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The Frenchman's Adventures.

BEING destined for a mercantile profession, I was sent, when a youth of fifteen or sixteen, to Bourdeaux, in order to acquire the knowledge for my proposed pursuits, in the counting-house of one of the first establishments in that ancient city. The head of this firm, which was an extremely wealthy one, was M. Durance, a gentleman who, from an old friendship for my father, took me into his own house, and was most parentally kind to me. M. Durance was well up in years, round and ruddy in aspect, social in his habits, and possessed of one of the very best of hearts. He had one foible, however, which made the good soul almost intolerable to all mankind. Notwithstanding the great extent of the business he had conducted, he had seldom been out of Bourdeaux. He had only once been at Paris; but that once was enough. On that occasion he had met with two adventures. Oh, those two adventures! Tongue cannot tell, nor brain conceive, the delight which the worthy man took in narrating these incidents. His friends were kept thereby in a state of perpetual alarm. They never heard the words, "Did you ever hear me tell,"—or even, "Did you ever,"—come from M. Durance's lips, without an internal shudder, and an instant retreat, if possible. "Did you," was enough to bring out a cool perspiration. For if the good old merchant once began, pause or rest was out of the question for the succeeding couple of hours. How often have I been compelled, after dinner, to listen to these two eternal adventures! It was not that they were uninteresting in themselves. On the contrary, they were of a remarkable order, and still more remarkable as having occurred at one and the same time. But who can listen even to a good thing for ever! Nevertheless, as it is not likely the reader can ever have suffered from M. Durance's perpetuities, we shall repeat them once more, with a little more brevity than it was the honest man's practice to employ.

M. Durance had occasion to go to Paris upon business. He had a carriage or chariot in which he proposed to travel, but at the time when he found it convenient to set out, this vehicle required a slight repair, and the merchant, then comparatively young and active, thought it best to ride slowly forward on horseback for a couple of stages, leaving his servant to bring the carriage after him. M. Durance thus hoped to enjoy, for some part of the way, a more leisurely view of the country, which he had scarcely ever seen beyond a few miles' distance from his own house. Accordingly, after giving full instructions to the servant, M. Durance set out respectably mounted, and well armed, for he carried a large sum in bills and money. To do him justice, he had a stout spirit and a fair share of courage; yet not much of either was required to travel alone at that period, owing to the admirable degree of efficiency into which the famous Fouché had brought the police of the country.

M. Durance's first day's travel was unproductive of any wonderful event. He stopped before nightfall at a village inn, rested comfortably, and next morning pursued his route. While riding slowly along the border of a large wood, in the forenoon of the second day, he observed a party of men, also on horseback, a short way before him. He continued his course, and they did the same; but the merchant was uncomfortably surprised in the end to observe them frequently turning round, one after another, apparently to look at

him. M. Durance thought of his pistols, and began to be very uneasy. The road now struck into the wood already mentioned, and when in the middle of it, poor Durance was shocked to see the men halt, and turn round to observe him, as if simultaneously. The merchant was at this time but a short distance from them, and could not help drawing up his horse also for a moment. While he was in this situation, one of the men, after an apparent consultation with the others, left them, and advanced to our friend.

"Now is the time," thought Durance, "here comes the demand for my purse! What is to be done?" And the worthy soul's heart sank within him, as he thought of the heavy sum which he bore.

When the man came up, however, there was no demand of this kind made. The stranger's first words to Durance were: "What is your purpose here?" The merchant hesitated, and at length stammered out, "I am come—upon an honest errand, I hope—like yourselves." "Ah, I thought so," replied the stranger. Then, after a moment's pause, he continued, "Well, what will you take to go away? Will you take one hundred louis?"

Mystified thoroughly, Durance, almost by accident bolted out a "No!" The man again spoke, and said, "I cannot offer you more without speaking to my companions." With which words he turned away and rejoined his band.

