

said as much when he mentioned this mystery in his posthumous confession."

"Hippolyte Fauville was a madman."

"Yes, but a lucid madman and capable of reasoning with the most appalling logic. Some years ago, at Palermo, Mme. Fauville had a very bad fall, hitting her mouth against the marble top of a table, with the result that a number of her teeth, in both the upper and the lower jaw, were loosened. To repair the damage and to make the gold plate intended to strengthen the teeth, a plate which Mme. Fauville wore for several months, the dentist, as usual, took an impression of her mouth.

"M. Fauville happened to have kept the mould; and he used it to print the marks of his wife's teeth in the cake of chocolate shortly before his death and in the apple on the night of his death. When this was done, he put the mould with the other things which the explosion was meant to, and did, destroy."

Don Luis's explanation was followed by a silence. The thing was so simple that the Prime Minister was quite astonished. The whole tragedy, the whole charge, everything that had caused Marie's despair and death and the death of Gaston Sauverand: all this rested on an infinitely small detail which had occurred to none of the millions and millions of people who had interested themselves so enthusiastically in the mystery of the teeth of the tiger.

The teeth of the tiger! Everybody had clung stubbornly to an apparently invincible argument. As the marks on the apple and the print of Mme. Fauville's teeth were identical, and as no two persons in the world were able, in theory or practice, to produce the same