

## *Colonel Novena, The Prince Of Confidence Men*

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The Confidence Man, Par Excellence; A Real “Artist” “Colonel Novena,” “Count Antonelli,” “General Alverosa,” “Sir Richard Murray” Makes A Visit — A Man Of Great Natural Ability, With “A Screw Loose” — A Bit Of “Philosophy”(?) — The Man Described, Versatile, Agile, Brave, Daring The Colonel As A Gallant — Curious Tale About Two Sisters And Colonel Novena— President Buchanan, Professor Henry, General Fremont, And Mr. Seward Of The Number Of His Friends — Dishonest Ways Of Doing “Legitimate Business” — A Shocking Bad Memory The Colonel As A Philanthropist — Comes To Grief At Washington, D. C.— Saratoga Tempts The Colonel—His Successes There—A Change Of Circumstances — A Valuable Diamond Necklace Lost — The Great Mystery — The Historic Character Of The Necklace— Thorough Searching — The Shrewdest Scamps Generally Have Better Reputations Than Most People — Too Good A “Character” A Matter Of Suspicion”—Mr. Henry Inman, Artist,” Is Created — Headway Made The Necklace Comes To Light, In The Possession Of A Most Remarkable Woman — Goodness In Bad Places — A Living Moral Paradox — An “Unfortunate “ Good Samaritan — The General’s Sense Of Honor Wounded — To Canada — Down The Rapids Of The St. Lawrence — A Tomb In Greenwood Rendering To Woman Her Due — A Blessed Charity—Wall Street Corrupts The Morals Of The Nation.

by George McWatters

“CONFIDENCE men,” in the usual way, are so common, — such as the fellows who drop pocket-books, stuffed with counterfeit money, in the streets of cities, in order that innocent countrymen or uninitiated foreigners may pick them up, and divide the spoils with an up-coming witness, and give him all their good money in order to have a large share in the poor or counterfeit money, — that I have hesitated a moment over the caption I should give this narrative, lest the reader should think I am about to introduce to him one of those common, every-day affairs. But, on reflection, I cannot think of a more appropriate title than I have chosen, for Colonel Novena *was*, of all the rogues and scoundrels I have encountered in my professional life, the confidence man, *par excellence*, as the French would say, not by the “excellence” of his high character, to be sure, or his moral worth, but by his artistic superiority.

The public will recollect, or such of them as enjoy retentive memories of names will do so, how much was said some years ago, by the public press, for a few days, about a certain Cuban, a “Colonel Novena,” “Count Antonelli,” “General Alverosa,” and “Sir Richard Murray,” — for by these names, as well as sundry others, was this gentleman in his career known. His true name, as definitely as I could ever learn, was Julian Cinquez; but even that is doubtful, and it matters not. He was a man of brilliant talents, indeed, great native ability; and the wonder is that he did not attach himself to some honorable profession, or follow some pursuit in life recognized as legitimate; for he could not only have adorned any profession which he might have adopted, but he might have made an

extensive fortune as well—or so we are apt to say of like characters. Yet, to confess the truth, I am not so certain that our moral reflections upon these matters are correct. The fact that the man did not lead the life which his talents apparently indicated that he might, is perhaps evidence in itself that the world might misjudge him. He might not have been able to “adorn any profession” after all, for in such men’s characters, there is obviously always “a screw loose;” and for want of fixedness or tightness of that same “screw,” is it, perhaps, that the general machine will not work. That may be the philosophy of the matter.

Colonel Novena was no small man in his way. He was a handsome man, too, possessing a finely-shaped face, with large, dark, not quite black eyes, and eyelashes such as would arouse the enthusiasm of the master painters, and which gave to those eyes that sweet, alluring expression so irresistible to women; or when reflecting the light of anger from them, added a twofold horror to their expression, enough to make the strongest men quail, for the man then seemed a very demon. The colonel was about five feet ten inches in height, elegantly proportioned, his form being, perhaps, as nearly perfect, in every respect, as any man on the wide globe could boast of. Grace, dignity, and strength combined in it, and when at all aroused or excited, Colonel Novena was as lithe and flexible as a cat, or better, perhaps, a tiger. Notwithstanding the classic outlines of his face, it possessed great mobility, — and having a comical vein in his nature, Colonel Novena could imitate anything, from the grimace of a pretty, simpering girl, to the Falstaffian stolidity of a Dutch judge, and was one of the most excellent of story-tellers, in consequence. In short, Colonel Novena possessed all the talents and natural “gifts” necessary to make a man the most acceptable companion under any circumstances. He won his way easily into everybody’s heart, whom he considered worth his notice, either socially or business-wise; by which I mean, whom he regarded as of consequence enough to be exploited upon or victimized; and he had a way of exciting the sympathy of even officers of the law, when they felt conscious of his guilt; and I dare say that there has seldom ever existed a man so competent to play the *rôle* of “Injured Innocence,” as was Colonel Novena. It is not surprising then that he ran so long a career of forgery and false pretence of all kinds.

