

THE MAN IN THE WELL

SYNOPSIS

The body of a man is discovered in the well located on the dividing line between the estates of Arthur and Louis Farades, two brothers. The police are called and upon learning that the body is that of M. Jean Farades, an uncle of the two brothers, the latter are accused of murder.

Paul Merseins, who is engaged to the daughter of Arthur Farades, sets out to clear her father of the crime.

He has Jacques Velizy, who had made the voyage from India with Jean Farades, arrested as an accomplice in the murder, but he proves his innocence. Velizy falls in love with Jeanne, the daughter of Louis Farades. The two men later, in their search for evidence, become friends.

He finds that Calceles is writing identical with that of the receipt; and that he is in league with John J. Smith of Calcutta.

CHAPTER VI. The police find some possessions of Jean Farades hidden in the Farades' brothers' places, and take them to the district attorney's office. Velizy and Merseins go to India.

CHAPTER VII. They find Smith and see him buy some property from India. Later on they become acquainted with him and go to his country villa for dinner.

"I am homesick," she said with a wistful smile, as Jacques expressed his sympathy. "It is your terrible city, I want my own garden with its flowers and sun."

"I'll get another doctor to see you tomorrow," her husband said. "The doctor is very clever, and I'll send for him." Fedeja's great eyes seemed full of fear as she looked at him. She made no reply, but seemed to avert her eyes.

Jacques was alarmed at this change in her. Her kind eyes were dim with pity. He stayed only a few minutes.

"Good-by, madame," he said, pressing her slim hand in his. "I am genuinely sorry to see you go so unwell. I hope the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you will have recovered."

Her burning hand trembled in his, and when she replied there was still the sob in her voice.

The day fixed for the signing of the contract arrived. When Jacques reached the office he found Calceles expecting him.

"I have made a few alterations," said the commission agent carelessly as he handed Jacques his copy. "It is nothing but the change of sense of the contract, but it seems necessary."

"He had had a contract drawn up by a lawyer which prevented Velizy from touching his capital once it was in the business. He began to read it and when he came to a clause, and the more excited he became in defending his own interests, the more content was Calceles that he was dealing with a fool."

"Now, there is just one clause that is essential as regards the payment of the funds," Jacques remarked, when the commission agent had finished.

Calceles had contented that his future partner would not think of that in the numerous articles with which he had hoped to beguile him.

"You give me your capital, and I'll pay mine into the counting house," Calceles said; "that is simple."

"Of what does your consist?" "I see," said Jacques, "you have so many occupations that you haven't time to attend to anything. Well, I'll give you all the time you want."

The commission agent was beginning to see that his man was not such a fool. He had accepted all the conditions that Calceles had made in the contract, but he had not yet signed them.

"Fix the time yourself. If you need a month, that will suit me," said Jacques.

"Oh, scarcely a month," murmured Calceles, who felt himself beaten.

"Very well, then, as soon as you can; and in the meantime I'll drop in occasionally, and see you, and examine the books."

"But," objected Calceles, "if you examine my books, I must be sure to pledge myself in the most absolute manner. If you wish, I'll write a letter to that effect."

"Your word is sufficient." The commission agent was not anxious to receive a letter to which he would have to reply. When Velizy had gone he sat for a long time in the room that he had taken for a simpleton had some hidden motive in suggesting this partnership.

Pecheret, who had been out, now returned.

"Well, it is all up," he asked, when he caught sight of his partner's face.

"Oh, no. But that fellow has some motive in coming here. He'll bring me his money when I show up mine, and in the meantime he is coming here, so he says, to see the books."

What is a Gentleman? An exaltation of a gentleman has been described many times, never perhaps with entirely satisfactory results. Little Saddle had never heard any of the legends, but he had read the subject, albeit one touched with unconscious symbolism. The word was in the spelling lesson, and I said: "please read it," she answered, "a gentleman's a man, you don't know very well."

"Then he is more to be feared than I should have thought," said Pecheret.

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