

The Murder of Antony Louvel, 1794

by Thomas Waters

I MET an old acquaintance of mine, whom I had lost sight of for many years, in the High Street, Camden Town, one spring Sunday evening; but so changed in all respects, that I had some difficulty to persuade myself that it could be really Jack Pendrell who was so heartily shaking hands with and declaring he was so delighted to see me. When I knew Pendrell, he was a pale, moonish, spouting youth—imbued with a strongly-expressed preference for perishing in the flood rather than rot upon the bank; and especially desirous to achieve the tinsel triumphs of the actor. Having, however, stumbled hopelessly in his first amateur step on the stage, he was forced by inexorable destiny to subside into a country grocer's apprentice. "My life," I remembered him to have exclaimed, just as he was about to scale the roof of the Reading coach—"My life, Clarke, is blighted forever. But, thank God, the struggle can't last long. I feel that. The sword will soon cut through the scabbard."

And now, good heavens! this Byronic young gentleman was the stout, podgy father of seven children in actual presence, with more possibly at home. One, the youngest, he sustained on his left arm; two, seated in a smart child's carriage, he tugged along by the long handle with his right; the remaining four, with their mamma—a sharp, sloe-eyed, little woman—continuing and concluding the procession! The weather was warm; and the once for ever blighted being—though perspiring profusely, and somewhat blown with his work—appeared to be in excellent health.

"Maria, love," said Pendrell, with a deprecatory, timid smile, addressing his by much better half, "Maria, love, Mr. Clarke, the famous detective officer we read of in the newspapers, and a very old friend of mine."

"Maria, love"—who at first evidently resented the halt which I had caused—relaxed immediately that the words "detective officer" struck her ear, and said she was glad to make the acquaintance of any of her husband's friends. To such a pitch did she carry this graciousness, that upon reaching the side door of the house, upon the front of which shone the words "John Pendrell, Grocer and General Purveyor," in all the glory of giant gilt letters, and I excused myself from accepting her invitation—"Pray come in, Mr. Clarke," she positively acceded to her husband's wish to be allowed to go and smoke a pipe with his old acquaintance, merely restricting his tether to the extent of one hour.

I afterwards knew that the reason why I had found such immediate favour in the lady's eyes was that, having lost five silver table spoons when confined with the baby actually in arms, about twelve months previously, it suddenly occurred to her, upon hearing my name and vocation

mentioned, that I might be able to find out whether it was the servant-of-all-work for the time being or the monthly nurse who stole them—a query which greatly disturbed her peace of mind, forasmuch that the services of the monthly nurse would be again required before many days had passed. I may here remark that I was not fortunate enough to solve the mystery of the spoons, and that the monthly nurse resumed her functions in due time.

We proceeded to a respectable tavern in the neighbourhood; and materials having been set before us, our pipes lit, I said:— “Matrimony agrees with you, Pendrell. You are twice the man, in circumference at all events, that you were when I last saw you! And I conclude, from what I saw just now, that your brain is swept clear of all romantic rubbish.”

“Yes, Clarke; yes. Matrimony appears to be the natural state of life to which it pleases God, for wise purposes (we are bound to believe His ways to be inscrutable and past finding out), to call us. Most of us come to it in time, or it comes to us—which is much the same thing. And, depend upon it, there is nothing knocks the nonsense out of a man like a wife and seven small children! nothing. Your health; and happy to see you once more.”

We smoked for some minutes in silence—he, I could not fail to see, with an introspective doubtful glance at a disagreeable thought which had suddenly arisen in his mind. “My fat friend’s affairs, I should be afraid, are embarrassed,” said I to myself, “were it not that he is pretty nearly two yards in girth.”

“I have been several times,” he presently said, “about to hunt you up, and consult you upon a matter which lies in your professional way of life; but Mrs. Pendrell being an eccentric person—she is very eccentric, Clarke,—won’t keep a pony-chaise for the children, though we can well afford it—and I did not know how she might take a call from you. Now, however, that she has herself invited you to take a cup of tea now and then, and a hand at whist—Maria plays whist herself—first, to keep in with the old, diabolical villain, who—. Here, waiter; the same as before. It makes me hot to think about it.”

