

bigger and ready to reveal itself at the most inopportune moment. I tried stupidity and asked whether I was desired to write a letter and sign it.

No, Monsieur, it must be a letter written to you. Won't one of my visiting cards do? And I drew out my card-book. Strong went to the chief's shoulder. Even the grim countenances of the gentlemen relaxed into a smile.

Monsieur is pleased to joke. Monsieur was up a tree, wasn't he? said Prescott as he lit his cigar. He was, but fortunately a brilliant idea struck him. I asked the chief or commissary or whatever he was—

You understand English? No Monsieur, I am sorry to say—no! I regret it deeply, for the official document which I am about to submit to you comes from the English authorities.

But it will be excellent. Let Monsieur only produce it. Monsieur here, pointing to Broderick, who was rather more mystified than before, will be good enough to authenticate it.

Certainly, I said, adding in English, Broderick, I am going to exhibit a document to these gentlemen, and you will have to certify that it is official and authentic.

Then with much pomp and repetition of protest against what I termed my unwarrantable arrestation, I brought and spread out before the commissary—guess what?

I am sure I can't tell. A receipt for a registered letter! No! Fact. Broderick was hugely tickled at the way my police friend handled the paper, gazed at the printed words, the stamp and the address, which was that of a lady in the North to whom I had sent a small souvenir just as I left London.

Parkstrait—Inverness? Your name? Residence? queried he. Yes—Park Street, Inverness. Only, added I in English, you pronounce them so badly that they might almost be my name.

Tres bien—very good. Monsieur is at liberty. Monsieur will accept my excuses, but my orders—Monsieur understands. And off went cocked-hat and kepis with multitudinous bows, which I returned with much condescension and grace, and Broderick with some of his own *sci-diant* French gestures.

The interview being thus satisfactorily ended, we went for our *bouillon*, and morning saw me in Paris, provided with all requisite papers and documents in case I were once more called upon to prove my identity.

By Jove! you got off cleverly. And what was the reason for your arrest? That is more than I have ever been able to discover. C—to whom I told the whole story, could make nothing of it, and a high official with whom I had the pleasure of breakfasting a few days later, smiled discreetly and said nothing.

So that the whole affair— Is one of those things that no fellow can find out, as Dundreary used to say. Here's the registration receipt. I have kept it carefully as a memento of my only brush with the famous French police, the cleverest and most intelligent body of men in the world.

F. C. SUMNER.

December.

WRITTEN FOR THE CHRISTMAS CRITIC.



It is certain that no month of the year is so rife with suggestive, thrilling and sublime thought as the month of December. This arises more from memorial arrangements and observances than from any special natural phenomena. It is true that its preliminaries are very touching and melancholy—withered flowers, falling leaves, sombrous clouds, weird music among the trees, the departure of birds, and the strange pencillings of the silent frost. But all these, with the additional evidences it presents of the despotic sway of Winter, could not invest it with the interest it awakens, resulting from the fact that it is the only month that calls human attention to the greatest event that ever took place in the universe—the Nativity of the World's Redeemer.

As this is the month that terminates the history of the year, it would naturally awaken serious thought, respecting not only the end of life on earth, but the end of all things; yet if there were no Christmas in it nine-tenths of the interesting thought it now elicits would be unknown. It is a period more favorable for review than for anticipation, yet in the human mind both are generally associated. Remembrances both pleasing and regretful, without invitation come trooping tumultuously into the soul. There would be in it more death than life were it not for the life-giving ideas of Christmas. This is the central truth of December, very closely connected with the central idea of Christianity—the atonement.

Great thoughts are hovering round this standpoint of observation, reflection and anticipation. Much of this thought, especially the delightful, emanates from juveniles. The boys and girls of Christendom are in love with Christmas. The gifts of the Magi interest them more than either the brilliant star, the babe, or the wise men. There is something exceedingly appropriate and beautiful in these Christmas gifts to children in view of God's unspeakable gift to our race. The outgoing influences of Christmas

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