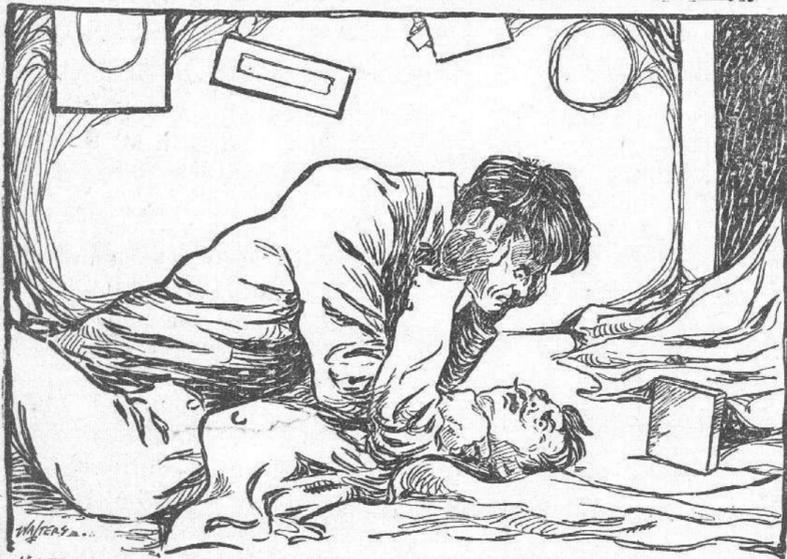


# THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MONSIEUR CLAUDE

Edited by George Tickell

BEING THE CHRONICLES OF A FAMOUS PREFECT OF POLICE DURING THE REGIME OF THE SECOND EMPIRE, IN THE REIGN OF NAPOLEON III, NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE GOOD NAME OF Mlle. LECLAIRE



"I KILLED HIM IN SELF-DEFENSE"

"WOULD that I were a man with strength to exact a man's revenge!" exclaimed Mme. Rigault, closing her small white teeth with an emphatic snap.

"Perish the thought," rejoined Monsieur Claude, courteously. "Not only would the prefecture lack an invaluable assistant in such a case, but to lose a most exquisite ornament."

The little lady, famous alike for her beauty and talent as a political spy in the court of Louis Napoleon, shook her graceful head disdainfully.

"Compliments will not help me, M. Claude," she said, "although your manner of paying them is irresistible. You must aid me in a practical way and perhaps may be all the more inclined to do so when I inform you that the emperor advised me to consult you."

"Be assured, Mme. Rigault," said the chief, earnestly, "that my poor services are ever at your command. It would be strange were it otherwise. I have not forgotten how well you repaid the confidence reposed in you regarding the affair of the Scarlet Arrow, not to mention other important matters where the empire benefited by your loyal exertions. And I venture to say that his majesty's opinion coincides with mine."

"The emperor has acted with his customary kindness," responded Mme. Rigault. "He told me to trust to you implicitly, and added that whatever steps you might see fit to take would be sanctioned by him."

"With the imperial favor, one is doubly armed," commented the chief. "Tell me the story and we will decide what is best to be done."

"It concerns the one woman being whom I love better than myself, M. Claude," said the little lady, gravely; "none other than my younger sister, Blanche Leclair, with whom you are acquainted."

The chief bowed in assent. "I have that honor," he said. "A charming young girl for whom I entertain sincere admiration and respect."

"Well, then," continued Mme. Rigault, "it will surprise you to learn that Blanche, naturally one of the most joyous and innocent of girls, has suffered in silence for nearly a year under the persecution of a cowardly blackmailer. I did not gain her confidence until yesterday when, driven to desperation on the near approach of her marriage with Monsieur d'Argental, she appealed to me for aid."

"And the name of her persecutor?" queried the chief as Mme. Rigault paused.

"He is Horace Vere, younger son of an English lord, at present residing in Paris," replied the lady.