“Who is the diabolical old villain you are speaking of?”

“The name of the diabolical old villain is Manzel; Theophile, or Theophilus Manzel; his place of birth, somewhere in France; his means of life, cribbed from mine, and be d—d to him; and he has, in my private opinion, two or three murders, at least, upon his thundering old head.”

“Two or three murders! What nonsense are you talking about?”

“No nonsense at all. I perhaps exaggerate the number of Manzel’s crimes; but if he has not human blood upon his spotted soul, blood long since shed, but which will not sink into the earth, and still cries to Heaven for vengeance, I am a besotted idiot. In fact, Clarke, there is a skeleton in our house—as they say there is in most others—which I should be glad to see laid in the Red Sea, or, a more effective riddance, swinging from a gibbet. Come, I am going to open my mind to you,” he added, with kind of acrid seriousness; “it is time I should to someone. Let us go into

the next room; we can there talk without danger of being overheard. I'll not be stifled with this dreadful mystery any longer, whatever be the consequence."

The change of manner, of aspect, in Pendrell surprised me a good deal. He had become all at once a serious, self-respecting man of business and the world. I should have known, without reasoning upon it, for I had seen hundreds of such instances, that a man may be a very tame snake to his wife, and a confoundedly bristly person for others to meddle with. Such men love home-peace, and will submit almost to anything for a quiet life; a fact which their loving spouses are very quick to discover, and to tune their tongues accordingly.

"I shall be unreserved with you, Clarke—I did not much like his "Clarking" me in such bumptious, patronising fashion, but I let that quietly pass—I shall be unreserved with you, Clarke, really believing as I do that serious—nay, solemn—eventualities, are involved. To begin with, I have an inveterate dislike of Theophilus Manzel,—a bitter, gnawing dislike. No man loves, esteems his wife in a mild, been-married-ten-years sort of way, more than I do mine. She is an excellent partner. It is likely enough that had I not married her I should have gone through the bankruptcy court twice at least before now. Maria is also a very judicious mother, and I love our children. Of course, she has her ways and whims; but if two ride one horse, both can't ride in front, and better for the man to let his wife hold the bridle than to be always fighting and scratching for it. That, at least, is my opinion, and I suppose that of all sensible men. Well, Clarke, it's just because I should never have married Maria but for Manzel that I hate the fellow. At least, that was the original cause of my hatred."

"I have no skill for the interpretation of riddles."

"There will be no skill required when you hear how the marriage was brought about. A man may relish a delicate, substantial dinner, but would not particularly like being kicked along Cheapside into the London Tavern to partake of it."

"That would certainly be an objectionable grace before meat."

"Decidedly so. This, then, was how that ceremonial catastrophe was brought about. You know very well that when I started for Reading I was 'a blighted being.' Thanks to a pretty free use of brandy-and-water and cigars, I revived sooner than could have been expected. I scrambled through my apprenticeship pretty well, and returned to London in high feather just one week before my father's name appeared in the Gazette. My mother had been dead between two and three years. Her husband followed before the formalities of bankruptcy were completed, and I was left to my own resources. Ample resources truly. About five pounds in cash, two suits of clothes—both the worse for wear—and not the slightest love of work; not, at all events, for its own sake. It was necessary, however, to seek it out; so I left Chelsea to take lodgings in business London. Chancing to stroll along John Street, Fitzroy Square, I met my destiny at No.6, in one of

