On Thursday the 6th of March, 1862, two days after Mardi Gras, five women from the village of La Jonchère appeared at the police station in Bougival. They said that for two days nobody had seen one of their neighbors, the widow Lerouge, who lived by herself in a small house. They had knocked several times without success. The windows, like the door, were shut up tight, and there was no way of looking inside. The silence, the disappearance, disturbed them. Afraid that there had been some crime, or at least some accident, they asked if the authorities could possibly break into the house and reassure them.

Bougival is a nice place, full of canoeists on Sundays; some misdemeanors are committed there, but crime is rare. The commissioner at first refused to grant the women’s request. But they were determined. They argued so long and so forcefully that the official got tired and agreed. He sent for the captain of gendarmes and two of his men, called for a locksmith, and together they followed the widow Lerouge’s neighbors.

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1 In the 1860s a country village, Bougival (north of Versailles) is now well within the metropolitan Paris area. A favorite venue of the Impressionist painters, in literature Bougival is famous as the country retreat of the young lovers in Alexandre Dumas fils’s La dame aux camélias (1848).
An inventor of a new kind of frictionless railway had brought some celebrity to La Jonchère. A few years earlier, he had given public demonstrations of his invention there, with more perseverance than success. It’s an insignificant village on the side of a hill above the river Seine, between Malmaison and Bougival. It’s about twenty minutes’ walk from the highway that runs from Paris to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, passing Rueil and Port-Marly. You get there via a steep side road of primitive construction.

The little group, with the two gendarmes in front, followed the levee that retains the Seine at that point, and soon, turning right, took that side road, hemmed in by walls and thick hedgerows.

After several hundred paces, they came to a house, unprepossessing but well-maintained. This house - a cottage really - was built by some Paris merchant. He must have been quite the nature lover, because he’d cut down all the nearby trees. Deeper than wide, the house consisted of a two-room ground floor with a loft above. There was a garden around it, poorly maintained. The dry-stone wall, only about a meter high, wouldn’t have kept intruders out; here and there, it was already crumbling. A light wooden gate on iron hinges led to the garden.

“This is it,” the women said.

The commissioner stopped. During the trip, all the unemployed hangers-on in the vicinity had joined the group. He had forty curious people around him at this point.

“Nobody goes into the garden,” he said.

To make sure, he put the two gendarmes on guard by the gate, and went up to the house with the captain and the locksmith.
The commissioner knocked loudly several times on the door with the heavy head of his walking-stick. Then he knocked on all the window-shutters. After every knock, he pressed his ear to the wood and listened. Hearing nothing, he turned to the locksmith.

“Open it,” he said.

The locksmith opened his kit and got his tools ready. He had already put one of his picks into the lock when there was a commotion among the hangers-on.

“The key,” somebody said, “here’s the key!”

Sure enough, a kid of twelve or so, playing with his friends, had spotted a huge key in the ditch by the side of the road. He grabbed it and carried it up proudly.

“Give me that,” said the captain, “and we’ll see.”

They tried the key, and it worked.

The commissioner and the locksmith looked at each other with foreboding.

“This can’t be good,” said the captain. They went into the house. The crowd, barely controlled by the gendarmes, stamped their feet impatiently. They lined up along the wall, stretching their necks, trying to see inside, to get some sense of what was going on.

Those who’d predicted they’d find a crime were unfortunately correct, as the commissioner realized when he stepped over the threshold. Everything in the front room spoke with ugly eloquence of a break-in. The furniture – a dresser and two large chests – had been broken into and emptied. In the back room - the bedroom - the disorder was even greater. Angry hands had taken pleasure in tossing everything around.
Near the fireplace, head in the ashes, sprawled the corpse of the widow Lerouge. One side of her face and hair had been burned. It was a miracle her clothes hadn’t caught fire.

“Bastards,” said the captain. “Couldn’t they just have robbed the poor woman without killing her?”

“Where was she struck?” asked the commissioner. “I don’t see any blood.”

The captain bent and turned the body. “Look, between her shoulders,” he said. “Two heavy blows. Damn. I’ll bet my stripes she didn’t even have time to say ‘Ouch.’ And she’s pretty cold. Though she’s not completely stiff any more. She’s been dead at least 36 hours.”

The commissioner started writing a preliminary report, as well as he could manage, using a corner of a table.

“No use wasting breath,” he said to the captain. “Better start looking for the killers. Alert the justice of the peace and the mayor. And have someone run up to Paris and take this report to the courthouse. In a couple of hours we’ll get a magistrate\textsuperscript{2} out here. Meanwhile I’ll start a provisional investigation.”

“Should I deliver the report?” asked the captain.

