

The Crime of the Boulevard

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By Jules Claretie

CHAPTER XII.

Bernardet, without stopping to salute her, pointed out the portrait and asked to see it. When he held it in his hands, he found the resemblance still more startling. It was certainly Jacques Dantin. The painting was signed "P. Bordeaux, 1871." It was oval in shape; the frame was gone; the edge was marked, scratched, marred, as if the frame had been roughly torn from the picture.

"Have you had this portrait a long time?" he asked of the shopwoman.

"I put it in the window today for the first time," the huge woman answered. "Oh, it is a choice bit! It was painted by a wicked one."

"Who brought it here?"

"Some one who wished to sell it—a passerby. If it would interest you to know his name—"

"Yes, certainly it would interest me to know it," Bernardet replied.

The shop woman looked at Bernardet defiantly and asked the question: "Do you know the man whose portrait that is?"

"No, I do not know him. But this resembles one of my relatives. It pleases me. How much is it?"

"A hundred francs," said the big woman.

Bernardet suppressed at the same time a sudden start and a smile.

"A hundred francs! Diab! How fast you go! It is worth some rather than francs."

"That!" cried the woman, very indignant. "That! But look at this material, this background. It is famous. I tell you, I took it to an expert. At the public sale it might perhaps bring 1,000 francs. My idea is that it is the picture of some renowned person, an actor or a former minister—in fact, some historic person."

"But one must take one's chance," Bernardet replied in a jeering tone. "But 100 francs is 100 francs. Too much for me. Who sold you the painting?"

The woman went around behind the counter and opened a drawer, from which she took a notebook, in which she kept a daily record of her sales. She turned over the leaves.

"November 12, small oval painting bought"—She readjusted her spectacles as if to better decipher the name. "I did not write the name myself. The man wrote it himself." She spelled out:

"Charles—Charles Breton, Rue de la Condamine, 16."

"Charles Breton," Bernardet repeated. "Who is this Charles Breton? I would like to know if he painted this portrait, which seems like a family portrait, and has come to sell it?"

"You know," interrupted the woman, "that it often happens. It is business. One buys or one sells all in good time."

"And this Breton, how old was he?"

"Oh, young. About 30 years old. Very good looking. Dark, with a full beard."

"Did anything about him especially strike you?"

"Nothing!" the woman shortly replied. She had become tired of these questions and looked at the little man with a troubled glance.

Bernardet readily understood, and, assuming a paternal, a beaming air, he said with his sweet smile:

"I will not fence any more. I will tell you the truth. I am a police inspector, and I find that this portrait strangely resembles a man whom we have under lock and key. You understand that it is very important that I should know all that is to be ascertained about this picture."

"But I have told you all I know, monsieur," said the shopkeeper.

"Charles Breton, Rue de la Condamine, 16—that is the name and address. I paid 20 francs for it. There is all right. Read it, I beg. It is all right. We keep a good shop. Never have we, my late husband and I, been mixed with anything unlawful. Sometimes the bric-a-brac is soiled, but our hands and consciences have always been clean. Ask any one along the street about the Widow Colard. I owe no one, any every one esteems me—"

The Widow Colard would have gone on indefinitely, if Bernardet had not stopped her. She had, at first mention of the police, suddenly turned pale, but now she was very red, and her anger displayed itself in a torrent of words. He stemmed the flood of verbs.

"I do not accuse you, Mame Colard, and I have said only what I wished to say. I passed by chance your shop. I saw in the window a portrait which resembled some one I know. I ask you the price, and I question you about its agent into your shop. There is nothing there which concerns you personally. I do not suspect you of receiving stolen goods. I repeat my question. How much do you want for this picture?"

"Twenty francs, if you please. That is what it cost me. I do not wish to have it draw me into anything troublesome. Take it for nothing, if that pleases you."

"Not at all. I intend to pay you. Of what are you thinking, Mme. Colard?"

The shopwoman had, like all people of a certain class, a horror of the police. The presence of a police inspector in her house seemed at once a dishonor and a menace. She felt herself vaguely under suspicion, and she felt an impulse to shout aloud her innocence.

"Always smiling, the good man, with a gesture like that of a prelate blessing his people, endeavored to reassure her, to calm her. But he could do nothing with her. She would not be appeased. In the long run this was perhaps as well, for she unconsciously, without any intention of aiding justice, put some clues into Bernardet's hands which finally aided him in tracing the man.

