

Anecdotes of Vidocq, the French Detective

A jealous husband summoned Vidocq and told him to ascertain what his wife did between twelve and one o'clock every day, for he was jealous. In a few days Vidocq returned and told the husband all he desired to know; he gave the agent fifty dollars. Monsieur, said Vidocq, since your purse is open, you ought to pay me the little bill your wife owes me for a business similar to this you have employed me on. What! said the delighted husband, for his vanity was flattered by the jealousy of his wife—does she take so much interest in me? Oh! no sir, 'twas not you, 'twas the tenor at the Grand Opera she made me follow! On another occasion a wealthy merchant sent for Vidocq; he told the astute detective that a system of robbery had been going on around him, and that his strong box was less by \$30,000 than it should be, and that unless these continual peculations were ended, he should soon be reduced to bankruptcy. Whom do you suspect? Nobody. Have you a clerk? Oh yes, as honest a fellow as the day is long, who would not steal a centime—a sober, quiet industrious fellow, worth his weight in gold. Hem! Are you married? Certainly, to a divine woman, who saves me a fortune every year; she is economy itself. I know she never gamble on 'change or green baize,' Lor! man, what an idea! She! my Gabrielle, gamble, ha! ha! ha! Is she extravagant in dress? Not a bit of it. The truth is, I have to scold her for not dressing well enough. Humph! said Vidocq, the best thing you can do is to leave Paris for four or five days—really leave it, and give public notice of your intention to be gone.

The merchant obeyed, and the moment he was gone Vidocq secreted himself in the merchant's office. The second day of his concealment the merchant's wife and clerk entered the office. We must take advantage of this good fortune, said the wife, and fly; you know I have 100,000f., with that we can live happy in America. Agreed, said the clerk. The word was scarcely out of his mouth when Vidocq, armed to the teeth, discovered himself. There should be 150,000f., said Vidocq, where are the 50,000f.? I lost them gambling on change, said the clerk. Give me, Madame, the 100,000f., said Vidocq. When he placed them in his pocket he drew out a pair of handcuffs, and said to the clerk, you must leave France. I'll be generous and give you liberty, on condition you quit France. Tomorrow morning we will go to Havre together, when I'll embark you for New York. As for you, Madame, said he, turning to the guilty wife, let this be a lesson to you, and obliterate this transgression by devoting the rest of your life to your husband. He shall never learn this secret. The clerk was embarked at Havre—the money restored to the husband with a cock-and-bull explanation, and Vidocq said that he never saw a more affectionate and happy married couple than the merchant and his wife ever afterwards.

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