“No. Send one of your men. You’ll be of more use to me here, keeping the gawkers in line and finding the witnesses I need. We’ve got to preserve everything just as it is. I’ll operate out of the front room.”

A gendarme set off at a run towards Rueil station, and the commissioner started gathering the standard information.

\textsuperscript{2} A juge d'instruction, who served as both prosecutor and supervising investigator in criminal cases.
Who was this widow Lerouge? Where was she from, what did she do, what did she live on, and how did she live? What was her routine, what was her reputation, who did she visit? Did people know if she had any enemies? Was she a miser – did she even have any money? Those were the kinds of things the commissioner wanted to find out.

But even though there were lots of witnesses, they didn’t know much. The depositions taken from the neighbors were incoherent and incomplete. Nobody knew anything about the victim, a stranger in the community. Many witnesses came by more to get information than to give it. A gardener who had befriended the widow Lerouge and a dairywoman she bought groceries from gave the best information, accurate if not very important.

Finally, after three hours of tedious questioning, after enduring all the country hearsay and collecting the most contradictory testimony and the silliest gossip, here is what the police commissioner knew for sure:

Two years before, just after New Year’s in 1860, the Lerouge woman had arrived in Bougival with a big moving van full of furniture, linen, and other belongings. She’d checked into an inn, intending to settle in the vicinity, and started looking for a house. Finding one to her liking, she rented it without bargaining, agreeing to pay 320 francs for a half-year, in advance, but refusing to sign a lease.

Once the house was rented, she moved in the same day, and spent about 100 francs making repairs. She was about fifty-five years old, trim, strong, in good health. Nobody understood why she would move to a place where she knew absolutely no one. People guessed she was from Normandy, because often, early in the morning, she was seen wearing a cotton bonnet. But her nightwear didn’t
prevent her from being a flirt during the day. She wore smart dresses and bonnets with lots of ribbons. She was covered in jewels like a shrine. She must have lived on the coast at some point, because the sea and ships came up a lot in her conversation.

She did not like to talk about her husband – dead, she said, in a shipwreck. She never said another word about that. Just once she told the dairywoman, in front of three other people: “No woman was ever as unhappy in a relationship as I was.” And another time: “The newer the better. My late husband loved me for just a year.”

The widow Lerouge seemed rich, or at least very comfortable. She wasn’t a miser. She’d lent a pregnant woman in Malmaison 60 francs and wasn’t bothered about repayment. Another time, she lent 200 francs to a fisherman in Port-Marly. She liked to live well, spending a lot on food and ordering wine by the half-cask. She liked entertaining her acquaintances, and she gave excellent dinners. If people remarked that she was well-off, she didn’t deny it. She was often heard to say: “I’m not wealthy, but I’ve got what I need. And if I want more, I can get it.”

Aside from that, she made no allusion to her past, her family, or where she’d come from. She was talkative, but as much as she talked, she did little but complain about other people. She must have seen a lot of the world and known a lot of things. Strong-willed, she barricaded herself at home, treating her house like a fortress. She never went out in the evenings; she got drunk after dinner and then fell asleep. People rarely saw any strangers at her place. Four or five times, there was a lady with a young man. Another time, two gentlemen, one with ribbons on his chest, the other quite young. The latter two had come in a magnificent carriage.

Basically, people didn’t think much of her. Her remarks could be shocking, and sounded strange from the mouth of a woman her age. She had been heard
giving a young woman inappropriate advice. A delicatessen owner from Bougival, having had business reverses, decided to court her. She rejected him, saying that being married once was enough. Several times, men had been seen at her house. First a young man, who looked like a railway employee; later a dark-haired man, old enough, dressed in a smock, evil-looking. People guessed that they were her lovers.

While the commissioner was taking down these depositions in writing, the magistrate arrived. He brought with him the chief of the Sûreté and one of his agents.

M. Daburon - whose friends were later shocked when he resigned to tend his garden just as his career was at its peak - was then thirty-eight years old, well-built, likeable if a little cold, with a sad, gentle face. The sadness was the result of a severe illness that had nearly carried him off two years earlier.

Magistrate since 1859, he had quickly acquired a brilliant reputation. Hard-working, patient, with a sense of nuance, he had the rare ability to unravel the skein of the most involved case, picking one true thread out of a thousand false ones. No one was better than Daburon, with his implacable logic, at solving those fiendish puzzles where X is the culprit. Skilled in reasoning from the known to the unknown, he excelled at piecing facts together and assembling, in a network of convincing proofs, the most unpromising - and apparently most irrelevant - details.

Even though he had many valuable qualities, he didn’t seem born to carry out his imposing functions. He operated nervously, lacking confidence in his great skill.

