

MYSTERY of the BOULE CABINET

BY BURTON E. STEVENSON

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"Monsieur X. had had the decency," he went on, more slowly, "to, as he thought, retain his wife's private papers. He had caused the contents of the various drawers to be dumped out upon a chair. But there was one drawer of which he knew nothing—a secret drawer, known only to my client. That drawer contained a packet of letters which my client is most anxious to regain. She has given me to understand that their recovery is essential to her peace of mind."

I reflected a faithless husband has no reason to complain if his wife repays him in the same coin.

"My client went to work at once to regain the cabinet," continued Mr. Hornblower, plainly relieved that the thinnest ice had been crossed. "She found that it had been sold to Armand & Son. Hastening to their office, she learned that it had been resold by them to Mr. Vantine and sent forward to him here. So she came over on the first boat, ostensibly to visit her family, but really to ask Mr. Vantine's permission to open the drawer and take out the letters. His death interfered with this, and in despair she came to me. I need hardly add that no member of her family knows anything about this matter, and it is especially important that her husband should never even suspect it. On her behalf I apply to you as Mr. Vantine's executor to restore these letters to their owner."

I sat for a moment turning this extraordinary story over in my mind. Surely Miss X. would scarcely guard the secret of that drawer with poison.

"Does any one besides your client know of the existence of these letters?" I asked at last.

"I think not," answered Mr. Hornblower, smiling dryly. "They are not of a nature which my client would care to communicate to any one. We must get them back at any cost."

"As a matter of fact," I pointed out, "there are always at least two people who know of the existence of every letter—the person who writes it and the person who receives it."

"I had thought of that, but the person who wrote these letters is dead. He was killed in a duel some months ago by Monsieur X."

Mr. Hornblower sat regarding me, his lips pursed, as an indication, perhaps, that he would say no more.

But there was no necessity that he should. I knew enough of French law and of French habits of thought to realize that if these letters ever came into possession of Monsieur X., the game would be entirely in his hands. His wife would be absolutely at his mercy. And the thought flashed through my mind that perhaps in some way he had learned of the existence of the letters, and was trying desperately to get them. That thought was enough to swing the balance in his wife's favor.

"I am sure," I said, "that Mr. Vantine would instantly have consented to your client opening the drawer and taking out the letters. And, as his executor, I also consent. But I must warn you, Mr. Hornblower, that I believe two men have already been killed trying to open that drawer, and I told him the story. I am inclined to think," I concluded, "that Vantine blundered upon the drawer while examining the cabinet, but there is no doubt that the other man knew of the drawer, and also, presumably, of its contents."

"Well!" exclaimed my companion. "I have listened to many astonishing stories in my life, but never one so equal this. And you know nothing of this Frenchman?"

"Nothing except that he came from Havre on La Touraine last Thursday, and drove from the dock direct to Vantine's house."

"My client also came on La Touraine, but that, no doubt, was a mere coincidence."

"That may be," I agreed, "but it is scarcely a coincidence that both he and your client were after the contents of that drawer."

"You mean—"

"I mean that the mysterious Frenchman may very possibly have been an emissary of Monsieur X. Madame may have betrayed the secret to him in an unguarded moment."

Mr. Hornblower rose abruptly. He was evidently much disturbed.

"You may be right," he agreed. "I will communicate with my client at once. I take it that she has your permission to see the cabinet, and if it proves to be the right one that she may open the drawer and remove the letters."

"If she cares to take the risk," I assented.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. HORNBLOWER must have driven straight to her family residence on the avenue, or perhaps she was awaiting him at his office. At any rate, he called me up inside the half hour.

"My client would like to see the cabinet at once," he said. "She is in a very nervous condition, especially since she learned that some one else has tried to open the drawer. When will it be convenient for you to go with us?"

"I can go at once," I said.

"Then we will drive around for you. We should be there in fifteen or twenty minutes."

"Very well," I said, "I'll be ready. I shall, of course, want to take a witness with me."

"That is quite proper," assented Mr. Hornblower. "We can have no objection to that. In twenty minutes, then."

I got the Record office as soon as I could, but Godfrey was not there. He did not come on usually, some one said, until the middle of the afternoon. I rang up his rooms, but there was no reply. Finally I called up the Vantine house.

"Parks," I said, "I am bringing up some people to look at that cabinet. It might be just as well to get that out of the way and have all the lights going."

"The lights are already going, sir," he said.

"Already going? What do you mean?"

"Mr. Godfrey has been here for quite awhile, sir, fooling with that cabinet thing."

"Tell him, Parks, that I am bringing some people up to see the cabinet and that I should like him to stay there and be a witness of the proceedings."

"Very well, sir," assented Parks. "Everything quiet?"

"Oh, yes, sir. There was two policemen outside all night and Rogers and me inside."

"Mr. Hornblower's carriage is below, sir," announced the office boy, opening the door.

"All right," I said. "We are coming right up, Parks. Goodby," and I hung up and slipped into my coat.

Then as I took down my hat a sudden thought struck me. If the unknown Frenchman was indeed an emissary of Monsieur X., Madame might be acquainted with him. It was a long shot, but worth trying. I stepped to my desk, took out the photograph which Godfrey had given me and slipped it into my pocket. Then I hurried out to the elevator.

There were three persons in the carriage. Mr. Hornblower sat with his back to the horses, and two women were on the opposite seat. Both were dressed in black and heavily veiled, but there was about them the indefinable distinction of mistress and maid. The latter was restless and uneasy.

Mr. Hornblower glanced behind me as I entered.

"You spoke of a witness," he said.

"He is at the Vantine house," I explained and sat down beside him.

