CHAPTER I

BURGLARS AND THE POLICE

VIDOCQ

BEFORE coming to the police agents who have helped to make the Préfecture de Police famous since its inauguration in 1900, a curious figure deserves mention. Vidocq was a daring bandit who joined the Police Force after making an escape from gaol.

This was in the year 1809. M. Pasquier, the Prefect of Police at that time, believed in setting a thief to catch a thief, and he enrolled Vidocq without hesitation.

It was he who, for more than twenty years, secretly directed the police operations against criminals in Paris.

I will borrow from M. Léon Ameline's book the story of this extraordinary individual.

Vidocq did not belong to the official staff of the Prefecture.[1] His offices were in the Rue Sainte-Anne.[2] He had, at first, six and later ten men under his orders—all former prisoners, paid from the secret funds of the police and not included in the lists of police employés. In 1829 Vidocq was replaced by his lieutenant, Latour, known as Coco-Latour. After the Revolution in July 1830 the semi-official brigade was suppressed and an official brigade was created, consisting of twelve inspectors commanded by an officer of the peace. M. Gisquet, the Prefect of Police, was not satisfied with the results obtained by this new brigade and, after an interview with Vidocq, by a warrant of 31st March 1832, officially appointed him *Chef de la Brigade de Sûreté*. The Prefect, however, soon perceived that Vidocq's methods of procedure were sometimes reprehensible. In order to discover the authors of a crime and to have a success credited to his account, Vidocq staged a series of sham burglaries. He was dismissed—that is to say, his resignation was accepted—on 17th November 1832. Under certain circumstances he was a useful auxiliary, but his standard of morality was too low to deserve the confidence imposed in him so long. With the exception of this short period when he was very mistakenly placed at the head of the Brigade de la Sûreté his rôle from 1810 to 1829 was at once that of a semi-official detective, a shameful "copper's nark" and an informer. The officials of the Prefecture disliked having anything to do with Vidocq's section, and it was because

[1] He only belonged to it for six months.

[2] The old Rue Sainte-Anne occupied the site of the new buildings of the Palais de Justice.

of this that he was given sole direction of the investigations he undertook.

Vidocq and his men always used the same methods. They would search the circle of their acquaintances, haunt the lowest depths of Paris, which they knew so well, offer to treat notorious vagabonds of their acquaintance to a meal or a drink, and make love to prostitutes. This was how they encouraged confidences.

Vidocq could imitate the appearance and language of the professionals of crime to perfection and these people considered him one of themselves.

Sometimes he managed to join a gang, assisted in planning a crime and even saw the beginnings of its execution, when it would be dramatically interrupted by the arrival of the police who had been informed by him.

Sometimes Vidocq would arrange for his own arrest in order to impose on his occasional friends.

In the end these people found out that he was working for the police, but he knew so well how to disguise himself, he was such an adept in the art of make-up that he would deceive even the people who had known him in gaol.

Vidocq's adventures would furnish the material for several books.

He was born in Arras in 1775, the son of an honest baker. When he was sixteen years of age he stole 2000 francs from his father, meaning to seek his fortune in America. But the money was stolen from him in turn before he reached Ostend, where he had intended to take ship. He worked for a time as a clown in a circus, then returned to Arras, enlisted in the Army, deserted, enlisted in another regiment and again deserted. He went to Austria and there served in a regiment of cuirassiers. Then he returned to France, where he again served in the Army and was wounded in the leg. He then came back to Arras and married—at the age of eighteen.

Discovering that his wife had a lover, he went to Belgium, where he again became a soldier. He was promoted to a lieutenancy, seduced his landlady and managed to get a large sum of money out of her, which he spent very quickly in Paris. In 1790 he was sentenced to imprisonment for assaulting an officer—then shortly afterwards to eight years' hard labour for a forgery of which he was innocent. Vidocq escaped from gaol in Brest, was captured, and again escaped. Denounced by a former convict, he was imprisoned at Arras, escaped, and continued in Paris and the provinces his life of extraordinary adventures,

being in turn a pedlar, an electioneering agent, a tailor, and so on. It was at Lyons in 1809 that he had the idea of offering his services to M. Dubois, General Commissioner of Police in that city. M. Dubois, a sceptic, refused, and had him put in gaol. He promised Vidocq, however, that if he succeeded in escaping and would return and give himself up at Police Headquarters, he would accord him his confidence. Vidocq managed to knock down the two policemen who were taking him to goal and came back in triumph to the inspector. The latter, after employing him for a time, gave him a pass to Paris. There, after some vicissitudes and a final stay in the prison of La Force, he definitely changed sides and was recruited by the Prefect of Police as a protector of the honest.

After his dismissal in November 1832, Vidocq retired to Saint-Mandé, with the intention of living quietly on the money he had earned. He wanted to devote his retirement to philanthropic work and started a bookbinding factory in Saint-Mandé, where he proposed to employ former convicts of both sexes. But his factory was set on fire and he was ruined.

Vidocq, whose name was the terror of evil-doers and was repugnant to honest people, died in misery in 1857, abandoned and forgotten.

The regular police despised Vidocq and were jealous of him. Magistrates made things as difficult as possible for him and accused him of blackmail and of sharing in thieves' booty. They were for ever trying to ruin him and to bring about another conviction by paying surprise visits to his rooms, where they had previously hidden compromising objects or letters.

But Vidocq, gifted with an animal's instinct of self-preservation, foiled all their schemes and brought to nothing all the charges against him.

