

A Detective's Story
by Leopold Davis

The firm of Chappelleaux Freres & Co., Importers of watches and jewelry, formerly of No.—, Maiden Lane, New York, on taking account of stock in the early part of January, 1858, found that a large number of fine gold watches, whose value was estimated at over eighteen thousand dollars, were missing.

Suspicion immediately fell upon one of their confidential clerks, one Robert Lasalle, a Frenchman, who, while receiving a salary of only one thousand dollars per annum, was known to live in an extravagant manner. At the time above stated, he had been married about a year, his wife belonging to a Quaker family in Philadelphia. On the day when the discovery was made, Lasalle was absent from the office on a collecting tour through the upper part of the city, a duty devolving on him upon the last day of each week. The discovery was made by the senior member of the firm, who, being an experienced businessman, deemed it advisable to confide his secret to nobody except his two partners; and, after a short consultation with them, he started for police headquarters. Having stated his grievances and suspicions to the chief of police, and having offered a reward of two thousand dollars for the detection of the thief, he gave a full description of Lasalle's person and dress, in substance as follows:—

Age, about thirty; height, about five feet eight; complexion, healthy; face, oval and prepossessing; nose, straight and well-shaped; eyes, hair, and moustache, black; weight, about one hundred and sixty; movements, quick and graceful; language, select, with a foreign accent when speaking English. Dress as follows: Black diagonal-cloth coat and vest, black and gray striped pants, blue beaver overcoat, polka dotted black satin scarf, with scarfpin representing a gold hand holding a large pearl, fur cap, and fur gloves.

Mr. Chappelleaux also stated that Lasalle and his wife boarded at No.—, Waverly Place.

On receiving the above particulars, the chief of police forthwith placed the matter in the hands of John Rogers and James Donahoe, two very shrewd and experienced detectives. To the last-named gentleman, whose acquaintance I accidentally made at the house of a friend, I am indebted for the following story, which he told to me in his own peculiar style, as follows:—

It was about noontime of a clear, cold day, when the chief told me what was the matter. I talked it over with Rogers, and we soon devised a plan of our own how to operate. Rogers was to act as a shadow to watch Lasalle's movements when outdoors, and I was to take a room at the house where Lasalle and his wife boarded. So I went home to get my valise, and to dress up in my Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, knowing that I had to deal with a fine bird. Then I took a hasty lunch, and told the old woman that I had to board in a fashionable neighborhood for a while; which did not at all surprise her, as I had been on the police a good many years, and we had been married long enough for her to get used to my strange life. She knew very well what was up, and smilingly said, "All right, Jim; only take care that you do not fall in love with a rich woman."

“No fear,” said I leaving the house. I then went to No.—, Waverly Place, at that time occupied by a German lady, Mrs. Moller. On ringing the bell at two o’clock in the afternoon, a colored boy about fifteen years old opened the door, and asked me what I wanted. I told him that I wanted to see the lady of the house; whereupon he stated that his mistress was just dressing to go out; but, if I waited about ten minutes, I might be able to see her. And, after ushering me into a front parlor, he went up-stairs to announce me. While waiting, I looked at the elegant furniture, the rich carpet, the fine pictures and ornaments, and made up my mind that this was not the worst place to live in; and if the fare was as good as the rest of the things, and if sauerkraut was not served up more than seven times a week, I could stand it a little while. I was just rehearsing in my mind how to approach Mrs. Moller, when the lady herself made her appearance, a slender blonde, with blue eyes, pale face, and suffering expression, dressed in deep mourning. Arising to bow to her, she begged me to keep my seat; and then seated herself, and politely said,—

“What can I do for you, sir?”

“I wish to hire a room, with breakfast and supper,” replied I. “Can you accommodate me?”

“I can give you a comfortable room on the third floor, the only one now vacant; but we serve no supper. We have breakfast from seven to ten, lunch from twelve to two, and dinner from six to eight,” said Mrs. Moller.

“What would be the price of the room you speak of, including full board?” asked I.

“Forty dollars per month, payable weekly,” answered the lady.

I thought her charges pretty steep, for at the time war-prices had not yet been imposed upon the community; but, as I had not to pay my expenses, I was not so very particular. She then called the colored boy to show me the room, which I found as she had represented it. Returning to the parlor, she asked if it suited me, and if I had concluded to hire it.

I told her that I would make it answer, although I would have preferred a room on the second floor.

“I am very sorry that I cannot accommodate you; but the best part of the second floor is taken up by a wealthy French gentleman and his wife, who pay me one hundred and fifty dollars a month for a suite of rooms, with full board. The gentleman, who is a partner in the firm of Chapelleaux Freres & Co., boarded with me four years before his marriage, which occurred a year ago last Christmas. His wife is a very fine young lady from Philadelphia. After the wedding he brought her here, where they have since remained,” remarked Mrs. Moller.

You may easily imagine how attentively I listened to the voluntary statement of the lady, in which, unbeknown to her, I was so deeply interested. It was clear that Lasalle was living greatly beyond his means; and, in order to blind the eyes of those who came in daily contact with him, he was obliged to make misrepresentations regarding his income and position.

“How many boarders have you besides the two you mentioned?” inquired I.