"Vere!" repeated M. Claude. "The name sounds familiar. Ah, I have it. He lives in a mansion on the Boulevard Haussmann where high play is indulged in by a number of his countrymen and several young bloods about town. It cannot be actually termed a public gambling establishment in the strict sense of the word, but judging from the reports of my men, it lacks but few of the requirements of a professional hell. Yet M. Vere has entree to the best social circles. I presume that explains his connection with your sister's name."

"Partly," responded Mme. Rigault; "but the trouble arose in the first place through an unfortunate intimacy contracted by Blanche with his cousin, one Thomas Stratton, who committed suicide by blowing out his brains about 16 months ago. It is just two years since Blanche came from my mother's quiet country home and made her debut in Paris. She knew nothing of the dangers one encounters in a great city, and I am inclined to blame myself for not having made closer scrutiny into the character of the acquaintances she made. Yet even had I been aware of her infatuation for Stratton I would have found little to disapprove of at the time. He was young, handsome, of good family and apparently well to do, and his suicide,

opportunity of demonstrating the worth of those faculties which have gained for you the sobriquet of The Lynx. There is an Englishman named Horace Vere, living at No. 23 Boulevard Haussmann. Find out all you can concerning his habits and personal attendants and report to me as soon as possible."

"The Lynx," a tall, thin individual with small, restless black eyes, saluted and went forth upon his mission without replying. He was a man of few words, with an infinite capacity for obtaining information from unpromising sources, a quality which enabled him to rank as one of M. Claude's most trusted aids. Therefore the chief was not surprised when early the following morning his wily subordinate offered an exhaustive report on the daily life and pursuits of the object of Mme. Rigault's hatred.

"This so-called Alfred Beausine, confidential valet to M. Vere, whose name appears marked with a red cross in your notes—is he then one of our missing birds, M. Serge?" inquired the chief.

"Beausine is his alias, M. Claude," replied the Lynx. "He is none other than Levard, wanted in connection with the robbery of Pierre Simons, the jeweler, last year. I did not arrest him as I preferred to wait for further orders."

"Have him brought here at once," ordered the chief. "Is there substantial evidence against him in the Simons case?"

"Enough to warrant a speedy conviction and galley sentence, M. Claude," returned the Lynx. "I will produce him in a little while."

M. Serge was as good as his word, for within the space of an hour he reappeared with the prisoner, a shifty-eyed, undersized man, who blinked nervously as he stood before the prefect.

"You are Lavard, at present masquerading under the name of Beausine, one of four confederates concerned in an attack upon M. Simons, the jeweler?" queried the chief.

The man murmured a faint reply in the affirmative and M. Claude continued:

"The evidence against you is complete and of sufficient importance to provide heavy punishment. It now rests with yourself whether you will be given the galleys for 15 years or receive a comparatively light sentence upon my recommendation. Whether I shall interfere or not depends upon the manner in which you carry out a certain task at my bidding."

A faint tinge of color crept into the prisoner's pallid face.

"What do you require of me, M. Claude?" he asked timidly.

"In the possession of your master, M. Vere," said the chief, "there are several letters written by a Mlle. Blanche Leclair to his cousin, now deceased. Obtain those documents and I promise that your punishment for complicity in the Simons affair will be merely nominal."

Two days after the above conversation had taken place the chief was sitting alone at his desk when one of his subordinates announced that an Englishman named Vere desired an audience with him. M. Claude, much surprised, but curious as to the cause of the unexpected visit, gave orders that he be admitted, and the door opened to disclose the person of one of the most formidable looking men that had ever entered the prefecture.

Vere was a giant in stature, with huge shoulders, long, muscular arms and a chest whose tremendous width and depth gave promise of herculean strength. His broad face, red and swollen, gave eloquent testimony of nights spent in reckless dissipation, and from under heavy brows his little bloodshot gray eyes gleamed maliciously. Without troubling himself to go through the formality of asking permission he deposited his immense frame on a convenient chair, and leaning back at ease, surveyed the chief with an air of cool defiance.

