THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

W. W. H. Amos

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## Forty-One Stabs.

At the extremity of the aristocratic Longchamp quarter, in Marseilles, known on the city maps as Paul street, Gabriel Merceron carried on business as a watchmaker and jeweler. Established in trade for fifteen years, he was universally esteemed for his skill, his probity and his liberal enterprise. And he deserved his good name, for he combined the best qualities of the citizen and soldier. He had served as a lieutenant in several African campaigns, and been made the recipient of the legion for his gallantry. When he quittted the military career he settled in Paris, and became the best workman in the establishment of the famous watch and clock-maker, Breguet. On the savings of his campaigns and his good wages he amassed sufficient capital to set up for himself in his native city, where he married a beautiful and popular woman of burgeois society.

The Mercerons lived in luxury and peace. The store made money, and was richly stocked. It was famous for possesing some of the finest jewelry in Marseilles in its safes.

Monsieur Merceron was an easy-going man, fond of his wine of an evening, but no great pleasure-seeker. His wife was of gayer nature, and as he possessed perfect confidence in her, he opposed no barrier to her social movements. The result was that she went much abroad and her beauty made many conquests.

She was in the habit of joking with her husband over these. The perfect accord in which they lived rendered it possible for them to laugh together at the futile attempts of the *roues* of the city to destroy their happinesss.

One evening Mme. Merceron, returning from a stroll in the park, presented to her husband the following note, which had been slipped in her hand by a man whose face she remembered to have seen on various occasions, but whose name was unknown to her:

"Dearest Bright Eyes: The madness of adoration which agitates me is irrepressible. You must satisfy it or destroy me. Address me at the tobacco shop of the Green Sailor, in the Rue Latouse.

"Ever your burning Frederic."

Merceron preserved this extravagant epistle and read it to some of his cronies at the wine shop. One of them suggested that it would be a joke to open a correspondence with the ardent Frederic. This was accordingly done, a young clerk writing the letters in a feminine hand, at Merceron's dictation. They described the watchmaker as a most infernal brute, and his wife's lot as a most unhappy one. The result was that Frederick advanced to proposing an elopement with his suppositious inamorata, and in doing so gave his name. This led to the discovery that he was one, Frederick Gagniot, aged twenty-six, and born at Saint-Nazaire, an ex-convict, who had served four years in jail for robbery of a jeweler's shop.

The idea of a love affair between his wife and such a rogue was too absurd for Merceron. He appointed a meeting with the duped lover for the evening of June 15th, 1882 when he proposed, with the aid of some of his friends, to teach him a lesson in the value of clubs as love destroyers.

On the morning of June 15th, a young man called at Merceron's store and examined his stock of diamonds. Mme. Merceron, who was getting ready for a trip into the country, said after he went out without buying anything:

"Upon my word, Gabriel, I believe that is the foolish fellow who put that letter in my hand in the park."

"Is it, indeed," replied her husband, chuckling to think of the surprise in store for his visitor. Mme. Merceron, to whom he had told nothing of his little plot, intending to give her a good laugh out of it after all was over, went off and left him alone in the shop, the cook being on a visit, and her own maid going with her. The last she saw of Merceron was at noon, eating the cold lunch prepared for him on the counter, while she went by in a carriage with some friends.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon a servant from some swell customer called to reclaim a watch which had been left for Merceron to repair. At her first step into the shop the woman recoiled with a cry of horror. The corpse of the jeweler was stretched upon the floor in the rear, his body stabbed with forty-one stabs.

The shop had been rifled, the safes emptied of their most valuable contents, and the store generally plundered. In a drawer, under a rug, was a shoved aside cash drawer containing a few francs, and on the rug, was a bloody sand-bag. The assassin at the time was supposed to be in the store, concealed behind the counters, or in the back room, and to have crept out when the coast was clear, and struck his victim down from behind. The murderer must have been well acquainted with the premises, and with the habits of the family, and his victim, from the fact that he was found in his shirt sleeves, and not dressed for the street, and from the fact that the cook was not in the house, and the family were all absent, it would seem that the murder was committed between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the victim was left alone, and when the cook was out on her evening visit to her friends. The murderer must have been well informed of all these facts, and yet he was a stranger in the city, and was known to have been there but a few days. The police are at a complete loss to account for the murder except on the theory that it was committed by some one who had been robbed by Merceron, and who had come back to take his life and his plunder. The murder must have been committed between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the shop was left alone, and when the cook was out on her evening visit to her friends. The murderer must have been well informed of all these facts, and yet he was a stranger in the city, and was known to have been there but a few days. The police are at a complete loss to account for the murder except on the theory that it was committed by some one who had been robbed by Merceron, and who had come back to take his life and his plunder. The murder must have been committed between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in a shop with a glass front which was without curtains, and whose door was unlocked to a street alive with passers by. The promptness of the assassin in accomplishing his crime, had only been equalled by his coolness in appropriating its spoil in full view of the populous thoroughfare.