“I generally have from fifteen to twenty; and I can assure you that it is a very difficult task, as I am not very strong, and help is so very unreliable. I generally keep three servants,—a cook, a chambermaid, and a bell-boy; but, after all, I have to do the best part of the work myself. For the last two days I have had to do all the chamber-work, as I was obliged to discharge my girl last Thursday, on account of dishonesty. She is the third I have had to dismiss for robbing me. I have no faith in any of them. This afternoon I shall go to an intelligence office in First Street, near the Bowery, and try to get a decent German girl, even if she is a greenhorn,” said Mrs. Moller.

“I think you act wisely in doing so,” said I. Then, taking out my wallet from my breast pocket, I handed Mrs. Moller ten dollars, saying, “I always pay my board in advance. Please give me a receipt for the money. My name is Frank Henderson. I have formerly lived in Boston, but can give you plenty of city references if you desire it.”

“Oh, never mind!” said the lady: “that is all right; I shall not require any.”

Mrs. Moller gave me the receipt; and after requesting her to have my valise sent up to my room, and a fire built, I left the house, highly elated on account of the information I had received regarding Lasalle, but still more pleased with Mrs. Moller’s statement about the servants. Her talk could not have suited my purposes any better. When she declared her intention to hire a German girl, it instantly occurred to me, that, unbeknown to her, she must be furnished by *us* with such a servant, as in this case it would be much easier for me to gain access to Lasalle’s rooms. Rogers and myself had made an appointment to meet at headquarters at four o’clock in the afternoon, and we both were punctual. In the year in which this robbery took place, very little was yet known of female detectives; still there were two women in the service,—one an elderly American lady; the other an intelligent young German girl, of fine appearance and good address. The name of the last was Lisette Bremer. She was shrewd and reliable, and would be the very person to aid us in this matter. The boss happened to be in the office. I reported to him what I had done, and what I had heard in Waverley Place about Lasalle’s pretended wealth, and that I perhaps had an opportunity to furnish Mrs. Moller with a servant in the person of Miss Bremer. He seemed pleased, and said,—

“You have made a good beginning. Go on with the matter, Jim. I need not tell an old coon like you what to do, only do not run up expenses too high.”

“No fear,” said I, leaving the office.

I went to Lisette Bremer. She lived on the fourth floor of a tenement-house in Third Street, near Avenue B. I found her at her room, engaged in knitting blue woolen stockings of enormous dimensions.

After shaking hands with her, and seating myself opposite her, I told her my errand. I directed her to put on her waiting-girl disguise suit, go right away to the intelligence office in First Street, and apply for a situation as a chambermaid in a German family, then come back immediately, and report to me what her prospects were of getting such employment.

She dressed in ten minutes, and started off precisely at five o'clock, while I staid at her rooms to await her return. Half an hour later she came back to tell me that when she made the application she was told by Mrs. Lohmann, the lady who kept the intelligence office, that only five minutes before a very fine German lady had asked her to procure a good German girl to do housework. The lady could not be two blocks off; and she, Mrs. Lohmann, would send her boy after her, and ask her to come back for a moment. The boy ran as fast as he could, and overtook her at the corner of Bond Street and the Bowery. The lady, who happened to be Mrs. Moller, gladly came back to the intelligence office, saw Lisette, had a short talk with her, seemed to take a liking to her, and finally made a bargain with her to come right away. Lisette promised to be at Waverley Place at eight o'clock the same evening. You may imagine how gladly I received the welcome news from Miss Bremer. Things seemed to go on swimmingly. Not five hours had elapsed since the case was placed in my hands, and I had already accomplished a great deal. Not only was I comfortably quartered on the battle-ground, but I also had a good and reliable assistant in the person of Lisette Bremer. Never before had I made such rapid progress in so short a space of time; and all this was accomplished by acting on the impulse of the moment. So much for being quick-witted, I said to myself. I now returned to my room in Waverley Place; and at six o'clock, having been summoned by the dinner-bell, I went down stairs to the dining-hall. The table was elegantly set for about twenty, but the boarders had not all made their appearance yet. Only ten ladies and four gentlemen were present. Lasalle and his wife had not come in yet. There was a good deal of style about the company; for they all appeared in full-dress, and their combined perfumes of musk, jockey-club, patchouli, and Heaven knows what else, almost spoiled my appetite. I was for a while kept in suspense; for nearly all the guests had assembled, the second course was being served, the conversation had become more animated, but Lasalle and lady were still absent. The colored boy was just removing the plates and dishes for the second time, when I heard a loud and merry laugh in the entry; and a few moments afterwards Venus and Adonis,—nay, I beg your pardon, I mean to say, Mr. and Mrs. Lasalle,—arm in arm entered the room. I was startled; for I must confess that I never saw a handsomer nor a happier-looking couple than they were. She was not quite as tall as he, but beautifully built. Imagine a handsome brunette, with a healthy complexion, an eagle nose, a sparkling, dark eye, a sweet little mouth with a pleasant smile, and you see Mrs. Lasalle. She looked more like an Italian beauty, or a pretty Jewess, than a Quaker lady. There was a certain grace visible in her, which is natural only to persons of good breeding, and which stamps nobility on their brow. Their seats were at the head of the table, and they seemed the center of attraction. After they were seated, Lasalle said,—

“Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you are all in the best of health and spirits on this beautiful day. Mrs. Moller, my better half and myself once more crave your pardon for being a little late at the table. Mr. Goodrich, how was business with you today? Pretty good, you say? Well, I am glad to hear it. Have you heard of the gigantic bank robbery in St. Louis, and the flight of the cashier? All these calamities are caused by people living beyond their means.”