the windows of which rather dingy domicile a paper informed passers-by that 'A room was to be let within for a single man.' I knocked; the door was opened by Maria Kent, now and for over ten years past Mrs. Pendrell. Terms, three shillings per week for the parlour next the sky, with a turn-up bedstead in it. I agreed, and slept at No. 6 that same night. The house was tolerably well-furnished, and let out in lodgings by M. Manzel and his wife—the wife being Maria Kent's mother. I rather took a fancy to Maria—nothing at all serious, but a fancy; liked to play a game of cribbage with her of an evening after I came home tired, dispirited with vainly seeking for employment. The grim ogress—Madam Manzel, as she called herself,—frowned severely at our little familiarities; and as I felt a perfect horror of the stepfather (one of the most gaunt, ghostlike spectres that ever in the flesh—more correctly, sharp bones, tightly covered with cadaverous-coloured parchment—haunted a human habitation), scarcely less for his wife, and though I felt no very great interest in Maria, I more than once half resolved upon giving notice to quit. I did not, however; and, by-and-bye, my five pounds being expended, or close upon it, with an arrear of a fortnight's rent upon my fainting shoulders, I could not do so. My trunk, a large, well-filled one, all reckoned, would have been kept back; and there were many things therein which I gloomily foresaw would soon be in charge of one of the gentlemen who flourish under the shadow of three golden balls. Another week passed, I was still more deeply in debt, and things looked very black indeed, when the sky changed in a most sudden, surprising manner. You must know that Manzel had then, as he has now, a sort of occult reputation for being a man of hoarded substance; who, if so minded, could shell out no end of money. I believed it then doubtfully, I have no doubt now but it's devil's wealth. Enough of that, I must put on the steam, or I shall never bring this business to a wind-up. 'Mr. Pendrell,' said Maria,—when I returned home, after a more than usually wearisome day of disappointment—and she looking fresh as a rose, merry as a lark, 'Mr. Pendrell, mamma has given me something for you.' 'The rent bill,' groaned I 'Oh no; nothing of the sort: two tickets for the Princess's theatre; and we might, if you like, but I suppose you won't,—go together.' I wonder my hair, limp as it must have been with perspiration and the hot weather, didn't stand on end. 'Come,' added Maria, 'get ready at once. I can pay for the cab—there and home!' That was the beginning of it; the end was, that we were married by license at St. John's Church—old Grim-Grubber forking out the expenses with the liberality of a prince. We were to live at No. 6 till Manzel could find an eligible opportunity to set me up in business, in the grocery line. There was a first-rate wedding breakfast; after which we set off for Margate, on our wedding trip. A very pleasant wedding trip it was. Only if I had known—but, as the copybook says, if ignorance is bliss, it is wise to let well alone. Before I go on, I beg most emphatically to state that I am quite sure Maria—my wife—dealt with me in simple good faith; with complete ingenuousness. At all events, that is my opinion, and I don't want to be argued out of it. The very day after our return," continued Pendrell, "old Death's-head, looking grimmer and ghastlier than ever; and with a goblin-grin upon his face, comes into the room where Maria and I were breakfasting, with a Times newspaper in his hand. He took the Times daily, and spelt it through and through. 'Here,' said he, 'my children, is a curious advertisement:—"If John Pendrell, son of deceased James Pendrell, of Henry Street, Chelsea, will call or otherwise communicate with Messrs. Horniman, of New square, Lincoln's Inn he will hear of something greatly to his advantage.'" 'Gracious goodness! what can that be, I wonder? Come, John!' says Maria, jumping up, 'let's go at once!' 'How did it happen, John'—(I had been John with the old villain and his wizened wife since the evening Maria and went to the Princess's Theatre)—' how

