufficiently well based to accuse a man in advance of trial, and these latter ardently took up his defense. Paul Rovere had even, with much dexterity and eloquence, diplomatically written two articles, one on either side of the question.

"It is," he said to himself, "the sure way of having told the truth on one side of the other."

Bernardet did not renounce for an instant the hope of finding the man who had sold the picture. It was not the first time that he had picked the needle from a cartful of hay. Paris is large, but this human sea has its particular currents, as the ocean has special tides, and the police officer knew it well. Here or there some day he would meet the man, cast up by the torrent like a waif.

First of all, the man was probably a stranger from some foreign land. Wearing a hat like a Shantung, he had not had time to change the style of dress of the country from which he had come in search of adventures. Bernardet hunted the hotels, searched the registers, made conversation with the lodgers. He found poor persons who had come from foreign countries, but whose motives for coming to Paris were all right. Bernardet never stopped searching a moment. He went everywhere, curious and prying, and it pleased him when he found a leisure evening, to go to some of the strange wineshops or alehouses (called carabets) to find subjects for observation. These carabets are very numerous on the outskirts of Montmartre, in the streets and boulevards at the foot of the Butte, bizarre inventions, original and disagreeable creations where the ingenuity of the enterprisers sometimes made them ludicrous in order to attract, to cater to the idle and to hold the loungers from among the higher classes; carabets born of the need for novelty which might stimulate the blasé, the demand for something eccentric almost to mor-

tion, uneasy and slightly intense, struck Bernardet at once. That white face, with its black beard, with its gleaming eyes, was not to be passed by with a casual glance. The waiter placed a glass of brandy before him; he placed his elbows on the table and leaned his chin upon his hands. He was evidently not a habitué of the place nor a resident of the quarter. There was something foreign about his appearance. His glance was steady, as that of one who searches the horizon, looks at running water, contemplates the sea, asking for some "good luck," of the unknown.

"It would be strange," thought Bernardet, "if a simple hat and no other clew should put us upon the track of the man for whom we are searching."

At once, with the ingenuity of a master of dramatic art, the agent began to plot and to put into action what lawyers, pleading and turning and twisting a cause this way and that, call an effect. He waited until the manager informed them that they were about to pass into the cave of death and gave them all an invitation into the adjoining hall; then, profiting by the general movement, he approached the unknown, and almost shoulder to shoulder, he walked along beside him, through a narrow, dark passage to a little room, where, on a narrow stage, stood upright an empty coffin.

It was a doleful spectacle which the Cabaret du Squelette (the wineshop of the skeleton) offered to its clientele of idle loungers and morbid curiosity seekers attracted to its halls by these exhibitions. Bernardet knew it all very well, and he knew by just what play of lights, what common chemical illuminations they gave to the lockers on the sinister illusion of the decomposition of a corpse in its narrow home. This place, which he had seen many times in the little theaters in the faubourg at Neuilly. The proprietor of the cabaret had explained it to him. He had been curious and very keen about it, and so he followed the crowd into this little hall to look once more at the image of a man in the coffin. He knew well to what purpose he could put it. The place was full. Men and women were standing about. The black walls made the narrow place look still smaller. Occasional bizarre pleasantries were heard and nervous laughs rang out. Why is it that, no matter how skeptical people may be, the idea, the proximity, the appearance of death give them an impression of uneasiness, a singular sensation which is often displayed in nervous laughs or sepulchral drolleries?

Bernardet had not left the side of the young man with the gray felt hat. He could see his face distinctly in the light of the little hall, and could study it at his ease. In the shadows which lurked about them the young man's face seemed like a white spot. The officer's sharp eyes never left it for a moment.

The manager now asked if some one would try the experiment. This was to step into the open coffin—that box, as he said—"from which your friends, your neighbors, can see you dematerialize and return to nothingness."

"Come, my friends," he continued, in his ironical tones, "this is a fine thing. It will permit your best friends to see you deliquesce. Are there any married people here? It is only a question of tasting in advance the pleasures of a widowhood. Would you like to see your husband disappear, my sisters? My brother, do you wish to see your wife decompose? Sacrifice yourselves, I beg of you. Come, come up here! Death awaits you!"

They laughed, but here and there a laugh sounded stident or hysterical. The laugh did not ring true, but had the sound of cracked crystal. No one stirred. This parody of death affected even these hardened spectators.

"Oh, well, my friends, there is a cadaver belonging to the establishment which we are going to place in it. You may readily understand that we do not take the dead for companions."

As no one among the spectators would enter the coffin the manager, with a gesture, ordered one of the supernumeraries of the cabaret to enter. From an open door the figurant glided across the stage and entered the coffin, standing upright. The manager wrapped him about with a shroud, leaving only the pale face of the pretended dead man exposed above this whiteness. The man smiled.

"He laughs, messieurs, he laughs still," said the manager. "You will soon see him pay for that laugh. Rome rit et mourut," as Bassuet said.

Some of the audience shouted applause to this quotation from a famous author. Bernardet did not listen. He was studying from a corner of his eye his neighbor's face. The man gazed with a sort of fascination at this fantastic performance which was taking place before him. He frowned; he bit his lips; his eyes were almost ferocious in expression. The figurant in the coffin continued to laugh.

