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A BURGLAR'S STORY;

On June 27, in the city of Paris, there was another revelation of the mysteries of French social life added to the long list recorded in the archives of the police prefecture of the Seine.

Monsieur Horace D'Aubigne, a gentleman of fortune, middle aged, but lately retired from the civil service of the empire, having strong passions, a penchant for women, a love of intrigue, and by no means lacking in vanity, became enamored of M'le Borriane, then an actress, attached to the Odeon.

Monsieur D'Aubigne, having resolved upon the conquest of this young woman, very speedily obtained an introduction to her, and from that moment, as he came within the influence of her smile and was thrilled by the flash of her dark Spanish eyes, he had but one idea, one thought—that of possessing her, of putting her in the gilded cage of his protection and revealing in the light of her love.

And M'le Borriane—what of her? Twenty-five years of age, an almost perfect form, a beautiful face; the mask of innocence and gentleness covering the hateful deformity of a woman who, from her girlhood of sixteen, had been an adventuress; who had been driven from Marseilles by the shameless notoriety she courted as the Mistress of Count De Lapiere, and whose suicide three months after her disappearance made public the fact that she had dishonored and impregnated him.

She came to Paris, and in the world of infamy and social degradation, its great field of vice and passion, in which such as she could reap her harvest, lay open to her. Here there would be no need of flight; the lover of to-day in this whirlpool of seething immorality could to-morrow be cast off and his fate forgotten. The empire was the thing of to-day; it had no to-morrow; its self-appointed ruler an adventurer and his government a mesh-room. And Paris was the empire—France.

M'le Borriane was shrewd and cunning. As cold, passionless in temperament as an icicle, selfish and cruel, she was simply a beautiful fiend. Her position as an ingenue at the Odeon was only that of a favor. She too well the power of her beauty and the method by which it could be enhanced and made almost irresistible in the glare of the footlights.

With this beauty for a bait she angled in a social pool when she knew was filled with gudgeons, hungry for a taste of the deceptive morsel. She was vivacious, could converse charmingly, and assumed all the prettiness, demure modesty of a woman of the bolder and more aggressive expression of passion which were by turns necessary to secure success in capturing her prey.

Money, the ambition to live like a princess, and a notoriety which would make her the toast of the clubs and the chief moral of gossip for all Paris was hers. She had heard of M. D'Aubigne. When he obtained an introduction to her she had ascertained his wealth, and by inquiry learned his habits, his nature and his history. She knew, through all this, that she would be able to mold him to her wishes as if he were potter's clay. And she knew that of her past he was ignorant.

She set upon him with all her arts, and within the first month of their liaison, this man of strong passions, vanity, and a lover of intrigue, became infatuated with his prize. He was her slave. By a thousand devices she increased this infatuation to a delirium of abject worship.

He furnished a residence for her—No. 53 Rue Montfermeil—as sumptuously as for a queen. She asked for nothing she did not receive. Her object was not yet accomplished. The serpent had enveloped the victim in its folds, but the victim was not to be devoured on the instant.

She found that he was the heir to a large estate in Brittany; that in Marseilles, the very city from which she years before had been driven as a pest, he owned a magnificent chateau and grounds, from which he drew an enormous rental, and, better than all, he had no living relatives. He must marry her. That would be her crowning triumph. Once his wife she could snap her fingers at fate, defy the world, and, as Mme. D'Aubigne, abandon all care as the revelations of her past infancy.

She laid her plans adroitly. Slowly and surely she led him, blind in his passion, step by step to the trap she had made.

On the 15th of September, 1864, when he entered her boudoir to ask her to accompany him to a jeweler's for a purchase of diamonds she had fancied, she threw her arms about him and burst into a flood of tears. Sobbing convulsively, she said:

"Horace, we must part. This is our last meeting. I can no longer live in this manner. It will shatter my heart—it will bring grief to you; but must be. This will be our farewell embrace!"

Wild, crazed, all his passions aroused by her apparent terrible suffering, and stimulated to frenzy by the thought of losing the woman who had so completely enthralled him, he begged, wept, raved and entreated her to stay, until, in his despair, he at last uttered the words which sealed his doom:

"Remain! Live with me, not as my mistress, but as my wife." One month later—in October—they were married in the church of the Madeleine. Her triumph was complete. Was it here begin the records of the police department.

Mad. D'Aubigne, her extravagance, dash and the brilliance of her style of living, the slavish obedience of her husband to her whims and caprices, were for the time the talk of Paris. She held her lovers in a salon which rivaled those in luxury and splendor of the Tuilleries. Men of note and all that class of the middle strata of society gathered to do her homage and feast at her expense.