"This is Mr. Lester," he said, and the veiled lady opposite him, whom I had known at once to be the mistress, inclined her head a little.

Parks opened the door to us, and, nodding to him, I led the way along the hall and into the anteroom. Godfrey was awaiting us there, and I saw the flame of interest which leaped into his eyes as Mr. Hornblower and the two veiled women entered.

"This is my witness," I said to the former. "Mr. Godfrey—Mr. Hornblower."

Godfrey bowed, and Hornblower regarded him with a good humored smile.

"If I were not sure of Mr. Godfrey's discretion," he said, "I should object. But I have tested it before

this and know that it can be relied upon."

The woman I had decided was the maid sat down as though her legs were unable to sustain her and was nervously clasping and unclasping her hands. Even her mistress showed signs of impatience.

"The cabinet is in here," I said and led the way into the inner room, the two men and the veiled lady at my heels.

It stood in the middle of the floor, just as it had stood since the night of the tragedy, and all the lights were going. As I entered I noticed Godfrey's gauntlet lying on a chair.

"Is it the right one, madam?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, with a gasp that was almost a sob.

"You are sure?" I queried.

"Do you think I could be mistaken in such a matter, sir? I assure you



FLORIDA GIRL A CAPITAL DEBUTANTE



Miss Lucille Clark.

Miss Lucille Clark is the attractive daughter of Congressman and Mrs. Frank Clark of Florida and is one of the girls of the congressional circle who are debutantes this season. Miss Clark had no formal debut, but this is the first winter she has gone into society and her name is generally included in the lists of debutantes of the season.

CHURCH OFFICIAL ON INTERFERENCE WITH MEXICANS

DESPITE TREATMENT OF MORMONS HOLDS THAT COUNTRY IS NOT TO BE CRITICISED

SAFFORD, ARIZ., March 28.—Anthony W. Ivins an apostle of the Mormon church, preached a sermon of unusual importance on the Mexican war situation at Thatcher Sunday morning. Mr. Ivins was president of the Mormon state in Mexico for twelve years and filled two preaching missions of some years' length in that country.

Mr. Ivins began his sermon by saying that he had just come from the border, where everybody was thinking and talking of war, and remarked that he feared we did not understand how close the United States is to war today. Many people in our country are today clamoring for the nation to intervene and take a hand in the war with Mexico, because of wrongs to foreign citizens or foreign-owned property. Intervention law does not require any nation to give the subjects of other nations better protection than it accords to its own citizens, and the speaker maintained that people who are clamoring for this nation to go to war with Mexico are those who are seeking to make that nation give others greater protection for life and property in Mexico than the Mexicans themselves are receiving. If we should intervene in that country it would but have the effect of stopping a people from working out their own destiny in their own way.

Elder Ivins told how much better the Mexican people had conducted their war than the Balkan states had conducted theirs. He could remember our own civil war, he said, and that the American soldiers, both north and south, had resorted to greater atrocities than either side had resorted to during the four years of revolution in Mexico. He warned the people of the United States that if they intervened in Mexico's affairs they would not find it an easy task to handle the Mexican people. It would have been much easier four years ago. Those who see the lily clothed, barefooted and hungry soldiers of Mexico may think it would be an easy fight, but they are badly mistaken. The Mexicans are patriotic and love their country and will resent our intervention just as strongly as we would have resented it had other nations interfered at the time of our civil war. If we do intervene, the speaker said, the people along the borders have got the burden of the trouble to carry, and it will cost the lives of thousands and thousands of our best young Americans.

The speaker then painted a picture of war and quoted Sherman's famous remark, "War is hell." Wars are terrible wasteful of property and life. The money cost of wars of civilized nations since the Crimean war would build ten railroads around the world or would permanently endow free schools for all the children in the world, and yet our nation is asked to waste its treasure to satisfy a lot of demagogues who want war, but would never fight in it. He told how in the battle of Spotsylvania 12,000 Union soldiers were mowed down in thirty

minutes, leaving 12,000 mothers wives or sweethearts to mourn their loss. That same campaign, short though it was, cost the lives of 60,000 stalwart young men. Too many of us think that our regular army, will fight this war, but it will not. Young men will be taken from the American homes, and their bones will bleach in Mexico, and the good of the world will not be furthered.

Mr. Ivins then continued by telling of one war that we had with Mexico and told how he had visited most of the battlefields of that war. Our soldiers were never halted, yet on one field alone 4,000 fine young men laid down their lives. So hardened to the horrors of war did the people of that vicinity become that they actually took the skulls of those American boys by wagon loads into the city of Mexico and made them into buttons, just as 30,000 bodies were taken to England after the Crimean war and ground up into fertilizer.

In closing his sermon Mr. Ivins spoke warmly in defense of the Mexicans, and he wondered that they were as good a people as they were when the iron heel of oppression had ground them down for 300 years and the power of an out of date industrial system kept them down.

Employees of Pacific Mills print works, who have tied up plant by their strike for an increase in wages, have voted to remain out until their demands are granted.

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TELEGRAPH BRIEFS.

Vice-President Brooks, of Western Union, referring to negotiations for new wire contract with New York Stock Exchange, says, "We will cancel any contract for a leased wire if Stock Exchange will show us that it is being used for a bucket shop or other illegal purposes."

FAMOUS DANCER HAS BEEN MARRIED LONG



Mile. Dazie.

Mile. Dazie, the famous danseuse, it has just become known, has for a year and a half been the wife of Cornelius Fellows, son of the late millionaire horseman of that name. Mr. Fellows' father, Cornelius Fellows, Sr., was a friend of William K. Vanderbilt, William C. Whitney and August Belmont, and successor to the late Colonel Lawrence Kip as president of the National Horseshow association.

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