(Continued Next Week.)

Turn About.

J. Barton King, the famous Philadelphia cricketer, at a dinner, described the manners and customs of the English as he had observed them during his cricketing tour.

"The English lodging house," said Mr. King, "is not of much account. I have a friend, an Oxford man, who tried lodgings, then took a flat. In lodgings, it seems, the landlady gouges you frightfully."

"My friend told me how he once rebuked his landlady. She came to him when the door opened and said, 'Whisky all gone, sir,' he said, 'Shall I get you another bottle?'"

"Yes, I wish you would," said he, "it's your turn."

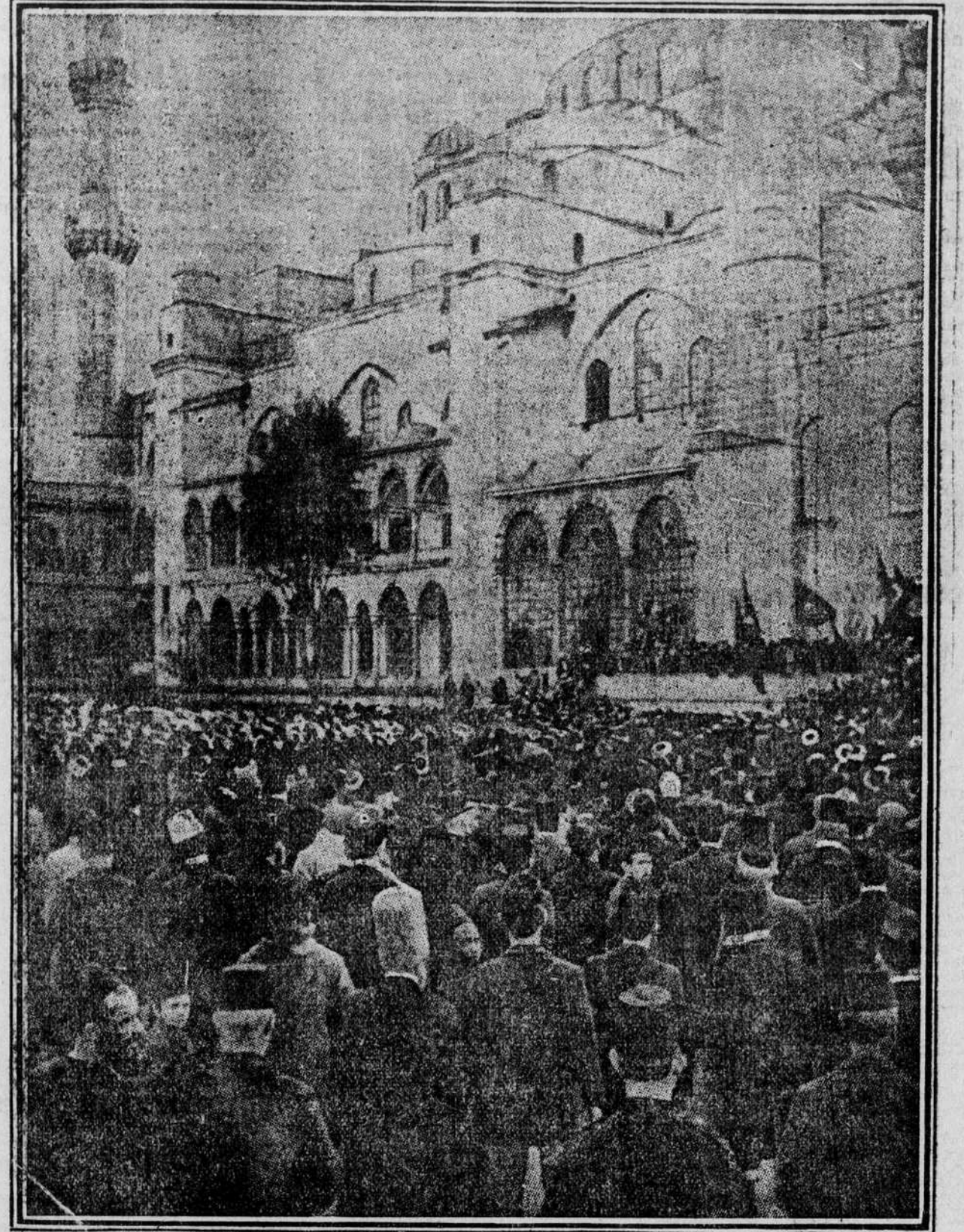
Discreet Prophecy.

"Why do you invariably predict the coldest winter we have had in years?"

"Well," answered Professor Blather-ton, "if it comes true people necessarily give me credit for great wisdom. And if it doesn't come true they are too thankful to hold any grudge."

Ma says one of the advantages of a low neck dress is that it makes back scratching easy.

TURKS BOYCOTT THE RED FEZ WHICH IS MADE IN AMERICA



ANTI-AUSTRIAN DEMONSTRATION AT THE SULTAN'S AKHMED MOSQUE

The red fez, which is made in America, is absolutely boycotted by the Turks, who use the white fez, which they themselves manufacture. Note the predominance of the white fez, which is rapidly replacing the red.