If M. Claude's indignation rose at the insolent demeanor of the Englishman, it did not appear on his trans-

quil, immobile features. Producing his snuff box he inhaled a pinch of the contents, sneezed languidly and addressed the newcomer with indolent grace.

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit, M. Vere?" he inquired, politely.

Vere uttered a short, contemptuous laugh.

"Call it an honor if you want to," he retorted, speaking in English, the language in which the chief had chosen to address him. "I didn't come here to fence with fine phrases or beat about the bush. First of all, I wish to inform you that I have killed your cursed spy, Beausine. I strangled him with these hands about four o'clock this morning, not, however, until I had first wrung from his throat a confession that he had been employed by you to steal some of my papers."

He stretched out his thick, blunt fingers and shook them menacingly in the chief's face. Neither the action nor announcement served to startle the chief from his habitual composure. He merely smiled and again applied himself to the snuff box without exhibiting the slightest trace of anger or excitement. Then he said, placidly:

"Without pretending to comprehend your allusion to the late lamented Beausine's employer, M. Vere, I seem to understand that you come here to boast of having murdered a man. Rather an indiscreet confession, M. Claude, a chief of police, is it not?"

Vere indulged in a bitter sneer.

"I killed him in self-defense when he tried to rob me," he said, savagely. "There's no mistake about that. I'm an Englishman, under the protection of my country's ambassador, and ready to welcome any investigation you care to make. If you want proofs send to my house; you will know where it is, and your men will find the corpse of that sneaking cur where I left it. I fancy that for your own sake you will want to hush the matter up. If the letters from Mlle. Blanche Leclair, for which your emissary risked and lost his life, are made public, you know what a pretty scandal will follow."

The results of the police investigation of Beausine's death corroborated the big Englishman's story in every particular. Examination of the dress of a goblet that had contained wine drunk by Vere before retiring, disclosed the presence of a drug placed therein by the valet with the evident intention of rendering his master helpless. But the dose, which would in all probability have overcome a weaker man, failed to accomplish its purpose in the case of the giant son of Albion. The latter, awaking from slumber and finding Beausine in the act of removing certain valuable documents contained in a belt around his waist, sprang upon him and in the struggle that ensued choked him to death. Such was the gist of Vere's testimony, which was accepted by the authorities, and no further action was taken.

Suddenly, one day Vere left the city and was reported by the Lynx, who followed faithfully on the trail, to have established himself in lodgings at the seaport of Marseilles, passing the greater portion of his time in the lower drinking places of the city and occasionally visiting a gaming establishment where he risked small sums of money. None of his Parisian associates had accompanied him, and M. Claude, aware that the Englishman had suffered severe financial reverses in the gambling halls of Paris, came to the conclusion that he had retired to Marseilles as a less expensive place than the capital in which to await Monsieur d'Argental's return, when he hoped by a final threat of exposure to bring the girl to his terms, upon which her friends would probably furnish the sum demanded for the surrender of the letters.

The result of the chief's cogitations was that one fine morning found him domiciled under the roof of the Lion d'Or inn at Marseilles. A dark brown wig, flashy clothing and glittering display of jewelry had wrought such a change in the head of the prefecture that his most intimate friend would have failed to recognize the usually sedate and soberly dressed M. Claude in this debonair person, to whom the servants of the Lion d'Or paid the customary homage of their kind.

On the third day of his visit to Marseilles a British frigate anchored in the harbor and a few hours later M. Claude encountered Vere on the street in company with an officer from the man-of-war.

"I've had a notion to accept your invitation, Vere," he heard the big man say in his loud, careless way, "and run over home with you. I'm killing time here at present until a certain little business scheme develops in Paris, but it won't materialize for a couple of weeks yet, and I might as well spend a while in England as among these French rogues. When do you sail?"

"To-morrow evening," replied the naval man, and they strolled on leisurely, the rest of the conversation being inaudible to the chief. M. Claude frowned as he digested the substance of the remarks he had just heard.