And so he went on in that easy way of talking, having something to say to almost every one of the company. Suddenly his eyes rested on me; and turning to our hostess, he said,—

“Mrs. Moller, my dear lady! I perceive a stranger at the table. Has the gentleman been introduced yet?”

Mrs. Moller blushed, and then said,—

“Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will pardon the oversight on my part. This is Mr. Henderson, from Boston.”

“Thank you madam,” said Lasalle; and then, turning towards me, he continued, --

“Mr. Henderson, as one of the earliest patrons of Mrs. Moller, permit me to welcome you in behalf of all to our happy household; and here is to our better acquaintance,” said he, emptying a glass of claret, of which he had been drinking.

“Thank you, sir; thank you,” said I,— thinking if he only knew to whom he was speaking, he might not be so glad to become better acquainted with me.

After dinner I went up stairs to my room; and, accidentally looking out of the window, I noticed a livery coach drive up to the door; and, ten minutes later, Mr. and Mrs. Lasalle, dressed for the opera, stepped into the carriage, and drove off. The next day was Sunday; and the breakfast hours on that day were from eight to half-past nine. I did not much care to see Lasalle again at the table; and, rightly judging that, having been out late on the previous night, he would surely sleep long, I went to my breakfast very early, and thus succeeded in evading him. Half an hour later I heard his melodious voice and his merry laugh on the stairway; and at ten o’clock I once more saw him and his wife enter a carriage which had come to take them to church. It appeared that I had taken quarters in a good and pious house; for all the inmates seemed to be church-members, even Mrs. Moller. Things were apparently working in my favor.

Lisette Bremer had arrived, and had been duly installed as chambermaid on the previous night, and accordingly had entered upon her duties. My time to act had arrived sooner than I expected. The last boarder, an elderly gentleman, had just left the house, when I heard Lisette in the hall of the third floor. I opened my door; and, satisfying myself that no one was near, I whispered to her,—

“Put Lasalle’s rooms in order instantly.”

She nodded her head and obeyed orders. After twenty minutes she had finished her work, and I slipped noiselessly into the lower hall, and then into Lasalle’s apartments – bolting the door carefully, and darkening the keyholes after I had entered. I commenced my work by examining every thing that stood on the shelves in the closets; but my eyes met nothing to arouse my suspicions. I then went to the bureau, which had four large and three small drawers, containing mostly her and his underwear, three white vests, several dozen of white and colored kid gloves, cuffs, collars, laces, three valuable fans, two elegant opera-glasses, a variety of silk scarfs, neckties, and ribbons, four parasols, all differing in color and design, and numerous other articles of minor value. Next I went to the writing-desk. Finding that it was locked, I took a bundle of small keys from my pocket; but, after having tried them all, I found, to my regret, that none of them would fit. Not wishing to force the lock open, I was just thinking what best to do, when I stepped on something solid on the floor; and, looking down, I saw it was a small key. Trying it in the lock of the desk, I was happy to find that it was the very key I wanted. The desk contained

books, papers, letters, some valuables, a small sum of money, writing and artist's materials, crayon drawings, a few water-color sketches, and other things too numerous to mention.

Among the papers I found a package of letters, written on drab-tinted paper, arranged in rotation, according to their respective dates, which were indorsed in red ink on each of them. They proved to be love-epistles, written by Lasalle's wife, at her parents' home in West Philadelphia. From them it appeared that her maiden name was Grace Frazer. In one of these letters she says, that, if she ever had the happiness of becoming his wife, she would never leave him, but cling to him through life,—in weal and woe, in gladness and sorrow, until grim death should separate them; and that her last words should be a blessing for her darling Robert. Being a plain, matter-of-fact man, and a police-officer at that, I wondered whether, after learning that he was a common thief, she would feel inclined to follow him to Sing Sing. I must confess that I had my doubts about it. I only read a few of the love-letters; for, to tell you the truth, they were a little too sweet for me. I knew that such talk was all blarney, and would not hold good when it came to the pinch. I now went to this trunk, which was wide open. It contained old clothing, linen, books, pictures, &c. I examined every article very carefully, and was greatly disappointed by not finding any thing whatever to arouse my suspicions. I assure you it was not an easy task to return the manifold articles to their proper places; but, being used to that kind of work, I accomplished it, as I thought admirably. I had just put the last article into the trunk, when I accidentally, and to my great regret, discovered that I had forgotten to put back a cigar-box, half-filled with cigars, which was one of the last things I had taken from the trunk. While looking at the article with displeasure, a thought suddenly struck me, that a cigar-box, half empty, really had no business among all the rubbish in the trunk; and, while it would be quite natural to put a full box in the trunk, no sensible man, especially a smoker, would think of thus exposing the cigars to the danger of being broken; but that it would be more natural for him to put such a box on a shelf in the closet, on the mantel-piece, or on a table. Thus reasoning to myself, I resolved to empty the box of its contents, expecting to find at least fifty cigars. Unpacking them, I was greatly surprised to find only about half that number, while I had already reached the bottom; and I was still more astonished when I found that the box had a false bottom. Murder will out, said I to myself. Had I not accidentally forgotten to return the box to the trunk, I would never have thought of examining its contents so closely; but now my suspicions were aroused instantly. Taking a penknife from my pocket, I lifted the false bottom, and, to my still greater surprise, I found a white paper box, which fitted exactly in the space it occupied. You may easily imagine how eager I was to examine its contents; and although detectives, as a general rule, are not of a nervous temperament, I am in truthfulness forced to admit, that my hands trembled so much that I dropped the box; and you may picture my delight when I saw a large number of pawn-tickets fall out of it upon the floor. I picked them up, counted them, and found that there were thirty five in all, issued by various pawnbrokers in New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Hoboken, Newark, Philadelphia, Providence, and Boston; some for a single gold watch, and some for two or three. Gathering them up again, I put them into my wallet; and, consulting my watch, I found that it was already half-past eleven o'clock, and that in half an hour more Lasalle and his wife would probably return from church. I therefore concluded to discontinue my search. Placing the paper box in the cigar-box, and putting the cigars again on the false bottom, I wrapped the whole concern in an old newspaper; and, taking it with me, I was just about to unlock the door, in order to leave the room, when I heard the voice of the colored boy, who was talking to one of the servants. Thinking it would be best not to let them see me come out of Lasalle's room, I went