Colonel Novena knew the art of dressing well. He was never over-dressed, — a fault of villains of his kind generally, He was never too poorly dressed for the special business he had in hand. His *rôle* of the gentleman of leisure and wealth was incomparably well taken; and being thoroughly educated, he acted the part of the literary *savant* to perfection. On the prairies or frontier, he was the most daring and hardy of backwoodsmen, and compelled the admiration of his fellow-travellers or hunters for his daring and prowess. He was a genius, in fine, socially. He seemed to need no “credentials” anywhere, save his fine manners and honest-looking face. Yet he always took care to secure the best letters of introduction everywhere, and had his trunks full of such things, given him by the great men of the laud, such as President Buchanan, General Fremont, Professor Henry, Chief Justice Taney, Corcoran the banker, Mr. Seward, Andrew Johnson, etc.; for he obtained them from leading statesmen of all sorts of political faiths, from men of science, and from leading financiers, and did not hesitate to demand the like of the most notable ladies of the land.

Why Colonel Novena never condescended to marry some one (or more, perhaps), of the ladies of great wealth whom he numbered among his admirers, is a mystery to me, for there was not one of them who would not have been proud to own him as her husband. But perhaps the colonel had some valid reason for remaining a bachelor, or for assuming to be one; for there is no certainty, of course, that he had not a wife somewhere, or that in several parts of the world (for he had travelled all over it) there might not have been found many ladies, each one of whom might have claimed him. However, it is probable that such was not the case, for “murder” of that kind “will out” in time, as well as the real article of homicide, and I was never able to learn that the colonel was married.

As an example of the wonderful fascinations of the colonel, it may not be improper to relate here a tale, told me by one who was once on terms of intimacy with the schemer when he figured in Fifth Avenue society, and who vouched for the truth of it, as largely based on his own observations of the colonel’s course with the ladies in question.

There were two sisters, the one a middle-aged widow, very rich, and quite good-looking; the other, much younger, very beautiful, but without money—poor, in fact. The latter was very gifted as a colloquist, and was a charming woman of society. The former was also a lady of many accomplishments. The parents of these ladies were dead, and the elder and rich one had assumed the guardianship of the younger, who lived with her, for she kept up her house after her husband’s death, and lived in great style. The colonel made the acquaintance of the elder at a fashionable party in Madison Avenue one night; and learning that she was very rich, was, of course, sufficiently charmed with her to seek admittance to her house, which he duly effected. Calling upon the widow, he met her dazzlingly beautiful young sister. The colonel was in a dilemma; and it appears that he thought his only way out of it was to make love to both.

The sequel of the story is, that Colonel Novena so adroitly managed his addresses to these ladies, and gained such power over them, that neither dared disclose to the other the colonel’s engagement to her, each sister enjoying, in her strictly secret heart, the sense of a sweet victory over the other; and in order to not expose her secret by receiving the colonel alone too frequently, often asking the other’s presence on the colonel’s calls.

Indeed, so fascinated did they become with the colonel, that they often visited his bachelor’s quarters together, and there, in his library, spent hours at a time with him, reading, chatting, partaking of wine, and so forth.

They were almost without restriction in their affectionate caressing of the “dear colonel” in each other’s presence; for what of jealousy should either feel towards her sister, when she held in her heart the sacred truth that *she* herself was dearer to the colonel than her sister? This complication of affairs continued for several months, the parties meeting daily. The colonel had, of course, persuaded each that the usual announcement of an engagement should be foregone in *this* instance, for some wily, but apparently good reason, which he gave; and the gossips were at a loss to discover which of the two ladies he loved the more, so they “married” him to neither for a certainty.