In following the trail of his quarry, M. Claude had discovered that the gambling establishment most frequented by Vere was one kept by a Spanish woman who had formerly pursued a similar occupation in Paris. Compelled to leave the capital by orders from the prefecture, she had taken up her abode in Marseilles, where she conducted her business on a smaller but sufficiently well-paying scale. To this place, shortly after the shades

of night had fallen, the chief made his way. The gaming room held but few occupants when he first entered, but as the night wore on the crowd increased in size and M. Claude, having lost a few insignificant stakes, drew away from the tables and sat smoking placidly in a snug corner. Nearly an hour passed before the man he expected made his appearance, and when he did he took a seat at a table in close proximity to M. Claude, who viewed his movements with intense interest. Vere had for his opponent a young man of elegant appearance, who had been playing with varying fortune for some time before the Englishman entered the room. The youth's extreme eagerness and the nervous excitement he displayed, attracted the chief's attention and caused him to augur badly for his chances against the stolid and cunning Briton. For awhile, however, fortune leaned toward the young Frenchman, and a scowl deepened on the brow of his huge adversary as he saw the pile of gold coins on his side of the table dwindle gradually away.

Suddenly, just when it seemed that the Englishman must lose the last of his stake, an unexpected revolution took place in the wheel of fortune and Vere began to win steadily. Repeatedly he scored over his opponent, the latter becoming more and more agitated as he lost, until a pile consisting of 40,000 francs lay beside the British player. A crowd, attracted by the high play, had gathered around the table and M. Claude, rising, pushed his way into the front rank. Something suspicious in Vere's manner, a faint trace of anxiety appearing through the phlegmatic mask he was wont to wear, had given the chief food for reflection and he stood watching keenly, never removing his gaze from the big hands of the Briton. The young man demanded his revenge and producing more funds, staked the entire sum he had lost previously—40,000 francs. M. Claude, his whole attention concentrated on the Englishman's hands, saw him slip a card from his sleeve and put it in the place of one he held. Instantly the chief's somnolent voice broke the silence. "M. Vere, you are a thief!" he shouted.

At this startling denunciation Vere turned pale and sprang to his feet. As he did so a couple of marked cards fell from his sleeve on the table, and a roar of anger burst from the crowd. The victim of the sharper leaped forward and in a moment Vere's colossal figure became the center of a struggling knot of men. M. Claude, the originator of the disturbance, looked calmly on. It was no part of his plan to become involved in a personal attack on Vere.

A loud and imperious knocking on the front door of the house and a harsh summons to "open in the name of the law," created a momentary lull in the tumult of the fight that raged around the Briton. As his assailants paused to listen, the big Englishman broke from their grasp by a superhuman effort and sprang toward a window that stood half open in the rear of the room. Quick as he was, the youth with whom he had been playing when denounced by M. Claude was quicker. He caught the Englishman's coat as the latter reached the sill and clung to it firmly. Vere endeavored to shake him off, but in vain, and seeing that others were advancing to the aid of their countryman, he uttered a savage curse and picking up a glass decanter that stood on a table close by, dashed it down with terrific force on the young man's head. He fell to the floor with a choking groan, and Vere disappeared through the window, just as a party of gendarmes entered the room.

M. Claude by a moment's examination convinced himself that the fugitive had not taken much risk of injury by his sudden leap for freedom. The gaming room was situated on the ground floor of the house, and the distance from window sill to ground could not have measured over six feet. The officer in charge of the gendarmes made it his first care to look after the wounds of Vere's unfortunate victim, who lay senseless and bleeding profusely from a jagged cut in his head. A physician was summoned and pronounced his condition serious, the skull having been fractured by the blow it had sustained.

Mme. Alavarda, the keeper of the establishment, answered the interrogations of the officer with the nervous haste of one who wishes to curry favor with the powers above.

"Yes, she knew the English monsieur, but slightly. His address she was informed of by a compatriot who had dined with him. It was No. 72, Rue de Noailles."