His enemies went so far as to accuse the ex-convicts who formed his squad of robbing people in the streets, and Vidocq concocted a witty manner of refuting this charge. His men were ordered always to wear *suède* gloves on duty—to demonstrate the impossibility of their picking pockets. M. Gisquet, the Prefect of Police who was responsible for Vidocq's short-lived term as official *Chef de la Sûreté parisienne*, apologized for his mistake in his memoirs. He wrote:

"Three months' experience sufficed to show me all the inconveniences attached to employing men like these at the Prefecture. Vidocq's methods were so definitely provocative that I decided to dismiss him as well as all the suspect characters of whom he made use. Up to that time it had been very generally thought

that a thief must be set to catch a thief. I proposed to use honest men as detectives, and the results proved that I was right. . . . I did not want Justice to continue to be represented by men who, having previously been sentenced, could not be believed on oath. . . . I ordered the immediate dismissal of all ex-convict employés and decided that in future all members of the regular police should be men with a clean record. . . . From that time onwards the Brigade de Sûreté was composed of men of irreproachable antecedents nominated by a warrant signed by myself."

The intelligence and professional cleverness of our "bloodhounds" of the police is constantly being tested by the authors of those burglaries which entail specialist knowledge. These people need not only to know all the ins and outs of their profession but they must be capable of preparing "an affair" in all its details and sufficiently well organized and provided with money to be able to await the most favourable moment for the execution of their plans.

As a general rule, these thefts are committed by regular "teams." Some of them—the international gangs, for instance, are permanent. They possess chiefs and appointed receivers, and consider burglary in the light of a regular and highly remunerative industry. Other teams, on the contrary, are organized only for a short time and for a single theft. Once the particular operation is finished, each of the members goes his own way. As a rule these teams are small in numbers. Usually there are three or four members, rarely five or six. These, of course, are only the people who actually commit the thefts. Receivers and other accomplices with whom the team may be connected are often much more numerous.

Modern science has put highly perfected means of action at the disposal of such people. It enables them not only to cut out door panels with complete silence but also to break open safes with fair certainty of success.

It is clear that the latest scientific inventions help the defence as much as the attack. But, just as in war the struggle between the shield and the cannon ends in the invariable victory of the cannon, so will the safe, however modern and powerful it may be, always succumb to the tools of the scientific burglar.

But even when the burglars cannot do the work on the spot, they can carry the safe away and break it open elsewhere. Safes weighing three-quarters of a ton have been found broken open

near the scene of the burglary. No metal can resist the blow-pipe. It is only necessary for the criminal to possess a motor-car capable of carrying a tube of hydrogen, another of oxygen and a burner. A flame of three thousand degrees Réaumur can then be brought to bear on the plates protecting the safe.

Makers of safes have tried to invent a fire-proof material to place between the two plates, but criminals have circumvented this method of defence by using dynamite or nitro-glycerine.

Sometimes they have to get through a wall in order to approach the safe. This difficulty does not discourage the criminals. Some of them have even made a speciality of this kind of work. They generally rent a room above, beneath, or next to the place they have determined to attack. They can then pierce without interference the walls which separate them from their goal.

This procedure has the advantage of making it unnecessary to break in from the outside, and thus the risk of being surprised or of arousing suspicion is diminished.

One of the most famous burglaries committed by an international gang was the theft at the offices of the American Express, carried out on the night of 26-27th April 1901, in the heart of Paris.

The American Express Company had—and still has—an important agency in Paris, occupying the first three floors at No. 2 Rue Scribe, at the corner of the Rue Auber.

At the time of which we speak, the night-watchman was a young negro of seventeen years of age, Merl Segar, who slept in one of the rooms on the first floor. An office boy called Charpentier lived in a room on the sixth floor.

At 6 a.m. on 27th April, when coming down to his work, Charpentier declared that the Bank had been broken into during the night.

Segar was shivering on his bed, half dead with fear.

He had been overpowered about midnight by three men who had gagged and bound him. One of them, armed with a revolver, watched over him while the other two ransacked the bank.

When their task was finished they had cut the rope which bound Segar and threatened to kill him if he gave the alarm.

Terrified and shivering, the negro had awaited daylight without daring to make a sound.

The investigators found numerous pieces of rope which had been cut by a knife. It was proved that the safe had been broken open by nitro-glycerine. A sum of 20,256 francs had been stolen,

as well as five hundred and fifty travellers' cheques to the value of 12,200 dollars.

The Police had a valuable clue even before beginning their investigation.

A few days before the theft—to be exact, on 20th April—the Manager of the Morgan Bank, situated at 31 Boulevard Haussmann, had warned the Service de la Sûreté that three suspicious-looking strangers had come to look over the offices with, he thought, burglarious intentions.

A watch on the buildings had been kept by Sergeants Debischop and Thevenot, who had already made a reputation for their success in sensational cases. These two excellent policemen were totally unlike, but each was an admirable complement of the other. Dry, a little stiff, phlegmatic, very British-looking, Debischop was a policeman of high rank, thanks to his *sang-froid* and his powers of reasoning. Tall, strong, highly-coloured, very vivacious and rather excitable, Thevenot was the man of quick and rapid action. He loved fighting and colourful life.

On April 24th our officers again saw the three suspects in the hall of the Morgan Bank, which they were apparently studying closely. They were followed and were seen to behave in the same way at the Opéra branch of the Comptoir d'Escompte and at the Equitable Company of the United States.

On the 25th the same men reappeared at the Morgan Bank and again inspected the branch of the Comptoir d'Escompte. After this they went on the same voyage of discovery to Cook's offices and the post offices of the Avenue de l'Opéra and the Avenue Marsollier.

Debischop and Thevenot watched them more and more carefully.

On the 26th these individuals once more returned to the Morgan Bank and to the Comptoir d'Escompte, and went thence to the Halles. Two of them took seats on the terrace of a café whilst the third went into a shop, where he bought five yards of string.

