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JOHN SCHNOOR.

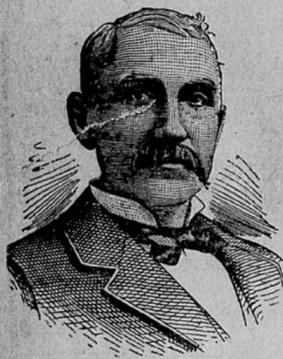
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Also make first mortgage loans on improved farms at current rates
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One 174 acres, nearly all in cultivation, a splendid orchard, good large
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fine flowing well, some fruit, a fine place for chicken or hog raising as
there is thousands of acres of timber joining. Price \$700—Part time.

A HARLINEY, VERSA, F.S.
organ County, Missouri.

THE HONOR OF BESSON.

By ROBERT O. V. MEYERS.

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Besson shoved in his pocket the paper
on which he had jotted down the
order.

"Of course," said Mr. Clavie while
the young clerk in the background be-
came interested in a book on a table
near enough the two to render over-
hearing not impossible—"of course you
will be punctual?"

Besson buttoned up his coat.
"And," followed up the publisher,
"you understand fully."

"Such insistence! It tired Besson.
"It is probable," he answered, "that I
understand."

Clavie cleared his throat.
"Your pardon," he explained, "but
you seemed so—shall I say inatten-
tive?"

"It is a very good word," Besson as-
sured him. Then, apparently willing
to relieve the other's anxiety at so
slight a cost to himself, he pulled the
paper from his pocket. "I have it
down, you see—ten biographies of 500
words each, to be incorporated into a
new popular history of the revolution.
The subjects are Marat, Bierre, Dau-
ton, Desmoulins, Robespierre, Espre-
mesnil, Mirabeau—of course not 'Ton-
neau' Mirabeau."

"You know that."
"As you say, Mirabeau (not 'Ton-
neau'), Roland, Tiville—I have them
all here."

"And I know you have their histories
at the ends of your fingers."

"Or at the ends of the fingers of those
who have prattled about them in print—
Besanville, DuLaurie, Lacrolette, Con-
dorcet, Mercier, Toulangeon, Boville,
Mellian, Vauban."

"Bravo!" cried Clavie. "Did I not
say so?"

"I believe Mamzelle is correct," he
dryly summed up Besson, "I am to re-
ceive—"

He paused, a twinkle in his eye, in
the corner of which quivered a drop of
moisture.

"You consider the price low," said
the publisher. "Twenty francs for each
biography of 500 words is—"

"Precisely," interrupted Besson as
he returned the paper to his pocket. "I
took a prize in mathematics some
years ago. I know how many centimes
a word that is. It is settled. Bon
jour!" And he left the office, brushing
the drop from his eye with a finger
circled by a deep gold band that served
to accentuate the whiteness of the
hand.

"Francis," the publisher said, turn-
ing to the young clerk, "there goes a
man who knows more about France
and her times than any two men in
Paris today. But," he shrugged his
shoulders, "dissipation has done its
work. The green angel has him, and
he will not be on time. Thus I have
put the date five days ahead of that on
which, as you know, we shall actually
need the articles he is to do for us. To-
day is the 6th. I have told him we
must have them by the 15th. We need
them on the 20th. He will deliver
them on the 18th. He has worked for
us before. You may resume your du-
ties, Francis."

Outside in the sunshine Besson re-
lieved his eyes of another drop of
moisture. It was always thus early in
the morning. It was barely noon, and
he had been forced to rise prematurely
in order to see the publisher, who had
twice asked for the interview.