back. Noticing a large photographic album on the table, it suddenly occurred to me that it might be wise, and perhaps save a great deal of unpleasantness, to procure his likeness now, for the Rogue's Gallery. Finding four different pictures of him in the album, I selected the one which in my estimation resembled him the most. Putting this also into my wallet, I made sure, by listening, that there was nobody in the entry; and the, carefully and noiselessly unbolting the door, I left the room, and walked quietly up stairs into my own.

Half an hour later the inmates of the house returned from church. That day all were punctual at lunch. Lasalle was gayer and more talkative than on Saturday. His tongue went like a waterwheel, and again he had something to say to everyone at the table. Not even me did he spare. "Mr. Henderson," said he, "have you been to church, my dear sir, or have you worshiped God in your own room?—which, in my opinion, is just as good, as long as people have the true religion in their hearts, and do what is right."

"I agree with you in that respect," said I; and then thought, what a hypocrite that brazen Frenchman is! The idea of talking of religion in such a manner, when he knows, in his own heart, that he is a wicked sinner. After lunch I went to Mr. Chapelleaux's residence in West Fourteenth Street. I showed him the pawn-tickets, and requested him to go with me to one or two of the pawnbrokers, to identify the property. He went with me first to a place in the Bowery, and then to another one in Chatham Street. As both pawnbrokers lived over their stores, we had no trouble finding them at home. I showed them the pawn-tickets issued by them respectively, and demanded to see the watches. They produced them; and Mr. Chapelleaux was satisfied that they belonged to the missing property, and showed me his private mark on each of them, which was a small C in a circle. We then went to police headquarters. Not finding the chief there, I went to his private residence, while Mr. Chapelleaux returned to his own home. I saw the boss and told him of my success. He expressed himself greatly satisfied with my doings, especially when I showed him the cigar-box and the pawn-tickets. He said he considered it sufficient proof of Lasalle's guilt, and would go with me to the office to make out the necessary papers for the Frenchman's arrest. Arriving there, I handed him the confiscated property, and he soon handed me the warrant. After leaving him, I went to my home, to see if anything had happened there.

"Well, Jim," said my wife, after we had exchanged salutations, "any prospects for a new dress?"

"Oh, yes!" replied I, "perhaps for a silk one."

I played with the children for an hour, and then left again. Wending my way to Waverley Place, I weighed in my mind the question, whether to arrest Lasalle before or after dinner. Perhaps you think that detectives have no regard for other people's feelings? But you are mistaken, my dear sir. Out of regard to Mrs. Moller and her other boarders, I resolved to put off the performance of the tragedy until half an hour after dinner, which on the Sabbath was served as early as five o'clock. I arrived at my room at half past four. The short space of time seemed very long to me that afternoon, but at last the sound of the dinner-bell ended my suspense. As was probably always the case on Sundays, the guests were all very punctual at the table, with the exception of the Frenchman and his wife. Poor woman! her doom was sealed for ever.

“Lasalle is bound always to be the last at the table. I sometimes think he does it for effect,” said Mrs. Moller smilingly. To me, however, matters soon became serious; for the third course had already been served and the Lasalles had not made their appearance yet. The dessert was now placed on the table, and still they remained absent. I did not know what to make of it, and was just thinking whether I had not better find out where Lasalle was, when I heard a ring at the door-bell. About ten minutes afterwards, Lisette Bremer excitedly entered the room, and quickly walking to Mrs. Moller’s seat, she whispered a few words into that lady’s ear, who suddenly turned pale, hastily arose from her seat, and, begging the company to excuse her for a few moments, hurriedly left the room. I instantly felt that something was wrong; and, thinking that perhaps my time to act had arrived, I followed Mrs. Moller’s example by leaving the room. In the hall I met Lisette, with a glass of water in her hand, hastening up-stairs to Lasalle’s room. I asked her if anybody was sick, and she said that Mrs. Lasalle had fainted. Under the pretense of offering my services to procure a physician, I followed her to Lasalle’s room. On entering, I saw Mrs. Moller kneeling on the floor, and bending over the apparently lifeless body of Mrs. Lasalle. Approaching her, Mrs. Moller looked up at me with an expression of intense grief and said “Mr. Henderson, a great calamity has befallen our house. Look at this letter, which was delivered by a strange messenger just now.”

