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The House and the Vine.

The house is old—its windows racked;
Its doors are falling down;
Where once the dainty tintings were
Is now a faded brown.
The steps are rotting; in the porch
Great gaping holes are seen;
The roof tree's broken; with thick mold
The boards are fairly green.

The yard is filled with weeds and trash;
The walk is crumbling fast;
The trees and shrubs are broken—all
Their beauty-days are past.
The sagging rails tug at their posts
As though their fair wood drop,
Aye, all is drear and desolate
From floor to chimney top.

And yet about the crazy door
And round the tottering stoop
Clambers and clings a tendril vine
In many a verdant loop;
And on that vine bright blossoms glow
And smile through all the day;
From every dainty flow'r the bees
Sweet burdens bear away.

The broken house—a ruined man
With blighted life and a me;
Soul-windows dimmed, a tarnished coat—
A more than tarnished name.
The clinging vine, a woman's love—
Perchance a man's true dear
Whose fragrant blossoms bless the world
Through all the changing years.
—S. W. Gillilan, in Los Angeles Herald.

---THE--- STORY OF MONTE CRISTO

The Paris Police Case on Which the Novel of
Dumas Seems to Have Been Based.

PARIS, France.—The Police of Paris had its origin in 1667, during the reign of Louis XIV. From that period dates the systematic classification of all official documents relating to matters over which the police had jurisdiction. The completeness of this collection has been more or less dislocated by the ravages of political or revolutionary upheavals, notably during the Commune, in 1871, when through the partial burning of the Prefecture of Police of Paris, the building in which these documents were housed, many of the more valuable records were destroyed. Fortunately the various archivists of the police who had charge of these papers had arranged complete dossiers, each relating to a particular case, which from time to time for 200 years were put in print and thus preserved from complete annihilation.

Alexander Dumas, Eugene Sue, and others have drawn largely from these scarce police reports, disguising the source of inspiration with such skill, enveloping them in such a cloud of decorative accessories that the bald originals were ornamented almost beyond recognition.

The narrative which I am about to give is taken from one of these rare dossiers of the Police of Paris put together by an archivist of the Prefecture in office during the early years of the last century. It will disclose the possible source from which Alexander Dumas derived inspiration in the construction of his famous romance, "Monte Cristo."

In Paris in 1807, Francois Picaud, of Nismes, a journeyman cobbler, on a certain Sunday set out to call upon his fiancée. On the way he stopped in the Place Sainte-Opportune at a cafe conducted by a fellow townsman. This man, Gilles Loupain, was older than Picaud, a widower with two children. He was noted for malice, contempt of the prejudices of others and intense jealousy of his more prosperous or fortunate neighbors.

When Picaud arrived at Loupain's he found him with three men, all natives of the district about Nismes. These were strangers to the cobbler, nor were their names made known to him during his brief halt at the cafe. The gala appearance of Picaud aroused the curiosity of Loupain. When it was learned he was on his way to visit his fiancée; that she was the rich Marguerite Vigoureux, and that the day of the wedding was to be the one after the morrow, the malice and jealousy of Loupain were aroused. He determined forthwith to thwart the cobbler and to postpone the wedding, if not permanently to prevent it. With this in view, when Picaud had departed, he consulted with his companions, and a plan of action was agreed upon. One, however, Allut by name, declined to join in the conspiracy. He warned the others that evil consequences would surely follow and that Picaud would not fail to seek revenge.

It was agreed that Loupain should go before a Commissioner of Police and denounce the cobbler as a spy in the employ of the English. This he did two hours later. At that time the Vendéans were in revolt against the Government. The Duc de Rovigo, then Minister of Police, when the case was reported to him, was convinced that in the unfortunate cobbler he had arrested a spy of the insurgents and an important personage.

On the very night of the visit to his fiancée Picaud was arrested. His capture was enveloped in such mystery that no one was a witness to it; no one saw his departure. From that day all trace of him was lost.

In 1814 the Empire had ceased to exist. On the 15th of April of that year there emerged from the chateau or prison of Fenestrelle a man bent with suffering. In seven years he had changed as if he had lived for half a century. No one would recognize in him the young and good looking Picaud of a few years before.

