

## *Vidocq and Lacour, the Paris Police Detectives.*

Mr. Vidocq, a man who in his way has obtained great celebrity, has recently died at the age of seventy-eight. Vidocq has recounted the principal events of his life in his memoirs, published in 1818-'19, of which two volumes were written by M. Maurice, and two by M. Sheritier. Vidocq has also published "*Les Vrais Mystères de Paris.*" He was Chief of Police for a long time, and always a rival of the famous Lacour, called Coco Lacour. He was Chief of Police at the time of the robbery of the medals of the Royal Library, and he was greatly annoyed in this affair; for Lacour arrested the robbers under the following circumstances which are not generally known:

M. Gisquet applied to Lacour to discover the perpetrators of the deed. He refused at first. "You have," said he, "your Chief of Police, M. Vidocq; let him find the robbers." But Gisquet insisted, and Lacour yielded.

Some days after, Lacour, who had got upon the track of the rascals, sought Gisquet, and told him that three men had committed the robbery—Froussard, and two others, whose names we have forgotten. "Why?" asked Gisquet. "First," was the reply, "in order to steal the medals, the thieves must know something of their value; this indicates that the criminals were thus learned. This reduces to fifteen the persons among whom we are to seek the robbers of the library. The skill with which the furniture was opened further limits the number; and finally, the extreme elegance of the tools left where the crime was committed, convinces me beyond doubt that Froussard is the leading spirit in the crime."

"Then seek him," said Gisquet.

To seek was easy—to find him was more difficult. Froussard, more than twenty times condemned to the galleys, had always managed to elude justice. But one day Lacour paused upon the bridge De Tournelle, seeing before him two persons dressed with elegance and taste. There was nothing about them tawdry or mysterious—nothing calculated to attract attention. Suddenly Lacour, who had not seen their faces, said to himself, "I have it! Here are two companions of the chain. In spite of the elegance of these two gentlemen, I recognize a trait not generally perceptible. A certain movement of the limb, which the convict contracts from wearing fetters, betrays them. One of these wore the chain upon the left, and the other upon the right leg."

Lacour advanced, and notwithstanding his disguise, recognized Froussard as one of the men before him. He hastened to the nearest post, and begged the officer to arrest the two men. "One of them," said he, "is Froussard, the author of the Library robbery."

The officer, in common with the military, having a decided repugnance for policemen, refused to make the arrest, unless Lacour would produce a written order, and give the signals.

Lacour was distracted. He could not make himself known; the robbers would escape. Suddenly he saw a magistrate upon the quay. He hastened to him and stated the circumstances. "I pledge my word," said he, "that M. Gisquet has charged me with the detection of the robbers; trust to me, arrest these men, and you will secure a reward." The magistrate was convinced, and gave him a blank warrant, which he filled out; the commandant was satisfied, and gave orders for

arrest. Instantly Lacour, at the head of some soldiers, seized Froussard by the arms and held him, for otherwise he would have drawn his knife and fought to the last. As it was, Froussard attempted to seize his weapon, but he was overpowered. He exclaimed upon seeing himself secured: "What! Arrested with a disguise so perfect! Lacour must be at the bottom of this; I just saw him," added he, "going to the post."

Vidocq ceased to be Chief of Police soon after this success of his rival. To gain a livelihood, he devoted himself to various pursuits; he watched husbands for the benefit of wives, and wives for the benefit of husbands; furnished commercial intelligence; carried secret letters, and recovered stolen property. At one of Count d'Appony's balls one of his friends lost his cloak; Vidocq made him pay very dearly for restoring it, and did not do it after all. *Apropos* to the secret letters: many remember a certain signal he had, which indicated to friends whom he met when upon such a mission that Vidocq was disguised, and that he carried letters to a lady from a married gentleman.

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