Thus saying, she handed me a note, written in lead-pencil, and addressed to Mrs. Lasalle. I grasped the paper eagerly, and read the following words, which were hastily written by a trembling hand:—

“MY PRECIOUS DARLING,—A merciless fate has separated us for ever! We can never meet again in life, and I fear not even in heaven. Pray for me! Your unfortunate

“ROBERT”

I comprehended everything in a moment. Lasalle, or his wife, had probably missed the photograph in the album, which aroused Lasalle’s suspicions, and led him to believe that somebody had a motive in taking it. Then he had probably examined his trunk; and, missing the ill-fated cigar-box, he at once knew that his game was at an end, and that instant flight was advisable. Mrs. Moller had been in Lasalle’s room at a quarter to four; and from her I learned that he had left as early as half past three, telling his wife that he was just going around the corner to get a newspaper, but did not return, leaving the poor woman in a dreadful state of suspense, fancying all sorts of terrible things, until at last the fatal letter verified her fears, that something dreadful had happened to her husband. I clearly saw that I had waited too long with Lasalle’s arrest.

“James Donahoe,” said I to myself, “you have made a great blunder; but, if Lasalle still lives on earth, he shall be found by you.”

Mrs. Lasalle having revived from her fainting spell, no medical aid was needed; and, as my business at Waverley Place was not at an end, I went up-stairs to my room, packed my valise, and, after addressing a few lines to Mrs. Moller, I left the house, feeling greatly dissatisfied with myself. Not getting a chance to speak to Lisette before leaving, I left her to await further orders. Instead of proceeding to headquarters, I telegraphed to John Rogers to meet me at my house instantly; and then, hiring a cab to drive me up there, I reached the house a few moments after he

had arrived. Our consultation was brief; and, after ten minutes, he left me again. I then packed my trunk, providing myself with several disguise suits, three different wigs, some false beards, green eyeglasses, a pair of handcuffs, and various other articles of that nature. After this I wrote a letter to the chief, informing him what had happened, and requesting him to have one hundred card-pictures made from Lasalle's photograph, and send one to the police headquarters of every large city in the United States and in Canada. I also advised him to issue a search-warrant, and immediately institute a very careful search of Lasalle's premises. On the same evening Rogers went by the nine o'clock train to Philadelphia; while I took the eight o'clock train to Boston, intending to go from there to Canada. Before leaving New York, I engaged two experienced men to search for Lasalle in the city.

On Monday, before commencing my search, I hired a shrewd and trustworthy assistant, a man by the name of Strong, to go ahead of me to Portland, Quebec, and Montreal. After two day's labor in Boston, I felt satisfied that Lasalle was not there. I wrote from Boston to Lisette Bremer, requesting her to stay another week with Mrs. Moller, and watch what was going on there. On Tuesday evening I left by the six-o'clock train for Portland, arrive there at quarter past ten. On Wednesday I worked very hard in Portland, but met with no success. On Thursday night I reached Quebec. On my arrival there, I was rejoiced to find for me, at the St. Louis Hotel, a dozen card-pictures of Lasalle, which were mailed to me from New York on Monday night. I also found a telegram from my man Strong, requesting me to join him in Montreal without delay. There being no train to that city before the next morning, I stopped at the hotel overnight. Late on Friday evening I arrived at Montreal; and no sooner had I registered my name at the Ottawa Hotel, than Strong tapped me on the shoulder, expressing great anxiety to speak to me.

"What is up, Strong?" asked I, leading him aside.

"A man, answering your description of Lasalle, arrived here from Toronto yesterday, and I know where to lay my hands on him. He took lodgings at a small French hotel in St. Joseph Street," said Strong.

"Does he look like this?" asked I, showing him one of the card-pictures.

"That is the man! I could almost swear to it!" exclaimed my assistant.

"All right," said I: "come up stairs for a few moments, and I will go with you."

After ordering my trunk to be taken up stairs, and whispering a few words into the night clerk's ear, I took Strong up to my room. While he was examining the photograph more closely, I dressed up in my old man's disguise, put on a pair of spectacles, and then, addressing him in the voice of a feeble and toothless old man, I nearly frightened him out of his wits. You ought to have seen how the fellow laughed when he discovered it was I. Twenty minutes later we arrived at the French hotel in St. Joseph Street. It was then nearly midnight, but the people had not gone to bed yet. I told Strong to lead me into the house, as if I needed his support, and then engage a room for me.

Detectives are generally good actors, and I could play my part pretty well.

I entered an assumed name, with an apparently trembling hand, in such a manner that the Devil himself could not have read it. The old gray headed Frenchman who kept the house stood behind the counter. He looked at my signature through his eye-glasses, and then asked me in broken English,—

“Vat you call zat name, Monsieur?”

“John Carrindale,” I replied.

“Ah, yes! I comprehend,” said he. “Your name be Jean Herrington, I see. Mr. Herrington, will you drink some zing before you put yourself to bed? I will sell you one bottle of claret, zat will make your old blood run warm, and only charge you fifty cents.”