While the police were investigating, Mme. Merceron returned home. A woman of great decision and energy, the desire to avenge her husband immediately became paramount with her. Singularly enough, however, she entertained no suspicion of her "mash," and even forgot his visit to the store on that fatal morning. Neither did the dead man's cronies, who were acquainted with his plot, hold any suspicion of its victim.

Operating on several false clews the police spent a week without tangible result. Then a local jeweler reported that a man had attempted to sell him a watch and pin which had, he thought, formed part of Merceron's stock. The description of this individual tallied with that of the man who received his correspondence at the Green Sailor, and he was arrested at his house. There such discoveries were made as left no doubt of his criminality. The place contained scores of the objects stolen from the murdered jeweler's stock.

Gagniot denied his guilt vehemently, at first. Finally, when he found lies of no avail, he said:

"Very well. I did it then, but not for myself alone."

"For whom then?"

"For Mme. Merceron. She ought to be ashamed of herself for persecuting me because I put her husband out of the way in order to aid her to flee from his brutalities."

Upon this astounding declaration the widow was arrested as an accomplice. Her amazement was equal to that of the public. The wildest rumors were afloat and she was beginning to be regarded as a monster of hypocrisy, duplicity and vice, when the wine shop coterie came to the front and the mystery of the fatal hoax was a mystery no longer.

It was as the assassin had asserted. Poor Merceron in laying his little plot to amuse himself at his expense, had deliberately planned his own death. The young scoundrel having, as he supposed arranged for the elopement of the object of his passion, had to provide himself with means to carry her off. The idea struck him as eminently romantic to make the husband he hoped to deceive foot the bills for his own deception. He laid his plans well. The morning visit to the shop showed him the lay of the land. The afternoon afforded him the opportunity to carry his plot out.

Having made sure of his movements, he had boldly walked into the store and told Merceron he had concluded to buy a certain brooch which he had examined that morning, and which he had seen the jeweler return to the lower draw in a safe in the dusky rear of the shop. As the victim stooped to get the bauble out, his murderer stabbed in the back. He fell, and the asassin then transfixed him again and again with his murderous blade.

Having accomplished his sanguinary work, Gagniot had coolly gone to the trysting place, and there, with her husband's blood on his hands and his property in his pockets, had awaited the coming of his expected sweetheart. He ascribed her failure to keep her appointment to the excitement consequent on the murder, and that night wrote the following letter, which was afterward found at the place where the practical jokers had been receiving the correspondence which had been sealed in blood:

"Sweetest Barley Sugar Stick: I waited, consumed by desire, but I forgive you. I know it was a bad time. But do not delay too long. I have done my duty, now do yours. The old tom cat is away, so let my sweetest little mouse come and play with her

Frederic."

who so adores her."

The ardent lover was sentenced to death. He would not beleive but that his correspondence had been authentic, and on receiving his sentence rolled his eyes, raised his hands to heaven, and cried:

"Oh, God, who is so good, only see what women are, and still you receive them in heaven."

It is safe to say Monsieur Frederick Gagniot will not be troubled by them there anyh...

## Advantage of Bermuda Grass.

Mr. O. W. Huguley, in a letter to the Atlanta *Constitution*, writes:

I had long wished for a grass which would sod and be profitable as a grass lot and for hay. The prejudice existing everywhere against Bermuda grass has prevented tests being made with it. It is the popular opinion that once on a farm you cannot destroy or control it. I agree that it cannot be profitably destroyed (neither will you want to destroy it after you learn its value), but it can be controlled in two ways on almost every farm. Who is there who does not own a few acres of land surrounded by public roads, a small creek or a piece of woodland? It will not cross either of these nor seed, and hence it cannot be carried by birds or stock. Again, land cultivated, say plowed four or five times annually, can never sod with Bermuda grass, although there may be some scattered all over it. It will not be more than the crab grass and poverty weeds, which, like Bermuda grass, have never been destroyed. Once sodden, the work is done for one hundred years. The grazing and hay continue to improve as the sod thickens and the becomes richer which it will do every year. It is better to have some uplands, especially if you have a creek bottom you are afraid to cultivate, and hence cannot be utilized on account of the overflows washing away the newly plowed soil. By having bottoms and uplands you have grazing in wet and dry seasons. Such a piece of land is worth more in Bermuda grass than if planted in corn. The sod is so tough it is never so wet but that you can turn stock on it. Hence you save much by grazing your plow stock on wet days. Horses, cows, sheep and hogs are all equally found of it, and it is sufficiently nutritive to fatten them when not at work. It comes up as early as any grass in the spring. You can graze it till winter or until your harvest fields are open, then take the stock off and mow it for hay in the fall for winter food, or if the lands are rich it will grow up till after frost, and cattle and mules will subsist on it (the dry grass) all the winter and spring, after they have eaten the other pastures out.