The police officers then showed the string which had been used to tie up the night watchman to M. Chanrion, at whose shop the three suspects had bought their own. The shopkeeper recognized the goods he had sold. He added that his customers were certainly of English or American nationality.

It was decided to start investigations in England, in the world of international thieves. So Debischop and Thevenot went to the Gare du Nord on 1st May, at 9 a.m., to take the train to Calais. Suddenly they found themselves on the platform face

to face with the man they had seen buying string on 26th April at M. Chanrion's shop.

They immediately arrested him. The catch was a good one. The man was carrying a part of the booty stolen from the American Express Company, in particular a third part of the 550 travellers' cheques. He also had on him a cloak-room ticket for the deposit of a trunk at the Gare St. Lazare. This trunk was seized and immediately opened and was found to be filled with a large quantity of dynamite and with burglars' tools.

The arrest of this man, who had given the name of Miller, had prevented the two officers from catching the train that left at 9 a.m. At 11.50 they took another train for Calais.

Walking along the corridor of the train, another surprise awaited them. They found themselves in the company of one of Miller's companions on the day he bought the string. In spite of his energetic protests they arrested him at once, and when the train stopped at Amiens they handed him over to the local police. He was the man called Eddy Guérin *alias* Edwards.

The police officers had not noticed that he was travelling in the company of a woman. She took good care not to arouse their attention and continued her journey to England.

Miller could not deny his guilt. So he decided to confess, and explained the way in which the burglary had been committed.

He had carried it out in company with Eddy Guérin and a professional " yegg " (a man who opens safes with explosives) named MacManus. The latter had entered the offices of the American Express Company before closing time and had hidden himself in a closet in the basement.

After the negro watchman had made his rounds, he opened the door to his accomplices. All three of them tied up Segar. Miller stayed to watch him as a precaution, while MacManus and Eddy Guérin proceeded with the burglary. The job took rather a long time. It was not until 5 a.m. that the malefactors left the office with their booty.

Dawn was rising over Paris. They went in the direction of the Seine, and, crossing a bridge, threw into the river all the tools they had used in breaking open the safe. Then they went to the room occupied by Miller in an hotel in the Rue de l'Arcade and divided the spoil.

Guérin was a clever criminal, a regular type of the international bandit. On 20th May 1889, he had been sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for stealing 247,000 francs from the Bank of France in July 1888. He had also been sentenced several times

in foreign countries for crimes of a similar nature. Notwithstanding Miller's confession, he persisted in denying his guilt. On the night of the burglary he said he had not left the hotel in the Rue Vignon where he had been staying. He made a particular point of the fact that nothing compromising had been found on him and protested vehemently against his arrest.

The theft which he brought off at Lyons, in company with a man named Frank Dago, in full daylight, and in the middle of the crowd surrounding the pay-desks in the hall of the Société Lyonnaise, deserves to be described.

While a messenger of the Bank of France, carrying a bag containing a large sum of money, waited his turn at the counter, the two criminals managed to rob him of 247,000 francs in notes and 26,000 francs worth of shares. The unfortunate messenger only noticed his loss when the thieves were already well away.

Eddy Guérin, who was a member of an admirably well organized international gang, only turned over 200,000 francs to his associates when he arrived in London.

Informed by newspaper articles of the actual amount of the robbery, these excellent gentlemen were indignant. They disapproved and ordered him to hand over the missing 40,000 francs, the remaining seven thousand being allowed for his expenses.

Eddy Guérin refused. A fight began during which he received a revolver bullet in his side. But he managed to get away. His associates, however, denounced him to the authorities at Lyons, who sent their best detectives to London to make his arrest.

They found Guérin in the place indicated by his denouncers. But the adroit thief escaped them by climbing on to the roof and sliding down a water-pipe.

But this gymnastic feat did not secure his escape. When he reached ground he hailed a cabman and ordered him to drive to the station. But the driver was suspicious—for he had seen the last part of Guérin's descent—and he drove so slowly as to give the pursuing policemen time to overtake the fugitive.

Summoned before the Cour d'Assizes du Rhône, Eddy Guérin strenuously asseverated his innocence—just as he did on the present occasion. He was, however, sentenced to ten years' penal servitude and served his sentence in the prison at Riom. He was released on 24th May 1899, and was shipped from Havre to his own country. But he soon came back to France and continued in the same way of life.

In the case of the American Express Company, a fresh occurrence was destined to upset his plans. His mistress, May Churchill *alias* Chicago May, escaped arrest at the time Guérin was taken,

but, after spending a few weeks in England, she returned to Paris to try and get into communication with her lover, and was arrested.

The inquiry established that she had taken Guérin's luggage to England, and he was no longer able to pretend that there were no proofs of his guilt.

A true friend to the burglar, May Churchill denied participation in the crime and did all she could to prove her lover's innocence. But the English Police quashed her statements with the information that she had checked Guérin's luggage under a false name when she arrived in London, and that she had gone to a safe deposit to leave a package which, unfortunately, had not been examined. She had taken it away before they could search the safe.

However, the English Police had supplied very interesting information about her. Together with a woman called Antchum and a certain Timothy Oats, she had practised a special form of robbery, the two women enticing men to their rooms where they were robbed by Oats.

On the other hand, the Berlin Police had arrested on 7th August a certain Karl Leternee, who was circulating travellers' cheques stolen from the Rue Scribe. He confessed to having received them from Timothy Oats. They certainly constituted a part of Eddy Guérin's share.

Eddy Guérin and Miller were brought before the Court of Assizes of the Seine on 14th June 1902, and sentenced to hard labour for life.

May Churchill was sentenced to five years' penal servitude and ten years' expulsion from France.

