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## CASE By... Emile Gaboriau

### CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN the Marquis de Clameran perceived that Raoul de Lagors was the only obstacle between him and Madeleine, he swore that the obstacle should be removed.

The same day his plan was laid. As Raoul was walking out to Vesinet about midnight he was stopped at a lonely spot by three men, who asked him what o'clock it was. While looking at his watch the ruffians fell upon him suddenly.

By his skillful blows, for he had become proficient in boxing in England, Raoul made his enemies take to their heels. He continued his walk home, determined to be hereafter well armed when he went out at night. He never for an instant suspected his accomplice of having instigated the assault.

But two days afterward, at a cafe which he frequented, a vulgar looking man, a stranger to him, after trying to provoke a quarrel, finally threw a card in his face, saying its owner was ready to grant him satisfaction. Raoul rushed toward the man to thrash him with his fists, but his friends held him back. "Very well, then. You will hear from me tomorrow," he said to his assailant. "Wait at your hotel until I send two friends to you."

As soon as the stranger had gone Raoul recovered from his excitement and began to wonder what could have been the motive for the insult. Picking up the man's card, he read:

"W. H. B. Jacobson, formerly Garibaldian volunteer, ex-officer of the Army of the South (Italy, America), 30 Leonie street."

"Oh," he thought, "here is a big military man who can whip everybody!"

Raoul had seen enough of the world to understand these heroes who cover their visiting cards with titles.

But, since the insult had been offered in the presence of others, early the next morning Raoul sent two of his friends to make arrangements for a duel. He gave them M. Jacobson's address and told them to report at the Hotel du Louvre, where he proposed to sleep.

At half past 8 in the morning his seconds arrived. M. Jacobson had selected the sword and would fight that very hour in the woods of Vincennes.

"Let us be off," cried Raoul gayly. "I accept the gentleman's conditions."

After a minute's fencing Raoul was slightly wounded in the right shoulder. The ex-officer of the south wished to continue the combat, but Raoul's seconds declared that honor was satisfied and that they had no intention of imperiling their friend's life again.

The ex-officer was obliged to acquiesce. Raoul went home delighted at having escaped with nothing more serious than a little loss of blood and resolved to keep clear of all so-called Garibaldians in the future. In fact, a night's reflection had convinced him that Clameran was the instigator of the two attempts to kill him.

Mme. Fauvel told him what conditions Madeleine placed on her consent to marriage. Raoul instantly saw the great interest Clameran would have in his removal. He recalled a thousand little remarks and events of the last few days, and on skillfully questioning the marquis his suspicions changed into certainty. This conviction that the man whom he had so materially assisted in his criminal plans was so basely ungrateful as to turn against him inspired in Raoul a resolution to take speedy vengeance upon his treacherous accomplice and at the same time insure his own safety. He was persuaded that by openly siding with Madeleine and her aunt he could save them from Clameran's clutches. Having fully resolved upon this, he wrote a note to Mme. Fauvel asking for an interview. The poor woman hastened to Vesinet at the appointed hour, convinced that some new misfortune was in store for her. She found Raoul more tender and affectionate than he had ever been. He saw the necessity of reassuring her and winning his old place in her forgiving heart before making his disclosures.

He succeeded. The poor lady had a smiling and happy air in an archway, with Raoul kneeling before her.

"I have distressed you too long, my dear mother," he said in his softest tones, "but I repent sincerely. Now listen to me."

He had not time to say more. The door was violently thrown open, and M. Fauvel, revolver in hand, entered the room.

"Ah," he said, "you thought you could abuse my credulity forever!"

Raoul had the courage to place himself before Mme. Fauvel and to stand prepared to receive the expected bullet.

"I assure you, uncle," he began.

"Enough!" interrupted the banker with an angry gesture. "Cease this acting, of which I am no longer the dupe."

"I swear to you—"

"Spare yourself the trouble of denials. I know all. I know who pawned my wife's diamonds. I know who committed the robbery for which the innocent Prosper was arrested and imprisoned."

Mme. Fauvel, white with terror, fell upon her knees.