did it happen, John,' said Grim-Grubber, with suave serenity of tone, 'that you did not leave or send your address to the house at Chelsea or to the post office there? Delay in communicating important information to parties interested may be very prejudicial.' If I had spoken the truth, I should have answered that I did not wish my relatives to know that I lived in a garret, No.6, John Street, Fitzroy Square; but I merely said it had not occurred to me to do so. 'Now, John, I am ready,' said Maria. 'You run and fetch a cab directly. I'll copy the address. So away we went. The 'something greatly to my advantage' was two thousand five hundred pounds left me by a maternal uncle, who had departed this life about a month previously to be paid forthwith, free of legacy duty. Two thousand five hundred- pounds! Didn't my heart leap to my mouth? It was the Indies! And I won't say that it did not, at the moment, occur to me that I need not have been in such a hurry to enter into the holy estate of matrimony. As soon as Maria and I," continued Pendrell, after a good gulp of brandy-and-water—required, it seemed, to lighten a depressing reflection—"as soon as Maria and I could come down from the clouds, we of course talked little else than as to how the wonderful windfall which had dropped into our mouths was to be invested. I being a fairly educated person, fond of reading, and having a soul above grocery—more fool I—thought of setting up in the publishing line. This, however, as soon as Maria could comprehend what 'publishing' meant, met with a contemptuous negative. Finally, four freehold houses in Camden Town were purchased for about eleven hundred pounds, and settled, to guard against possible failure in business, upon my wife. With the remainder, the grocery business in the High Street, lease of premises, stock in trade, &c, were purchased; and a very lucky speculation it has proved. This brings me again to old Manzel. I employed Messrs. Horniman to transact the necessary legal business, with respect to the purchase of the freehold houses, and the settlement of the same upon Maria. In consequence, a clerk of theirs came frequently to No.6, and upon one occasion saw Manzel, inquired of one of the lodgers who he was, and heard, to his great surprise, that he was Mrs. John Pendrell's stepfather. I was not within at the time, and he called again a few hours afterwards. After business was transacted, the clerk said, 'I don't know whether I ought to mention it, but I have seen old M. Manzel twice before at our office.' 'Indeed!' said I, 'when?' 'About a fortnight—I have been looking at the office diary—about a fortnight before you yourself came to inquire about the advertisement, setting forth that you would, by calling upon Messrs. Horniman hear of something to your advantage. That was M. Manzel's errand. He had seen the advertisement, thought he might be able to find you, and wished to know the particulars. He was informed, went away, and two days afterwards returned to say he had failed to trace you out—believed, indeed, that he was mistaken in the person.'"

"An impertinent busybody must the clerk have been. Only mischief and heartburning could be the result of such an uncalled for communication."

"I don't care about that! What I did care about—that which enraged me beyond bounds was, that I had been so treacherously dealt with bamboozled—swindled—taken in and done for by the hoary miscreant!"

“Still, as your marriage is a very happy one— “

“No matter for that,” savagely snapped Pendrell. “However, what was done could not be undone”; and, as before said, I now, as regards the marriage itself, am quite contented. In fact, it is as much for my family’s sake as my own that I am now taking you into my confidence. From the hour the clerk spoke with me,” continued Pendrell, “ I hated Manzel and his wife with the bitterest hatred. My wife—to her great surprise at the time, and unbounded—astonishment since as when ever Maria is in a bad way (bad way of temper, I mean,) she always brings up—could not prevail to have them come and live with us. Upon that point I was adamant for a time; and when, utterly wearied out, I yielded, Madame Manzel refused to leave John Street. She had taken to her bed a day or two before; which she declared, and truly as it proved, that she should never leave alive. She was bedridden till about fourteen months ago, when she died a frightful death.”

“Killed! murdered by her husband!” I exclaimed, impulsively. “So that is what you have been so long driving at!”

“By no means. I mean morally a frightful death. You shall hear. A message came to our house, importing that Madame Manzel was dying. M. Manzel was out; but the dying woman had been heard to express a wish to see her daughter. As it happened, Maria had not many hours previously been seized with the pains of labour. At her insistence, though I would have been gladly excused, I went to John Street. A terrible scene awaited me. The woman was dying—mad, raving mad; but there was method and memory in her madness. Her ravings were frightful; and all related to some horrible murder, which it would seem she had witnessed, but could not prevent. The name of Antoine— Monsieur Antoine—frequently occurred. The moment she saw me, she sprang half up in bed, glared like a tigress at bay, and screamed out that it was her daughter, it was Maria, she wanted to see. I explained. That seemed to pacify, to calm her for a few moments. ‘Come to me; come close,’ she exclaimed; ‘but first clear the room; turn everybody out—everybody out!’ There was no one but a nurse present; the doctor, who had been sent for, not having arrived. The woman left the room; and I, at the gesture of her withered hands, stepped to the head of the bed, and bent down to hear what she wished to say, her voice dropping suddenly to a whisper: ‘Tell Maria never to accept—never pollute her soul, perhaps endanger her life, by accepting anything, any jewels, she may find after his death! They are dyed in blood—innocent, venerable blood. Hark! Is that his step on the stairs! He will kill me, too, should he know!’ Her flaming eyeballs were fixed upon the chamber door. It remained closed; and the footstep which had caught her ear passed upwards. ‘Not him,’ she gasped. Then turning again to me, she murmured, ‘Silence! not a word, except to Maria! not a word. But remember!’ She then sank back on her pillow. Good God! how it has haunted me ever since! Maria persists that it was mere delirium. I know better.”