There was another sensation yet in store for the press and gossip. The 27th of June, 1865, at 9 o'clock in the morning, there was a group of people assembled in front of the Hotel D'Aubigne, No. 53 Rue Montfermeil. With the exception of the windows on the second floor, the shutters were all closed. The little group gathered about the porte cochere, and under its shadow hid grave and serious faces. They spoke in whispers, as men do when in the presence of a great calamity.

A sergeant de ville stood guarding the entrance. There were two other officials on the pave in front of the police.

The little group was composed of the coachman, half a dozen passers-by and two or three semi-officials of the police.

Upstairs in the hotel, on the second floor, lying upon the bed in the madame's chamber, lay Horace D'Aubigne—dead. His face was flushed, his lips drawn apart, the eyes partly open and staring glassily upward, and the fingers of the right hand lying upon the silken coverlid, were cramped, and drawn up like the claws of an animal.

In an adjoining room Madame D'Aubigne was prostrate upon a sofa, to all appearances frantic with grief, hysterically moaning and sobbing, and at intervals wildly crying out the name of her "beloved Horace."

Her story was, that during the night murderous shrieks had aroused her maid and monsieur's valet; they had rushed into the chamber to find Monsieur Horace dead and Madame on a deshabille, evidently crazed with agony. She exclaimed that a few moments before—it was then 5 o'clock—she had arisen, being awakened as she thought by a noise in the boudoir. Turning up the light, her first glance naturally rested upon her sleeping husband. To her horror, she saw that he was dead—cold! She gave the alarm. This was all that was thus far known.

Madame's shrieks had attracted the crowd at the porte cochere. Some one in his fright, had ran to the commissaire d'office and said that a murder or something equally horrible had occurred. This accounted for the presence of the sergeant de ville and police official. A surgeon arrived—the physician of Monsieur Horace.

He examined the body, and pronounced that it was a case of apoplexy. "It is apoplexy—has been threatened with it for the past year," said the physician. "I have warned him to be more careful in his manner of living, repeatedly. It is the end I feared for he would not hear me. He insisted that apoplexy was not of his family."

The physician's verdict was accepted, the police scrutiny was withdrawn; three days later the weeping Widow D'Aubigne followed the remains to Pere la Chaise and with dried eyes and a proper show of grief looked still more beautiful. The will

of Horace D'Aubigne made her his sole legatee. The adventuress was worth 3,000,000 francs. Society respected her for her grief—and fortune.

One month later a man clothed in the habiliments of a bourgeois appeared before the Prefect and demanded a private audience. It was granted.

"Monsieur le Prefect, you know me?" "I do. You have been a convict; you are now under the surveillance; you are Francois Surjet, better known as le chat rouge—the red cat."

"Yes, monsieur; but even a burglar can do an act of justice. I am a burglar. If I should be cornered in a job I would kill if it would secure my escape, but I can't countenance a cold-blooded assassination. It is of that I come to speak."

"What do you mean?" "You are aware of the circumstances attending the death of Monsieur D'Aubigne?" "Yes—his physician—"

"I heard him say: 'The doctor was as true again as to my dizziness—he insists that I must be careful.' She fondled him and laughed. 'An servant brought in some wine and a light luncheon. While he was eating she dismissed the servant, and I saw her with that smiling face take from a drawer behind him a small vial, apparently of perfume. She had already filled her own glass with wine. She took up his glass and I saw her from my hiding place pour a few drops of the contents of the vial into it and then fill it up with wine. He took the glass from her hand and, kissing her, drank it empty. 'Something for his dizziness,' I thought, as I saw her put away her diamonds. I watched them retire. He retired first, she lingering up at her toilet. Ah, she was a beautiful fiend. I saw her looking at me. Presently he groaned—but he seemed unable to utter words. She ran to the bedside and hung over him. Then I know there was murder in the air, and even I in my hiding place trembled with fear. In ten minutes she said, in a quivering, eager tone, 'He is dead, and his millions are mine!' She dressed herself, and passing into an inner room I heard her unlocking what seemed to be an escritoire or a desk. Drawing aside the curtain I took my chance of escape. The Bank of France could not have tempted me to remain in that house. I tried to keep the secret—but I can't. Now, Monsieur le Prefect, shall I tell you whom I recognize that woman to be?" "Go on."

That night the prefect sent for Madame D'Aubigne and confronted her with the statement of the burglar. Appalled, overcome with this unexpected revelation, she sank upon her knees and groveled at his feet, waiting and imploring for mercy. Five days later she confessed all. But before this D'Aubigne's body was exhumed, and the autopsy disclosed the cause of death; the poison of nicotine. The adventuress died upon the guillotine, November 15, 1865.

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