Whether should he go—home to work
at the order from Clavie? Bah! He
had no such intention. What—on such
a day as this to go to his silent room
at Mamzelle's, in the Place Labrosse,
and sit there and spin out words about
Marat, Mirabeau (not 'Tonneau') and
those others! No, no, my child, not
while the sun shone like this, and the
boulevard promised what it did, and
that path in the Bois had begun to
sprinkle the asphalted air with imper-
ceptible jets of the perfume of lilacs.
He might get at the things this evening—
though not this evening, either, for
he had promised himself to go this
evening and see how wretchedly Sar-
dou had put together that last new
play, a thing of shreds and patches of
apocryphal history. Tomorrow would
be time enough. Hold! He had prom-
ised himself that tomorrow. Well, he
had told Clavie that the biographies
would be done by the 15th. Here it
was only the 6th. He had ten days in
which to write out 5,000 words upon

the subjects with which he was entire-
ly familiar. He could do it in a day.
He had done as much before.

To be sure, he wished that he al-
ready had the money for the stuff. He
was badly in need of money, as was
usually the case, and the people who
had purchased the newspaper that
owned him so much for those papers on
the Sorbonne would not pay up till
next month. It was vexatious, and he
had a mind to return to Clavie and re-
quest a trifle in advance and—

But, stop! He knew what he should
do. He would go and see Bougreau's
new picture, which was such a falling
off from his earlier and better style.

First he would have a small glass at
the American's, where the tumbler
were not so thick as at Compe's. Af-
ter Bougreau's picture he would drop
in on Fleche and point out to him the
faults in the poem he had under way.
Surely, now he was in for it, he could
think of a hundred things which would
assist in pleasantly passing the time
(ill evening and the theater. Now for
the small glass at the American's, for
he was shaky after last night. And
what drollery there had been last
night. Arsene with castanets was in-
imitable in that grotesque imitation of
Calve as Carmen.

Mamzelle, in the Place Labrosse,
heard him at daybreak fumbling at the
lock. She often had to go down and
admit him at about this hour, as he
had more than once filled the keyhole
with bits of pencil and the like, mis-
taking them for his latchkey. So it
was better, all things considered, to let
him in as soon as one heard him.

"I regret, Mamzelle," he said when
she opened the door, "to be the cause
of rousing you from the morning slum-
ber which increases beauty. I have
been to the theater."

"As any one may know," Mamzelle
responded shortly, though not unkind-
ly.

Her father had often gone to the
theater and come home to this very house,
at this very hour, in this very condi-
tion. Indeed, old Carriere, across the
way, had told her on more than one oc-
casion that it must seem like old times
to have her lodger going on like this.

"And it was a bad play," Besson was
saying, smiling so blandly that Mam-
zelle frowned. It too vividly reminded
her of the old times. "Sardou knows
no more about French affairs than—
than you do. The next thing we shall
have you doing historical plays, Mam-
zelle."

"The good God forbid!" she ejacu-
lated. "And if monsieur would kindly
enter I will close the door. Monsieur
is still outside."

"I believe Mamzelle is correct," he
apologized. "Permit me." And, enter-
ing, he shut the door in an elaborate
fashion. "Does Mamzelle ascend?"

"It is my hour for beginning the
day," she told him.

"It is an admirable hour for begin-
ning anything," smiled Besson and zig-
zagged his way up to his room. Mam-
zelle waiting at the foot of the stairs
in case of an accident. Then she took
the lamp from its stand and went into
her parlor.

"But," she sighed, "I only wish he
would pay me 60 francs on account. I
pity him. I pity all men. They are of
the sex of my father. I cannot press
him for the rent of his room, and yet
I have promised Dalcour 60 francs by
noon of the 25th of the month, and I
have not a franc of it. I fully expect-
ed monsieur to settle the 1st of this
month, which made six months' rent
due me, but he has not done so, and
now that he has taken to going to the
theater every night, in place of twice
a week, and writing not at all, I see no
prospects of the money."

She threw open the window so that
she might catch the first light of day
and have a box of flowers under way
by the time she partook of dejeuner.

"I will wait as long as possible,
though," she said, with a sigh. "I must
not despair. Despair ruins my skill,
and this time I am making orchids."