Mme. Colard still rebelled. Did they think she was a spy, an informer? She had never—no, never—played such a part. She did not know the young man. She had bought the picture as she bought any number of things.

"And what if they should cut off his head because he has confidence in me, entering my shop? I should never forgive myself, never."

"It is not going to bring Charles Breton to the scaffold. Not at all, not at all. It is only to find out who he is, and of whom he obtained this portrait. Once more, did nothing in his face strike you?"

"Nothing," Mme. Colard responded. She reflected a moment.

"Ah, yes, perhaps. The shape of his hat. I felt hat with wide brim, something like those worn in South America or Kareros. You know, the kind they call sombrero. The only thing I said to myself was, This is probably some returned soldier. I had not seen at the bottom of the picture Bordeaux. I should have thought that this might be the portrait of some Spaniard, some Peruvian."

Bernardet looked straight into Mme. Colard's spectacles and listened intently, and he suddenly remembered what Moniche had said of the odd appearance of the man who had, like the

TWO OF THE BEST KNOWN GENERALS AND THEIR WIVES



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, MAJOR GENERAL F. D. GRANT, MRS. LEONARD WOOD, MRS. F. D. GRANT, AND MAJOR GENERAL LEONARD WOOD

New York, Special: The return of Major General Leonard Wood from the Philippines where, for more than six years, he has been in command of the military forces, marks another movement on the great army chess-board. By it two leaders of the "American regulars" are to leave their former posts for new fields. General Wood has only once been at Governor's Isl-

and, and then but for a scant 15 minutes. Major General Grant leaves the familiar scenes at "Bay Island" to take command of the Department of the Lakes, with headquarters in Chicago. Little pomp was observed when the generals exchanged compliments. It was a handshake between commanders and the formal introduction of General Wood to the staff at Governor's island.

The general orders from Washington was read and the ceremony was over. General Wood returns to the United States after a summer in Europe. He spent most of his time in Switzerland. He also visited the maneuvers of the French and German armies, and was the military representative on the American commission to the Spanish Historical congress at Saragossa.

THE ELECTORAL VOTE.

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

If an intelligent foreigner, traveling in the United States at the time of a national election, should ask an American friend a few simple questions about the electoral college, when it meets and how it proceeds to choose a president, he would probably be astounded at an utter ignorance on the part of the American sovereign voter. In the sense of having any physical function of meeting and acting, there is no such national entity as an electoral college. The practice of elections has departed so widely from the theory of the constitution that an American who has not made a special inquiry into the subject generally regards the general election as setting the presidential, except for minor clerical details. Very few realize the truth—that the selection of a president is still beset with grave doubts and with serious possibilities of convulsion.

Not one American in 10 stops to think that Mr. Taft is not yet elected and is no more a president-elect than is any other citizen. He is the nominee of a political party and in the hands of its electors. They can choose Bryan if they so decide.

The process is that the electors in each state meet and vote. The state executive then certifies the vote to the secretary of state at Washington, who certifies the returns from all the states to congress. The philosophy is that the affair is in the hands of states, and that the national congress merely counts and announces the result. Under the constitution the president of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and the House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. Whether the president of the Senate shall count the votes, or whether the House has the power of deciding what votes shall be counted, are questions not yet finally settled, notwithstanding the legislation of the Hayes-Tilden period and the act of 1887. Many authorities hold that an amendment to the constitution is necessary before the discretionary power involved in counting disputed returns will be satisfactorily located.

Section 4, of the act of 1887, provides that the Senate and House shall meet on the second Wednesday of February. The president of the Senate shall preside. Two tellers appointed by the House and two by the Senate shall open all certificates and papers. If only one set of returns shall have been lawfully certified by a state it shall be counted. In case of dispute between two state authorities, the two houses, acting concurrently, may decide. If they disagree, each house takes up the question separately, and only those returns shall be counted which both houses, acting separately, shall decide to be the "lawful votes of the legally appointed electors of states."

In other words, as Senator Sherman said, the clause allows the two houses, if they are partisan and act together, to reject the honestly recorded votes of every elector in every state. It permits a majority of congress, on technical grounds, or no grounds, to defeat the popular will and prevent the inauguration of a new president. If the two houses do not separately concur, state disfranchisement will result. The unlearned voter will agree with the learned jurists that unless some better solution of this difficulty is invented, trouble will sooner or later be precipitated.