"At last it had come—the dreadful day had come! Vainly for years she had

added falsehood to falsehood. Vainly she had sacrificed herself and others. All was now discovered.

"Pardon, Andre! I conjure you, forgive me!"

At these heartbroken tones the banker trembled. This voice brought before him the twenty years which he had spent with this woman, who had always been the mistress of his heart, whose slightest wish had been his law and who by a look could make him the happiest or the most miserable of men.

"Unhappy woman!" he said. "Unhappy woman! What have I done that you should act thus? I have loved you too deeply."

Raoul, who listened with attention, saw that if the banker knew something he certainly did not know all. He saw that erroneous information had misled the unhappy man and that he was still a victim of false appearances. He determined to convince him of his mistake.

"Monsieur"—he commenced.

But the sound of Raoul's voice was sufficient to break the charm.

"Silence!" cried the banker, with an angry oath. "Silence!"

The stillness was only broken by the sobs of Mme. Fauvel.

"I came here," continued the banker, "with the intention of killing you both, but courage fails me to kill a woman, and I will not kill an unarmed man."

Raoul once more tried to speak.

"Let me finish!" interrupted M. Fauvel. "Your life is in my hands. The law excuses the vengeance of an injured husband, but I refuse to take advantage of it. I see on your mantel a revolver similar to mine. Take it and defend yourself."

"Never."

"Defend yourself!" cried the banker raising his arm. "If not—"

Feeling the barrel of M. Fauvel's revolver touch his breast, Raoul took his own pistol from the mantel.

"Place yourself in that corner of the room, and I will stand in this," continued the banker, "and when the clock strikes, which will be in a few seconds, we will both fire."

They took the places designated. But the horror of the scene was too much for Mme. Fauvel to witness any longer without interposing. She understood but one thing—her son and her husband were about to kill each other before her very eyes. Fright and horror gave her strength to start up and rush between the two men, with extended arms.

"Have pity, Andre!" she cried, wringing her hands in anguish. "Let me tell you! Don't kill!"

This burst of maternal love M. Fauvel took for the pleading of a criminal defending her lover. He seized his wife by the arm and thrust her aside.

But she would not be repulsed. Rushing up to Raoul, she threw her arms around him and said to her husband:

"Kill me, and me alone, for I am the guilty one!"

At these words M. Fauvel glared at the guilty pair and, deliberately taking aim, fired. Neither Raoul nor Mme. Fauvel moved. The banker fired a second time, then a third. He cocked the pistol for a fourth shot when a man rushed into the room, snatched the pistol from the banker's hand and ran to Mme. Fauvel. It was M. Verduret.

"Thank God," he cried, "she is unhurt! Do you know who that man is that you attempted to kill?"

"Her lover!"

"No, her son!"

The banker looked wildly from Raoul to M. Verduret, then, fastening his haggard eyes on his wife, exclaimed:

"It is false! You are all conspiring to deceive me! Proofs!"

"You shall have proofs," replied M. Verduret. "But first listen."

And rapidly, with his wonderful talent for exposition, he related the principal points of the plot he had discovered. The true state of the case was terribly distressing to M. Fauvel, but nothing compared with what he had suspected. His throbbing, yearning heart told him that he still loved his wife. Why should he punish a fault committed so many years ago and atoned for by twenty years of devotion and suffering? For some moments after M. Verduret had finished his explanation M. Fauvel remained silent.

So many strange events had happened in the last few days, culminating in the scene which had just taken place, that M. Fauvel was incapable of thinking. If his heart could pardon and forgetfulness, wounded pride and self respect demanded vengeance. If Raoul, the baleful witness, the living proof of a fearful sin, were not in existence, M. Fauvel would not have hesitated—Gaston de Clameran was dead—he would have held out his arms to his wife and said:

"Come to my heart! Your sacrifices for my honor shall be your absolution. Let the sad past be forgotten."

But the sight of Raoul prevented.

"So this is your son," he said to his wife—"this man who has plundered you and robbed me!"