MacManus, who had fled to America, was arrested soon afterwards in Ottawa, Canada, and tried at the court of St. Louis, as the Canadian authorities refused to hand him over on account of his nationality. He was sentenced to ten years' hard labour.

Eddy Guérin was transported to Guiana and taken to the station on Devil's Island. This unquestionably was done on account of his record and because he was likely to attempt to escape. For six years Guérin thought of nothing but escape. He suffered greatly from heat and fever. He weighed 220 lbs. on arrival, but became a shadow of his former self.

He had always been able to attract women, and he inspired the wife of his guard with sentiments which have never been exactly defined.

In May 1905, just as he was about to change camps, she gave him a certain amount of money. The next day Eddy Guérin

disappeared into the virgin forest, accompanied by two other convicts.

The three possessed a revolver, primitive tools, a barrel of water and the money given to them by the guard's wife.

After having cut down a tree and transformed it into a canoe, the three convicts embarked in the dead of night and set their course for Dutch Guiana, which was two hundred miles distant from their starting-point.

They rowed by turns without stopping. After several days and nights they began to disagree about their work.

One night Eddy Guérin heard his two companions talking in Spanish, planning to steal the revolver and the money he had with him and cut his throat. An attempt to put this plan into execution followed almost immediately.

Guérin saw his companions moving in his direction with the idea of surprising him while he was asleep. As if by chance he awoke at that moment and they had to abandon their plan.

For three days and three nights the convict did not sleep for a second. Then, overcome by the nervous strain of this perpetual wakefulness, he put an end to the situation by forcing his companions to work under threat of the revolver. Against their wills, they were obliged to obey. Two days later the three convicts, completely exhausted, arrived on the Dutch coast.

Here Eddy Guérin left his companions and went alone into the forest, where he was captured by a tribe of Indians. He escaped after four days and arrived at Paramaribo. Thence he found his way to Georgetown, where he embarked for New York. From there he went to Chicago.

The story of this escape has been taken from a newspaper, the *Milwaukee Free Press*, dated September 24th 1915. The article was pretentiously entitled " Eddy Guérin, the Only Convict Who Succeeded in Escaping from Devil's Island." This is not quite correct. Guérin did not escape from the Devil's Island, where he was detained for six years. He simply profited by his transfer to St. Laurent du Maroni to put into execution the plan he had been evolving for such a long time.

It is also stated in the article that the French Penitentiary Service had declared that the convict was dead and that his grave could be seen at Devil's Island. But, in an official document now before the writer, a letter addressed by the Service de la Sûreté to John Collins, Superintendent-General of the Chicago Police, and dated April 30th 1905, it is stated that Guérin escaped from the penal colony of St. Laurent du Maroni, Guiana, to which he had been transferred.

GUERIN, ALIAS EDWARDS

MAY CHURCHILL

The truth is certainly less picturesque than the legend but it cannot be disputed.

Eddy Guérin defied the Chicago Police to catch him. Provided with money by fellow-members of his gang he would have lived peacefully if the spirit of unrest had not urged him on. Less than six months after his escape he went to London.

In April 1906, Debischop and Thevenot were ordered to London to find and arrest him.

A few days later, when this audacious criminal imagined himself to be quite safe, he was arrested. He was extradited, handed over the the French Government and sent back to Guiana.

Next we will describe an instance in which the struggle between the criminals and the Police becomes a tragedy, the murder of the Sub-Chief of the Paris Sûreté, Robert Blot, and Inspector Nugat of the special brigade.

The persons concerned belonged to the gang nicknamed the Antiquaries or Church Robbers.

For more than a year the Sûreté Générale had received complaints of thefts from many churches and museums throughout France.

The first of these sensational burglaries was committed on the night of 25th–26th May 1908, in Limoges Cathedral. Numerous precious objects, forming part of the treasures of the Cathedral, had disappeared. On the night of 5th–6th August 1908, the same criminals visited the Church of St. Viance, in the Corrèze, and equally valuable *objets d'art* were stolen. Two months later, on the night of 26th–27th October 1908, the Church of St. Vaury, Creuse, was burgled in its turn.

All attempts to find the thieves failed. They had stopped their operations for several months, undoubtedly because their robberies had brought them in enough money to live.

Suddenly, on the night of 25th–26th March 1909, the gang gave further cause for discussion. They broke into the church of the Souterraine, Creuse, stole two rare and very valuable chalices, one Roman and the other Gothic, both ornamented with turquoises and rubies, and also three ciboriums of the Renaissance and a censer of the same period. A month later the Church of Huriel was also visited and two chalices and an antique ciborium were stolen. During the same month, on 27th April 1909, the burglars broke into the Museum at Gueret and stole several precious objects.

It was a striking coincidence that the same articles had already ben stolen in 1907 by the Thomas gang, the same who stole the

famous Ambazac reliquary from the Church of Ambazac, Haute Vienne.

This gang had been discovered and run to earth, after a lengthy investigation, by Brigadier Calchas, of the Paris Service de la Sûreté, and the stolen treasures had been replaced in the show cases.

Now they had disappeared afresh!

The departmental commissaire of the Sûreté Générale at Limoges, M. Canac, who was in charge of the investigation, took energetic measures in collaboration with Inspector Calchas, who had been prime mover in the first investigation. This inspector, who had the same name as the famous prophet sung by Homer, was really a great policeman. It seems to us that his personality and his way of working deserve particular mention.

Physically, he was a fat, round ball of grease on short legs. His protruding stomach preceded his fat face, with swollen cheeks, in which tiny eyes glittered under heavy lids. To see him one would have said that his spirit had been conquered by matter and flickered only feebly within him. However, when he wished, this man was an astounding actor. He could exaggerate the foolishness of his appearance to such an extent that one would imagine oneself in the company of a person with no intelligence whatsoever.

