

tion of France was swept off from the streets at night, and conveyed to Havre de Grace, to be shipped to the projected colonies; even laboring people and mechanics were thus crimped and spirited away. As Count Antoine was in the habit of sallying forth at night, in disguise, in pursuit of his pleasures, he came near being carried off by a gang of crimps; it seemed, in fact, as if they had been lying in wait for him, as he had experienced very rough treatment at their hands. Complaint was made of his case by his relation, the Marquis de Créqui, who took much interest in the youth; but the Marquis received mysterious intimations not to interfere in the matter, but to advise the Count to quit Paris immediately: 'If he lingers, he is lost!' This has been cited as a proof that vengeance was dogging at the heels of the unfortunate youth, and only watching for an opportunity to destroy him.

Such opportunity occurred but too soon. Among the loose companions with whom the Count had become intimate, were two who lodged in the same hotel with him. One was a youth only twenty years of age, who passed himself off as the Chevalier d'Etampes, but whose real name was Lestang, the prodigal son of a Flemish banker. The other, named Laurent de Mille, a Piedmontese, was a cashier and captain, and at the time an esquire in the service of the dissolute Princess de Carignan, who kept gambling-tables in her palace. It is probable that gambling propensities had brought these young men together, and that their losses had driven them to desperate measures: certain it is, that all Paris was suddenly astounded by a murder which they were said to have committed. What made the crime more startling, was, that it seemed connected with the great Mississippi scheme, at that time the fruitful source of all kinds of panics and agitations. A Jew, a stock-broker, who dealt largely in shares of the bank of Law, founded on the Mississippi scheme, was the victim. The story of his death is variously related. The darkest account states, that the Jew was decoyed by these young men into an obscure tavern, under pretext of negotiating with him for bank shares to the amount of one hundred thousand crowns, which he had with him in his pocket-book. Lestang kept watch upon the stairs. The Count and De Mille entered with the Jew into a chamber. In a little while there were heard cries and struggles from within. A waiter passing by the room, looked in, and seeing the Jew weltering in his blood, shut the door again, double-locked it, and alarmed the house. Lestang rushed down-stairs, made his way to the hotel, secured his most portable effects, and fled the country. The Count and De Mille endeavored to escape by the window, but were both taken, and conducted to prison.

A circumstance which occurs in this part of the Count's story, seems to point him out as a fated man. His mother, and his brother, the Prince Van Horn, had received intelligence some time before at Baussigny, of the dissolute life the Count was leading at Paris, and of his losses at play. They despatched a gentleman of the prince's household to Paris, to pay the debts of the Count, and persuade him to return to Flanders; or, if he should refuse, to obtain an order from the Regent for him to quit the capital. Unfortunately the gentleman did not arrive at Paris until the day after the murder.

The news of the Count's arrest and imprisonment on a charge of murder, caused a violent sensation among the high aristocracy. All those connected with him, who had treated him hitherto with indifference, found their dignity deeply involved in the question of his guilt or innocence. A general convocation was held at the hotel of the Marquis de Créqui, of all the

relatives and allies of the house of Horn. It was an assemblage of the most proud and aristocratic personages of Paris. Inquiries were made into the circumstances of the affair. It was ascertained, beyond a doubt, that the Jew was dead, and that he had been killed by several stabs of a poniard. In escaping by the window, it was said that the Count had fallen, and been immediately taken; but that De Mille had fled through the streets, pursued by the populace, and had been arrested at some distance from the scene of the murder; that the Count had declared himself innocent of the death of the Jew, and that he had risked his own life in endeavoring to protect him; but that De Mille, on being brought back to the tavern, confessed to a plot to murder the broker, and rob him of his pocket-book, and inculpated the Count in the crime.

Another version of the story was, that the Count Van Horn had deposited with the broker, bank shares to the amount of eighty-eight thousand livres; that he had sought him in this tavern, which was one of his resorts, and had demanded the shares; that the Jew had denied the deposit; that a quarrel had ensued, in the course of which the Jew struck the Count in the face; that the latter, transported with rage, had snatched up a knife from a table, and wounded the Jew in the shoulder; and that thereupon De Mille, who was present, and who had likewise been defrauded by the broker, fell on him, and despatched him with blows of a poniard, and seized upon his pocket-book; that he had offered to divide the contents of the latter with the Count, *pro rata*, of what the usurer had defrauded them; that the latter had refused the proposition with disdain, and that, at a noise of persons approaching, both had attempted to escape from the premises, but had been taken.

Regard the story in any way they might, appearances were terribly against the Count, and the noble assemblage was in great consternation. What was to be done to ward off so foul a disgrace and to save their illustrious escutcheons from this murderous stain of blood? Their first attempt was to prevent the affair from going to trial, and their relative from being dragged before a criminal tribunal, on so horrible and degrading a charge. They apolied, therefore, to the Regent, to intervene his power; to treat the Count as having acted under an access of his mental malady; and to shut him up in a mad-house. The Regent was deaf to their solicitations. He replied, coldly, that if the Count was a madman, one could not get rid too quickly of madmen who were furious in their insanity. The crime was too public and atrocious to be hushed up or slurred over; justice must take its course.

Seeing there was no avoiding the humiliating scene of a public trial, the noble relatives of the Count endeavored to predispose the minds of the magistrates before whom he was to be arraigned. They accordingly made urgent and eloquent representations of the high descent, and noble and powerful connexions of the Count; set forth the circumstances of his early history; his mental malady; the nervous irritability to which he was subject, and his extreme sensitiveness to insult or contradiction. By these means they sought to prepare the judges to interpret every thing in favor of the Count, and, even if it should prove that he had inflicted the mortal blow on the usurer, to attribute it to access of insanity, provoked by insult.

To give full effect to these representations, the noble conclave determined to bring upon the judges the dazzling rays of the whole assembled aristocracy. Accordingly, on the day that the trial took place the relations of the Count, to the number of fifty