

WAS IT MURDER?

(FROM THE FRENCH)

It was a sensational case. The old members of the bar down there still talk of the stir the affair made through the district.

It was at Aix, in Provence, a year or two after the Crimean war. An enormous crowd, worked to a high pitch of expectation by the strange, mysterious features of the trial, had taken possession of the hall of justice.

The counsel for the defendant was called upon.

He rose from his seat, grave, majestic, with his black robe and cap, prepared to let loose the flood of his commonplaces, conscious of being the mark of all those eyes, enjoying in anticipation, not an acquittal—that mattered little to him—but his success as a celebrated criminal advocate.

The prisoner quietly made a sign that she wished to speak.

The advocate, with a gesture of annoyed consent, and a few words murmured to his client in a low voice, sat down, and buried his face again in his papers and musty books, as if to avoid hearing what—much against his will and advice—she was about to say.

Tall, dark, her shapely form showing beneath the long mourning dress, the lifted widow's veil displaying her melancholy eyes, with their dark rings, and her hollow cheeks, waxy pale from the long confinement, she must once have been very beautiful. But, to tell the truth, she encountered little sympathy. Public opinion was even definitely hostile to her—especially amongst the women.

She spoke:—

"You have heard, gentlemen, the indictment and the crime with which it charges me. I do not deny it. The facts set forth in it are true, perfectly true. You have heard the witnesses, both those called to support the accusation—whose evidence I do not dispute—and those whom the gentleman defending has chosen to call—much against my wish, I assure you—to testify to my character, which is not in question. You have heard, too, what the public prosecutor has said to establish my guilt and make more certain of my conviction. I have nothing to say either against the indictment, or against the witnesses for the prosecution, or against the address of the public prosecutor. The murder is a clear one, which, from the moment of committing it, I have neither sought to deny nor to extenuate. The reason why I now interrupt my honorable counsel—and I sincerely beg his pardon for doing so—is that there is one thing which I fear. He may seek to mislead your minds by representing my crime in unreal colors, surrounded by circumstances foreign to the case, and perhaps by endeavouring to suggest motives very different from those which really actuated me.

"Yes, I did kill Jean Reynier, my husband! I killed him with premeditation! Why? Because I loved him.

"As a girl I was poor. My family, respectable middle-class people in a humble position, stinted themselves to give me the best education that was open for a woman. When, on entering womanhood, I was left alone by my parents' death, my education had made me strong for the struggle—as strong as a girl could be at 20. I turned to teaching to earn my living. My independence I never yielded, not even, like other women, the day I took a husband—a husband, not a master! I married because I loved that man.

"When I met him he was a non-commissioned officer of dragoons, a fine man, young, without much education, and of a very ordinary type of intelligence. Intellectually—I say it without any false modesty—he was my antithesis. But, cradled in literature and art though I was, I had never given way to those dreams of childish romance, of fanciful loves—all the false, affected sentimentalism that usually fills the heads of young girls and makes them expect their future husbands to be languishing puppets only fit for fairy-tales. By temperament I have always been virtuous. I do not say that boastfully; it is my nature—I would never have yielded to a man who was not my husband. But I wished for a husband who should be physically a true male, and mentally a being whose mind would submit to the ascendancy of my own.

"I found such a man in Jean Reynier; I loved him, and I married him.

"About a year after our marriage he left me to go to the war; his regiment was ordered to the Crimea.

"I pause here to say one thing. It has nothing to do with the matter of the trial, and the prosecution has said nothing about it; but it may find its way into private comments on my case. I speak of it with great reluctance, but I must state, simply and without any thought of self-praise, that I have always been faithful—in the moral sense as well as the physical sense of the word—to the man I had chosen as my husband. After my marriage I never thought of another man, either when we were living together, or during his absence, or after his return. That return—! Well, now I will tell the whole story."

For an instant she paused, deeply moved. There was a stir in the crowd, still far from

sympathetic, while a momentary smile, half sceptical, passed along the bench in front, where sat the twelve jurymen. The Judge was impassive; he might have been asleep. Below the accused the celebrated advocate, his elbows on the desk, his chin resting on his thumbs, shrugged his shoulders and thought of his five periods ruined. What did she want to speak for? Where would she land herself with all this futile talk? God knew what folly she was going to commit next! Clearly the woman was mad; and directly, if she would let him speak at all he was very much inclined to plead insanity.

She went on: "In a cavalry charge at the battle of Alma he had both legs shattered by a shell, and was left for dead amongst a heap of slain.