But finally an end came to the duplex affair, and the sisters told the “secret” to each other; and the colonel was upbraided by them both one evening when he called on them. It is said, however, that notwithstanding the colonel’s dishonorable course, either of the sisters would have been glad to secure him. But the colonel was now in a dilemma again, out of which there was no such sweet escape as before. The beautiful lady he did not want as an “incumbrance,” and the “other charmer” could not fully command him, with all her riches, without the society of the more brilliant one too, which he knew he could not have if married to the former; for the colonel well knew what tyrants most women are to their husbands when they have them in their power, and he preferred his freedom to the slavery of a “boughten” husband’s position.

The colonel was a bit of a social philosopher, and often “put things” in novel and clever ways. It was a saying of his. I was told, that “the condition of the average husband is the most comical and pitiable to be conceived — a slave to his wife or his family; a creature subject to all sorts of indignities at home, and not allowed to go abroad.” “A model husband,” said he, “is in these days little more, at best, than the gentlemanly butler or purveyor for his own house; has the privilege of paying all the bills, bearing all the burdens, etc., while his wife and family feel as ‘grateful’ as pigs at their dinner.” Of course the colonel had in mind only the wives and families of fashionable circles.

The colonel’s weakness was for “trading,” in all sorts of ways, but especially in matters of considerable importance, such as in real estate, rich merchandise, ships, and stocks, as far as he could in the last. He made a good deal of money, in a manner which was legitimate enough, too, on the outside, but which always proved tricky. For example, going into a place like Milwaukee, Wis., he readily got himself reputed as a man of great wealth; would contract to purchase three or four adjacent building lots on some valuable site, at some future time, — say, three months thereafter, — for he always was about to send home (to Cuba) for his money. The owner would enter into a written contract to convey the property to Colonel Novena, or his assigns, at the time named, for a given sum for each lot. It was immediately noised about that the colonel was going to build a splendid mansion on one of these lots, and keep the rest for a grand lawn. Everybody talked about it, and the colonel, being an architect as well as everything else, produced drawings of the intended stately palace. The citizens were all very anxious to have so wealthy and tasteful a man settle in their midst.

By and by it was announced that the colonel had changed his mind. His mansion was to be put up at some other point, but upon two of the building lots he was going to erect an extensive block for stores, offices, and so forth, and the other two lots were to be sold.

These he would manage to sell for a very considerable advance above the price contracted for, as the new block was going to make them vastly valuable. Of course the purchaser must take them before the time ran out; otherwise the colonel, as he did not then want them, and scorned to be a mere real estate speculator, would relinquish his claim to them to the owner, but since he had gotten control of them, might as well ask something for their increased value.

As a by-play in connection with his various swindling operations, these speculations in real estate served to divert the colonel, as well as help fill his pockets. The building lots being well disposed of, the colonel could afford to let the original owner take back the two on which the famous block was to be built, and the purchasers of the other had only to wait till somebody or other should put up the desired block, and raise the value of their sites up to the imaginary height to which the colonel's elegant and magnificent pretences had elevated them; but then the poor fellows might have to wait years, for the colonel's block outshone, by far, all other possible blocks.

The colonel had a way of ingratiating himself with the teachers of female seminaries, finding out who of the pupils were the children of the wealthiest parents, getting acquainted with the young girls, taking a fatherly interest in them, getting introduced to their parents, and flattering them upon the genius and beauty of their children, and at last borrowing very considerable sums (just for temporary accommodation, till he could get remittance through his New York bankers, of course) from the delighted fathers of the beautiful girls; and it was impossible to not honor the colonel's request under such circumstances. But the colonel had a shocking bad memory, and always forgot these little accommodations, amounting to from three hundred dollars to a thousand dollars, according to how much he had thought best, in a given case, to ask for.

In the town of Elmira, N. Y., I think it was, the colonel managed to borrow some thirty thousand dollars, all in the space of four months; and when one of the victims came to speak of the swindle to one of his most intimate neighbors, and a cousin at that, I believe, he was astonished to learn that this person could practically "sympathize" with him. The colonel had professed to each that he had higher respect for him than anybody else in the village, and had, therefore, in his extremity, sought him to confide in; for of all things in the world, he thought it the greatest shame for a man of means to borrow money, he said, but his properties in Cuba were of such a nature that his agents there could not always turn them into money instantly on command.