M. Durance never was so much puzzled in his life, but his spirits rose as he saw no intention on the part of the men to injure him, and he waited quietly till the stranger's return. That personage was not long away, and when he returned to the merchant, a bag of money was in his hand. This bag he held out to Durance, saying, "We have come to the resolution of just offering you three hundred louis—here they are—if you choose to go away. Now do take them," continued he; "upon my word we cannot offer more." Durance sat more bewildered than ever, and was about to speak, when the bag was thrust into his hand by the stranger, who at the same time said: "Now, do take it without another word. It will be as well for you, perhaps, as you are alone; and I can tell you there are some determined fellows yonder, who would think nothing to drive you off. But I was for a compromise, and, upon my honor, we cannot give more." With this the man turned to move away. Part of his last speech had made a wonderful impression on Durance, who, though utterly unable to tell the meaning of all this, thought it wise to pocket the bag, and ride onwards. He did so, and soon lost sight of the strangely liberal party he had met.

M. Durance continued his route peacefully, till nightfall, pondering all the way on what had passed, yet incapable of coming to any conclusion on the subject. On reaching the village where he proposed to rest all night, he was joined by his servant, Joseph Demaray, with the carriage, and on the ensuing day they pursued their journey in this vehicle. Nothing of interest occurred throughout their further progress, until they reached the very gates of Paris. But just as the vehicle was passing the barrier, a gentlemanly looking person came up to the carriage side, and thus addressed M. Durance: "Sir, you will have the goodness to go with me." "What!" said the merchant, "whither must I go? and why?" In a low tone of voice, and with the utmost civility, the gentleman replied, "You will permit me to have the honor of conducting you to M. Fouché." "M. Fouché!" ejaculated M. Durance, in no small alarm at the thought of what the famous head of the police could want with him: "I have committed no offense, I have broken no law, and I cannot understand why I should be sent for by"—The stranger cut short this speech by saying, "I have been waiting for some time upon you, Sir, being instructed that you would arrive in a carriage like this; and your person, portmanteau, and every thing about you, answer the description given to me. I cannot, therefore, be mistaken in the party, and you will have the goodness to attend me to M. Fouché, who will himself explain his business with you, which is more than I can do." There was no resisting this

peremptory civil request. By the stranger's directions, M. Durance sent on his servant to the hotel where he proposed to lodge, and seeing no alternative, followed the messenger to the office of the head of the police.

Fouché received our hero with the utmost politeness, and after requesting him to be seated, entered immediately on a detail of certain matters, which made the eyes of M. Durance grow as round as full moons, and led the good man to the conclusion that Fouché and the gentleman in black were things synonymous.

"You are M. Durance, of Bourdeaux, the head of the extensive mercantile house that bears your name; you have in your portmanteau the sum of—naming the exact number in specie, and the sum of—in bills; you are about to reside at the hotel B. near the Boulevards; and it is your custom to retire to rest about eleven o'clock." These are but a few of the particulars regarding M. Durance's situation, purposes, and habits, which the public functionary seemed to be aware of. The merchant sat in mute astonishment.

M. Fouché evidently enjoyed his visitor's wonder, and before any reply could be made, the police functionary continued in these rather startling words: "Sir, are you a man of courage?" We have mentioned already that M. Durance had a good deal of spirit about him, and he was now roused to make the reply, "that no one had ever doubted his courage, and he begged to know the cause of the question."—"Sir," answered M. Fouché, "you are to be robbed and murdered this night." "Robbed and murdered!" exclaimed the thunderstruck merchant of Bourdeaux. "Gracious heaven! can this be true?"

"It is true," returned M. Fouché.—"You have seen how much of the truth relative to your affairs, I am acquainted with, and this also is the truth. My reason for putting a question to you, affecting your courage, is this: If you have enough of that quality you will go to your hotel and retire at the usual hour, placing your portmanteau, as usual, by your bedside, and betraying no suspicion to those around you. Only take care not to fall asleep—and leave the rest to me. It will be unnecessary, and, indeed, improper, for you to look into the closets or beneath the bed. In short, do nothing, but go to rest as you would do at home, and leave the rest to me. Have you resolution to do this?"