Mme. Fauvel was unable to utter a word in reply. Happily M. Verduret was there.

"Oh," he said, "madame will tell you that this young man is the son of Gaston de Clameran. She has never doubted it. But the truth is—"

"What?"

"In order to rob her he has perpetrated a gross imposture."

During the last few minutes Raoul had managed to approach the door, hoping to escape while no one was thinking of him. But M. Verduret, watching him out of the corner of an eye, stopped him just as he was about to leave.

"Not so fast, my pretty youth," he said, dragging him into the middle of the room. "Let us have a little conversation before parting. A little explanation will be edifying."

The jeering words and mocking manner of M. Verduret made Raoul turn deadly pale. He started back as if confronted by a phantom.

"The clown!" he gasped.

"The same, friend," said the fat man. "Ah, now that you recognize me, I confess that the clown and myself are one and the same. Yes, I am the jolly clown of the Jandrier ball. Here is the proof."

And, turning up his sleeve, he showed a deep cut on his arm. "If you are not sure, examine this scar," he continued. "I imagine you know the villain that gave me this little decoration that night I was walking along Bourdaloue street. That being the case, you know I have a slight claim upon you and shall expect you to relate to us your little story."

But Raoul was too terrified to utter a word.

M. Fauvel listened without understanding.

"Into what dark depths of shame have we fallen!" he groaned.

"Reassure yourself, monsieur," replied M. Verduret. "After what I have been constrained to tell you little remains. I will finish the story."

He then told how Louis Clameran had concocted his plot to palm off Raoul as Mme. Fauvel's son with a view to extort money from her.

"Can this be possible?" cried Mme. Fauvel.

"Impossible!" cried the banker. "An infamous plot like this could not be executed in our midst."

"All this is false!" said Raoul boldly. "It is a lie!"

M. Verduret turned to Raoul and, bowing with ironical respect, said:

"Monsieur desires proofs, does he? Monsieur shall certainly have convincing ones. I have just left a friend of mine, M. Patot, who brought me valuable information from London. Now, my young gentleman, I will tell you the little story he told me."

In 1847 Lord Murray, a wealthy and generous nobleman, had a jockey named Spencer, of whom he was very fond. At the Epsom races this jockey was thrown from his horse and killed. Lord Murray grieved over the loss of his favorite and, having no children of his own, declared his intention of adopting Spencer's son, who was then but four years old.

"Thus James Spencer was brought up in influence as heir to the immense wealth of the noble lord. He was a handsome, intelligent boy and gave satisfaction to his protector until he became intimate with a worthless set of people and turned out badly."

"Lord Murray, who was very indulgent, pardoned many grave faults, but one fine morning he discovered that his adopted son had been imitating his signature upon some checks. He indignantly dismissed him."

"James Spencer had been living in London about four years, managing to support himself by gambling and swindling, when he met Clameran, who offered him 25,000 francs to play a part in a little role which he had arranged."

"You are a detective?" interrupted Raoul.

The fat man smiled grimly.

"At present," he replied, "I am merely a friend of Prosper Bertomy. It depends entirely upon your behavior which character I appear in while setting up this little affair."

"What do you expect me to do?"

"Where are the 350,000 francs which you have stolen?"

The young rascal hesitated a moment.

"The money is in this room," he said. "Very good. This frankness is creditable and will benefit you. I know that the money is in this room and also exactly where it is to be found. Look in the back of that cupboard."

Raoul saw that his game was lost. He tremblingly went to the cupboard and pulled out several bundles of bank notes and an enormous package of pawnbrokers' tickets.

"Very well done," said M. Verduret as he carefully examined the money and papers. "In this you have acted wisely."

Raoul had counted on this moment, when everybody's attention would be absorbed by the money, to make his escape. Softly he stole toward the door, opened it, slipped out and locked it on the outside. The key was still in the lock.

"He has escaped!" cried M. Fauvel.

"Naturally," replied M. Verduret without turning his head. "I thought he would have sense enough to do that."

"But—"

"What you have this affair become public? Do you wish a case to be brought into the police court in which your wife is the victim?"