“Go on, Mr. Pendrell. Never mind about what Maria thinks. You are beginning to interest me.”

“I knew you would be. Well, it must and shall out. I will not be poisoned with it any longer. Madame Manzel’s eyes closed; she was falling asleep, or dying perhaps. I would summon the nurse, and leave. As I was doing so with stealthy steps, the deep bell of a neighbouring church

tolled, as one may say, rather than struck the hour of one. The dying woman must, I think, have thought she heard the bell which in some Roman Catholic churches announces the elevation of the Host. She started up, screaming, ‘Ha! It is the 20th of March! the 20th of March! You are having your mummery-mass said for his soul, are you?—for the repose of the soul of him whom you—robber! Villain! Murderer!—killed in cold blood—in his bed, whilst he slept? But I will denounce you,’ she shouted with demoniac fury, springing out of bed, and seizing me with a strangling grasp round the neck— she! a woman bedridden for half-a-dozen years!—’ drag you to justice, to the scaffold! I care not that I am your wife. Hell joined us, if I am. Help, help! Murder, murder!’ I know,” continued Pendrell, wiping his forehead,—the present horror, so to speak, of the well-remembered scene bringing out the perspiration in streams,—”that if her outcries had not brought the nurse (a powerful woman) back into the room, I should have been strangled, and no mistake about it. I was absolutely black in the face, the nurse declared, when she rescued me. I can well believe it; for I know I was as nearly choked as a man could be and live. Forced back into the bed, and held forcibly down, Madame Manzel expired in convulsions, foaming at the mouth, and uttering terrible denunciations of Theophile and Jules, which names, with that of Monsieur Antoine, were uttered over and over again.”

“This communication of yours, Mr. Pendrell, is a very serious one. Do not forget that it may be my duty to report all you tell me to headquarters.”

“To be sure; it will be your duty to do so. But hear me out. My wife, as I told you, believes that her mother’s ravings were mere delirium, not having the slightest basis in fact. Fire would not burn that belief out of her.”

“It is not mine, I can assure you, Mr. Pendrell.”

“Nor mine. Acting upon that belief, my wife; as soon as she could leave the house, went to John Street, and arranged with Manzel to sell the lease, furniture, &c., at No.6, John Street, and take up his abode with us. I was obliged to give way; and he still lives with us, if life it can be called. He is like a man pursued by a remorseless demon: starts up in the night, screaming with terror; and when one or more of us hurry into his room with lights, he is found generally in his shirt; his face white as stone; eyes starting from his head; and trembling, as with ague, in every limb. In fact, I believe that his mind is giving way—that he is more than half mad already. Another circumstance, Mr. Clarke, must not be forgotten. It was, as I said, on a 20th of March that Madam Manzel died; and on the 20th of March last, Manzel, for the first and last time since he has lodged with us, went out, dressed in deep mourning. My curiosity was excited, and I followed him to the Sardinian Roman Catholic Chapel; and there, sure enough, a black mass was being said, and requiem sung, for the repose of the soul, one of the officials told me, of one Antoine Louvel (I took the name down at his dictation), who died on that day, very many years ago, how many he could not say.”

“The incidents you relate have a terrible coherency. Go on, pray.”

Mr. John Pendrell had paused hesitatingly. Recovering himself, he said:—“I read, only about four days ago, that whoever shelters a murderer, knowing him to be such—or does not, in fact, denounce him to the police—is held to be a guilty accessory to the murder after the fact. Is that the law?”

“Unquestionably it is. Still no one is bound to accuse a person of murder upon mere suspicion—though of the strongest kind.”