But when he was working his eyes became enormously vivid and intelligent. Such a change came over him that one could hardly believe him to be the same person. He was no longer big, nor fat, nor stupid. He was so energetic that he was like the hero of a mediæval story. But this side of his character was known only to a few.

When he was in charge of an important investigation he disappeared for weeks, to enact the rôle of the criminal he suspected. He performed this so nearly to the truth that it is safe to say that, in his way, he reached genius. His modesty prevented him from boasting, and the general public has never known how great a policeman was hidden under the immense body of this fine fellow. Those who knew him have forgotten that, in the case of the robbers of the churches and museums, he played his part so perfectly that he was able to mix with this dangerous gang of criminals and to discover their secrets.

In the Ambazac case, for a whole week he acted the part of an old country curé, good-natured and rather stupid and, later, for several months he took on himself the rôle of "Monsieur Louis," jewelry broker, receiver and providential helper of the gang.

His courage was as great as his cunning. He risked his life by

spending days and nights alone with criminals who would unquestionably have murdered him if they had had the slightest suspicion of his identity.

He spent an unforgettable night playing cards in a first-class compartment of the P.L.M. train between Paris and Marseilles with Thomas and three leading members of his gang. He inspired his travelling companions with such confidence that during the night they handed over to him a number of stolen *objets d'art* and gave him the job of selling their treasures. Of course, at the end of the journey the whole of the gang, whose surprise may be imagined, was arrested.

He behaved in a similar manner when tracking down the gang of church robbers at the time this comedy turned into a tragedy.

Two of the gang had fallen into the hands of the Limoges Police. They stated that a certain Delaunay, of 25 Rue de la Folie Méricourt, Paris, was their real chief. He lived in a pleasant, comfortably-furnished flat on the second floor.

It was decided to proceed with his arrest without delay.

M. Blot, sub-chief of the Service de la Sûreté, started for the Rue de la Folie Méricourt on 18th July 1909, at 6 a.m.

He had been warned that the man was a very dangerous person who might put up a strong resistance, and so he took with him—besides his secretary, M. Peyrot des Gachons—Chief Inspector Dol and Inspectors Mugat and Mathieu.

When they arrived, M. Blot, next to whom stood Inspector Mugat, knocked at the door of the flat. From inside a woman's voice asked: "Who is there?"

"Open, in the name of the Law!" answered the sub-chief of the Sûreté.

The same woman's voice then asked:

"Must I open, Monsieur?"

"Get away from there," said a man's voice. "I'm going myself."

The door was half-opened. Through the aperture a man's hand appeared. It held a revolver. It drew the trigger. M. Blot put his hands to his breast and fell into the arms of his secretary and of Inspector Mathieu, whilst Inspector Mugat flung himself on the door, forced it open, entered the room, and came to grips with the murderer.

But the bandit was as strong as Hercules. He freed himself, turned the Inspector round and shot him twice in the back.

In his turn, the unlucky Mugat fell to the ground.

Chief Inspector Dol, who had followed Mugat, fired at the

criminal. But he missed him and was thrown violently out of the room.

The door was shut and locked. Two fresh shots were heard—then silence.

The secretary and Sub-Inspector Mathieu took their leader to a chemist's shop and then climbed the stairs afresh. At the now closed door they found only Chief Inspector Dol, who was vainly trying to break it down.

M. Faralicq, the magistrate of the Second Arrondissement, who had been warned of the arrest, arrived at this moment.

Using his enormous strength, he managed to break the door in with his shoulder. He went into the flat, followed by Chief Inspector Dol and by Mathieu and M. des Gachons.

By the bedroom door two bodies were lying side by side, in the midst of a great pool of blood. They were the unfortunate Inspector Mugat and the man the party had come to arrest. Both were dead.

At the same moment M. Blot died in the chemist's shop to which he had been taken.

The so-called Delaunay was later identified by M. Bertillon. He was a protean criminal, known under ten different names. Actually he was Jean-Baptiste Detollenaere, sentenced to death in default during 1905 by the Court of the Oise for having assaulted and killed, on 3rd August 1904, at St. Just-en-Chaussée, near Clermont, Oise, a postman named Pillon, whom he had robbed of a bag containing 400 francs.

Thus ended the life of this gang leader, three times a murderer.

Fortunately all stories of thieves do not end so drastically. Others can be told in which clever policemen triumphed over expert criminals without shedding blood and sometimes even under comical circumstances.

Here is an altogether happy case.

In March 1922, two employés of a money-changer, Marcel Chilouet and Lemarchand, *alias* "Lagardère," stole 600,000 francs from their employer and fled with their wives, first to Constantinople and then to Athens.

For 160,000 drachmae Chilouet and his wife bought a magnificent marble villa in the suburbs and became friendly with several of the leading people of Athens.

Sergeants Leroy and Holtzer, two excellent detectives of the Service de la Sûreté, went there and, after many adventures and false clues, which it would take too long to describe, managed to find the sumptuous hiding-place of the thieves.

The day they made this discovery chanced to be the eve of the house-warming of the marble villa.

The criminals had decided to give a fancy-dress dance. What better could Leroy and Holtzer do than go to it? And so that night two of the "masks" in that select company had had no invitation. One of the sergeants wore the dress of Sophocles, the other was Æsculapius. It was a delightful party. And the "gate-crashers" also enjoyed themselves. . . . When dawn came neither of them had left. When the last guests had gone, they stayed on alone.

The moment for the settlement of the bill had come. Taking off their masks they declared their identity and, in no wise deterred by the good time their hosts had given them, they made their arrests.