"Oh, monsieur!"

"Then let the rascal go free. Here are the 350,000 francs. Here are receipts for all the articles which he has pawned. We should consider ourselves fortunate. He has kept 50,000 francs. So much the better for you. This sum will enable him to go abroad, and we shall never see him again."

Like every one else, M. Fauvel submitted to the ascendancy of M. Verduret. Gradually he had awakened to the true state of affairs. Prospective happiness was possible, and he felt that he was indebted to M. Verduret for more than life. He was not slow in expressing his gratitude. He seized M. Verduret's hand, as if to carry it to his lips, and said, with emotion:

"How can I ever find words to express my appreciation? How can I repay the great service you have rendered me?"

M. Verduret reflected a moment and then said:

"Since you feel under obligations to me I have a favor to ask of you."

"A favor of me? Speak, monsieur. You have but to name it. My fortune and life are at your disposal."

"Well, then, monsieur, I confess I am Prosper's friend and deeply interested in his future. Can you not exonerate him, restore him to his position? You can do more than this, monsieur. He loves Mlle. Madeleine."

"Madeleine shall be his wife, monsieur," interrupted the banker. "I give you my word, and I will so publicly exonerate him that no one shall reproach him with what has been my mistake."

The fat man quietly took up his hat and came, which stood in a corner, as if he had been paying an ordinary morning call, and turned to leave the room.

"Monsieur," he said before going, "excuse my intruding any advice, but Mme. Fauvel—"

"Andre!" cried the poor woman. "Andre!"

The banker hesitated a moment, then, following the impulse of his heart, ran to his wife and clasping her in his arms, said:

"No; I will not be so foolish as to struggle against my heart. I do not pardon, Valentine; I forget—I forget all!"

M. Verduret had nothing more to do at Vesinet. Therefore, without taking leave of the banker, he quietly left the room and, taking his cab, ordered the driver to return to Paris and drive to the Hotel du Louvre as rapidly as possible. His mind was filled with anxiety. He knew that Raoul would give him no more trouble. The young rogue was probably taking his passage for some foreign land at that very moment. But Clameran should not escape the punishment he deserved. But how was it possible to inflict this punishment without compromising Mme. Fauvel? M. Verduret thought over the various cases similar to this, but not one among his repertory of expedients could be applied to the present circumstances. After long thought he decided that an accusation of poisoning must come from Oloron. "I will go there and work upon public opinion, so that to satisfy the townspeople the authorities would order an inquest in Gaston's case. But this required time, and Clameran, being warned, would disappear."

It was almost dark when the carriage stopped in front of the Hotel du Louvre. M. Verduret noticed a crowd of people collected together in groups and heard the police crying "Move on!" The crowd would merely separate in one spot to join a more clamorous group a few yards off.

"What has happened?" demanded M. Verduret of a loungeer near by.

"A strange thing," replied the man. "He first appeared at that seventh-story window. He was only half dressed. Some persons tried to seize him; but, with the agility of a sleepwalker, he jumped out upon the roof, shrieking 'Murder! Murder!' The recklessness of his conduct led me to suppose—"

The gossip stopped short in his narrative, very much astonished. His questioner had vanished.

"Could it be Clameran?" thought M. Verduret.

He pushed through the crowded courtyard of the hotel.

At the foot of the staircase M. Fanferlot and three peculiar looking individuals were standing together.

"Well," cried M. Verduret, "what's the matter?"

"The matter is this," said Fanferlot dejectedly. "I have no luck. You see how it is. This is the only chance I ever had of working out a beautiful case, and, presto, my criminal breaks down!"

"Then it is Clameran who?"

"Of course it is. When the rascal saw this morning, he scampered off like a hare. On reaching the Boulevard of Schools a sudden idea seemed to seize him, and he struck out for this hotel, probably to get his pile of money. When he arrives, what does he see? These three friends of mine. The sight of them had the effect of a sunstroke upon him. He went raving mad."

"Where is he now?"

"At the prefecture, I suppose. Some policemen handcuffed him and drove off with him in a cab."

