

crime. At the Stamp Bourse he made the acquaintance of several persons, who came to his house, drawn there by the passion for philately.

Mr. Delahaef, unfortunately, was one of the number. He was a young man of 20 years of age, rather timid, living at his father's. He was not a novice; he often went to the Stamp Bourse buying and selling, and it was the purchase of a collection at 2,000 francs, which had been much talked off at the Bourse, that drew Aubert's attention to him. It was at that time that the idea must have been formed in the mind of the murderer of procuring by swindling, robbery, or even murder, important lots of rare stamps, which are easier to sell than jewels or other merchandise. With this object he wrote three letters on the 12th of May to young Delahaef, to Mr. Astruc and to us. All these letters are substantially the same, and when translated, is as follows:

PARIS, Tuesday, May 12th, '96.
Mr. Maury, Paris.

I should like to buy a collection of good stamps, guaranteed genuine, about 2,000 or 3,000 francs. I have thought that in your house I could easily find such. If you can supply me with them within 24 hours, send word to me—Mr. Gaston Darnis, Cafe des Negociants, Rue de Louvre, city. Send one of employees with reply to the Cafe des Negociants, or to my hotel which is next door, the Grand Hotel Central, Rue du Louvre, about 12 or 1 o'clock.

I remain, etc.,

G DARNIS.

We replied to this letter that we never went to houses, either to buy or to sell, but that in our store we were willing to give the client all information which could prove useful to him. Mr. Astruc replied to the same effect. Young Delahaef was not so prudent, and hastened to do business, taking with him his collec-

tion and duplicates. This was on May 14th. The accessories to the trap were ready—the fine eyes of Marguerite Du-bois, the axe and the empty trunk. The unfortunate man did not return.

Meanwhile, Aubert was endeavoring to sell the stamps obtained, with the sole object, we must repeat, of procuring money, and not to satisfy a mad passion of a collector. From the 15th to the 18th of May he probably sold the rarest—to whom? This is not yet known. On the 19th he sold to Mr. Doubledent, Rue du Bac, for the sum of 600 francs, a partly denuded album. He also presented himself at Mr. Vervelle's, offering him some rather common duplicates.

The reporters of the large newspapers overwhelmed us for three days with the following questions:

"What is the Stamp Bourse really? What is the origin of the word Philately? What are the dearest stamps? What are the names of the principal collectors and what is the value of their collections? When did people begin to collect? What does the stamp business amount to?" To all this we have replied a hundred times during the past few years, and each time the information, more or less correctly noted down, has been reproduced in articles strewn with errors.

We have already related how a few isolated collectors, numismatics or collectors of the old vignettes from sheets of stamped paper, among whom we have mentioned Messrs. Legras and Laplante, had, about 1855, the idea of also collecting postage stamps. But it was from 1858 to 1860 in Paris that the fashion—we may say the passion—burst forth and increased, especially among children. The first devotees made appointments to meet in the Jardin des Tuileries, under the shade of the large chestnut trees along the central walk, between the parterres surrounded by railings and the square space where there are two statues of young girls running, copied from some