The Chilouets still had 100,000 francs left. They made no bones about admitting that they had buried a hundred and twenty other notes of 1000 francs each in the cellar of a house occupied by the parents of Chilouet at Issy-les-Moulineaux.

So the plaintiff was likely to recover a fair proportion of the money he had lost.

But the detectives wanted to go one better.

They managed to convince their prisoners that it was in their interest to make good their victim's loss as much as possible. Then they took them to a lawyer and made them sell the marble villa to the money-changer, who—according to Greek law—legally acquired the place without paying a sou for it.

Thus ended, in a musical-comedy manner, the story of these thieves.

Here is another tale from which gaiety is not altogether absent.

About 4 p.m. on 12th June 1923, an old diamond-broker was about to enter—as he did every day—the bank where he had a safe, to deposit a bag containing jewels worth 800,000 francs. He had even laid his hand on the knob of the door when he heard somebody behind him call:

"Monsieur! Monsieur!"

He turned round and found himself face to face with a respectable-looking man who told him—politely—that he had a big stain of spittle on his back.

Glad to have been warned of this little misadventure which could now be put right, the diamond-broker smiled gratefully at the thoughtful gentleman who had been so polite.

"I should like to be told if the same thing happened to me,"

said the unknown gentleman. He pointed his finger at the spittle between the other's shoulder-blades.

"You had best take off your coat if you want to get it off," the amiable gentleman continued.

Putting his bag at his feet, the diamond-broker took off his overcoat and saw that he really had at his back a mark like spittle. He felt sure that he would only be able to get it off properly in the lavatory of the bank; so he thanked the man, took his bag again and went inside.

He had not reached the lavatory when it occurred to him that, while his bag had not changed its shape, it was lighter than before.

A horrible suspicion began to dawn upon him. He tore the bag open. It contained nothing but packing-paper.

Abandoning this valueless object, he rushed outside, shouting. But he looked in vain for the amiable man.

Sergeant Rousselet of the Special Division was entrusted with the investigation of this case. He established the thief's method of procedure without difficulty. The bag the broker had taken was not his own, but another exactly like it, which the adroit thief had changed when his victim removed his overcoat.

The thief's behaviour seemed to show that he was a clever professional, probably belonging to an international gang. But how was he to be discovered?

Sergeant Rousselet thought hard; and at last came to the conclusion that in the bag he held the thread of Ariadne.

The bag had a special strap, known as a jeweller's strap, quite new.

Taking the bag with him, he made inquiries among the manufacturers and sellers of things of this kind. He managed to prove that the bag had been bought, the day before the theft, at the Galeries Lafayette, and the strap that very same morning at a shop near the bank on the doorstep of which the theft had been committed.

At the same time the salesman gave a more exact description of the thief than the broker was able to supply. He also stated that his customer had joined another individual who was waiting outside in the street and who held in his hand a bag exactly like the one that was shown to him.

A search was made for these two people, who were evidently the thieves. In order to succeed in laying hands on them, Rousselet looked up the records of international thieves who made a speciality of this kind of crime.

His attention was drawn more especially to a certain Booter,

who had already tried in 1914 to rob a diamond-broker. Arrested and sentenced to five years' penal servitude he was released in 1919. Except on one point Booter's description agreed with that of the thief; but the latter was clean-shaven, whereas Booter wore a beard.

In spite of elaborate search Booter was not to be found.

When a similar theft was committed in Brussels, Rousselet went to that city and was told that a certain Kleinberg, living in Antwerp, was supposed to have been the thief.

Rousselet then showed Booter's photograph to his Belgian colleague. The latter exclaimed:

"This is not Booter but Kleinberg!"

Inquiries made in Belgium revealed that this man had left Antwerp, where he usually lived, on 10th June; that is, two days before the theft was committed in Paris. He was accompanied by a certain Finkelstein.

The whereabouts of the two criminals was at present unknown.

Returning to Paris, Rousselet discovered that, on the day of the theft, they had been staying at an hotel near the Gare du Nord. They had left together in the morning, one hiding under his coat a bag like the one that had been stolen.

Proof of their guilt was thus established.

On 29th July, when they returned to Antwerp, they were both arrested, tried, and sentenced.

The stories we have just told concern thieves more adroit than dangerous. Here is one of a very dangerous criminal—Mouret.

The case that brought him into the hands of the French Police —for the second time, as we shall see later—did not occur in France but in the United States of America.

Mr. C——, a rich New York banker, engaged, at the beginning of 1923, a butler who gave him great satisfaction.

He was a regular pearl among servants.

But he was about to give his master a very disagreeable surprise. One day, when the latter and his family were at table, four men with revolvers in their hands entered the dining-room. One of them shouted: "Hands up." Mr. C—— was amazed to recognize his excellent butler in this person.

Unquestionably he thought this change in very bad taste. But this was no time for recriminations. Revolvers were being aimed at him. He and his family were robbed and then locked into an iron-plated cellar where they would certainly have died of suffocation had not Mr. C—— succeeded in dismantling the lock with his knife.

After they had rid themselves of the occupiers of the house in this rapid and energetic manner, the robbers were able to take things quietly. When they left the house they took with them jewels worth 1,700,000 francs.

A little while afterwards the American Police arrested two of them and identified a third, who was arrested at Marseilles. At the same time they informed the French Police that the fourth, the famous butler, was supposed to have taken refuge in France.

As he had been sentenced in the United States, they sent the French Police his description and finger-prints.

Inquiries undertaken by the criminal identification service established the fact that he was a certain Mouret, *alias* the "Bébé de St. Antoine," a murderer who had been sentenced to hard labour for life and who had escaped.