The days passed, and Besson offered
no part of the money he owed her. Of
course in the midst of her increasing
perplexity old Carriere had to come
over, when he saw her working at the
window. He folded his arms on the
window sill and talked in at her.

"Ah, Mamzelle," he chirruped, "such
a tombstone as your father will have!
It must be pleasant to rest under such
a tombstone. Dalcour is proud of it
himself. He says that but for my
friendship for you it would have cost
you considerably more than he charges
you. He is an agreeable man, that Dal-
cour. By the way, our young man, our
Besson—I hope his late hours do not
interfere with his work. Is he always
prompt in paying what he owes? I
ask as a friend."

"I find no fault with monsieur,"
Mamzelle stily replied. "He is a writer
for the newspapers. Writers for the
newspapers frequently keep late hours.
I understand."

Again old Carriere sauntered over.
"Dalcour says the marble of that
tombstone is without a flaw. I have
seen it. Dalcour says that 60 francs
you pay him on the 25th will just de-
fray the expense of the marble and the
carrying of it to the cemetery, not a
son for the carving he has executed—
such a ravishing wreath of acorns
round your father's name. Our young
man, our Besson—does he write much
for the newspapers? I meet him so
frequently on the boulevard."

"Doubtless it is wearisome. But, then,
these writers for the newspapers gather
ideas on the boulevard," said she.

Old Carriere smiled and disclosed his
two eyeteeth, which were separated by
a sad stretch of unrelieved vacancy,
and, dusting his elbows, went away
only to come back in a day or so and
say something to the same effect, for
he watched Mamzelle and saw that
something was on her mind. And as
in former times only one thing had
been on her mind—namely, her father—
so he now decided that only two
things could have the old effect—her
father's tombstone and her lodger.

By the 23d Mamzelle was nearly be-
side herself. She had promised Dal-
cour that she should have 60 francs on
the 25th, and she had never broken her
word. The flower making was 'but
poorly remunerative. She earned only
enough to keep her in the bare neces-
saries of life. The landlord must be
paid regularly; the baker must not
wait; her fuel must not be had on
trust. She had only the rent of the
room Besson occupied to assist her in
outside matters, and the rent had not
been paid for nearly the half of the en-
tire year he had been with her. Why
did she keep him? She sometimes ask-
ed herself that question. Old Carriere

would have said that it was because
she had lived so long alone with her
father that now, faded haired and fee-
ble eyed, she found in Besson's neglect
of her and his mode of living a likeness
to the parent who had made himself
the controlling thought of her exist-
ence.

On the afternoon of the 23d Dalcour,
going by, stopped a moment at the
window to say that through unprece-
dented efforts he had managed to get
the tombstone into such condition that
it would be completed on the day he
had promised. She was a woman of
her word, and he wished to be a man
of his.

Mamzelle felt a sudden singing up in
her head. The pieté was conveniently at
hand, but there was nothing to pledge
unless it was her father's tall hat, and
it was more than doubtful that she
could get any considerable sum on
that, especially as the wheels of a
wage had gone over it that time its
wearer had fallen in the fit and they
brought him home white and still, with
the hat reposing upon his motionless
breast.

Besson must do it. He must pay up.
She decided it all at once. She became
quite warm thinking of it. It was
scandalous in the man to treat like this
a woman of her age and with so little
in the world. He was young, he had
his health, and yet he let her house
him for nothing. It was scandalous.
He should pay up.

She did not go to her sleeping room
that night, but waited in the parlor for
him. She knew that he would not come
home early, yet it was a satisfaction to
sit there and weave and unweave the
speech she should employ when he ar-
rived, for she intended to tell him what
she thought and how execrably he was
acting.

While she sat there beguiling the
time thus, Besson was at the theater.
The false history of Sardou attracted
him to the usual degree. Suddenly a
feeling of aloofness seized him. He
was near nothing and no one. The man
occupying the seat next to his was
more than miles away from him. He
recognized the fact that the feeling had
often approached him before, but now
it was here. He was alone. This
dramatist had honor; these actors had
applause; this audience had entertain-
ment. He had nothing. He rose and
went out into the street. He must
elude something that was doing its
best to incorporate itself into his very
being.