He had been incarcerated under the name of Joseph Lucher. During his imprisonment he acted as servant to a rich Milanese ecclesiastic. The prince of the church treated him more as a son than as a domestic, and when he came to die, on the 4th of January, 1814, indignant at the little effort of his relatives to procure his release, he conveyed to Joseph Lucher, the quondam cobbler, 7,000,000 francs on deposit in the Bank of Amsterdam and described to him a hiding place in Italy where were concealed 1,200,000 francs worth of diamonds and three millions of specie, consisting of ducats of Milan, florins of Venice, Spanish quadruples, French louis d'or and English guineas.

When Lucher was at last free he proceeded to Milan, found the buried treasure, with which was a multitude of antique gems and cameos of great value. Then at Amsterdam he made good his title to the amount deposited in the bank, and, having divided it into three parts, he distributed the money equally among the banks of Amsterdam and Hamburg and of England, after reserving for his immediate use a million francs and all the diamonds from the Italian hiding place. Then on February 15, 1815, eight years, day for day, since Picaud, now Joseph Lucher, had disappeared, he arrived in Paris and went forthwith to the cafe in the Place Sainte-Opportune.

Here he found that after mourning him for two years, his fiancée had married the restaurant keeper, Loupain, and brought him enough money to set up the finest and best equipped cafe on the boulevard. Nobody could tell him the names of the men who had caused his undoing, but he was told that Antoine Allut knew them and that he had gone to live at Nismes. To Nismes Joseph Lucher went and lodged at the well-known Hotel Luxembourg, disguised as an Italian priest—Baldini. After much difficulty he found Allut, got into his confidence, told him that he had been a fellow political prisoner in the Chateau del Oeuft, at Naples, with a Nismoisian, Francois Picaud, who on his deathbed, in 1814, at about thirty years of age, had implored him to find out the names of those who had consigned him to that living death and expressed confidence that they were known to Antoine Allut, a fellow townsman of his at Nismes. He authorized the priest to give to Allut a superb diamond, which had been given to him by a noble English prisoner, if he would disclose those names. Then the priest flashed the diamond before the eyes of Allut, who yielded to the temptation and gave up the names when a jeweler had offered 63,000 francs for the stone, to be paid in a farm and 50,000 francs in money. The names were Gervais Chaubard, Guilhem Solari and Gilles Loupain. When, four months later, the diamond was resold to a Turkish merchant for

102,000 francs, the jeweler was murdered and Allut was obliged to take refuge in Greece, where he fell into great poverty.

Picaud went to Paris, and by a clever device, being unrecognized in a shabby disguise, he secured employment as a waiter in the Cafe Loupain and there found as fellow employes Gervais Chaubard and Guilhem Solari. One day the former disappeared, and at last his body was found by the other on the Pont des Arts, killed with a poignard. Then a superb dog belonging to Loupain was poisoned; then the favorite parrot of Madame Loupain; then the pretty daughter of the family was courted by a reputed marquis. As he boasted of his enormous wealth, the Loupains were overjoyed when he married the girl and ordered a rich wedding supper at the Cadran Bleu. But when the guests arrived they waited in vain for his coming. At the dessert a note was found under each plate announcing that the reputed marquis was an escaped convict; that he was in flight and the police were after him.

Loupain was ruined by a fire in his cafe. Only a pittance was left to him. His son joined a band of thieves, was convicted and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment. Only Prosper (the name by which Picaud went) remained true and worked without pay in a modest cafe which he had obtained for Loupain from means furnished by putative friends, and where Solari also was employed. One evening Solari died in frightful convulsions from poison.

One evening while Loupain was walking in a little frequented path in the Garden of the Tuilleries, he was killed by a poignard in the hands of a masked man.

With this, his last act of vengeance completed, Picaud was about to leave the path in the Garden of the Tuilleries, when he was seized by the collar and thrown violently to the ground and carried away to a place which seemed to be some recess or cavern of an abandoned quarry.

Here in the darkness the captor said: "Well, Picaud, what name are you passing under now? The one assumed in your release from Fenestrelle?"

"Are you still the priest Baldini, or the waiter Prosper? Has not your ingenious mind invented a fifth? For you, without doubt, vengeance is but a passing amusement, or is it a furious mania of which you would be ashamed had you not sold your soul to the devil? You have devoted the last ten years of your life to the pursuit of three poor creatures that you should have spared. You have committed horrible crimes, and last, but not least, you have dragged me to perdition."