As he had in France a mistress called Mullon, *alias* "Pépé," Inspectors Leroy and Holtzer, who had taken charge of the investigation, hoped to get at the criminal through her.

Their inquiries were fruitless until they found a man who owed Mouret money. This man, who had an admirable conscience, was absolutely determined to pay off his debt. He was given the task of repaying his creditor.

He worried the owner of the hotel where "Pépé" lived to find out how he could meet his dear friend, who had helped him in his bad days. The landlord imprudently let fall the sentence: "I'll go and see Frémont."

He went the next day, without knowing that he was being shadowed by two Inspectors of the Sûreté. They followed him to Neuilly-sur-Marne, to an isolated inn situated on the bank of the river, whose proprietor was indeed a certain Frémont.

As they could not hear the conversation between the two men, the policemen discreetly withdrew.

Next day the two Inspectors lunched at the inn. They confessed to the proprietor that they were wanted by the Police for some petty theft or other and asked him to hide them.

This excellent fellow immediately declared that he could refuse nothing to comrades in trouble, as he himself was an old convict, and, adding the deed to the word, he put them up in his own house. For a week they waited in vain for Mouret, who certainly lived in the neighbourhood, to appear at the inn. But the cunning criminal lay doggo. . . .

Their presence in the neighbourhood, however, enabled them to learn of the death of Mouret's father, who lived at Saint-Maur, on the bank of the Marne in a small, isolated house.

After visiting the undertakers of the place, Inspector Leroy

was informed that an individual answering to the description of Mouret had given orders for the poor man's burial. He had paid for it in advance without making any difficulty.

Undoubtedly this was the man.

The elder Mouret was to be laid into his coffin at 6 p.m. At the time agreed upon, two employés of the undertaker in charge of the proceedings arrived at the house of mourning. They were dressed in their traditional costume and were accompanied by a third comrade, none other than Inspector Leroy.

But the latter's vigilance was in vain. The unworthy son of poor Father Mouret was too wary to appear. The plan had failed.

Still the policeman did not despair of capturing the criminal. He began again to shadow " Pépé."

One night this woman took a tramcar at the Barrière de Vincennes, left it at Gournay, and walked on through the fields. Leroy saw a man who had a dog with him on a leash coming towards her. Soon afterwards the couple disappeared in the direction of the bank of the river, where there are some houses and a vacant lot.

Next day a fisherman, again none other than Sergeant Leroy, walked along the river bank with a rod in his hand. He did not catch anything, but this did not trouble him. The prey he looked for was not in the water. Before long now, he would meet it.

He entered the little hotel to have some coffee to warm himself, and was obliged to suppress a movement of astonishment. Mouret, whom he knew well, was standing bareheaded at the bar.

A moment later he left by the door at the back of the room, and the Inspector heard him going upstairs to the first floor. Beyond doubt, he was living in the place.

Without regret the fisherman abandoned his task and betook himself to the Sûreté.

Next morning, two other fishermen—i.e. two other Inspectors of the Sûreté—came into the inn when it opened, whilst Leroy, now dressed as a lighterman but fearful of being " spotted," stayed outside.

The two fishermen were taking a glass of white wine, with some bread and sausage, when Mouret came downstairs from the first floor, entered the room and ordered something to eat.

Two minutes later the lighterman opened the door and asked " if there was some hot coffee."

This was the signal agreed upon. The two Inspectors immediately leapt upon Mouret and threw him to the ground, whilst the third, with drawn revolver, shouted :

" Police ! Keep still, everybody ! "

Endowed with enormous strength, Mouret defended himself desperately. He managed to take a revolver out of his pocket and to fire two shots at the men who were trying to arrest him.

They shouted to their colleague:

"Shoot! Shoot!"

A shot rang out. Mouret fell.

When, a few weeks later, he had recovered, he was brought before the Cour d'Assises de la Seine. Here he was sentenced to hard labour for life and was sent back to the penal colony.

To end this record of struggle between our Police and burglars, here is the quite recent tale of the "masked bandit."

His first appearance on the scene goes back to the night of 25th–26th April 1928. It was about 4 a.m. when M. Monteaux, who slept on the second floor of the private house belonging to his father-in-law M. Ricqlès at 14 Avenue Gourgaud, was awakened by a suspicious noise.

It was still dark in the room, but a figure was moving about. Somebody wearing a big cap, with the lower part of the face masked and a flash-lamp in his hand, was gliding silently across the floor.

With one bound M. Monteaux sprang from his bed and threw himself upon the intruder. Brandishing a large kitchen-knife, the latter struck M. Monteaux, wounded him slightly and fled. It was found that he took with him three antique gold watches.

On the stairs a black velvet mask was found as well as the knife, which had been taken out of the kitchen of the same house. Finger-prints were also found. It was further discovered that the criminal had made his entry through a neighbouring house which was still being built. But his identity remained secret.

A month later, on 21st–22nd May 1928 about 4 a.m., a man masked with a coloured handkerchief, with bath towels tied round his feet, holding an electric lamp in his left hand and a revolver in his right, was found by M. Georges Haviland, the French earthenware king, in his private house at 29 Avenue de Villiers, where he was searching the drawers in the chests of the room where M. and Mme Haviland were peacefully asleep.

Mme Haviland, who awoke first, instantly became aware of the fact that this softly-moving visitor who had entered without being invited, was a burglar. She woke her husband; and, while the unwelcome scoundrel levelled his revolver at her and

ordered her to keep quiet, she had the presence of mind to take a very valuable ring from her finger and put it in her mouth so as to hide it from the burglar.

The latter was satisfied with the theft of some jewels lying on the table by the bed. He left quietly, locking the door behind him.