Upon receiving this information two of the gendarmes, who had returned after a short and useless search for the fugitive, were dispatched to his lodgings with instructions to arrest and bring him to police headquarters when found. The wounded man was removed to a hospital and M. Claude, leaving the house, proceeded with rapid steps to the harbor. Vere's escape annoyed the chief greatly for he doubted the ability of the Marseilles officers to secure him. Vere was sufficiently acute to know that the spies of the prefecture were perfectly informed as to his movements, and would naturally be averse to placing himself in a position where he could be searched and the letters taken from him on some pretext. It was possible that he might have visited his residence for the purpose of obtaining whatever valuables he possessed, but there was

small likelihood of his remaining there long enough to risk capture. His most logical plan of action would be to seek refuge under the British flag on board the frigate now lying in the harbor.

Thus mused the chief as he reached the water front and gazed across the black expanse of water to where the lights of the English man-of-war twinkled in the offing. It was after midnight and a profound silence reigned along the shore, a silence interrupted only by the lapping of the water against the wharves. M. Claude caught sight of a long, low wooden pier jutting out from the land, and he turned his steps toward it. In a few seconds of walking he reached the end and glancing down saw a small boat moored by a rope to the piles, tossing gently to and fro with the tide. Here then was a means of escape for Vere, did he but know of it. The chief glanced back to the wharf as the thought occurred to him and uttered a fierce exclamation. There was a man shoving off in a boat from the spot he had just left. By the light of the moon he could see the gigantic figure plainly as it swung to the oars. It was Vere—escaping from him—bearing the documents that would blast the fame of Blanche Leclair.

M. Claude stooped and swiftly severed the rope that moored the boat to the pier. In another instant he was bending to the oars with savage energy.

Vere's boat shot straight for the mouth of the harbor in the direction of the British frigate's anchorage. M. Claude, still in the shadow of the pier, backed water suddenly and brought his craft to a halt as he perceived that Vere in passing would steer directly before his bows. He waited with bated breath as the black dot drew near, wondering if the Englishman would glance around and notice his presence. But Vere did not see the danger that lurked in the shadows; his mind was fixed on the big ship swinging lazily at anchor in the offing. He had successfully eluded his pursuers on land, and he laughed exultantly as he bent his broad back and sent the sharp prows cleaving rapidly through the black water.

And in that moment of fancied triumph his fate came upon him. From out the darkness there silently glided a menacing shape that crashed against the side of his vessel, an active figure sprang upon him and a million lurid fires flamed before his eyes as a crashing blow descended full on his temple. The oars slipped from his nerveless grasp and his huge bulk collapsed into an inert mass at the bottom of the boat.

Replacing the life preserver in his pocket the chief hurriedly retrieved the drifting oars and pulled back to land. Reaching the wharf he moored the boat to a convenient ringbolt, and proceeded to examine into the condition of his prisoner. He was breathing heavily but was still unconscious, and M. Claude made a search of his garments with a dexterity born of long practice. In a cloth belt next to Vere's skin he discovered the long sought package of letters that had caused him so many anxious hours, and pocketed them with much heart-felt satisfaction. Then he walked leisurely to the nearest police station and revealed his identity to the inspector in charge.

"I chanced to witness the affair in Mme. Alavarda's establishment last night," he said, "and later was fortunate enough to perceive this Monsieur Vere in the act of making his escape by water. There was no time to summon assistance, and knowing that once aboard the British frigate now in the offing he would be beyond your jurisdiction I took it upon myself to capture him. In doing so I was compelled to use considerable force and you will find him unconscious in the boat where I left him, unless he has recovered his senses, which I hardly think is likely."

"I will send my men for him at once, M. Claude," returned the highly gratified inspector. "The young man whom he first cheated and then assaulted is dangerously ill, and but for you the ruffian would have surely escaped the consequences of his ill-doing."

"You are welcome to my poor services," responded the chief, with an easy wave of his hand. "And by the way, I came here on important business of the state which is now concluded. Let the credit of the capture lie to your own record and see that my name is not mentioned in connection with the affair. It is my wish that my presence in Marseilles should remain a secret to all but yourself."

