

The Most Jealous Man in the World



M. Gespronde

MME. LUCILLE GESPRONDE, wife of the most jealous man in the world, eloped leaving him locked in the wonderful safe which he constructed so as to be able to watch her every movement.

M. Gespronde, after seventeen hours in his self-made prison, was released by his employes, who summoned a professional safebreaker, but before he was free his wife, with her lover, had crossed France from Paris and caught a steamer for the United States.

The man, declared by Parisians to be the most jealous in the world, is believed to have driven his wife to the elopement by his constant suspicion and his jealousy, which raised itself to the height of madness, almost. His undoing was caused by his own device, a safe which, according to the plans which he drew, could be opened either from the inside or the outside.

The deserted husband now threatens civil suit in the French courts against the makers of the safe, claiming that the mechanism failed to work at the vital moment and that, through the fault in the manufacture of the safe, he lost his beautiful young wife.

Gespronde, a wealthy jeweler of Paris, with a large shop on the Boulevard des Capucines, amassed a huge fortune before he reached his 40th year, and until then he gave no thought to women.

Fell Violently in Love at Sight.

Two years ago, however, he saw in his shop at Christmas time the beautiful Lucille Nierciere, daughter of a deputy and member of a prominent family, which is in reduced circumstances, although still holding large estates in the province of the Seine. He fell in love at once, violently and madly, and, it is said, approached the mother of the girl in the shop, pleading with her for permission to pay his addresses to the daughter and seek her hand in marriage.

Mme. Nierciere at first thought she was speaking with



Mme. Lucille Gespronde

a madman, and the girl, who had not overheard the wild request of Gespronde, watched curiously while her mother spoke with the man and told him that she would send her husband to speak with him concerning his proposition.

The story of the adventure was told that evening, and M. Nierciere declared that it was impossible that the wealthy M. Gespronde could make such a request, but he promised to investigate, and the following day called upon the jeweler, who professed that, having seen Mlle. Nierciere, he never could love another.

The advantages of such a match for the daughter appealed to the parents, and M. Nierciere requested the jeweler to wait a week until a family council could consider the plan. During all this time nothing was said to Mlle. Nierciere con-

cerning the plans for her marriage, but when she walked with her maid or drove she was frightened because she found she was being constantly followed.

Shadowed Her Before Betrothal.

She complained to her father, and an investigation revealed the fact that, even before he received permission to seek the hand of the beautiful girl, then only 18 years of age, he had placed detectives upon her track, ordering them to report to him concerning any man who approached her, spoke to her, or upon whom she smiled. Already he was madly jealous.

The family consultation was held, and, in view of the good record, the high standing, and the wealth of M. Gespronde, the engagement was agreed upon, and the next day M. Despronde was formally presented to his future wife and gave her, as a betrothal present, a rope of diamonds which was almost without its equal in Paris. He was a man of good address, handsome, fairly clever, and these, with the gifts that he showered upon her, dazzled the young girl. She consented to the family arrangement and was married in the church of Saint Roche, on the Rue St. Honoré, in May, 1904.

Even at the wedding Gespronde showed his remarkable jealousy, appointing his best friends to watch the bride and see that she smiled upon none but him.

Afterward he took her to live in his beautiful home in St. Germain, the most beautiful suburb of Paris, and established her in her town house on the Boulevard Malesherbes, near where that famous boulevard becomes the Avenue de Wagram.

Jealousy Becomes Talk of Paris.

His jealousy for his beautiful young bride became the talk of Paris. He took her everywhere—to the opera, to receptions, to the grand balls—but if any man smiled upon her or if she smiled upon a man Gespronde became wildly jealous.

Four times he fought duels with men who danced with his wife, and three of them were men whom he himself had introduced. He objected because his wife, at his own suggestion, danced with them, and challenged them to fight. Paris laughed, but the spectacle of the wealthy husband insanely jealous excited the young men to greater efforts to win her smiles.

Gespronde was especially jealous of a young Frenchman named Jules Dumont, an artist, who was extremely wealthy and of good family. It was he who introduced Dumont to his wife and who brought him to the house in the Boulevard Malesherbes. Dumont at that time was supposed to be in love with Mme. Gespronde's younger sister, Claire, who had refused him, according to the family report, being but 16 years old and promising to become quite as beautiful as her older sister.

Mme. Gespronde sympathized with the young man and urged her sister to accept him, and later tried to comfort Dumont and urged him to press his suit.

Phonographs to Record Her Words.

Gespronde became wildly jealous of Dumont and ordered his wife to see no more of her sister's sweetheart. She, angered by her husband's insistence, declared that she would see him as often as she pleased, and, as punishment, Gespronde placed spies upon her and they reported every time she spoke to the man. He even placed phonograph records behind the tapestries of her reception room to record her conversations with the young man.

The treatment, however, served to arouse the interest of the wife in Dumont, who before that had regarded him merely as her sister's rejected suitor, and her natural resentment of the treatment led her to devote more of her time and attention to the young man than she ordinarily would have done.

The husband, who up to that time had reproached her for every smile and rebuked her for every gay word spoken to a man, suddenly became quiet. He said no more about men and appeared to have ceased to trouble about his wife.