Tragic faces passed him. Sounds of
false joy smote his ear. This was his
life. There was nothing more for him.
Up rose before him strange revelations

He turned round, his hand on the
baluster of the stairs. She saw the
flash of the ring on his finger. What
right had he to wear rings when he
owed half a year's rent?

"Then there is something the mat-
ter," he said. "You—you have not been
frightened during my absence?"

"I am used to being alone," she an-
swered, with dry mouth. "It is not
that."

"Then what is it?" he queried. "Is
it the mice? These old houses are over-
run with mice. You should keep a
cat."

"Monsieur," she said, "you have not
found me unreasonable?"

"Assuredly not," he told her.
"I am not easily put into bad hu-
mor."

"Indeed, no."
"You do not find me annoying or in-
sistent?"

"You are the most retiring of crea-
tures."

"Then it is this," she said—"that is,
I mean, if monsieur will pardon me for
being so bold, I should find good use
for a little money just now—not much,
say 60 francs. I could not accept more
than 60 francs. The fact is, I have or-
dered a tombstone for my father's
grave. Dalcour, who makes it, is a
great friend of Carriere, across the way,
so he lets me have it at a low price.
Indeed, it is quite an 'occasion.' But
he has been so deceived he knows not
whom to trust, and a tombstone made
for a certain person is not pleasant
goods to have returned on one's hands.
He asks me for 60 francs on account
on the 25th, which is the day after to-
morrow—it is my father's birthday—
and at noon, when he pays his men.
Then the tombstone goes up. The rest
of the money I pay in a year, which is
certainly most reasonable of Dalcour.
But I have not the 60 francs. I have
promised it, though, and it grieves me
to think I may not keep my word. If
monsieur would kindly let me have
that amount, not a franc more, I should
be infinitely obliged. I should not be
so pressing only that my word is pled-
ged that Dalcour shall have the money,
and in honor I must pay him."

Besson was rolling the ring round
and round on his finger. He looked
down at the little faded creature who
used such fine expressions.

"Honor!" He smiled. "Honor!"

Mamzelle was on fire in an instant.
"Yes, honor!" she cried. "What have
I but honor? I have no wealth. I have
lost my youth. There is no one who
cares for me. I have only honor. My
word is not doubted because it has al-
ways been sacred to me. Honor! I
know how it is with those who have it
not. I have sorrowed and shamed for
one who let his honor fall to the dirt.
It was my father. He was believed of
no man. He had no friends. Alone I
followed him to the grave. Honor! It
is all I have in the world, and I will
carry it with me unsoiled up to the
good God."

She was panting, her hand up over
her heart. Besson was looking straight
before him, a strange expression in his
eyes.

"But monsieur does not attend," said
Mamzelle.

She had to speak to him a second
time. Then he pulled himself together.

"Mamzelle," he said, "you shall have
the 60 francs on the day you have
promised to pay it away," and pressed
onward up the stairs.

But she ran after him and caught
him by the sleeve. "Monsieur," she
said, "will you forgive my heated
words? Have I ever shown doubt of
you? Then forgive me! I had no one
else to go to, and then, monsieur, you—
you seem a trifle careless."

"Yes, yes," he said, "I know. 'Care-
less' is a very good word. But I am
not worth your thought, Mamzelle,
though I am as I wish to be. But you
shall have the money by noon on the
25th."

He went to his room. It was not
quite daybreak, so he lighted the lamp.
His head was heavy and hot. He got
the revolver from the drawer of the
table.

But not just yet. I will work at
those things for Clavie," he said.
"There will be time for that other
afterward."

He slipped the weapon in his pocket.
He picked up the water jug and dashed
its contents over his head.