Mme. Rigault summoned to the prefecture found the chief awaiting her with smiling features.

"The fruits of victory, my dear friend and colleague," said M. Claude, as he handed her the hardly won papers.

The little lady's eyes were dimpled with grateful tears.

"How can I ever thank you?" she faltered.

"By continuing to look upon me as your devoted servant," said the chief, gaily. "My faith, though, madame, your first suggestion as to the means to be employed for the redemption of these harmless looking documents was strangely prophetic! It became necessary after all, in a sense, to resort to an appeal to arms for the preservation of the good name of Mlle. Leclair."

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PERNA A TONIC OF GREAT USEFULNESS.



HON. S. THARIN.  
Hon. R. S. Tharin, Attorney at Law and counsel for the Anti-Trust League, Washington, D. C., writes as follows:  
"Having used Perna for catarrhal disorders, I am able to testify to its great remedial influence and do not hesitate to give my emphatic endorsement and earnest recommendation to all persons affected by that disorder. It is also a tonic of great usefulness."  
Mr. T. Barnard, West Aylmer, Ontario, Can., writes: "Last winter I was ill with pneumonia after having a gripe. I took Perna for two months, when I became well. I also induced a young lady, who was all run down and confined the house, to take Perna, and after taking Perna for three months she was able to follow her trade of tailoring. I can recommend Perna for all such who are ill and require a tonic."

Perna-tablets.  
Some people prefer to take tablets, rather than to take medicine in a fluid form. Such people obtain Perna tablets which represent the solid medicinal ingredients of Perna. Each tablet is equivalent to one average dose of Perna.



Arabella—Ah, John, there was a time when you couldn't see enough of me.  
John—Well, I can see plenty of you now, can't I?

NOT UP TO THE RECORD.  
Boy Haj, at Least Once-Seen Larger Pedal Extramities.

A pupil of one of the public schools in Chicago sends this communication: "Dear Sir: In our school this morning an amusing dialogue took place. A primary teacher of Chicago, wishing to impress on her pupils the necessity of greater quiet, said: 'I am a great deal larger than any of you, yet I don't make any noise when I walk around the room.' 'Perhaps,' remarked little seven-year-old Kenneth, 'you don't wear shoes.' 'Oh, yes, I do,' quickly replied the teacher; 'just look. Did you ever see any larger than mine?' 'Kenneth surveyed them carefully. 'Yes,' he replied, slowly, 'once—in a show.'—Waverly Magazine.

He Would Talk.  
"This is a busy wire, I tell you," roared the excited man in the telephone booth.  
And from the other end of the wire came this:  
"I don't care, I will talk."  
"Get off the wire!" shouted the other, beside himself. "You don't want to talk with me."  
But it was no use.  
"I've paid ten cents to talk," came the answer, "and I'm going to do it." And talk he did, busy wires not.

ASTONISHED THE DOCTOR  
Old Lady Got Well with Change of Food.  
A great scientist has said we can put off "old age" if we can only nourish the body properly.  
To do this the right kind of food, of course, is necessary. The best manufactured from certain kinds of food stuffs and unless sufficient of it is taken, the injurious elements overcome the good.  
"My grandmother, 71 years old," writes a N. Y. lady, "had been invalid for 13 years from what was called consumption of the stomach and bowels. The doctor had given her up to die."  
"I saw so much about Grape-Nuts that I persuaded Grandmother to try it. She could not keep anything on her stomach for more than a few minutes."  
"She began Grape-Nuts with only a teaspoonful. As that did not distress her and as she could retain it, she took a little more until she could take all of a teaspoonful at a meal."  
"Then she began to gain and grow strong and her trouble in the stomach was gone entirely. She got to enjoy good health for one so old and we know Grape-Nuts saved her life."  
"The doctor was astonished that instead of dying she got well and without a drop of medicine after she began the Grape-Nuts." "There's a Reason" Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pgs.  
Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.