"Come with me."

M. Verduret and Fanferlot found Clameran in one of the private cells reserved for dangerous prisoners.

He had on a straitjacket and was struggling violently against three men who were striving to hold him while a physician tried to force him to swallow a potion.

"Help!" he shrieked. "Do you not see him—my brother—coming after me? He wants to poison me!"

M. Verduret took the physician aside and questioned him about the maniac.

"He is in a hopeless state," replied the doctor. "This species of insanity is incurable. He thinks some one is trying to poison him, and nothing will persuade him to eat or drink anything, and as it is impossible to force anything down his throat he will die of starvation after having suffered all the tortures of poison."

M. Verduret, with a shudder, turned to leave the prefecture, saying to Fanferlot:

"Mme. Fauvel is saved. God has punished Clameran."

"That doesn't help me," grumbled Fanferlot. "All my trouble has been for nothing. What luck?"

"That is true," replied M. Verduret. "Case 113 will never leave the record office. But console yourself. I will send you as bearer of dispatches to a friend of mine, and what you have lost in fame will be gained in gold."

Later was celebrated at the Church of Notre Dame de Lorette the marriage of M. Prosper Bertomy and Mlle. Madeleine Fauvel.

The banking house is still in Provence street, but as M. Fauvel has decided to retire from business and live in the country the name of the firm has been changed and is now Prosper Bertomy & Co.

THE END.

## Miscellaneous Reading.

### ANECDOTES OF CECIL RHODES.

#### The Personal Side of His Character Illustrated.

If a man is rightly to be measured by the space devoted to him in the newspapers when he dies, then, indeed, none can deny that Cecil Rhodes was great, says a London letter. It is not the purpose of this letter to discuss Rhodes's features or the story of his life. Posterity will settle the former and the events of the latter are sufficiently well known. A few stories dealing with the personal side of his character, however, may be interesting.

His personality seems, indeed, to have been the most striking feature of the man. Those who have written of him that he was a subtle schemer, as some few have said, have been wrong. For the most part he seems to have been of a frank, almost unblushing nature. His speeches are described as having sounded like the words of a man thinking aloud. And it is certain that if Rhodes could only meet a man or a committee personally he could talk either over.

One of the widest spread stories of Rhodes is that which credits him with having declared that he had never met a man whom he could not buy. The story is not true. It has its form in an expression of his wealth showed his confidence in his powers of persuasion. When asked how he proposed to carry his Cape to Cairo telegraph across the Sudan, which was then under the dominion of the Khalifa, he replied: "Oh, leave that to me. I never met a man yet that I could not come to an agreement with, and I shall be able to fix things up with the Khalifa right enough when the times comes."

Rhodes rather fancied himself as a phrase maker. A writer who saw a good deal of him, describes him as repeating over and over again some saying of his own which he seemed to have been pleased as soon as he had uttered it.

Perhaps one of his best-known phrases is the "unctuous rectitude," with which he reproved a certain class of his opponents in this country. No one in future who wishes to discuss the traits of the British character will be able to do without those two words. Some other sayings of Rhodes which have been left on record are as follows:

"My life is a temporary one, but the country will remain after me."

"If I forfeit my flag what have I left? If you take away my flag you take away everything."

Remember that sentiment rules half the world.

"It is no use for us to have big ideas if we have not got the money to carry them out." Rhodes once remarked to General Gordon.

It took me fifteen years to get a mine, but I got it. Though my boat may be slow in the race I know exactly what I am starting for.

I have found out one thing, and that is if you have an idea and it is a good idea, if you will only stick to it you will come out all right.

The only awkward thing is the progress of time. We do get older, and become a little hurried in our ideas because of that terrible time.

After the raid: "The Kruger and I have met twice. The first trick I won (referring to Bechuanaland); he won the second. There is no doubt who will win the odd!"

When timorous friends were begging him to be discreet, and foes were saying he dare not "face the music," he answered both one and for all: "I am not going to lie about it!"