M. Durance meditated a little, as was not unnatural, before giving an answer, on which the head of the police addressed him again. "If you do not feel inclined to go through with this affair, I will procure one to personate you. This would render the affair more difficult, and its success less certain, but it might be done." "No, no," exclaimed our friend, "I will do it myself. I will act precisely as you direct, leaving my life in your hands." "You may do so, sir," replied M. Fouché, "with perfect confidence."

After a repetition of his instruction, and receiving some further particulars relative to the intended attack on him, the worthy merchant left M. Fouché, and having procured a street vehicle, was driven to the hotel whither he had sent his servant and carriage. The evening was now pretty well advanced, and ere M. Durance had rested himself and taken some refreshment it wanted little more than two hours of bed-time. The merchant felt himself incapable of going out, and he therefore sought a book and sat still. But with his usual kindness of heart he did not wish to confine others on his account. His servant Demaray, who was a Parisian, asked to go out and call upon his friends. "By all means, Joseph," said M. Durance; "go to see your friends, but recollect to be here again by eleven." After this, M. Durance attempted to read, but, finding himself incapable of following the meaning of two lines together, he laid down the book, and thought.

Joseph returned punctually at eleven, and lighted his master to bed. On being left alone, the courage of the merchant almost gave way. He looked around him. As M. Fouché had stated, there were two large closets in the room. The thought that, at that instant, his intended murderers might be there, came across

the mind of M. Durance, and he was strongly tempted to satisfy himself before he lay down. But he recollected his promise—he remembered how accurate the intelligence of M. Fouché had been on other points—and he resolved to confide in what had been stated to him, and to obey every direction.

Having come firmly to this conclusion he put out the lights and lay down on the bed. The counsel "not to sleep," proved most superfluous in the case of the honest merchant. His mind and senses were too much on the alert to permit him to slumber. Sometimes, within the first hour after he lay down he thought he heard stifled noises, but they were not continuous, and led to nothing. At length, however, about half-past twelve, the door of his bedchamber was opened, and a glimmer of light fell on the opposite wall. Having purposely arranged the bed-clothes about his head in such a way as to enable him to see without being seen, M. Durance then beheld three men enter, bearing a dark lantern, and each armed with a dagger and pistols. One of them advanced to the bed-side and seized the portmanteau. In this person's face, to his horror, the merchant beheld the lineaments of his own servant, Joseph Demaray! The first act of the men was to rip up and rifle the portmanteau; but while they were doing so together, each being unable, seemingly, to trust his companions, M. Durance heard them agree upon the necessity of his own immediate death. Ignorant of the means prepared by M. Fouché for his succor, M. Durance felt the perspiration burst upon his body; but he was not kept long in this state, for ere the rifling of the portmanteau could be completed, the closet doors burst open, five or six men rushed out, and in an instant the surprised robbers were in the hands of justice. On the officers coming out, the bed-room door at the same time was opened, and lights brought in, showing that all had been indeed thoroughly prepared for the relief of the merchant and capture of the offenders.

"Ah ha!" M. Durance would here say, when narrating the story himself "what think you of my second adventure? More wonderful still than the first, was it not?"

Whatever may be thought on this point, there is obviously less of mystery in the last incident than in the preceding. The extraordinary degree of information displayed by M. Fouché, resulted simply from the circumstance of the villain Demaray having written from Bourdeaux to Paris, announcing to his associates the prize which was coming in their way. It may be thought that a roundabout and dangerous mode for M. Durance was adopted for the seizure of the offenders, and this may be in part true. But it is to be remembered that the slightest symptom of preparation would have awakened the suspicion of Demaray and would thus have prevented, in all probability, the capture of his associates, who though old offenders, had long escaped detection by the police. As to other points, M. Fouché doubtless had been afraid lest Durance, if informed previously of the treachery of his servants, and other particulars, might have prematurely done something to betray the scheme.