I would like to inquire through your paper how far south Bermuda grass will grow successfully. It appears to me that if it is sodded on the low, rich lands below the frost line, say in south Georgia and Florida, it would grow and keep green for grazing all the year round. There is no better feed for stock which is not at labor, and a mule grazed on it at night will keep fat on one square meal of corn at noon. I do believe that Bermuda grass is worth as much for stock-raising in Georgia and Florida, if it will grow, as the blue grass is in Kentucky. Any farmer can find some piece of land so surrounded that he can control it. Let every farmer try one or two acres, and they will soon sod more. Put it on good bottom or rich uplands.

## Indians Trading.

A correspondent, writing from one of the trading posts in British America, says: I watched some Indians shopping and was astonished to see how invariably they waved aside inferior and chose such material as merinos at $1.50 to $2 a yard. One of the merchants told me it was useless to offer them anything but the best. An Indian, who could not speak English or French, and wanted five things, divided his idea of their relative cost in little piles on the counter, and going through a pantomime descriptive of his wants, was handed some silk handkerchiefs. Taking one he felt it, held it up to the light, and throwing it aside, shook his head vigorously, uttering an "Ugh!" of disgust. When shown a better one he was doubtful, but upon a much superior article being produced he took it, and willingly handed over one pile for it. This, however, was too much, and when given the change he put it in one of the other piles and proceeded in the same way to make the rest of his purchases. How easily they could be cheated." I said to the clerk after the Indian had left. "No," he replied, "not so easily as it would appear." They generally come from their camps in great numbers once a year to sell furs and make purchases. They go to different shops, and on their return compare notes as to the cost and quality of their goods. Then, if one has paid more than another, or has been cheated in quality, he will never enter the shop again, and the firm that gives the greatest bargains is most patronized on their return.

## North Carolina "Rebels" at Arlington.

We think it is about time to call the attention of the people of North Carolina to the fact that in the southwestern corner of the National Cemetery enclosure at Arlington—Gen. Lee's former residence near Washington—there are the remains of many North Carolina soldiers whose graves are each "ornamented" with a red painted head-board on which is inscribed the word "Rebel." Sometimes the name is given, sometimes only the regiment and company. We do not know of any other cemetery where this is the case, although it is possible that there may be such. Our dead who are buried outside of the limits of what were the Confederate States, lie generally in unmarked graves and therefore could not be identified in any way, and must remain where their remains are; but we think that, while we are exulting in the rapidly advancing prosperity of our State and boasting of the development of our wonderful resourses, we might devote a little time and a few dollars to the task of gathering the bones of those brave boys who gave up their lives for their State, and who are thus stigmatized even in death, and of bringing them back to rest in the soil they loved so well. The younger generation who have grown up since the war cannot be expected to feel the same interest in such things as those of us who wore grey uniforms, but it is cruel neglect of a sacred duty, and a reproach to the State to permit her dead soldiers to lie not only in neglected but dishonored graves, when those graves are known and when the expense of their removal would be trifling. They *must* be removed as soon as it can be done. What say the women of the State?—*Charlotte Journal.*

## A Jack that Killed a Grizzly.

A fight is on record in the courts at Pescadero between a jack weighing 750 pounds and a grizzly bear of the same weight. The jack is owned by a man named Ipse, and is a vicious brute. A man named Black, a raiser of blooded cattle in that neighborhood, had been troubled for several weeks by the visits of a grizzly, which killed and carried off a calf, and all his efforts to capture the bear had been unavailing. Finally he advertised in several papers of the State, offering $50 to any person who would kill the bear. Ipse read the offer and resolved to take his jack to the corral and see what the result would be. Accordingly, the jack was duly installed. In the night along came grizzly, and seeing the jack, and fancying a change of diet, he made an attack upon him; but as no one saw the fight it is only supposed that Bruin made the first overture. Anyway, next morning when the corral was visited Bruin lay stark and dead and the jack was quietly feeding off the pile of hay. An inspection of him disclosed the fact that his breast and sides were fearfully lacerated by the bear's claws, and one of his fore legs was dislocated. But Bruin was "all broke up." He had his lower jaw smashed to pieces; all of his ribs on the port side were stove in, and one of his fore legs was fractured at the shoulder. He was generaly smashed all over. Ipse naturally claimed the reward of $50, but Black refused to pay it, claiming that the jack was not a person, and therefore not entitled to the reward. All Ipse's argument failing he resolved to have recourse to law, and accordingly suit has been brought.—*San Francisbo Chronicle.*