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3 In the 1860s, the central detective unit of the Paris police force. The Sûreté was founded by Eugène Vidocq, a model for Gaboriau’s Lecoq.
He lacked the brazenness to make dramatic moves that can force the truth to leap out.

He had been slow to get used to certain methods employed uninhibitedly by his tougher colleagues. He was loath to trick accused suspects, or to set traps for them. Around the courthouse, they said of him: “He’s got the shakes.” Just remembering notorious judicial errors made his hair stand up. He didn’t want to draw conclusions from probabilities; he needed absolute certainty. He wouldn’t rest till an accused suspect broke down in the face of the evidence. One of his assistants joked that Daburon didn’t want to prove someone guilty; he wanted to prove everybody else innocent.

The chief of the Sûreté was none other than the famous Gévrol. He was certainly a talented man, but impulsive, and prone to persistent blind spots in his thinking. If he went down the wrong path, he would never admit it, still less backtrack. But he was bold and unshakeable. Amazingly strong despite his thinness, he never hesitated to face down the most dangerous criminals.

But his specialty and pride was a memory for faces so uncanny that it was beyond belief. If he looked at somebody for five minutes, that was it: they were filed away, they belonged to him. He’d know them anywhere and forever after. If they showed up in impossible places, in the most baffling disguises, they could not throw him off. He claimed that he owed this skill to the fact that when he met somebody, he looked directly into their eyes. He could then recognize their gaze without bothering about their facial features.
He’d been tested in an experiment a few months earlier, in Poissy. They had wrapped three prisoners in blankets, covering up their bodies. They’d put veils over their faces, leaving a slit for their eyes. That’s how they showed them to Gévrol. Without the least hesitation, he recognized three repeat offenders and called them by name.

Did he get lucky?

Gévrol’s assistant was an ex-convict who had gone straight. A lively fellow who knew his business, smooth as amber, and jealous of his boss, thinking him mediocre. He was called Lecoq.

The commissioner, beginning to wilt from all the responsibility, welcomed the magistrate and the two officers as liberators. He sketched the facts quickly and read his report.

“You did very well,” said the magistrate, “everything’s in good order. But you forgot one item.”

“What’s that, sir?” asked the commissioner.

“What day was the widow Lerouge seen last, and at what time?”

“I’m getting there, sir. She was seen on the evening of Mardi Gras at 5:20. She was coming back from Bougival with a basket of groceries.”

“You’re sure of the time?” asked Gévrol.

“Perfectly, and here’s why: the two witnesses who establish that fact, a cooper and a woman named Tellier, who live nearby, were getting off the omnibus that leaves Marly every hour when they saw the widow Lerouge on the side road. They hurried to catch up with her, talked with her awhile, and left her at her door.”

“And what did she have in her basket?” asked the magistrate.
“The witnesses don’t know for sure. They just saw that she was carrying two sealed bottles of wine and a liter of spirits. She complained of a headache and told them that even though you’re supposed to celebrate on Mardi Gras, she was going to go to bed.”

“Excellent!” exclaimed Gévrol, “I know what to look for.”

“Do you think so?” said M. Daburon.

“Hell yes. It’s clear enough. We’ve got to look for the tall dark-haired man, the guy in the smock. The spirits and the wine were for him. The widow was expecting him to come to supper. And he came, the handsome boyfriend.”

“Oh,” said the captain, nauseated, “she was very ugly and horribly old.”

Gévrol sneered at the cop.

“Captain,” he said, “a woman with money is always young and pretty if she wants to be.”

“There might be something to that,” said the magistrate, “but it’s not what I find striking. I’m more interested in what the widow Lerouge said: ‘If I want more, I can get it’.”

“That’s what caught my attention, too,” said the commissioner.

But Gévrol didn’t even bother listening. He followed his first thought, looking carefully at all the nooks and crannies of the room. Suddenly he turned back towards the commissioner.

“I’m trying to remember,” he said, “wasn’t it Tuesday that the weather changed? The temperature dropped fifteen degrees and we had rain. When did it start raining?”
“Nine-thirty,” said the captain. “I’d eaten supper and gone out on patrol when I was caught in a shower on the Rue des Pêcheurs. Less than ten minutes later there was half-an-inch of water on the road.”

“Excellent!” said Gévrol. “So if the man came after 9:30, his shoes would have been muddy … if they weren’t, he came earlier. You should have been able to see traces before everybody trooped in. Were there footprints on the floor here, commissioner?”

“I have to admit that we didn’t really look.”

“Ah, that’s annoying,” said the chief of the Sûreté, disgusted.

“Wait,” said the commissioner, “there’s still a chance to see – not here but in the back room. We didn’t touch a thing there. It should be easy to account for my footprints and the captain’s. Let’s see.”