What if President-elect Taft should die before the electors of the states meet and vote, or after the voting and before congress counts the votes? In the Greeley case most of the democratic electors voted for Hendricks, but certain Georgia electors insisted on voting for Greeley. However, that doubt was removed by a court decision which declared that a dead man is not a person and that such a vote is void. At no time did the question threaten national disturbance, since the electors are free agents in contemplation of the law; and if they do not follow party instructions or understandings it is a party matter.

So far from settlement is the question of the electoral count and so full of danger that practically every high authority has spoken of the "outraged usefulness of the electoral system." An example of the imperfections occurs in Maryland, where Taft has carried the state, it appears, by a plurality of 605, and yet Bryan gets six of the electoral votes. At the first instance of a political revolution, after which a strong majority of one party shall control both houses and be called upon to pass upon electoral votes cast for a political opponent, there will be temptations to devise technical reasons, in the vote of close states, for seating a candidate whom the people shall have rejected. The electoral system is crude, out of harmony with the customs of the country, fallacious in its theories and dangerous in action—as any one can perceive by asking himself what would have happened if both the president-elect and the vice president-elect should die before inauguration. The system has worked most of the time, because party management has been strong enough to prevent minor accidents, but no American can think of the electoral college without a wish that a sure and sound system could be adopted.

Half and Half.

It was a decidedly stormy passage to New York. Israel Zangwill, the playwright and novelist, said one night in the smoking room:

"It is pleasant to cross the Atlantic, but this bad weather is mingling a good deal of discomfort with our pleasure. Life is usually, though, like that—pleasure and pain—half and half."

"It reminds me of an elderly spinster who sat near me at the table d'hôte one afternoon in Venice. Turning to her niece, I heard her say:

"'In Venice at last! Ah, my dear, half the dream of my youth is now fulfilled."

"Why only half, auntie?" the young girl asked.

"I counted on going to Venice," sighed the spinster, "on my wedding journey."

Another Lincoln Story.

My intimate friend, the late Judge A. W. Hubbard, who represented in congress the northwestern third of Iowa during the civil war, related to me the following anecdote of President Lincoln which seems especially characteristic and worthy of preservation. Judge Hubbard went to the White House to see the president on some matter of business and found him occupied with a delegation from Cleveland, O., so had to wait in the ante room for their departure. At Cleveland there were two factions of the republican party, and as is apt to be the case in families, the feud was bitter and contention furious. Now there was a vacancy in the postoffice there, and the president had sent to the senate for postmaster the name of a prominent member of one faction, and the nomination was likely to come up soon for confirmation or rejection. A delegation of leading men in the opposing faction had hastened to Washington to expostulate and even demand of Lincoln a withdrawal of the nomination, and the judge waiting in the ante room could hear the noise of their importunate demands. In course of time, however, the delegation fled out through the ante room, and the president following immediately after, hat in hand and that expressive smile of sadness on his face, reached out his hand to the judge—an old friend—exclaiming: "Another be-um-up set, Hubbard, let's take a walk." Whereupon they went out to some office and the judge's business was settled on the way. Anyone who has seen a beehive upset, will see the point and appreciate the exclamation.



ALSO BLACK EYES, ETC. Visiting Englishman—What are the most notable features about football as it is played here? The Native—Broken noses.

(Continued Next Week.)

The Simple Life.

From the Lamar, Mo., Democrat.

Go out to the home of some friend who lives in the country, one of these sharp autumn nights. Get out at 5 o'clock the next morning and do the chores in the chill approach of the dawn, then he yourself, seated at the table, and commence stripping the frost-covered shucks from the nubbins, staying with the job until night. Then as you unload the corn into the crib amidst the gathering darkness you will have no trouble at all in burning out, for many people persist in hanging around town—even when they haven't any job.



The Bold Hunter—li-h-honest, Mr. Rabbit, I wasn't after you! I was lookin' for bears!

A SMALL ONE.

Knight Stands—I want you to understand that I am star of this company.

Howdy Bar-Yow—May be killed as a star, but you couldn't be found by a Lick telescope.

One Kind.

Teacher—Willie, what is a sentence? Willie—Thirty days.



One Kind. Teacher—Willie, what is a sentence? Willie—Thirty days.