So each of twenty or more persons, perhaps, became the special and only confidant of the colonel; the only man whom he would not be ashamed to inform about his present "little unpleasant strait." It must have been rather an amusing disclosure for the other nineteen when the twentieth victim came to expose his special honors, joys and "profits" to them. Nevertheless, so engaging a man was the colonel that the most excited and threatening of his victims usually cooled down presently, if he had the boldness to give the colonel "a piece of his mind." This illustrates but partially the consummate skill and address of the colonel; and the number of his victims in many parts of the land was astonishing. The colonel bought ships even, or interests in them, and disposed of the same, and was always far away from the scene of his last fraud very speedily. There was no limit to his audacity.

Having gathered together a pretty large fortune here, the colonel left the United States, and went to Canada to reside, not as Colonel Novena to be sure, but as "Sir Richard Murray." He might have taken more money with him there than he did; but the colonel was almost as free in the use of his money as he was adroit in getting it. In fact, he was a

philanthropist in his disposition, and aided a great many poor people, particularly children, many of whom he sent to school, leaving funds with some worthy persons as trustees, to continue them at school. There was no element of meanness, in the usual acceptation of the term, in the colonel, for all his misdeeds partook properly of the nature of crimes, to greater or less extent. At the South the colonel, I am told, fought several duels, — never on his own direct account, but for sundry “friends,” ladies especially, — and at New Orleans, his financial “speculations” amounted to “something handsome.” I have been promised by a friend a narrative of the colonel’s exploits in New Orleans to be incorporated in this article, but it has not been forwarded to me, and I must now do without it.

I remarked above that the colonel went to reside in Canada as “Sir Richard Murray.” His residence was in Montreal, but he had a country-house about seven miles out of the city, where, in fact, he spent the larger part of his time, in both winter and summer, and where, for two or three years he dispensed an elegant hospitality. His splendid manners forbade any inquiry into his right to wear a title, and his knowledge of the English language was so perfect, that no one would suspect from his accent his Castilian descent,

I have not been able to learn that the colonel ever “exploited” in Canada. The States were his theatre; and during a residence of a couple of years in Europe, he practiced his skilful “profession” considerably, I am authentically informed, especially in England and Ireland.

But the colonel came to grief at last. He had gotten a little “short,” and having left Canada for want of means to longer sustain his princely mode of living, betook himself to St. Louis. I have forgotten to say that the colonel was an expert, and usually very successful, gambler, but he had no real love for the life of a gambler. There was hazard enough in it, but it was of the tame kind. He longed to do bolder things, and he did them. But the colonel had no reputation at St. Louis, and was obliged to turn to gambling, and for a few days he was successful, winning quite large sums of money, which aroused the resident gamblers to conspiracy against the handsome stranger, in that place known as Count Antonelli, an Italian. The result was, that the gamblers robbed him of nearly all he had won, and the colonel beat a retreat from St. Louis, and made his way, by degrees, eastward. Although he encountered several “old friends” on the way, whom he had, in the years past, swindled out of various sums, they let him pass unheeded, or at most only warning their friends against him.

But the colonel’s star had in good measure become dimmed, he found, and he made his way to Washington, D. C., where he revived some old acquaintanceships, and created new ones, which served him quite well for a time. But the colonel, finally playing a pretty severe swindle upon a person in high authority, and who prided himself too much on his sagacity and general good sense to be willing that his folly in this case be made public, the victim let him off, on his agreeing to leave Washington, and “never show his head there again.” As the colonel could thus escape a long term of imprisonment, he gladly accepted the condition, and made the promise, which lie strictly fulfilled, for he never returned to that city.

The colonel made his way from Washington to Saratoga, in the summer of 1862, where he made the acquaintance of sundry New Yorkers, of a class a little below the most distinguished, the colonel stepping down a little from his usual dignity and carefulness as to the selection of his society. With this class he “profited” considerably, and it is said that in the winter of ‘62 and ‘63 he managed to do a good business in various “speculative” ways in New York, through introductions which he obtained from his new-made friends of ‘62. However, it is to be remarked here, that at Saratoga he had a new alias, that of General Alverosa, of Palermo, an intimate friend of Garibaldi, but who had been educated in England, which accounted for his excellent understanding of the English language.