"So! That cools the oven," he said.
"How do you like it, Mlle. Absinthie?"
The water streamed down his shoul-
ders. His face was varnished with it.
He seated himself at the table, where
there were a dozen pointed pencils and
a quantity of dusty paper.

"Honor!"

He took a pencil and drew it across
the paper.

"Jean Paul Marat was born"— he
wrote, when he let the pencil drop.
He picked it up and wrote again:
"Jean Paul Marat was born"—

He threw the pencil aside.

"Of course he was born," he said, "or
how else did he get here?"

He selected with care a new pencil.
His fingers grasped it till the knuckles
whitened. He drove it over the paper.
Sheet after sheet was filled with writ-
ing and fell to the floor. The pencil
wore out. He took another.

Day came, and the outside light pal-
ed the yellow struggling of the lamp,
though he did not heed. He wrote and
wrote. He wore out pencil after pen-
cil. The lamp died out, with an evil
smell, but he knew it not. From the
storehouse of his memory he drew
forth the knowledge he had acquired
years ago, when he had been hailed as
a rising man whom the world would
yet be proud to acknowledge. At 3
o'clock in the afternoon the last word
was set down. The ten biographies or-
dered by M. Clavie were finished.

His hand was cramped. His neck
had pained darting through it. Every
bone in his body seemed wrenched. It
was too late to deliver the manuscripts
that day.

He threw himself across the bed and
tossed about. At last he slept. He

He got the revolver from the drawer
of his one time hope and aspirations.
More than that, there appealed to him
that which had given the impetus to
all the rest—a woman's love—Marie's.
And it was all gone. Marie farther
away than the rest. Only he lingered,
and for what? And should this con-
tinue? No; a thousand times no. He
had been a fool to suffer it so long, but
now he would end it. The river! It
was cool there, and quiet, and dark,
and—lonely. No; he would go on to
his room at Mamzelle's, look into a
beautifully polished little American
cylinder, with a revolving chamber at
one end of it, and in a moment there
would be a quiet length lying on his
bed, and it would be all over! He could
scarcely wait to get to the Place La-
brosse, only that it would be too much
a part of his new loneliness to be rock-
ed about in the river, his wide open
eyes turning every now and then up to
the stars that should not heed. He
reached the house, his latchkey in his
hand. On the step he glanced up at
the dull little domicile. He to call this
life, to creep into a hiding hole in this
poor place—he who had known so much
that was different! He was of no im-
portance now, but in a few hours he
would have made even little Mamzelle
of the utmost importance and given
her name to thousands of readers of
the newspapers. A garden would pace
back and forth in front of the house.
The whole machinery of the nation
would be set in operation.

Wild to get it over, he dashed the
key into the lock, but Mamzelle was at
the door before he could turn the knob.
Her face was scared. Beyond her in
the dim entry the lamp flared on his
table and outlined a blotch on the wall
which Besson knew to be her father's
hat.

"Monsieur!" she stammered. "Mon-
sieur!" and could get no further.

"Anything wrong, Mamzelle?" he
asked her.

"Not at all," she answered.

"Oh!" he said. "I have been to the
theater, and a bad play it was. Sardou
is as correct in his French history as
you would be, very likely. But I be-
lieve I have said as much to you be-
fore."

"Several times," she returned.

He laughed.

"It is a way I have," he reminded
her. "Good night!" and prepared to
ascend the stairs. "I shall rest—"

The moment had arrived, the mo-
ment to meet which she had been so
long nursing herself.

"Monsieur," she said, trembling
every limb, "will you do me the favor
to step into my parlor?"

He turned round, his hand on the
baluster of the stairs. She saw the
flash of the ring on his finger. What
right had he to wear rings when he
owed half a year's rent?

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ter," he said. "You—you have not been
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word is not doubted because it has al-
ways been sacred to me. Honor! I
know how it is with those who have it
not. I have sorrowed and shamed for
one who let his honor fall to the dirt.
It was my father. He was believed of
no man. He had no friends. Alone I