Dynamic Rain Making.

From the London Morning Post.

The desperate expedient of rain making experiments has lately been put to the proof at Oamaru, in New Zealand. The method employed was that of detonating large quantities of explosives on the tops of hills. As the "rain making" took place at about the same time that a break up of the drought was imminent, and as human nature inclines to a belief in the "workers" of science, it was widely reported that in some instances the explosions had brought the rain down. Fortunately the whole of the experiments were carefully recorded and supervised by a trained meteorologist, who gives an unprejudiced account of them in *Symon's Meteorological Magazine*. Rev. D. C. Bates, the observer in question, arrives at the conclusion, with which no one who impartially surveys the facts will disagree, that the explosions of gun cotton, dynamite, and gunpowder, though of considerable force, had nothing to do with evoking the rain and that the energy these artificial expedients developed was puny in comparison with the great natural forces which were producing a cyclone over thousands of square miles when the rain fell. In some general observations on the experiments Mr. Bates remarks that the explosions had apparently no more effect on the vast expanse of air than would the striking of a match in a room. The forces arrayed against artificial changes in the atmosphere are tremendous, and almost beyond conception. About a thousand units of heat are needed to transform a pound of water to vapor. When vapor is retransformed into water latent heat is liberated to a corresponding amount. Now an inch of rain corresponds to about 65,000 tons to the square mile. The heat developed or released, therefore, under such conditions of condensation from vapor to water would consequently demand an equivalent in work equal to a hundred million horse-power working for half an hour. The force of the mightiest explosion with all its gas put forth into the air is in comparison less than a drop in a bucket. Rain making, in short, like fog dispersal, demands far greater forces than any man is yet able to direct, produce or control.

A Self-Made Monkey.

The Short One—You can't make a monkey of me.

The Tall One—I can't without infringing on your copyright.

Conundrums.

Why is a portrait like a member of congress?
Because it is a representative.

What relation is a child to its own father when it is not its own father's son?
A daughter.

Where is the smallest bridge in the world?
On your nose.

What table has no legs to stand on?
The multiplication table.

If a tough beef steak could speak, what English poet would it mention?
Chaucer (chaw, sir!).

Too Much Experience.

Long and tenderly she gazed into the count's eyes.
"How deftly," she murmured, "you touched papa for that hundred."
Then a frown ruffled her beautiful brow.
"You have deceived me," she cried, her eyes flashing fire, "I am not your first love!"

THE REASON.

Mrs. B.: "I can't keep track of my neighbors at all any more."
Mr. B.: "Are they moving in and out?"
Mrs. B.: "No, but my friend, Mrs. Gossip, is ill!"

CAME FROM THE WEST.

Some of the westerners who have successfully invaded New York, and their birthplaces are:

- + Samuel L. Clemens, author, Florida, Mo.
- + John W. Gates, capitalist, Chicago, Ill.
- + Whitelaw Reid, journalist and diplomat, Xenia, O.
- + Augustus Thomas, playwright, St. Louis, Mo.
- + James R. Keene, stock broker, California.
- + William R. Hearst, journalist, San Francisco, Cal.
- + William Dean Howells, author, Martin Ferry, O.
- + Henry M. Blossom, author, St. Louis, Mo.
- + James Lane Allen, author, Lexington, Ky.
- + John H. Finley, college president, Grand Ridge, Ill.
- + Dr. Simon Flexner, bacteriologist, Louisville, Ky.
- + Daniel Frohman, theatrical manager, Sandusky, O.
- + Norman Hapgood, editor, Chicago, Ill.
- + Margaret Illington, actress, Bloomington, Ill.
- + William Vaughn Moody, playwright, Spencer, Ind.
- + Adolph S. Ochs, publisher, Cincinnati, O.
- + Frederick B. Opper, artist, Madison Lake, O.
- + Lloyd Osborne, author, San Francisco, Cal.

Richard F. Outcault, artist, Lancaster, O.
Maud Powell, violinist, Peru, Ill.
Lillian Russell, opera singer, Iowa.
Ervin Wardman, editor, Salt Lake City, Utah.
David Warfield, actor, San Francisco, Cal.
Ray Stannard Baker, journalist, Lansing, Mich.
Elbert Hubbard, author, Bloomington, Ill.
Orville Wright, aviator, Dayton, O.
Wilbur Wright, aviator, Millville, Ind.
Blanche Bates, actress, Portland, Ore.
David Belasco, dramatist, San Francisco, Cal.
Amelia Bingham, actress, Hicksville, O.
George McMann, comic artist, St. Louis, Mo.
John G. Carlisle, lawyer, Campbell County, Ky.
Carrie C. Catt, woman suffragist, Ripon, Wis.
Irving Cobb, journalist, Shawnee County, Kansas.
Amalia K. Couderc, painter, Terre Haute, Ind.
Paul D. Cravath, lawyer, Berlin Heights, O.
Homer C. Davenport, cartoonist, Silverton, Ore.
Thomas A. Edison, inventor, Milan, O.