In tracing the colonel, by facts of his own confession, for which facts I was indebted, in some measure, to the late Dr. Jeremiah Cummings, of St. Stephen’s Church, and through things stated by others, I find spaces of months, which I have to skip over. How the colonel got on to his last year of 1864, I hardly know; but in the summer of that year the colonel, it seems, became hard pushed. He had wearied out such few of his friends as he had not swindled, and was living from hand to mouth, dressing well yet, and making some show of means, but unsuccessful at the gambling-table, and elsewhere.

Finally, there was one day found missing from a house in West 19th Street, where the colonel (rather, general at this time) boarded, a diamond necklace, belonging to a distant relative of Alexander Hamilton, of revolutionary fame. The necklace was very valuable intrinsically, but a part of it was composed of diamonds, which had been presented to Mrs. Hamilton by some admirers of General Hamilton, English residents of some one of the West India Islands, I forget which, on which General Hamilton was born. These had been presented to her out of respect to the general’s great statesmanship, etc., he from republican scruples having refused to accept them while occupying an official position under the government.

It was at this time that my special attention was called to Colonel Novena. I had known of him through the press, as I hear of other great men, some of whom one chances to meet, perhaps, but the majority of whom he knows “at a distance.” There was great search made in the house for the diamond necklace; and upon no one in the place had a ray of suspicion fallen. It was such a mystery, in short, as to where that necklace had gone, under the circumstances of its loss, that no one there conceived it possible that it would ever be found; and after the search in which everybody in the house took part (and everybody was glad to have his own rooms searched), it was thought preposterous to do ought else than to sit down quietly, and “give it up” forever.

But the mere fact that to a portion of the diamonds was attached a sort of historic fame, heightened, too, by the considerations of family affection and pride, induced the owners — (for the necklace was the joint property of a lady, and a gentleman who had succeeded to his deceased mother’s interest therein) — to make some little effort to hunt out the necklace. They had thought that nobody who might have taken it would offer it for sale to the important jewelers of the city, and it was too valuable to be purchased by the smaller establishments. So they had conceived that the diamonds would be taken from their

mountings, and sold separately, so as not to be identified. This thought had seized the owners at the time the loss was discovered, and had become, not a mere opinion with them, but a sort of conviction. So it was that they at once gave up in despair when the search at the house failed of the hoped-for result.

I was visited by the gentleman partner in the necklace, who placed the matter before me with all the facts he was possessed of, and I told him that I felt very certain that some resident of the house had taken the lost treasures: but it would be best for me to call upon him there, and study the situation of the rooms, etc. An hour of the next day was fixed upon, and I called; had opportunity to examine the various rooms, and their relative situations. I found that no ordinary thief, however skilled, would be apt to run the hazard of penetrating the rooms from which the necklace was taken; and, besides that, it must have been somebody conversant with the place in which the necklace was deposited, or somebody who had been carefully instructed by some knowing one, to be able to steal the necklace at the time it was taken; for it was missed not a half hour after it had been taken from its case and re-deposited there by the lady half-owner. I made careful inquiry about each of the boarders, and could fix my suspicions upon no one in particular; yet I came to the conclusion that it must be one of two of whom I was told, Colonel Novena being one, or, rather, General Alverosa, his alias then.

The owners of the necklace would hear nothing against the general; he was the last person in the world to be suspected. Indeed, they were so much affronted, and expressed themselves so emphatically, bordering on bad manners, at my suggesting the general as the possible thief, that I was obliged to say, very firmly, that unless they allowed me to take my own way about the matter, I would not go a step further. They allowed me to take my own course; but it was with ill grace they did so, after all; for the general had made himself a favorite of this couple, especially. He spent much of his time in their rooms when at home. Indeed, it was this fact, in a measure, which gave me a suspicion of him. Besides, they represented him as so perfect a character, that I confess I had fears of him from that fact too; for I have found the most wily rogues among men (and particularly among women) to be those who enjoyed the finest reputations. These make a good reputation a part of their "stock in trade." But this was not all that influenced me in my suspicions of the general. These parties, who had known him for quite a long period of time, knew nothing of his business pursuits, or if the general had any business at all; and only judged, at one time, that he might be a lawyer, from something he happened to say; at another, that he might be a broker in Wall Street, and so on.

But this was no occasion of suspicion to them, for they would have scorned to seem to wish to know anything of a gentleman's private life or business. But to me there was ground of suspicion in all this; and I concluded to take board at the house, and study the general, work myself into his good graces, and learn his places of resort, etc. The owners of the necklace were finally convinced that this was the true way, and were ready to pay my expenses for a given time. I provided myself with neater wearing apparel than I usually wore, and took board at the house as "Mr. Henry Inman, artist."