When Dr. Jameson was convicted and sentenced for the part he took in the raid, Mr. Rhodes exclaimed: "What a tribute to the moral worth of the nation that has snatched the world!"

I will challenge any man or woman, however broad their ideas may be, who objects to go to church or chapel to say that they would not be better for an hour or an hour and a half in a church.

In the Oriel Hall, Oxford, in 1899, he said: "I have been interested in Aristotle's definition of virtue in the 'Ethics' as the highest activity of the soul living for the highest object in a perfect life." That has always seemed to me the noblest rule for a man to follow and I have made it my rule from the first."

"Life is too short, after all," he used to say, "to worry about previous lives. From the cradle to the seaside. Just that and nothing more. But although it is only three days, we must be doing something. I cannot spend my time throwing stones into the water. But what is worth while doing?"

Sympathy with the natives, Dr. Jameson affirms, was one of Mr. Rhodes's most prominent characteristics. He says: "He likes to be with them; he is fond of them and trusts them, and they admire and trust him. His favorite recreation every Sunday afternoon was to go into the DeBeers native compound, where he had built a fine swimming bath, and throw shillings in for the natives to dive for. If there is a man in South Africa who deserves the title of the black man's friend, it is Cecil Rhodes."

Another story bearing on this point tells how one day he took some friends to see a certain pretty summer house in the grounds of Groot Schur, his home, from which a splendid view of the Cape Flats could be obtained. Mr. Rhodes put his head in the summer house and then quickly withdrew it.

"It's full of poor colored folk from Cape Town," he said, almost shame-

facedly. "They're doing no harm, but if they see us they'll bolt away and spoil their half-holiday."

The story of his meeting with the native chiefs of Rhodesia in the Matoppos Hills, where now he is to be buried, is almost too well-known to repeat. But here it is in brief.

Twice his new territory was almost swept back to barbarism by the warlike Matabele, and twice, in the event, it was himself alone who saved it from disaster. On the second occasion of his interference Sir Frederick Carrington with a large force had beaten the Matabele into Matoppos Hills; but he could not dislodge them thence. Time passed and Sir Frederick Carrington decided to retire into winter quarters.

Mr. Rhodes was alarmed. The expenses of the war were already enormous, and paid by the Chartered company; if the war dragged into another season the company would be bankrupt. He resolved to penetrate the Matoppos fastnesses himself and seek to make an end of the war. In company with the famous Johann Colenbrander, and two others, all unarmed he visited the stronghold of the Matabele and urged the Indunas to tell their grievances.

He listened and responded kindly. The grievances disposed of, Rhodes astonished his companions by an accession of anger, which alarmed them for his and their own safety. While he spoke his eyes blazed with anger and his lips trembled and the Indunas listened in silence.

"I do not upbraid you," he said, "for making war on the white men, but why did you kill their women and children? For that outrage you deserve no mercy."

These words, spoken in English, Colenbrander had to translate, but yet the Indunas covered under them, for they were driven home by the rage of the speaker. The Matabele was completely submissive, and the end was peace. It is characteristic of Rhodes that when he turned away from that meeting he said:

"It is scenes such as this which make life really worth living!"

It was, of course, from the De Beers Consolidated Mines that from first to last he derived the bulk of his income and his fortune, and what this meant will be realized when it is mentioned that for last year, apart from the dividends received on his holding of shares, the sum of £216,593 was paid to the three remaining life governors, of whom Mr. Rhodes was one, the other two being Julius Wernher and Alfred Beit. Thus his income as a life governor was over £105,000 for 1900-01, and for the current year, under the new agreement by which the Diamond Syndicate shares its profits with the De Beers company, it would probably have been a still larger sum.

The same writer calculates, on a distinctly conservative basis, that Mr. Rhodes's holdings in De Beers alone must be \$10,000,000. Looking at other interests, he says: "It is idle work guessing at the fortune of a man with such widely-spread interests as those of the late Mr. Cecil Rhodes, for he had very extensive land property in Cape Colony and elsewhere, as well as his shareholdings. But £3,000,000 is generally regarded as a modest estimate of the value of his estate."