

HER PHOTOGRAPHS.

You are posing for a portrait,
But I vow you are not so old.
On the screen that you were taken
How the eyes and eyelids showed!

HIS CLEVER RUSE.

Augustine Lafont was the confidential
agent of a large banking house in Paris.
Early in the spring of 1882 he set out
from Paris with bills, notes, drafts, etc.,
to the amount of 1,000,000 francs, for a
house in Chateau.

Nothing worthy of note occurred
until Lafont's attention was attracted
to the features of the new comers,
but yet from what little he could see he
at once made up his mind that their
countenances were not unfamiliar to him.

The diligence crossed the Seine at Nogent
and there remained for the night.
As soon as Lafont had opportunity to
examine the countenances of the strangers
at the supper table he became satisfied
that his first impressions were correct.

After supper the agent lighted his cigar
and walked out on to the bridge,
where he remained nearly half an hour,
at the end of which time he started back
toward the inn, and just as he arrived
at the door he noticed his two companions
entering the stable door.

With a stealthy, catlike tread he approached,
and he was fortunate enough
to make out the gist of their conversation.

When Lafont left the stable, he knew
that the two men had left Paris for the
purpose of robbing him, and that they
intended to put their plan in execution
as soon as the diligence should have
entered the department of the Upper
Marne.

He returned to the inn, and after
considerable reflection he determined
to procure a horse and secretly continue his
journey. Having come to this conclusion,
he went to the driver of the diligence,
and under the plea of having to
remain in Nogent on special business
for a day or two he settled his fare
thus far. Then he went to the stable
and ordered a horse to be in readiness
for him by 3 o'clock in the morning,
at the same time enjoining upon the
groom the strictest secrecy with regard to
his movements.

As soon as these arrangements were
made Lafont retired to his room. He
of course knew that his secret had leaked
out, and even in his proposed course
was not entirely free from danger.
A million francs was a large sum,
and if the two Parisian robbers had
set their hearts upon his possession
he had yet some work to perform
ere he would be entirely free from them.
Last of all,
a new idea struck him, and obtaining
a number of papers he neatly folded
them in an envelope, which he strongly
sealed and bound with a blue ribbon.

At 3 o'clock in the morning, while
it was yet very dark and before any
one else was stirring, Lafont quietly
descended from his room and went to the
stable. The groom was easily aroused,
and in a few moments the agent was
on his way to Chateau.

For two hours he rode on his way,
but instead of pursuing the highroad
from Traves he again crossed the Seine
and kept along by the banks of the Aube.
Daylight was just beginning to
streak the heavens when Lafont thought
he heard the sound of horses behind him,
and it was not long ere he knew that
he was being pursued, and in ten minutes
he was assured that the two robbers
were after him.

In a moment the agent leaped from
the saddle, and seizing a heavy stone
he inflicted a severe bruise upon one
of his horse's fore legs. The animal
reared and plunged, but Lafont managed
to hold him again mounted and rode on,
but the horse limped and staggered be-

neath the effects of the blow he had
received, and in a short time the robbers
came up.

"Ah, good morning, gentlemen,"
said the agent as he reined in his limping
steed, at the same time raising his hat
with affable politeness. "So, it seems,
you, too, are tired of the lumbering dil-
igence."

"Yes," replied the foremost of the
two men; "the diligence did not exactly
suit our convenience, so we took horses."

"And you are bound to Chateau?"
asked Lafont.

"Yes, on important business,"
replied the foremost of the two men;
"that is fortunate," said Lafont,
"for you may, if you see fit, do me a great favor.
I, too, have important business at Chateau,
but I fear that without assistance
I shall not be able to accomplish it.
I have, gentlemen, in my possession, a
vast amount of valuable papers and in-
tended to have continued on my way in
the diligence, but at Nogent I received
the intelligence that a plan was on foot
to rob me."

"Do not start, gentlemen, for what I
tell you is true. And for that reason I
set off thus alone, but my horse has met
with a sad mishap, and I fear the rob-
bers, who, I think, are yet at Nogent,
may overtake me. Now, if you are going
directly to Chateau, perhaps you
would be willing to take my package in
your charge and deliver it to M. Augient
at his office. Any one there will
tell you where he is. Then, if I am over-
hauled, the robbers will find nothing,
and of course you will not be suspected.
If you will thus accommodate me,
you shall be suitably rewarded. What
say you, gentlemen?"

The two men exchanged significant
glances during these remarks, and after
a moment's hesitation one of them said:
"You seem to be ready in trusting
strangers, sir."

"Oh, not at all, sir," retorted Lafont,
with a frank smile, "I would much
rather trust honest travelers than run
the risk of meeting with robbers. You
see just how I am situated, gentlemen,
and if you will do me the favor I ask
you shall not regret it. I shall stop at
Arcis and change my horse and then
follow you."

"Well," said one of the men, "we
will do your wish and meet you at M.
Augient's office."

"Then I thank you most heartily,"
said Lafont, and as he spoke he took a
closely sealed packet from his bosom
and handed it over. "In this," he said,
"there are valuable papers, and I trust
you will use all discretion in your care.
Now the robbers may overtake me as
soon as they like."

After some further directions, given
in an honest, confiding manner, Lafont
bade his new messengers goodbye,
and ere long they were out of sight.
The agent turned his horse's head back
toward Nogent, where he arrived in safety,
and on the next morning he pro-
cured a guard and once more took the
diligence. The robbers stopped at the
first convenient place to examine their
prize, but their chagrin can be better
imagined than described when they
found that they held only a securely
bound parcel of waste paper. They knew
that they were suspected, and of course
they dared not push the matter further.

—Exchange.

Dumas' Suffering.

When Alexandre Dumas, the young-
er, was just out of college, his father
took him on a hunting trip. They put
up at a farmhouse and occupied two lit-
tle bedrooms which opened into each
other. In the middle of the night the
son was awakened and saw his father
walking back and forth.

"What are you doing?" asked the
boy.

"You see, I am walking."

"You are sick?"

"Yes, I am in great pain, but I can-
not sleep. I have it every night."

"Is there nothing to cure it?"

"It is incurable."

"But can't it be relieved?"

"No. When it takes me, I get up and
walk. If it is very bad, I go to reading."

"And when it is insupportable?"

"I go to work."

It was true, and in later years his son
often saw him in the night sitting at
his desk writing with one hand and hold-
ing upon his stomach with the other.

"How can you work always?" some-
one asked him on such an occasion.



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