Fortunately, one of my old school-fellows was both an excellent portrait and landscape painter, and had his office on Broadway. I told him what I was up to; and a sign, new, but made to look a little old, and bearing my assumed name, was placed on his door; and a few of his sketches, some finished, others in process of completion, were assigned to me to talk about as my own, if I had occasion to introduce a special friend there. So that when "Mr. Henry Inman, artist," secured board at the house in West 19th Street, he also had a studio to boast of.

I had selected this disguise of artist, because, in earlier days I had possessed a little talent at drawing, and could paint indifferently well, and had, to considerable extent, cultivated a knowledge of the great masters, and could talk, as I was pleased to believe, decently well upon artistic subjects; and I had learned that General Alverosa assumed to be a great connoisseur of art.

Being established at my boarding-house, I easily made the general's acquaintance, and in less than a week had entertained him at my studio; gotten so well "into his good graces," that he had no hesitancy in taking me to sundry of his places of resort, gambling rooms, etc., though he did not gamble much; and had found out that the general loved the fair sex, if not wisely, yet too well, and at last begun to get a clue to his career. But how I was to learn more of him directly through himself, was a puzzle; and so I set about watching the general's course nights, after leaving me. I found that he frequented a house of a peculiar nature in 29th Street; that the colonel went there every night, but that he usually got home some time towards midnight, staying away all night only seldom.

Putting together all I knew of the general, I came to the conclusion that he was indebted to some fair lady for a part, at least, of his support; and so I managed to get myself introduced to the house in question (for it was one of those select places of pleasure which boast of their exclusiveness and "high respectability"); and on my first visit there encountered the general, who, finding me "surprised" at being caught there by him, and on my begging him not to expose me at our boarding-house, relaxed what little restraint existed on his part towards me, and took me into his confidence. The keeper of the house, an elegant, courtly-looking woman, was his especial friend — his wife, practically speaking; and I now could better understand what motive might have impelled the general, if he were indeed the thief, to steal the necklace.

I need not, indeed I should not, at any rate, go into details in regard to how I found that Madame Alverosa was in possession of that necklace; but so I found, and I had but little trouble in recovering it from her. The general had told her that it had belonged, for nearly a hundred years, in his family; and although it was a brilliant affair, and she was specially fond of displaying her jewelry, yet she rarely wore this, regarding it as something sacred; and it was only by a little strategy which could not be excused in anybody but a detective, that I found out she had the necklace; and it was not till it was safely in my possession, beyond the possibility of her immediately reclaiming it, that I let her know I had it. When she came to know the facts, she affected great indignation at, and disgust for the general; but the woman loved him, and she implored me to let him have a chance to leave the boarding-house in West 19th Street before I should restore the necklace to the owners;

and she said she would teach the general a lesson of honesty; that he had no need of resorting to crime; and that he had only been tempted to steal the necklace out of his love for her; he wanted to see her wear and enjoy it. Such was her generous, and probably correct interpretation of the matter. She offered, too, to pay all the expenses the owners had been to in ferreting out the necklace, my board, fees, etc., which she insisted on paying just doubly for, and which she did pay.

In view of what I had learned of this woman's charities, and her general disposition, I consented to her request. She maintained no less than five orphan children at different schools, paying all their expenses; frequently gave excellent marriage outfits to such of her girls as, desiring to reform, had chances to marry (a not infrequent thing in New York); and would not encourage any girl to stay in her house; indeed, constantly besought them all to reform, and seek some other mode of livelihood; and not seldom did she succeed. But there are some of those "unfortunates" to whom any other mode of life would be tame and intolerable. These the Madame disciplined into decency of deportment, and even attended to their education in books and music, etc., in order to render them as competent as possible to take care of themselves when the days of their physical attractiveness should have passed. She taught them economy, too, making each keep account with some savings bank.

In view of Madame's good qualities, I was disposed to respect her love for the general, and consented, as I have said, to let him withdraw from the boarding-house in 19th Street before I disclosed to the owners that I had the necklace in my possession. When I returned the necklace, and reported who had taken it, and gave the recital of my interview with the general at last, when I advised him to withdraw from the house, the reader may essay to, but he can hardly imagine the astonishment which was expressed by the owners of the necklace and the household when they came to learn the facts.