“Well,” said I, pretending to cough like an old man, “you may send a bottle of it, and two glasses, to my room.” He fetched the wine from the cellar, and, while Strong was leading me up the narrow stairway, he followed us with an oil-lamp and the wine. Before leaving the room, he asked me if I would like roast pigeons for breakfast, and I told him yes. He then said “Perhaps you would like to pay me for lodging, wine, and breakfast, because you not have any baggage; and you be so old, zat you may die before morning, and zen I lose my money.”

I thought that Frenchman had a hard cheek, but I could not keep from laughing at his strange request. Judging from his impudence, I expected that he would make an exorbitant charge, but I was mistaken; for, when I asked him how much he wanted he said,—

“I will take, for lodging, wine, and breakfast, one dollar and a half.”

Probably he thought I had no money; for when I took from my pocket a roll of Canada bank-bills, and a lot of gold and silver, he seemed greatly surprised and said, “O, Monsieur! Zat is all right: I do not want ze money now; any time tomorrow will do. I never am in a hurry about ze pay when I meet one nice old gentleman like you. Good night, Monsieur.”

After he had left the room I offered Strong a glass of wine.

“Thank you,” said he, “I have been there: no more vinegar and logwood for me.”

Laughing at his sarcastic remark, I tasted the wine, and found that he was correct. A few drops of it were quite enough for me.

“Now Strong,” said I, “go down stairs and find out from the register how the man, whom you suspect, entered his name.”

“Oh! I know that already,” replied he: “the name he gave was R. Fraser, from Paris.”

“You don’t say so?” exclaimed I.

“Why, what is the matter?” asked Strong, with surprise.

“A good deal is the matter,” said I: “As you know, Lasalle is from Paris. His Christian name is Robert, and his wife’s maiden name was Frazer. Murder will out, you see. No matter how smart a thief may be, he will always do something to commit himself. I bet we have found Lasalle.”

I dismissed Strong for the night, telling him to meet me at the Ottawa Hotel at nine o’clock the next morning. I now retired; but, although I was very fatigued from traveling, I did not sleep much that night. When the breakfast bell rang, at seven o’clock the next morning, I was already up and dressed, and ready to go down-stairs. Looking at the register before going to breakfast, I found that the name entered was not R. Frazer, but B. Frazier, spelled F-r-a-z-i-e-r. Entering the dining-room, I saw the man himself, who resembled Lasalle very much, and might have passed for his brother; but it did not take me long to satisfy myself that it was not Lasalle, after all, although it was very natural that Strong should have made the mistake. When he met me afterwards, at the Ottawa Hotel, he felt, of course, very disappointed when I told him that he had been on the wrong track.

“Never mind,” said I encouragingly; “no harm done. You may go to Toronto, and I will go to Ottawa; for I still believe that Lasalle is in Canada.”

We both took the same train as far as Prescott Junction, where we separated; he going one way and I the other. At Ottawa I stopped at the Russell House. This was on Sunday. The weather was clear and cold, and the sleighing lively. Not a single carriage or wagon was visible. In the afternoon I took a walk around the city. On my way back I was just crossing the bridge on Sparks Street, when I saw a handsome sleigh, drawn by a pair of spirited black horses, coming up the street. The sleigh was driven by a fine looking gentleman, with blonde hair and blonde moustache, which strangely contrasted with his sparkling black eyes. At his side sat a handsome, healthy-looking young lady, also a blonde, resembling the gentleman in color of hair and eyes, and in vivacity of gestures while speaking to each other. The sleigh was now passing me; and I was just thinking what a handsome couple they were, when my trained ears suddenly caught the merry laugh of the gentleman in the sleigh, which resembled Lasalle’s merry laugh so much, that, had I not seen the stranger’s face and only heard his voice, I could have sworn that it was Lasalle himself. Inquiring of a passing police-officer if he knew whose sleigh it was, he said, “Yes, sir: the sleigh belongs to Thomas McAuley, a wealthy merchant of Ottawa. The young lady is his daughter; and the gentleman is Eugene Delatour from Paris, who is visiting at McAuley’s house.” Thanking the officer for his information, I went to the hotel; and looking in the Directory for the address of McAuley, I found that he lived in the most fashionable part of the city. You may be surprised to hear that, in spite of having seen with my own eyes that the gentleman in the sleigh was not Lasalle, I stationed myself in disguise a little before seven o’clock that evening near the residence of McAuley. But such was the fact. We detectives hear and see such strange things, that we are forced to think that every thing is possible, and therefore are surprised at nothing. I had waited about ten minutes, when a sleigh, much larger than the one I had seen in the afternoon, was driven up to the door by a coachman in livery. A few minutes afterward the same young couple, and two elderly persons whom I supposed to be Mr. and Mrs. McAuley, came from the house, and entered the sleigh; and again I heard the never-to-be-forgotten merry laugh of Lasalle, and his melodious voice. Had not the severe cold pinched my