"You, you; who are you?"

"Your gold has been my undoing. The cupidity you aroused in me has never been quenched. The thirst for riches has made me mad. I killed him who cheated me. On account of this I was obliged to flee with my wife. She died in exile, and I, arrested, judged and condemned to the galleys, have suffered shame and exposure, dragging for years a ball and chain. At last, enabled to make my escape, my sole thought was to reach and punish the priest, Baldini. This evening I was about to speak to Loupain and warn him of your intentions; but you anticipated me, and before I could interpose you had killed him. However, after all what does it matter? You are in my power now and I can retaliate upon you all of the evil you have done to others. Do you recognize me? I am Antoine Allut."

"How much will you pay for bread and water?"

"I have no money."

"You have sixteen millions," replied Allut. He then proceeded to tell Picaud of the amount of his investments in England, Italy, Germany and France. The information was so accurate that his victim shivered with apprehension.

"You are dreaming?"

"And you—dream that you are eating."

Picaud was deprived of all nourishment for twenty-eight hours. He asked pity of his jailer.

"Listen," said Allut. "These are my conditions. I will give you something to eat twice a day; but you shall pay me 25,000 francs for each meal."

The miserable prisoner passed the rest of the day and night in raging hunger and despair. His sufferings became acute; he was seized with spasms; his mind wandered. The merciless Allut saw that he had gone too far. If his victim died, he would have no certainty of securing his great

fortune. Picaud evidently divined the thoughts that were passing in the mind of his persecutor. A cynical smile lighted for a moment his livid countenance. This was too much for Allut. Aroused to fury by the sardonic leer of his victim, and by baffled cupidity, he threw himself upon Picaud and stabbed him until life was extinct.

From Paris Allut fled to England. There in 1828 he fell ill. Brought to a realization of his crimes, he dictated to an ecclesiastic the details given in this narrative. Allut died repentant and received Christian burial. After his death the priest P— sent to the Paris police the document which records the strange events here related. —New York Sun.

NEVER SAW A CHILD.

An Island Boy of Fourteen Who Had Only Seen Grown-Ups.

"Did you ever hear of a child or ever know of one yourself that had never seen a child?" asked a man who takes an interest in the oddities to a representative of the New Orleans Times-Democrat. "Well, I have, and the case is not a thousand miles from New Orleans, either. The child in this instance had rounded into its fifteenth year before it had ever laid eyes on another child. It had never heard the musical prattle of companions other than the father and mother. The parents settled across the lake a few years ago, after a long residence on a small island of the sea. Where the child was born and where it spent fourteen years of its life there were no children. The little fellow knew no associates but the father and mother. I have often wondered since learning of this peculiar case what must have been the impression of the youngster when he gazed for the first time on a member of the human family smaller than he was. Did he think he had come upon a race of dwarfs? Or had his parents given him an idea of the existence of children? I do not know the family and therefore cannot answer these questions. But I would like to know just how the little fellow felt when he first beheld a child. It is the only case of the kind which has come to my knowledge. He had never had an opportunity to play the little games which most of us knew in the days of our childhood. He had never gone through any of the things which made young life sweet to all of us fellows, and while not knowing but there may be compensating advantages in a life of this sort, I have always felt a bit sorry for the youngster. Come to think of it, though, he missed a few things one would like to forget, for I suppose most of us have felt the rap of the maternal slipper because of disobedience due directly to one's companions. At any rate, we have always cherished the idea that our companions were in a measure responsible for many of the raps we got. The child who never knew a child could not be led astray in this way. So we do not know but that the lack of companionship may have something to commend it."

A Lover of Funerals.

A quaint character on the lower West Side is a young man who apparently takes charge of the outside arrangements at funerals. Standing in front of the house he signs for the carriages to come ahead, gives whispered instructions to the drivers, is ahead of the procession at crossings and holds back teams with uplifted hand. He has a word with the policeman on the beat, and escorts the old folks and professional mourners to a place of vantage if the dead was a popular personage. He has a mania for attending funerals.