The general, of course, "took things easy" when he found that I had trapped him, so far as I was concerned; but he was greatly mortified in spirit to think that Madame A. had learned of the theft, especially in view of his romantic story to her about the long possession of the necklace in his family. He at first declared he would never go back to her, and avowed to me that this was the only crime he had ever committed; but when I told him that I could not consent to his leaving me with the impression that he had deceived me, and opened his eyes to many things which had been disclosed to me of his career by my fellow-detectives, with some of whom during the time of my special study of him I was in concert, the general (whom at the time, by the way of the better assuring him of my accurate knowledge of his character I addressed as "Colonel Novena"), became very passive, and declared to me that if I would not further expose him, he would leave New York altogether, as soon as he could go.

Eventually he did leave; but not before he was fully reconciled to Madame A., who, as she told me, read him a moral homily which would last him for his life. And went to Canada, where she followed him, on a pleasure excursion. In about two weeks after their meeting in Canada, a trip was planned with some friends through the Thousand Isles, and down the rapids of the St. Lawrence. Madame A. was taken suddenly ill, but not

seriously, and staid over at a farmer's house, insisting on the "general's" going with the rest; and overcoming his gallant desire to linger with her, by representing to him that he would spoil the pleasure of all the rest by tarrying behind. So the Colonel Novena and the "General Alverosa," with all his other characters wrapped up in one individuality, went on with the party, — which was the last time Madame A. ever saw him alive.

Proceeding down the rapids in different boats, the party had gotten nearly through all safely, when some mishap occurred to the boat which bore "Colonel Novona," and it was dashed to pieces in the rocks, he receiving so severe a shock that, although an excellent swimmer, it was said, yet he was powerless to save himself, and was drowned. His body was recovered the next day; and Madame Alverosa spared no pains in honoring his memory. The body was taken to New York, and thence to Greenwood Cemetery, where it now reposes beneath a stately monument, which, however, bears neither the name of "General Alverosa," nor that of "Colonel Novena," but a name equally euphonic, and certainly nearer the "General's" true one, if I am rightly informed; but Madame Alverosa is entitled to my silence on this point, for she asked it, and received my promise in response.

And here, in justice to the character of woman, — to the sex whom we love to honor, — and in praise of an individual of that sex, who by untoward circumstances, was led into a course of life so base as that which Madame A. long pursued, let it be recorded that a short time after the "General's" death Madame A. abandoned her vile profession, sold out the house she occupied and owned, with the condition in the deed that it should never again be occupied or let for a like purpose; established a fund, in the hands of proper trustees, for the aid of a certain class of unfortunates, and withdrew to another part of the city, where she leads the life of a respectable woman during the winter. Her summers are spent at her elegant country seat, near one of the most beautiful villages in New Jersey. And the Madame has declared to me that of all her varied experiences in life, that which gave her the most pain was the discovery that the general had stolen the necklace. She had supposed that he gambled, and she was far from being unsuspecting that he might commit forgeries sometimes, or had done so in his career before she made his acquaintance; but all this she looked upon as in the nature, somewhat, of business.

"Wall Street gambles," she used to say; — "Wall Street commits its forgeries, and practices false pretences all the while, and men call these things there respectable. Why may not others gamble on a smaller scale, and practice their smaller cunning?"

Thus she justified the general against her own suspicions; but she could never get over the theft of the necklace by the "clever man;" and one day, when she was deploring his conduct, and I suggested that she might have the image of the necklace cut upon his monument, as a perpetual reminder to her, when she visited the grave, of the wickedness in the heart of "the best of men," the Madame shrugged her shoulders with a half-approving smile, and said, —

"Well, you may joke, if you like, but I know something of men; they are all bad, the best of them; and General Alverosa, with all his faults and his crimes, was a better man than

any other *my* eyes ever rested upon;” and she looked *me* curiously in the face at that, as I bade her good day, and went away, thinking that, perhaps, I was properly enough rebuked, and that, may be, no better man had lived, as surely no more remarkably gifted, elegant, and strange one, than “Colonel Novena,” had I ever met.

George S. McWatters, *Detectives Of Europe And America, Or Life In The Secret Service: A Selection Of Celebrated Cases*. Hartford: Burr, 1877 (848 pages).