nose and ears that evening, I might have imagined that I was only dreaming. The sleigh left; and I was undecided what to do, when I saw a young man, with a hymn-book under his arm, leaving the house. Taking it for granted that the family had gone to church, and that the young man would go to the same house of worship, I resolved to follow him. Keeping behind him at a proper distance, I found that I was not mistaken; and by walking a little faster when approaching the church, we entered the edifice at almost the same time. The service had already commenced, and they were singing the last verse of a hymn when we got inside. To my delight the young man went to the place where the McAuley family were sitting. I took a seat right over them in the gallery, from which, unnoticed, I could watch the party. Being in disguise, I could boldly look at them without arousing suspicion. I always carried in my pocket a pair of magnifying spectacles. Looking down at the young lady's escort, I noticed, by chance, that the color of his hair greatly varied from that of all other blonde gentlemen in the congregation; his being much lighter and almost of a flaxen hue. No sooner had I made this discovery, than it suddenly occurred to me that I had once heard a physician speak of a French invention,—a process by which the darkest hair could be bleached into a blonde. Could it be possible that this was Lasalle, after all? I now closely examined the stranger's features; and, before I left the church that evening, I was fully convinced that I had found the escaped criminal. The same evening I telegraphed to Strong to join me in Ottawa immediately. Another telegram I sent to John Rogers, who at that time was in Washington D.C., requesting him to return to New York instantly, and await my further orders there. A third telegram I sent to the chief of police, informing him that I had got on Lasalle's track. In a fourth telegram, I requested Mrs. Moller to write to me by return mail, care of the Post Office, Suspension Bridge, if she had heard any thing from Lasalle. In self-praise I must say that after I had returned to my room at the hotel, it took me only ten minutes to lay out my whole plan of operation; which proved a success, as you will hereafter see. On Monday afternoon Strong arrived in Ottawa. I pointed out to him McAuley's residence, described Lasalle's present appearance, and directed him to stay in Ottawa, and shadow the Frenchman, and follow him wherever he might go, reporting to me at Suspension Bridge, care of Western Hotel, punctually every day. Leaving Ottawa the same afternoon, I went by way of Toronto and Hamilton to the Suspension Bridge. Arriving there on Wednesday noon, I took lodgings at the Western Hotel. I found a letter from Mrs. Moller at the post-office, stating that she had heard nothing of Lasalle, and that his wife had returned to her parents' home in Philadelphia, somewhat deranged in mind. I now procured an intelligent lady to imitate Mrs. Moller's hand-writing and signature; and, after I was fully satisfied that she could do it to perfection, I dictated to her the following letter:—

“EUGENE DELATOUR, Esq. —

“*Care of Post Office, Ottawa, Ontario.*

“A clairvoyant has told your wife that you are in Ottawa, under the above-assumed name. She knows all about your unfortunate matter, and forgives you, saying that you did the wrong only for her sake. She insists on seeing you once more, before parting with you for ever, and wants you to meet her in disguise, in the ladies' room at the Suspension Bridge next Monday night, at seven o'clock. Now, if you do not want to drive your poor wife mad, be sure to be there; that is, if the clairvoyant has told her correctly, and this letter reaches you.

“Your true friend,
“HENRIETTE MOLLER.”

My calculation was that, by not mentioning on which side of the bridge she wanted to meet him, he naturally would first look for her on the Canadian side, and, not finding her there, he would undoubtedly venture over to the American side. You never saw a better counterfeit than that letter. I was so pleased with it, that I paid the lady ten dollars for her work, which gladdened her poor heart, I can tell you. If any thing would fetch Lasalle, that letter surely would; for, from a remark I read in one of Mrs. Lasalle's love-letters, I knew that both strongly believed in clairvoyants, and even in fortune-tellers. In the evening I mailed the letter to Rogers to New York, to be remailed by him from there to Ottawa. I also requested him to join me at the Western Hotel on Monday morning. The next day I received his answer by telegraph, saying that he had remailed my letter, and that he would be on hand in due time.

On Thursday and Friday Strong reported that there was no change in Lasalle's movements. On Saturday Strong telegraphed that he saw Lasalle receive my letter at the Ottawa post-office. The same day another telegram was received from Strong, stating that Lasalle had bought a ticket for the evening train to Toronto. On Sunday Strong reported his and Lasalle's arrival at Toronto, stating that they were both stopping at the "Rossin House," and that Lasalle had entered his name on the register as Eugene Delatour, from Paris. On Monday morning Strong sent another telegram informing me that Lasalle had bought a ticket for the one o'clock train to the bridge, which was due there at six-o'clock in the evening. In the mean time Rogers had arrived from New York. When I informed him what had been done by me, he expressed himself greatly satisfied, and said the whole affair was arranged in a masterly manner, which flattering remark, made by an old, experienced hand like him, somewhat consoled me for the great blunder I had made at the beginning of the affair. In the afternoon, while Rogers was in my room, he suddenly said, "Show me your handcuffs, Jim! I want to see which are the prettiest, and would be the most becoming to your handsome Frenchman with the golden hair." I showed him my handcuffs. "I like yours the best," said he. "How would it be to have his initials engraved on them? R.L. would make a handsome monogram." I saw that Rogers was full of the devil; but I did not mind it, and let him have his own way. We had known each other eleven years. I knew him to be as true as steel and greatly attached to me. Besides, he was calm, quick-witted, and courageous, and a better detective could be found nowhere. The afternoon was pleasantly spent in talking and joking. At five o'clock I ordered supper for two, because Rogers suggested that it was not healthy to work on an empty stomach. At a quarter before six o'clock we had finished our meal, and were leisurely walking toward the depot. The train was behind time, as is often the case in winter; but at last it came. When I heard the sound of the steam-whistle, I consulted my watch, and found that it was twenty minutes to seven. There were a great many passengers on the train that night. Quite a number got out to have their baggage inspected by the custom-house officers, yet a great many remained in the cars. It was a dark night, but the depot was lighted up sufficiently to see every thing that was going on. I cannot deny that I was a little excited. I stood near the ladies' room in the disguise of a hackman; while Rogers was stationed a little distance from me, with orders to watch my movements, and to join me as soon as he saw me remove my fur cap, but not before. Strong had been among the first passengers that left the cars. He had already joined me and informed me that Lasalle was in the last passenger-car, dressed as an old Quaker, with long, gray hair, wearing green spectacles. He had also stated that Lasalle had got out on the Canadian side, at Clifton, and searched the ladies' waiting-room, acting very nervously; that he had seemed undecided whether to cross the bridge by that train or not, but finally jumped on while the train was in motion. For a while we were doomed to a feeling of