"As they were on the point of burying him with the others, the surgeon-major, who was examining each body before it was laid in the great trench dug for the purpose, fancied he detected some signs of life in the non-commissioned officer of dragoons, and ordered him to be carried to the hospital. There it was found necessary to amputate both legs. The operation was successful, and Jean Reynier, alas! did not die. He returned to France with a medal and a little pension. We resumed our life together. I thought that love, the sentiment of duty, of natural pity, would enable me to live with the unfortunate man and alleviate, as far as possible, his lot.

"But the ex-dragon, formerly so proud of his masculine beauty and his superb horsemanship, had now but one thought, bitter and full of brooding despair—that he should have become so pitiable an object, inspiring a sort of horror; a miserable cripple! To be reduced to crawl about, dragging painfully over the ground his mutilated trunk, where once review days, in his brilliant uniform, mounted on a prancing steed, he had been the admiration of the crowd!

"Neither my devotion, alas! nor my tenderness could mitigate his horrible destiny. And I thought that for him it would be sweeter to die.

"I premeditated his death; yes, gentlemen, in that the prosecution are right. One night in bed—the accused grew crimson and seemed to shiver—"in the darkness, his breast, just where the heart is, met the point of a knife, which sank in, with a jet of warm blood that inundated me. I rose shuddering with horror.

"My courage had not failed me; I had committed a murder that it, my eyes was the accomplishment of a holy duty. But oh! that terrible moment, when my hand moved under the pillow in search of the liberating weapon, whose haft was pressed against my right breast as I slew him!

"I was strong and resolute to strike, but it was that my hand should not tremble, and that I should not make him suffer; for I loved him so!

"Before the law, perhaps, it was murder. In my eyes it was deliverance that I brought him. In any case, my conscience acquits me. Without fear, then, gentlemen, I await your verdict!"

The twelve respectable citizens in the jury-box did not see the matter in that light. The prisoner died on the scaffold.

How Taxation is Evaded.

Here is a little story which we clip from the Chicago Free trader, and illustrates how beautifully our present system of taxation works, in the interest of the fellows whom you are striving hardest to reach. The story is told by a Californian and is very edifying. "The assessment is taken on the first Monday in March. On the Friday previous the bank wired its New York correspondent: "Do you want gold? We are badly in want of government bonds." Government bonds are not taxable, but it was a mere coincidence. The New York bank telegraphed back: "Yes, there is nothing we want so much as gold. We have a plethora of government bonds." The Californian bank telegraphed: "We want \$1,000,000 of government bonds. New York telegraphed back, "Done." The Californian bank telegraphed, "Tie up those bonds, keep them for us, and we will tie up the gold and keep it for you." "All right."

Thereupon the New York bank took out \$1,000,000 worth, par value, of government bonds, carefully put them in its vault, labeling them the property of such and such a Californian bank. The Californian bank carefully counted out \$1,000,000 in gold coin, put it in a tin box, indorsed "Property of the New York bank," and put it in its own vault. Then came the first Monday in March; the bank cashier made out a written statement that his bank owned no money at all, had nothing but government bonds—which are not taxable, signed that statement, and went home and slept the sleep of the just.

Jack Irvin is a Kentuckian of Glover's Mill, who, in thirty-six years has not swallowed a drop of water. He drinks only tea, coffee and milk, and has passed his eightieth year.

LABOR AND WAGES.

There are 20,000 waiters in New York City.

The outlook for laborers in the iron manufacturing business is gloomy.

The theatres in London, England, regularly employ over 12,000 people.

A Boston, Mass., dry goods house has a regular physician for its employees.

Russia is employing 150,000 Poles in Poland in building new roads and fortifications.

Eighteen thousand men are needed at once to man the vessels of the United States navy.

The reduction in the wages of puddlers from \$4 to \$3.50 a ton went into effect a few days ago at Lebanon, Penn.

The average annual wages of the British working people are about \$260 a year for every man, woman and child.

The unemployed of Germany are still making matters interesting for the Government by threatening disturbances.

Building material men are all crowding work at present, and architects speak confidently of booming demands ahead.

The proprietors of two Boston hotels have issued orders that none in their employ shall hereafter wear either moustache or beard.

The puddlers in the iron works of Menden & Schwerte, in Westphalia, are now provided with furnace shields to protect them from the immense heat.

The hotel and restaurant waiters of Brooklyn and New York City have asked all members of organized labor not to patronize restaurants that employ female waiters.