The inquiry discovered that, like the burglar of the Avenue Gourgaud, he had reached the roof of M. Haviland's house by passing through an unfinished house alongside, climbing from there into the attic. This time he had left no finger-prints.

Exactly a month later, again at the same time—i.e. about 4 a.m.—the same masked man, of whom the Police now had a fairly exact description, his face covered with a coloured handkerchief and with towels tied round his feet, entered the bedroom of the private house of the Senator Baron Cornudet, in the Rue Octave Feuillet.

In spite of the precautions he had taken to alarm nobody, he woke the owner of the house. The latter tried to come to grips with the burglar but had to back away from him under the threat of the revolver at once pointed at him. However, Baron Cornudet found an opportunity to ring the alarm-bell. Whereupon the thief fled, taking with him only a gold watch and chain.

Public opinion being aroused by these strange stories, the criminal police pursued their investigations with great intensity. They had an exact description of the criminal and his finger-prints, but they could not identify him.

An interesting point which they had established was that the mysterious individual did not work alone. He was companioned by two accomplices every time. One kept a look-out, while the other had a motor-car ready at a point near the house which was being burgled. It was evidently an organized gang.

Three weeks went by. Then on 17th July, about 5 a.m., Mme Osusky, wife of the Minister for Czecho-Slovakia, who occupied the private house at 17 Avenue Charles Floquet, saw the masked man, with towels tied round his feet, coming into her room.

He bent over her bed, his face hidden behind a handkerchief, pointed a revolver at her and ordered her to be silent. Then he said jocularly, with a foreign accent: "It's very nice here, your house is chic! Let me help myself and I won't hurt you."

Then he calmly took from the mantelpiece and the furniture

of the room jewels to the value of 200,000 francs, addressed some joking words to Mme Osusky, and disappeared.

The alarm was given immediately after he left. He had been seen during his escape, but the sight of the revolver he aimed at his pursuers frightened them and, once more, he got away.

The investigation discovered that he had entered the house by a basement window, after breaking, with a lever found on the spot, the iron bar across it. While passing through the kitchen he had drunk a bottle of wine and eaten the remains of the previous day's meal. This explained why this careful and methodical man was rather later than his usual time and had burgled this house at five o'clock instead of four.

The mysterious criminal again changed his habits a few days later, when he did not allow the same number of days to pass between his burglaries. Less than ten days after his last adventure on 28th July, he entered the house of a rich American woman, Mrs. Vanderbilt, of 10 Rue Leroux. This time he was able to work at his ease, the owner being absent and the servants being in their bedrooms at the top of the house, far from the scene of his operations. However, he did not neglect to take his ordinary precautions.

This job was particularly profitable. Jewels to the value of 1,000,000 francs fell into his hands.

Having this time acquired a very considerable booty—although it was a particularly good season for burglary, as many Parisians were away from their homes—he let a whole month pass before giving the world fresh cause to talk of him. The next time he operated was during the night of 23rd–24th August.

This time he got into the house of Prince Murat, at 28 Rue de Monceau, making his entry in a new manner.

He attached a cord to one of the iron bars protecting the kitchen window and a frame-pole of the iron gates standing on either side of the main entrance. He put a piece of hard wood into the middle of the cord and gave it several turns. The string, thus shortened by the twisting, exerted such pressure on the bar that it was pulled out of its socket without making any noise.

After this he went into the house and walked freely amongst the rich collection of *objets d'art* and antique jewels inside. But —a strange and inexplicable thing—he left without taking anything!

During the night of 14th–15th September, a fresh theft was committed in the private house of Mme Heidelbach, 14 Avenue d'Iéna, during the absence of its owner.

The method employed at Prince Murat's to force open one of the bars of the basement windows was again employed. Jewels to the value of 300,000 francs were taken. The tracks of two men were found in the garden.

The Police were decidedly out of luck.

The finger-prints found did not correspond with those of any known criminal.

The Police circulated descriptions of the stolen goods and watched numerous suspects without result.

On 22nd September the tenacity of Sergeant Moreux and of the Inspectors of the Judicial Police was at last rewarded. Two individuals whom they were shadowing entered the shops of several small jewellers in the Second Arrondissement and offered small diamonds at such small prices that it was impossible for them to have been honestly acquired.

They were immediately arrested.

They were two foreigners of Serbian nationality, Pochetti Attilie and Suput Branco.

Their rooms were immediately searched. A great many Serbians were found there, in particular one called Dgoritch Milan, 28 years of age, a waiter, small and vigorous, with a frank and sympathetic face and vivid eyes, dressed in sporting fashion in plus-fours and a large cap. They were all brought to the police station, and examination revealed that they were a gang, the leader of which was Dgoritch.

At first he denied the thefts of which he was accused. Then, faced with the avowals of his accomplices, he confessed all the thefts of which he was guilty. He laughed at the remembrance of his victims' fright and declared that he had never meant to use the revolver with which he threatened them.

Asked why, after having so ingeniously broken into Prince Murat's house, he stole nothing, he answered seriously: "I know the history of France and I am a fervent admirer of Napoleon. When I found out I was in Prince Murat's house, I wasn't going to touch his family treasures."

He related good-temperedly how he had recently played the rôle of victim. An Italian embezzler, to whom he had given the job of selling some jewels at Deauville, had disappeared the next morning.

Obviously it would be possible to tell many other interesting stories of burglaries, but one must know when to stop.

We might also have mentioned other policemen whose

intelligence, cleverness, and courage are famous and who succeeded in cases as difficult as those mentioned.

We will content ourselves with mentioning the names of Bouygues, Riboulet, Cholet, Chaigneau, Holtzer, Leroy, Rousselet, and Louis who—as brilliantly as their predecessors—continue to defend society against the armies of crime.