

The Police System in Paris

The Paris correspondent of the New Orleans

Delta relates the following:

A few days since an individual neatly dressed, but abrupt in manner, as if conscious of exercising an authority, impossible entirely to conceal, presented himself at the mansion of the Countess de S., a widow of large fortune and asked to speak with her immediately. The servant, who answered the summons, informed the stranger that her mistress was at breakfast, and did not receive visitors in the morning. If he would return at four o'clock, he might be admitted.

"Four o'clock will not do," said the stranger. "Have the goodness to tell her my business is urgent."

Thus addressed, the girl left the visitor in the ante-chamber and entered the dining-room, to ask Madam's further orders. The door being left ajar, the unknown heard the Countess sharply reprimand her servant for bringing any such impertinent message whereupon, without further ceremony, he walked into the room and presented himself before the aristocratic lady, who was greatly amazed and irritated at so audacious a proceeding.

"It is very strange, sir," said she haughtily, "that contrary to my orders and wishes, you should so far forget the common impulses of decency as to present yourself here. I really cannot find terms in which to characterize your conduct. Nevertheless, as you have thus forced your way into my house, the readiest mode of inducing you to leave it peaceably will be to hear what you have to communicate. Explain the object of your visit as briefly as possible."

"Madam," coolly replied the stranger, totally unmoved by the austerity of the Countess' attitude and language, "you will do me the favor of sending this servant from the room. It is absolutely necessary that I converse with you alone."

"I have perfect confidence in my domestics," rejoined the Countess, whose anger commenced to give way to fear, "and you can speak freely in their hearing."

Without replying to these observations, the intruder opened the door leading into the passage whence he had entered, took the girl by the arm, and thrust her outside. Now thoroughly alarmed, and satisfied that some nefarious project was to be attempted, the Countess rushed towards a small spring bell on the buffet, but before she could reach it the stranger seized the timbre, and placed it on the table near her chair, and tranquilly said. "Madam, you have no occasion to fear me. My object is to serve, not to injure you." Somewhat reassured by these words, Madam de S., resumed her seat, taking the precaution, however, to place her hand on the bell.

The stranger smiled.

“Madam,” said he, “how many servants do you employ?”

“I will answer your question, sir,” said the lady, “when I have learned who you are, and what your object may be in thus interrogating me.”

“I have no time to waste in explanations, which might, in the event of my visit ending fruitlessly, be worse than useless. I beg you to reply without hesitation to my seemingly impertinent questions; I repeat, how many servants have you?”

“I do not know what impels me to satisfy you,” said the Countess, “but as your question, after all, is merely impertinent, as you admit, I will inform you that I have three domestics at the present time; one is an old servant of my father, who has been attached to me from infancy and who is my attendant, the second is my femme de chambre whom you have just seen, and the third is my cook.”

“How long has this femme de chambre been in your service?”

“For the last nine years.”

“Ah! The cook? What sort of a person is the cook?” Demanded the stranger, with a look of interest which convinced Madam S. that mere curiosity was not his motive of the singular and minute examination.

“My cook,” she said, “is a woman perhaps thirty-five years old who has been in my house only a few days. She came to me with very excellent recommendations, and her conduct thus far has been irreproachable. Of course it is impossible in so short time to judge with certainty, but Marie seems to me in her sphere a valuable acquisition.”

“Oh!” ejaculated the unknown with a smile, “the cook’s name is Marie, is it? Well I should like to see her for a moment.”

“Very good, sir,” said the Countess sarcastically, “she is probably in the kitchen, and if your object was an interview with one of my servants, you might have saved me the annoyance of an inquisitorial intrusion by presenting yourself directly at the servants entrance.”

Totally unmoved by this direct cut, the stranger rose, bowed politely to the Countess, and left the room. Beckoning up to two men who seemed to be holding a desultory chat on the other side of the street, the curious visitor, accompanied by the talkers, re-entered Madam de S.’s house, made their way to the kitchen, and arrested the irreproachable Marie. Leaving his prisoner in the hands of the two agents, who had been waiting his orders, the stranger returned to the dining-room, and interrogated the Countess as follows:

“Do you not expect to receive in a day or two a large sum of money?”

“But sir, by what right-- that is-- how do you know?”

“Answer me Madam! Do you or do you not expect the payment of 1000,000f.?”

“I do.”

“Very well, Madam. Your excellent cook, whom I have just arrested, is an escaped convict from the prison of Toulon, who intended to take the money off your hands!”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the Countess, seizing the revealed detective’s hand in both of her own, while tears of gratitude streamed from her eyes, “you have saved my life!”

“I think it very likely, Madam,” returned the officer, sententiously, “and I have the honor to bid you good morning.”

Republican Journal [ME], February 22, 1861