“But if property—valuables that it could be proved had been obtained by the murder, and had never been previously traced—were found in the possession of the harbourer or harbourers, there would be a presumption of guilty knowledge against him or them?”

“Certainly there would; unless they could show it was honestly, openly come by.”

“So I tell my wife; but she pooh-poohs and laughs at all I say upon the subject. But I have determined to act for myself in this damnable business. Better a year’s tongue-banging than to stand at the bar of a police court, if only for an hour. Well, then, I shall make a thoroughly clean breast of it. Manzel has told her, and it may be true enough, that he has made his will in our favour—means to hang me with his dead hand, as I have read of somebody doing. (I know he hates me with a deadly hate, for having been present when his wife died—dreads me too.) Manzel has, I say, told my wife that he has made his will in our favour; she—a true woman, in more than one respect—couldn’t rest till she had found out of what the bequest, so much bragged of in an under sort of way, consisted of. To do so, she in some way obtained the key of Manzel’s iron chest—where the treasure must be, if anywhere. He takes his siesta, on the sofa every day for about two hours, during which he is quite safe. To, however, make assurance doubly sure, Mrs. Pendrell, only on Thursday last—no later than that—locked the sitting-room door on the outside as soon as Manzel was fast; proceeded to his bedroom, opened the iron chest—you see, I have no reserve—found two large jewel-cases (the keys of which were in the chest), and brought them downstairs, for the leisurely gratification of her own eyes with the glittering treasure which would soon be hers there being no doubt whatever that Manzel will die before this year’s leaves do. Well, it was a dazzling sight; though of the value of the gems—diamonds, rubies, emeralds set in crosses, stomachers, strung in bracelets, necklaces—we course, could not accurately judge. Maria was entranced; and with difficulty prevailed upon herself to return them to the iron chest before Manzel awoke. More than ever is she convinced that her mother’s dying ravings were of no more serious account than the chirping of birds—that Manzel himself is a good, generous, though no doubt very eccentric man.

“For my part,” continued Pendrell, “I haven’t slept a wink since. At Manzel’s death, perhaps not more than a week hence, the will must be proved. Maria, if an angel from heaven were to try and persuade her not to display or dispose of the jewels, would not listen ‘to such nonsense;’ and we may find ourselves double-ironed in Newgate before we knew where we were.”

“Not quite so bad as that; but you might find yourself in a difficult position. What course of action do you propose?”

“I leave that to you; and feel wonderfully relieved at having transferred the whole business to your management.”

“Not quite so fast. There is nothing very definite, decided, in your statement. The chief points are Madam Manzel’s ravings, a short time before death—of no legal value whatever; but affording guidance and light to detective feet and hands. The ‘Mass for the Dead,’ said on the 20th of March (the day Madam Manzel died), for the repose of the soul of Antoine Louvel—Madam Manzel having spoken frequently during her last moments of a Monsieur Antoine, whom she, in her disordered imagination—we will say disordered imagination—accused of being murdered; at which Mass of Requiem, M. Manzel—leaving your house for the first and last time since he has lodged there—attended. You also find jewels of great value in M. Manzel’s iron chest, which you conclude are the jewels which Madam Manzel said were dyed in innocent, venerable blood; and which she, through you, implored her daughter not to stain her soul, perhaps imperil her life, by the acceptance of. All that is certainly very suggestive; but before acting, more reliable proofs—in a judicial sense—must be obtained. Meanwhile, I should like to see this M. Manzel. I have some skill in reading the workings of a man’s conscience in his face, especially when age and the gnawings of remorse have eaten away the mask which bold-browed, lusty villainy can often assume.”

“I wished you to see him, Mr. Clarke. Will you accompany me home now? It is a good deal past my time” added Pendrell, sinking down at once from the clear-brained man of the world, and resolute grappler with its difficulties, to the timid household serf; “and it may be better—more pleasant—you understand!”

“Very well indeed! Also, that you have not only much overstayed your time, but have been more frank and explicit than you quite intended to be. Not one word, remember, that I am a police officer!”