dreadful suspense. The train had already stopped fifteen minutes, and would shortly leave again, and yet Lasalle was not visible anywhere. I did not know what to think of it, and wondered whether Lasalle had concluded to go by the train to the next station, and then return. I was just saying to Strong, "I fear you will have to shadow the Frenchman a little longer," when I heard the conductor cry out, "All aboard for the East!" A few moments afterwards the train was set in motion; and I was just about to tell Strong to jump on quickly, when I saw an old Quaker, wearing green spectacles, appear on the rear platform of the last passenger-car, who, though the train was increasing in speed, hastily jumped from the steps; but being encumbered by a valise and an umbrella, he lost his foothold, slipped off, and fell to the ground, with his back on the sleepers of the track. Holding Strong's arm, I had almost breathlessly watched the occurrence, taking it of course for granted that this was Lasalle. Prompted by a feeling of humanity, I now hastened to his assistance. Approaching the spot, I noticed that by the force of the fall his eyeglasses had been knocked off, and a moment later I saw the wicked black eyes of Robert Lasalle staring at me with an expression of great mental and physical suffering. I comprehended it all in a single moment, and could not help recognizing the hand of Providence in the matter. The Frenchman, undoubtedly trying to evade notice, on the arrival of the train had lingered about one minute too long before getting off, and thus, by the almighty will of God, was to meet his well-deserved fate. He had sprained his ankle, and was unable to walk without aid. I turned around, and, by taking off my fur cap for a moment, gave the signal to Rogers and Strong, who promptly joined me. I proposed to Lasalle to go with us to the hotel, but he insisted on being taken to the ladies' waiting-room. I could not restrain my feelings any longer. We had assisted him in rising; and Rogers and I were leading him, while Strong walked behind us with Lasalle's satchel and umbrella, when I suddenly turned round to our prisoner. Removing my wig and false beard, I looked him full in the face, and then sternly said,—

"Robert Lasalle, it is no use to look for your wife: you will never behold her again, and your fine game is at an end." No sooner had I spoken those fatal words than his knees began to totter, and muttering a few words in French, which sounded like, "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Je suis perdu!" the powerful man fainted in our arms; and while still unconscious we carried him to my room at the hotel, put him on the bed, and handcuffed him.

Neither of my assistants had spoken a single word during the whole proceedings; but now, when we were all seated near the bedside of the criminal, Rogers said to me, "Jim, that job was put up well, and it will tickle the boss when he hears of it."

Ten minutes afterwards, Lasalle opened his eyes, Rogers having placed a bottle of hartshorn under his nose. He attempted to move his hands, but found that he was restrained by handcuffs. He first looked at me with an expression of awe, and then said, in a pitiful tone, "Mr. Henderson, was my unfortunate wife at the bridge?"

"She was not," replied I.

"Are you sure of it?" he asked again.

"I am," said I, "for she knows nothing of the letter that brought you here."

“Oh, I see it all!” he exclaimed, closing his eyes as if to meditate. When he opened them again, I asked him if he wanted any food; and he replied,—

“I am not hungry, only weak. Can you get me some wine?”

“Certainly,” said I, “anything you wish to drink.”

“I would like a bottle of St. Julien,” said he: “you will find a wallet with Canadian bank-bills in my vest pocket. Please take from it as much as you require.”

“Never mind,” said I: “we will settle that some other time.”

Strong went for the wine, and soon returned with a bottle of the best claret. Lasalle drank three glasses of it, and then fell asleep. I left him in charge of my assistants, and went to the telegraph office. From there I dispatched a message to the chief, saying,—

“Have captured Lasalle. Will start for New York to-morrow.”

Another telegram, to the same effect, I sent to my wife. The next morning we started for home. Lasalle spoke very little during our journey, merely asking a few questions regarding his wife and Mrs. Moller. Among other things, he wanted to know if Mrs. Moller had been bribed to write that letter; and when I told him that the document was forged, he would not believe it, and said that he knew her handwriting and peculiar signature too well, and that he would be willing to swear that she had written it. On Wednesday morning we reached New York. Arriving at the depot, I hired a carriage, which conveyed us to police headquarters, from whence Lasalle was taken to the jail. A few weeks afterwards he was tried; and as, during the second search, a box containing more than forty fine gold watches had been found concealed in a hole under the floor of Lasalle’s sleeping-room, he was convicted of grand larceny. The firm of Chapelleaux Freres & Co. recovered a large portion of their property. I got the reward, my wife got a silk dress, and Lasalle got ten years in Sing Sing at hard labor.

Thus ended the strange affair, and thus ends this long story.

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