She rejoiced, believing that he had been cured of his jealousy, and her love for him returned. Not a shadow, apparently, came over their happiness until, in February, she discovered that her husband was building in their Paris house on the Boulevard Malesherbes a curious safe, fitted with glass peepholes, from which he could look either into her drawing room, her boudoir, or her morning room, or the great reception room, and from which he could hear everything that was spoken in any one of these four rooms.

Builds Safe in Which to Hide.

The wife, outraged by this new proof of her husband's lack of faith in her, invited the attentions of Dumont rather than repulsed him. She questioned her husband about the alterations he was having made in the house, and he informed her that he was merely building a large safe in which to keep the family jewels. She was not deceived by the pretext, and, being one of the workmen, learned that a well known firm of Parisian metalworkers had been employed to build the safe, which could be opened from within as well as from without.

Until the safe was finished she was extremely discreet in her behavior with Dumont, and, sitting with him within plain view from her husband's secret hiding place, knowing that he was watching her, she rejected his advances by her actions, while whispering to him her promise to flee with him from the atmosphere of suspicion and jealousy.

For weeks the lovers kept up their pantomime while the husband, locked in the peculiar safe, listened and watched. His suspicions were lulled to sleep even while his wife and Dumont were planning to flee to America. He made rich gifts to his wife—gifts of money and jewels—and at the same time Dumont was converting his possessions into cash.

The elopement was planned as a climax to the life of deceit and suspicion, which had thoroughly disgusted the young wife.

On the day of the elopement Dumont called at the house in the Boulevard Malesherbes after luncheon and chatted with Mme. Gespronde casually until they both realized that the most jealous man in the world had entered his strange watch safe. Then, suddenly, their behavior changed. They threw themselves into each other's arms, caressed and kissed each other, and, speaking aloud, planned the elopement, announcing that they would leave for Havre, catch the steamer that evening, and sail for America.

Locked Inside His Safe.

The husband, maddened by jealousy, rushed to the door of his safe and turned the handles frantically, planning to rush out and confront the lovers. He found them rigid. In vain he tugged and turned. The door would not turn.

For some reason, not yet explained clearly, the inside combination had been destroyed, and the husband was a prisoner in the safe he had built to trap his wife. Whether the mechanism was faulty or whether the wife, angered by his unjust suspicions, tampered with the locks or caused Dumont to tamper with them, the French courts must decide.

Crazed by anger and jealousy the millionaire diamond merchant rushed back to the loopholes looking into his wife's boudoir and gasped through them at his wife in the arms of Dumont. He shouted and raved, but if the lovers heard they

paid no attention. He heard the orders of his wife to her maid to pack her jewels and clothes, and he heard all the plans for the elopement, but he was helpless.

Nearly a day later the man was found by his servants raving and cursing in the prison. By that time his wife and Dumont were well on their way to the United States. He was released after the locks of his prison had been cut by an expert.

His wild jealousy had driven his wife into the arms of another man and destroyed his own happiness.



FROM NEAR AND FAR.

SLEEPING ROOM IN ST. PETERSBURG FACTORY.

In Russian cities the factory employes often live in the big factories, which provide sleeping rooms for them so as to enable them to work more hours daily.

STORK'S NEST.

An ingenious Breton peasant built a most satisfactory stork's nest by fastening an old wheel on the top of two upright posts.

LIVE ON STILTS.

In the Landes district of France there are large areas where the ground is so marshy that easy walking is almost out of the question.

PYRAMID.

Ameen Abou Hamad, carrying nine Arabs. These Arab troupes are extraordinarily agile and always display great courage. They are first rate tumblers and gymnasts.

SMALLEST ELEPHANT IN THE WORLD.

The smallest elephant in the world travels to and from a Berlin theater in a cab.

PAJAMAS AND PILLOWS.

Pauline Chase, known in America as the Pajama girl, is now doing a pillow case dance in "Peter Pan" in London.

BEAD MERCHANT.

The bead merchants of Cairo, just like the American Indian, gets his beads from Venice, the bead market of the world.

UMBRELLA UNNECESSARY.

In Elba, the island to which Napoleon was confined, the peasants wear hats like this.

TROUBLES OF LOVERS, 1807.

In 1807 bonnets like these were in vogue. The illustration is an old caricature showing the trouble they caused when "he" wanted to kiss "her."

CATCHING THE MATERIAL FOR CAVIARE.

Hamlet's phrase, "caviare to the general," is the standing proof that the taste for this preparation of sturgeon's roe is acquired. The sturgeon from which the delicacy is obtained inhabit the Black and Caspian seas and their tributary rivers, and one of the principal varieties is the beluga or great sturgeon. The best quality of caviare is caught in winter, when the fishing is carried on through ice holes in the frozen rivers with long rods.

DOWN A VOLCANO.

This is the method of descent into the bowels of Popocatepetl, the great Mexican volcano.

TURKISH AUTHORESS.

She is Nigular Harum, the only Turkish literary woman who is well known outside her own country. In deference to her nation's customs she had to wear a veil when photographed.

HUMAN TEETH AS ORNAMENTS.

These curious ornaments were found in ancient tombs in Honduras. The teeth are mounted with jadeite.