“Certainly not! You will manage that—that Maria shall be as little annoyed as possible. To be sure, the hoary villain is no relation of hers, much less of mine. Still—”

“You have behaved very properly, Pendrell; and I will take care that, so far as you and your wife are concerned, nothing shall be done that may in the slightest degree compromise you. You half repent, I see, of the bold plunge you have taken; but, depend upon it, you have taken the wisest course. Have you any further particulars to relate? Is there, for example, any peculiarity in Manzel’s mode of thought and speech? He reads newspapers, I suppose, still?”

“Yes, oh yes! the Times every day—the Despatch weekly.”

“He does not, I suppose, much interest himself in politics; but, if I might hazard a guess, a thrilling murder fascinates, enchains him, and he will be constantly referring to it.”

“By heaven! that is exactly true. There is the tragedy of Lord William Russell—supposed to be murdered in his bed by Courvoisier: he has talked of little else ever since, and sometimes says he shall go and hear the trial.”

“It is very likely that he will—would rather, if he has the chance. The fact that Manzel does dwell so pertinaciously upon narratives of murder, and especially upon that murder, weighs upon my mind as heavily against him as any of the suspicious circumstances you have related.”

Mrs. John Pendrell was very gracious still. I listened with grave attention to her spoon story promised to render her all the assistance in my power; and the husband’s offence in overstaying his time was, I saw, condoned. I was obliged, however, more than once, when we had an opportunity of speaking unheard by Mrs. Pendrell, to assure him that it should never transpire that he had “informed” against Manzel. I stayed till ten o’clock, in the hope of seeing that person. He did not, however, make his appearance, and I took leave with a very serious affair upon my hands.

A very serious, difficult affair. I hunted through the “Annual Register” to no purpose. Nowhere could I find any account of the murder of Antoine or Antony Louvel. The 20th of March, in the only complete newspaper file I was able to consult just then, was equally blank. The priest at the Sardinian Chapel had merely been informed that one Antoine Louvel had died on the day named, and been requested to offer up annually a propitious sacrifice for the repose of his soul. At last, however, by what men call accident, I fell upon the track of information; followed it zealously up till I had all the incidents of the terrible tragedy clearly before me. Before decisive action was taken, the information thus picked up; raked together, was carefully collated, and, as the practice is, laid before the legal adviser to the commissioner. The evidence was pronounced insufficient to ensure a conviction—the great, seemingly insuperable difficulty, having regard to the lapse of time since 1794, being to identify Theophilus Manzel with Jules Carlier, Madam Manzel with Maria Denton. I individually had no doubt whatever upon the subject. Madam Manzel in her last ravings had spoken of one Jules, and her daughter’s name was Maria; but here came a difficulty pointed out by the lawyer, which had unaccountably, most unaccountably, escaped my notice. How the plague could Maria Pendrell, who was certainly not more than thirty-five years of age, be the infant child of Mrs. Maria Denton, widow when the murder was committed in 1794? The change of name from Denton to King might be easily enough accounted for, like the alteration of Carlier to Manzel; but their age? The solicitor thought Mrs. Pendrell must be the daughter of Madame Manzel by her second husband, Carlier or Manzel. This seemed feasible, and opened up a very disagreeable point in the case,—disagreeable, I mean, for poor Pendrell. He would, should Manzel be convicted, have been the means of sending his wife’s own father to the gallows. However, that was no affair of mine. I had a duty to perform which was not to be shirked, were I inclined to shirk it, which I certainly was not.

The difficulty about Mrs. Pendrell's age was quickly solved. Though always, as long as she could remember, calling herself Madam Manzel's daughter—for what reason she knew not—she was really that person's granddaughter. This was proved by the marriage documents, in which she was described as the daughter of Maria and James King, and granddaughter of Madam Manzel. Mrs. Pendrell, her husband informed me, had never, to her recollection, seen either of her parents. They had died probably when she was very young. The habit of calling his wife Madam Manzel's daughter had remained with Pendrell after he knew the truth. It was a fact of such trifling importance that he might have half forgotten it.