The wretch of a servant and his associates were punished as they all merited. M. Durance, grateful for his escape, blessed the wonderful police of his country, settled his business to his satisfaction in Paris, and in due time returned to Bourdeaux. It was not till after his return, notwithstanding many inquiries, that he could get any rational explanation of the first of his two adventures. Finally, however, by dint of local investigation, the mystery was solved. And what does the reader think was the cause of the three hundred louis being given to him with such strange and apparently causeless liberality.—The explanation is simple. In that wood, on the afternoon in question, there was to be a great sale of cut wood, which the party of men had come from a distance to buy in concert with one another. They looked for a great bargain, having reason to hope that nobody would appear to bid against them. But on seeing M. Durance on their track, they at once concluded that he was on the same "errand" as themselves. On consultation, they thought it worth

their while to endeavor to buy up his opposition by the offer of a good round sum. M. Durance's first words unintentionally confirmed the mistake as to his purposes. The issue is known to the reader.

It is not exactly in our power to say to what extent M. Durance carried his inquiries, with the view of restoring the three hundred louis. We believe he offered publicly to give it up on call, but that it was never claimed from him.—Perhaps the parties were ashamed of their extraordinary and simple-witted self-deception.

Courting a Doctress.

MISS MARY FLYNN was studying medicine and being courted at the same time. Mr. William Budd was attending to the latter part of the business. One evening while they were sitting in the front parlor, Mr. Budd was thinking how he should manage to propose. Miss Flynn was explaining certain physiological facts to him.

"Do you know," she said, "that thousands of persons are actually ignorant that they smell with their olfactory peduncle?"

"Millions of 'em," replied Mr. Budd. "And Aunt Mary wouldn't believe me when I told her she couldn't wink without a sphincter muscle!"

"How unreasonable!"

"Why, a person cannot kiss without a sphincter!"

"Indeed!"

"I know it is so."

"May I try if I can?"

"Oh, Mr. Budd, it is too bad for you to make light of such a subject."

Mr. Budd seized her hand and kissed it. She permitted it to remain in his grasp.

"I didn't notice," he said, "whether a—a—what you call it?—a sphincter helped me then or not. Let me try again."

Then he tried again, and while he held her hand she explained to him about the muscles of that portion of the human body.

"It is remarkable how much you know about such things," said Mr. Budd—"really wonderful. Now, for example, what is the bone at the back of the head called?"

"Why, the occipital bone, of course."

"And what are the names of the muscles of the arm?"

"The spirals and the infra-spirals, among others."

"Well, now let me show you what I mean. When I put my infra-spirals around your waist, so, is it your occipital bone that rests upon my shoulderblade, in this way?"

"My back hair primarily, but the occipital bone of course, afterward. But oh, Mr. Budd, suppose pa should come in and see us?"

"Let him come! Who cares?" said Mr. Budd, boldly. "I think I'll exercise a sphincter again and take a kiss."

"Mr. Budd, how can you?" said Miss Flynn, after he had performed the feat.

"Don't you call me Mr. Budd; call me Wille," he said, drawing her closer.

"You accept me, don't you? I know you do, darling."

"Wille," whispered Miss Flynn faintly.

"What, darling?"

"I can hear your heart beat."

"It beats only for you, my angel."

"And it sounds to me out of order. The ventricular contraction is not uniform."

"Small wonder for that when it's bursting for joy."

"You must put yourself under treatment for it. I will give you some medicine."

"It's your own property, darling; do what you please with it. But somehow the sphincter operation is the one that strikes me most favorably. Let us see how it works again."

"But why proceed? The old, old story was told again, and the old, old performance of the muscles of Mr. Budd's mouth enacted again and again, and a wedding followed, of course."

The best rules for a young man to follow are to talk little, to hear much, to reflect alone upon what has passed in company, to distrust one's own opinions, and value those of others that deserve it.