It has been decided that the annual international Socialist Congress shall be held in London on June 7. The Congress will discuss the question of an international strike for the purpose of securing a working day of eight hours.

The recently organized Federation of Metal Workers is composed of the International Association of Machinists, with 29,000 members; Iron Moulders Union, 23,000; Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, 4,000; Brotherhood of Brass Workers, 3,000, and Patternmakers' National Union, 2,000 members.

All the British Columbia and Northwest members waited on Mr. Abbott, Sir Alphonse Caron, Mr. Bowell and Mr. Foster and urged that the old rate of mileage be restored to the railway mail clerks of the Northwest and British Columbia. The ministers promised that the matter should be carefully considered. Messrs. Prior and Earle also urged a general increase in the salaries of the employees of the Victoria post office, pointing out that on account of the increased cost of living in British Columbia it was not fair that employes should be paid on the same scale as in the eastern provinces. Sir Adolphe Caron promised that this matter should also receive attention.

A deputation of unemployed workingmen waited upon Lord Mayor Evans on Saturday. The leader asked that the halls of the city companies be turned into labor bureaus. He wanted land to be purchased by the Government on which the unemployed could be set at work, and he wanted relief works to be started. The Lord Mayor replied that he would require time to think over the proposals laid before him by the deputation. He assured him that he sympathized with them, and said he was sorry to learn of the widespread distress among workingmen. A meeting of the unemployed was subsequently held at Tower Hill. It was presided over by the negro Wade. He referred to the deputation appointed on Friday to wait upon the Very Rev. Robert Gregory, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and said that the deputation found the Dean at luncheon. He received them and said he would preach a sermon in the cathedral on Sunday in behalf of the unemployed, and though he must have known that some of the members of the deputation were hungry, he did not ask them to have even a cup of tea. Wade also mentioned the fact that the Dean had advised the men not to hold a parade, but he declared that they would parade in spite of the advice given them. The man who led the deputation that waited on the Lord Mayor made an address, in the course of which he said the Lord Mayor would have to do more than merely consider the proposals the deputation had laid before him.

A whale which was captured in the Arctic Ocean the other day was found to have a harpoon in his body which belonged to a whaling vessel which had been out of service for more than fifty years.

Axolotl, or fish with legs, is the name the Mexicans give a queer creature which can swim like a fish or run up a smooth wall like a fly; can live and grow when kept constantly in water like a true fish, and yet can live and grow entirely away from water (excepting a little to drink) like a true air breathing animal.

A HUGE MONOPOLY.

Five years ago there were in the States fifteen works engaged in the manufacture of steel rails. The number is now reduced to six, with a productive capacity of 3,145,000 tons per year, as follows:

WORKS.	NET TONS.
The Illinois Steel Co.	1,045,000
Carnegie Bros. & Co.	660,000
Cambria Iron Co.	225,000
Bethlehem Iron Co.	225,000
Laokawanna Coal and Iron Co.	500,000
Pennsylvania Steel Co.	500,000
Total	3,145,000

These six great works form the celebrated "steel rail combine" under the lead of Carnegie. All the others have been driven out of the business or absorbed. The consolidation of interests was completed in the early part of 1891, after Carnegie had succeeded in forcing most of his competitors to abandon the field and gained a position which enabled him to dictate terms to the others. In less than eight years he had tripled the capacity of his works in the steel rail department, besides enlarging greatly his other branches of iron and steel production. Since then, the combine has successfully raised the price of rails in the face of a declining market for pig iron. Ever so powerful the railroads have a master and he is Carnegie. At the present rates, every million tons of rails turned out by the combine gives it a net profit of probably not less than ten million dollars. There is not a stronger monopoly in the country, and as it rests not only on a broad basis of capital but on valuable patents—that is, on great inventions made by employees who must be content with a very small compensation—even a Vanderbiltian is at its mercy. The "direct process" recently invented at Carnegie's works makes him more than ever the absolute master of the combine itself and the whole industry.

The Anarchists now under arrest in Paris will be tried before May day in order that their sentences, if they are convicted, will have the effect of preventing their comrades from committing further outrages.

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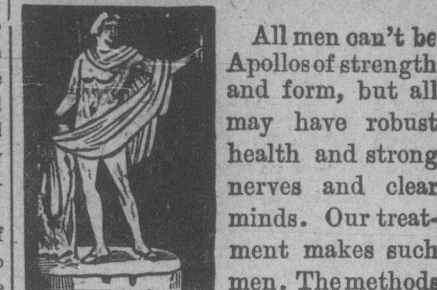
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