I played—at least I began—a rubber of whist, by arrangement of Pendrell, at his house, with Mrs. Pendrell and M. Manzel. Whist was the sole *délassement* of the latter; and he had, no doubt, once been a first-rate player. But the man was prematurely trembling on the verge of the grave pushed thereto, I had no manner of doubt, by the goad of a torturing conscience. His faculties were fast fading to childishness, and I had no doubt of success in the game I had resolved to play.

The second game of the rubber was commencing when I said solemnly:— “There are more particulars come out, I hear, respecting the death of Lord William Russell. How strange it is that the evidence of such a crime, if buried, one may say, in the centre of the: earth, is sure to come to light at last!” I looked at Mrs. Pendrell, who was Manzel's partner, as I spoke; but saw him distinctly mirrored in the chimney-glass beyond and behind her chair. The moment the words “murder of Lord William Russell” passed my lips, Manzel's trembling fingers ceased sorting his cards; the filmy eyes, kindling with a strange expression of curiosity and terror, were fixed upon me; and when I ceased speaking, the cards fell, scattering, from his hand.

“As a proof of that,” I continued, “a number of circumstances connected with a dreadful murder committed many years ago in Hatton Garden—”

“What is the matter?” interrupted Mrs. Pendrell, addressing Manzel, who had risen upon his feet, and, blanched with fear and horror, glared at me. I turned round at the question; and looked steadily at the shaking old man.

“A dreadful murder, committed many years ago, on the night of the 20th of March, 1794!” Manzel dropped helplessly into his chair at these words, continuing to gaze with that wild, terrified expression in my face. “The name of the murdered gentleman was Antoine Louvel; he was known to be possessed of large property in jewels and coin, with which he had escaped from France. He had two servants; a man and woman. The man's name was Jules Carlier; the woman's, Mrs. Denton. She was a young widow, bore an excellent character, and had one infant child. Carlier was handsome and also young; he had accompanied his master from France. On the night of the 20th of March, or, rather, towards one in the morning of the 21st, there was a great outcry at No. 17, Hatton Garden. A foul murder had been done. The outcry was raised by

Carlier, who, alarmed at some noise below (in M. Louvel's bedroom), had hastened downstairs, with a loaded pistol in his hand. He was too late. M. Louvel was weltering in his life-blood, and Mrs. Denton (who had first heard the noise) was weeping and lamenting over the murdered gentleman. The strong-box, in which M. Louvel's valuables were kept, had been broken open, and the contents—estimated at a very great sum—carried off; together with about one thousand pounds—partly in rouleaux of French louis, partly in English guineas. This information was furnished by Carlier. The assassin got clear off, and inquiry was baffled. No suspicion—not the slightest—appears to have fallen upon either of the servants, who not long afterwards disappeared from the neighbourhood. It has now transpired," continued I, rising from my chair, and speaking directly to Manzel—a pitiable spectacle was the horror-stricken, doomed miscreant, he feeling, knowing, he was doomed— "it has now transpired that Mrs. Denton and Carlier had been privately married some weeks previous to the murder; that it was Carlier who murdered his master, whether assisted by his wife is doubtful, more than doubtful. Certainly she was a guilty accessory after the fact. It is now also known, known to me," I continued, "that Jules Carlier is Theophile Manzel—it's no use screaming, sir—Mrs. Denton, his dead wife; and I believe that the jewels for which he pawned his soul, and was afraid to dispose of, are now in his possession, possibly in this house; I arrest you, consequently, Jules Carlier, for the murder of Antoine Louvel." Death was quicker in his arrest of the murderer than I; he slipped down screaming from his chair in a fit, from which he only recovered to live for a sufficient time to make full and ample confession of his crime. His life, he said, had been one ceaseless torture since its occurrence, and that he would have long since given himself up to justice but that admission of his own guilt would bring down exemplary punishment upon his wife.

The jewels, &c., after the legal formalities had been gone through, were given up to the representatives of the Louvel family. Mr. John Pendrell's agency in the matter was never so much as suspected by his wife—a fact upon which that well meaning, if weak man in a husbandly sense, has never ceased to felicitate himself.

Waters, Thomas. [Pseud.] [Attrib. William Russell.] *Autobiography of a London Detective*. NY: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1864.