

Translated for the New York American

Vidocq and the Sexton

When the inhabitants of Paris and of the environs were daily expecting the Cossacks, everyone was endeavoring to conceal from these northern robbers his most valuable things. The Curate of *Livery*, as well as others, wished to secure the church vases and whatever else of consequence he possessed. His relation and friend, Mr. Senert, jeweler, from Paris, was staying with him at the time; he saw these preparations, and determined to profit by them, so as to preserve from the hands of the Cossacks about a hundred thousand crowns worth of costly jewelry, which his stock consisted of. Moirellet, a pious man, well known from his reputation of wisdom and integrity, and who exercised the double office of clerk and sexton, was chosen by the two friends to hide this treasure from every eye. He buried it in an adjoining wood, and he covered it so skillfully that they thought it must escape their enemies' strictest search.

Notwithstanding all of these precautions the treasure disappeared. Moirellet appeared before the Curate one morning, pale and trembling, and announced that the fatal spot had been discovered, the deposit gone, and that evidently the Cossacks had been at work.

We are lost, exclaimed the Curate.

We are lost, said Moirellet; and the servant joined in and repeated the chorus, we are lost! All three accused the Cossacks; not one for an instant doubted the guilt of these insatiable strangers. But Mr. Senert, on hearing the news, was more suspicious. Notwithstanding his despair, he preserved some hope. He applied to the police, and as the Cossacks could not easily fall under their authority, he publicly accused Moirellet.

"It is possible that the man is guilty," replied M. Henry; "but if he is prudent we shall not be able to detect him."

"Ah! sir, I would give a hundred thousand francs—."

"We will endeavor to satisfy you."

"Ah! sir, if fifty thousand francs are necessary—."

"Here is Vidocq, who, no doubt, will be able to recover your treasure from the other."

"Ah! sir, I promise him ten thousand francs."

Vidocq agreed to the last mentioned sum, fearful that it might diminish still more, as the hopes of a discovery grew stronger. He set off immediately. The sexton was first imprisoned; and in the costume of a soldier, he procured a lodging ticket at Mrs. Moirellet's, and tried to make her confess. He even made a declaration of love to lead her on, but the sexton's better half was invulnerable; she resisted all his efforts and Vidocq got nothing for his pains.

From a soldier on furlough, he became a German domestic. Roaming without passport about the environs of Pointoise, he was at last taken up and was sent to keep Moirellet company.

Here all his endeavors were to become intimate with the assistant clerk; he easily succeeded by making him drink. Then he confided to him that he was a servant to a Prussian officer, and that he had robbed his master and concealed his valise in the forest of Bondi. One confidence brought on another. Moirellet confessed to Vidocq that he had robbed the Curate. Vidocq procured him the means of liberty; but when the wretch produced Mr. Senert's jewels, he threw himself upon him and declared he was his prisoner. "God of Heaven!" piteously exclaimed the dupe, "who would have foreseen such a thing?—he looked like such a goose."

Moirellet was sentenced to six years imprisonment. When Mr. Senert heard of the recovery of his jewels his delight was boundless. He overwhelmed Vidocq with his thanks, but said nothing about money. Our hero was obliged to recall it to him.

"Ah! true, I forgot," said he, "but I remember now having promised you five thousand francs," and he would never give him more.

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