

him. He broke his ban and fled to Toulouse. There, followed by the *gendarmes*, he sought an asylum, and could only find a sure retreat with the Brothers of the Christian Religion.

The good Brothers received with gladness a neophyte who announced his intention of ending his days with their community, and whose first care had been to place in the hands of the director a large amount of gold and jewels. Already Collet meditated making a hole in the treasury of the community, when he was recognized by an old prison comrade, whose silence he bought. The extortions of this man determined him to expedite matters. Under the pretext of consecrating his large fortune to the aggrandizement of the community, he bought, without paying for it, a large estate situate at Cugnax, and belonging to a gentleman named Laurent Lajus. He wished to have the new house put in order at once. He withdrew his money and his jewels from the hands of the Director, and borrowed thirty thousand francs of his accommodating vendor. The report of his fortune and his piety determined many charitable persons to make him advances, and in this way he extorted 15,000 francs from the Count de Lespinasse; 20,000 francs from the Countess de Grasse; 5,000 from the physician of the Brothers; 4,000 from two grand vicars, and innumerable smaller sums from different persons. Each one of the lenders pledged himself to secrecy, and believed that he alone was aiding in the pious work.

This new enterprise being completed, he departed for Montauban, thence went to Lahore and Le Plaissac. There he personated a rich bourgeois, dispensed money in the community, and spoke of settling in the vicinity. He, however, established himself in the Commune of Dordogne, at Rochebeaucourt, in the house of a commissary of police, M. Lafond. He called himself the Count de Golo, a rich proprietor of Ain, who came to end his days in the department. He bought a farm of Madame Jeannet-Lafond, the widow of a counsellor at Bordeaux. He promised to marry the woman, and make the commissary of police manager of his property, and to repair the church at his own expense; then, when called upon to fulfil his promises,

he departed, carrying with him the savings of all his dupes.

We next find him at Mans; and this place was the scene of the last exploits of this indefatigable swindler. He arrived there under the name of Gallat, hired a house, bought an estate, and sold another, which existed only in his fertile brain, to a jeweller, Trolait-Gabant, and then slipped away.

But this time the hour of final punishment had come. The *gendarmes* pursued him, seized him, and presently, before the Court of Mans, the long series of his impostures were laid bare. It was necessary to issue many commissions to take depositions of witnesses, who, since the fall of the empire, were no longer subjects of France.

After an energetic address by the Procureur du Roi, Gérard, Collet humbly confessed the faults of his life, and was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment at hard labor, to be exposed in the pillory, and to be branded.

Condemned in November, 1820, he was not taken to Brest until the month of July in the following year. He remained there five years.

These five years were not for Collet very hard ones. He found the means to live in the galleys like a true monk, and his rotund, rosy appearance, his jolly face and priestly *embonpoint*, accorded admirably with the name of Monsieur the Bishop, given him by his companions in the chain. Whence came the gold which he scattered around him? What was the secret of all the privileges which he knew so well how to obtain? No one could tell. Once only they surprised a package addressed to him, which one sought secretly to slip into his hand; upon this discovery, he was transferred to the galleys at Rochefort. There, suspected of concealing about his body diamonds and valuables, they made him submit to the most thorough search, and to the most energetic medical treatment. They failed to discover the whereabouts of the swindler's treasury.

After twenty-six months of poverty, he returned to his old ways. Gold was never lacking; he made a good use of it, and distributed large amounts in charity. His companions, whom he willingly obliged, and