## Hogs Early Maturity

There is no profit in keeping a hog until it is over 18 months old, and although such an animal may possibly reach the weight of 400 pounds, the heavy weight will not compensate for the food consumed. A pig farrowed in April and slaughtered about Christmas will more than return his cost, for it must be taken into consideration that during that period he will be but a pig, and the earlier feedings small in quantity. He should weigh 250 pounds when killed, especially if a grade Essex or Berkshire, and the carcass will contain a fair admixture of lean and fat. Very large hogs are very often fit only for the lard tubs, and very often only for the soapmaker. The quality of the meat influences the price, and the difference of only one cent a pound amounts to quite a sum in the whole. The profitable hog is the one that is grown quickly, fatted without delay, and marketed before it begins to consume the food laid up for winter.

Subscribe for this paper. Only $1.50 a year.

## Vital Statistics—An Important Matter.

For the second time in the history of the State, the tax-listers are required to ask each person coming forward to list his or her taxes the following questions:

1. Are you married, unmarried, widow or widower?

2. The births in the family, whether male or female, for past year.

The deaths for past year, stating disease which caused the same

4. Whether there has been any case of small-pox, scarlet fever dyphtheria, yellow fever, or cholera in the family during the last fiscal year.

This matter was very imperfectly attended to last year, yet much valuable information was obtained. A careful attention to the subject is earnestly desired by the State Board of Health, and we hope, the press of the State will urge the listers of taxes to give it their special attention.

The following is the law upon the subject:

Section 1. It shall be the duty of each and every person annually, at the time when he or she shall list property for taxation to make out and sign and deliver to the township assessor, on a blank prepared and furnished as hereafter provided, as follows, to-wit: 1st. Whether marrid, unmarried, widow or widower. 2nd. Number of births in the family within the year immediately preceding. 3rd. Number of deaths in the family within the same time, and the names of diseases causing the deaths, as far as known. 4th Whether any cases of the following diseases have occurred in the family for the year immediately preceddeing: Small pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, yellow fever, cholera. —*Greensboro Patriot.*

## "A Tariff for Revenue Only"

We received some days ago a letter from a "Young Reader," who wished us to explain the meaning of the phrase 'a tariff for revenue only,' and this is perhaps as good a time as any to give him and the Kentucky Democrats, so called, the enlightenment they need. A tariff is a tax. There are many ways of levying taxes, and to exact a duty on the importation of goods into a country is one of these ways. The importer pays this tax in the first instance, but he takes care, of course, to get it back from the consumers of the goods, because he adds it to the price, just as he also adds freight, insurance, commissions and other charges.

A tariff, then, is a tax, and the phrase in question means, therefore, simply 'a tax for revenue only.' Now let the 'Young Reader' ask himself for what purposes a government ought to or can rightly lay a tax. To levy a tax is to exact a contribution from an individual; to take a part of his earnings or property by irresistible force. It is plain enough that if the Government takes from us part of what we have honestly acquired by labor and skill it ought to take as little as possible, and ought to take only what is absolutely needed to support the government and pay its lawful obligations. Revenues of the government can be honestly and properly applied only to such purposes. Hence a tax or tariff should of course be 'for revenue only,' and that is what the Kentucky Democrats ought to have said in plain words.

Nobody likes to pay taxes, but when they are levied for the support of the Government every good citizen parts with a share of his earnings or property as a matter of duty, though not of pleasure. But if a citizen were openly asked to pay ten dollars in taxes, half to go to the Government and half to some private person or corporation, he would have a right to grumble; for why should he pay his substance to enrich or benefit some other person? That would be plainly unjust, and because this is so the advocates of 'protection' carefully conceal the wrong under various misleading phrases—such as 'the American System,' Encouragement of Home Industry,' &c. But, because they are conscious of the essential injustice and favoritism of the system of taxation which they advocate, therefore they cry out fiercely against the entirely and clearly just popular demand for a 'tariff for revenue only.' When our 'Young Reader' meets with such denunciation we advise him to ask his protectionist friend for what purpose a tax can justly be exacted by the Government except for 'revenue,' and for that 'only.'—*New York Herald, Ind.*

Crops are remarkably good all over Louisiana.