

THE LOST PROVINCES.

How Vansittart Came Back to France.

By Louis Tracy.

CHAPTER VI. The Dead Body.

The splendid success of Le Breton's ride gave the millionaire a little relaxation from his agonies of unrest; for the present, at least, Wilhelm had his work cut out, not before but behind him. Vansittart's breathing space was short. The frantic energies with which the Germans threw themselves into the task of repairing their shattered bases warned him that what he did he must do quickly.

with curving tail. Folliet put it into his pocket. "And now for Mr. Vansittart," he muttered. "CHAPTER VII. No. 11 Rue Pigalle. It was now growing dark. Folliet descended hurriedly from his interview with Vansittart and in the place de la Concorde sprang into a fiacre.

And in order that the victory might be striking and dramatic, he himself must be there with the army, commanding it, he, Vansittart. Paris was no place for him. His eagerness to set out became in a few days a fever with him.

No. 11 had a gloomy exterior. It was big and the gray jalousies were every one closed. In the courtyard there was no conch.

First of all, there was a whole world of business, a whole cosmos of organization, which his tired brain had to arrange before he could dream of leaving the capital.

Folliet, penetrating a few steps beyond the gate, was met by a girl, some 20 years of age, well figured, with dark face and hair in disorder. She was quietly dressed. Her eyes looked as if they had been crying.

The body was found at 9 o'clock on a Tuesday morning. The same night Folliet, the prefect of police, was closeted with a detective in one of the smaller rooms of the prefecture. His sharp, angular features were bent in eager inquisitiveness close to the face of his subordinate.

"If monster will—will step this way with me—we will sit together in the Cabaret au Vrai Bruyant just yonder outside and there talk."

"Murder!" he said. "Oh, I suppose that's it," answered the other. "No marks? No wounds?"

"Really, but it isn't worth all that trouble, you know. I wanted merely to ask you a question or two about your sweet heart, M. Bach. I may tell you at once that we have every hope of finding and restoring him to you, if we can just get a few facts—"

"This morning a girl came to give notice that Bach, a lager beer seller, No. 1 rue Musette, had disappeared. Bach's a widower, and the girl's his sweetheart. A little before that the body had been found, and we took the girl to see it. She said it wasn't Bach, though it was like him."

"What was he doing floating near him. Stuck between the ribbon and the side of the cap was a pigeon's feather."

"No, it seems not. At 7 on Friday evening the girl was with him in the parlor behind the shop. He didn't seem, she says, quite at ease—a little fidgety, perhaps—rather a nervous kind of man she says interested in the questions he put before he disappeared."

"Well, now, about Bach," said Folliet, with very sense on the alert. "You will find that the questions I have to ask you about him are not many, and easily answered. First of all, how long have you been engaged to him?"

"He shut up his shop to go, then?" "So it seems. He lived on the premises. It's one of those tiny liquor shops up Montmartre way."

"Down in answer came sounding the club upon the boards, a single blow. "Yes—that's all."

"And in order to keep it, he found it necessary to put on a cap with a pigeon's feather, eh?" "Yes—if Bach and the corpse are the same."

"Well, in a case of this kind everything is of importance, you know. Just answer my questions, you will find them easy to answer. How long have you known Bach?"

"Ah, you are not open and candid, you see," said Folliet; "how do you expect me to find your lover for you? Well, then, I must ask you something else. Was the appointment which Bach had to keep on the day he disappeared an important one?"

"I suppose so." "Only suppose?"

"This, too, he examined. It was small—about an inch square—dry and peeling. But on it, quite legible was the red 9 or 8

"How should I?"

"When did you first meet Mr. Bach?" "He? In this house."

"That's about it." "Thank you, Cazales. Shan't forget my promise. Find out anything else of importance to me, and I make the time six instead of three months. Bon soir."

who married first. You can guess the result." "Jeanne, at time of uncle's death was already engaged to be married—farmer, half German. Lorraine they say. She at once writes to him to come immediately; something prevents. Meanwhile Agnes, in great hurry, goes and gets engaged; man named Bach—know him well—beer seller—Montmartre. What steps little Marie takes I don't know. But the other two, frantic to be married, tearing out each other's eyes."

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"Well, all I can say," he said, "is that you know a great deal more than you choose to tell me. It is very foolish if you are anxious to find him, you know. I suppose you are anxious?"

"The three sisters, Cazales, were very different one from the other. Jeanne was ugly; Agnes was attractive; Marie, the 17-year-old, had youth and beauty, but she did not know of the clause in the will; yet she, too, had a lover."

"What the Lorraine farmer fly as with wings to claim Jeanne and the fortune? Day after day she wrote letter after letter urging him to come—to leave all and come, come. He answered, promising

"I will go with you, but I do not come. There were affairs of far vaster importance engaging, for the time being, this man's attention."

"Why not tell the gentleman what you know of this man Bach?" she cried. "Your lover! Yes, and a fine lover for my father's child was Bach!"

"I do not wish to take it off just now." At this moment Agnes entered the room. "Don't you hear your elder sister talking to you, you little idiot?" she said.

"If you can call any one your sister who hates you, sir," said Agnes. "It is you," replied Jeanne venomously—"it is you who began it! You covetous, greedy, malicious!"

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"Well, I won't stay to witness your family quarrels," he said. "Mlle. Agnes, I can only promise that we shall do our best; and I think I can give you the hope of seeing your fiancé in three or four days at the latest."

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her pace was very rapid. In sweet, reluctant, amorous delays, her wild young hair and cheeks spread a dark-red fan-shaped beard, rough and thick; and his body was heavy and bulky. He was a ne'er-do-weel, a student, a musician, one of the wild, penniless, Latin quarter sort, named Armand Dupres. At the conservatoire, everywhere, he was marked man; famous. But he never knew when his dinner would come, if it came at all. If he had known where it would come, life would have been intolerable to him, at his age. How the settled, tame man—the clerk, the artisan—could endure to live, he could not understand.

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the horse had been studied. He listened for the sound of the restless hoof, but heard nothing. Jeanne ascended a stairway before him. The whole house was dingy and gloomy.

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had crept from his hiding place meanwhile and had been busy. He had taken the key from the door between Jeanne's room and the entrance, then crept through the hole of the lock. The sight that met his eye was, first, a window, open, and looking out at the back of a house upon an open space. Then he saw the side walls, crowded from top to bottom with square wooden cages, in every cage a bird. The cages were square, littered with feathers, crumbs, seeds. As he looked, there alighted on the window sill in winged urgency, glancing in quick query round the room, a feathered messenger. Wrapped round her leg, bound with an elastic thread, was a narrow slip of paper. Folliet would have given his left hand to know what was written in that far-borne message.

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ROUND FLEW THE RACING TEAM.



"BACH IS A GERMAN"

(To be Continued.)