"He's not exactly right, you see," an undertaker said. "Imagines he's a relative. I've instructed my drivers to respect his orders when need be, and we've never had any trouble with him. He's pretty well known and the families seldom object to him. The queerest thing about him is that he seems to have some intuition when a funeral is to take place, going from one neighborhood to another on the same day. But I have never seen him in a house. I believe he has an aversion to a corpse." —New York Sun.

A Valuable Spring.

The value of a spring of water on a farm may be gathered from the following item: John E. Madden, of Lexington, Ky., recently purchased the farm of James C. McCann, paying \$75,000 for eighty acres. Mr. Madden declares that he did not want the land, but that he purchased it because it contained a never failing spring of water adjacent to his own farm.

A FABLE.

BY M'LANDBURGH WILSON.

There was a very learned man
Who had a foolish wish;
He set a mouse-trap on a bank
In hopes of catching fish.

He then went home and all day long
He sat around the house;
With rod and reel and wriggling worm,
He tried to catch a mouse.

The moral of his enterprise
The whole of life will match;
You always should adapt your bait
To what you want to catch.
—Collier's Weekly.



The Instalment Collector—"Are you sure your mistress isn't in?" The New Maid—"I hope you don't doubt her word, sir."—Chicago Journal.

Nellie—"Gracious! How did you manage to knit so much in so short a time?" Ninette—"Every time I do ten rows I give myself a chocolate cream."

When with the stomach ache you moan,
Small joy, let this allay distress—
'Twould cost, if you were fully grown,
A thousand dollars, more or less.
—Washington Star.

Buxnbuz—"Whatband seems to be taking quite an interest in old Gotit's daughter." S. T. Udent—"No, it's only the principal he's after."—Princeton Tiger.

J. Axon Bond—"Would you have loved me had I been poor?" She—"Certainly, my love; but I'd have kept you in blissful ignorance of the fact."—Smart Set.

"Did Alkali Ike make that tenderfoot eat his words?" "No; the tenderfoot turned out to be one of those fellows who would rather fight than eat."—Chicago Journal.

Agent—"Madam, could I sell you this book of fairy tales?" Mrs. Muchwed—"No; I've been married four times, and fairy tales are a chestnut with me."—New Yorker.

"Just give me time," the culprit cried,
"And I will mend my ways."
"Oh, very well," the Judge replied,
"I'll give you ninety days."
—Philadelphia Ledger.

He (during the quarrel)—"Well, I don't seem to cut any ice in this world." She—"Well, it's a safe bet that you'll not be in the kind of climate where you will be able to cut any in the next."—Yonkers Statesman.

Mrs. Newlyriche—"Well, of all the impudence!" Mr. Newlyriche—"What is it, Hannah?" Mrs. Newlyriche—"Those poor first cousins of yours have gone and got themselves the same identical ancestors that you've got!"—Puck.

"Oh, George!" exclaimed the young wife, "it was nearly midnight before you got home last night." "Well, well!" exclaimed the husband, "you women are so inconsistent. Before we were married you didn't care how late I got home."—Sioux Falls Press.

Nagsby—"Was Bragsby surprised when he was nominated for the Governorship?" Wagsby—"Surprised? I should say so. Why, he was so taken aback that he almost forgot the speech of acceptance he had prepared in advance."—Baltimore American.

Betty—"So Maud is engaged? Well, I'm sorry for the man. She doesn't know the first thing about keeping house." Bessie—"Oh, yes, she does." Betty—"I'd like to know what." Bessie—"The first thing is to get a man to keep house for."—Harper's Bazar.

Ethel—"So Bob and Edith are engaged? Can he support her in the style to which she is accustomed?" Jack—"Support her? Why, he can't even support himself any longer in the style to which she has been accustomed to seeing him while courting her."—Judge.

The Teacher—"Now, Johnny, can you tell me what Joan of Arc did?" Johnny—"Which one do you mean, the Irish Joan of Arc, the Bricklayers' Joan of Arc, the Japanese Joan of Arc, or the Joan of Arc who led the messenger boys to victory last summer?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

Getting Around It.

The German Emperor is said to have spent more than \$10,000 in fixing up his kitchen so that his daughter may learn to cook. Some men will do anything rather than hire a cook.—Atlanta Journal.

The population of Ireland, which fifty years ago was more than eight million, is now less than four million and a half.