As the commissioner opened the door to the back room, Gévrol stopped him.

“I’d like to ask the magistrate to let me examine everything closely before anyone else goes in. It’s very important to me.”

“By all means,” Daburon agreed.

Gévrol stopped on the threshold, and the others stood behind him. That way they could take in the whole crime scene at once.

Just as the commissioner had said, everything in the room seemed to have been thrown this way and that by someone in a rage.

In the middle of the room lay a table, covered by a fine tablecloth, white as snow. On the tablecloth sat an impressive cut-crystal glass, a shiny knife, and a porcelain plate. There was a bottle of wine, barely opened, and a bottle of spirits from which someone had taken five or six small drinks.
On the right, along the wall, were two fine walnut armoires with wrought-iron hardware, one on each side of the window. Both were empty, and their contents had been thrown onto the floor on all sides. The linen had been unfolded and shaken, and someone had rummaged through it.

In the back, near the fireplace, a big sideboard stood open. On the other side of the fireplace, an old desk with a marble top had been broken into and smashed. Even its smallest compartments had been ransacked. The leaf dangled by a single hinge; the drawers had been pulled out and flung to the floor.

Finally, on the left, the bed had been stripped and tossed about. Even the straw had been pulled out of the mattress.

“Not the slightest footprint,” said Gévrol. “He came before 9:30. We can go in now.”

He entered, walked to the widow Lerouge’s corpse, and knelt beside it.

“Not much to say,” he muttered. “Well-done. The killer was no amateur.”

Then, looking right and left, he went on: “Huh, the poor girl was making supper when she got hit. There’s the pan on the floor, there’s the ham and eggs. The animal couldn’t wait for dinner. He was rushed; he had to work on an empty stomach. Well, that means that he can’t plead that he got carried away over dessert.”

“Obviously the motive for the crime was robbery,” the commissioner said to the magistrate.

“No kidding,” said Gévrol sarcastically. “That’s why you don’t see any silverware on the table.”

“But look! There’s money in the desk drawer!” said Lecoq. “Three hundred and twenty francs.”
“There’s that,” said Gévrol, rattled.

But he recovered quickly and said: “He forgot it. I’ve seen more extreme cases. I’ve seen a murderer, once the killing was done, lose his head, forget what he came for, and leave without taking anything. Our boy was upset. Who knows, maybe he got distracted? Somebody might have knocked at the door. But he didn’t leave the candle burning. He blew it out.”

“Maybe he’s an economical kind of guy,” said Lecoq.

The two detectives combed the whole house, but their most painstaking efforts found not the slenderest clue that could serve as a point of departure for an investigation. Even the widow Lerouge’s papers, if she had had any, had disappeared. The found no letters, not a scrap of paper.

Every so often, Gévrol stopped to grumble and swear.

“Pretty thoroughly done,” he said. “Bastard knew what he was doing.”

Finally the magistrate said “What then?”

“Dead end,” answered Gévrol, “we’re up against a dead end. The villain took all possible precautions. But I’ll get him. Before night I’ll have a dozen men out searching the countryside. Anyway, he’ll turn up. He took silver and jewelry, that’ll do him in.”

“But for all that,” said Daburon, “we’re no farther along than we were this morning.”

“We’ve done what we can, goddamnit,” said Gévrol.

“Hey,” said Lecoq, “why isn’t old Tiraualair here?”

“What’s he got to do with us anymore?” said Gévrol, glowering at Lecoq.
Lecoq ducked away and said nothing more, privately delighted to have irritated his boss.

“What about Tirauclair?” asked the magistrate. “I seem to have heard that name somewhere.”

“He’s quite a guy,” said Lecoq.

“He used to work for the Mont-de-Piété,” explained Gévrol. “A rich geezer whose real name is Tabaret. He plays at being a detective, just for kicks.”

“For money too,” said the commissioner.

“He’s all right,” said Lecoq. “He works for the glory of it as much as for his bank account. It’s his hobby. We nicknamed him ‘Tirauclair’ down at the station, because of a phrase he keeps repeating: ‘bring it to light, bring it to light.’ He’s tough, the old guard-dog. He was the guy – you remember the case of the banker’s wife? – he figured out that she robbed herself, and he proved it.”

“That’s true,” said Gévrol. “He’s also the one who made poor Derème, the tailor, cut his own throat. He accused Derème of murdering his good-for-nothing wife, but he was innocent.”

“We’re wasting time, gentlemen,” interrupted the magistrate.

He turned to Lecoq.

“Go find me old Tabaret,” he said. “I’ve heard a lot about him, and I wouldn’t be sorry to see him at work.”

Lecoq ran out. Gévrol looked wounded.

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4 A public micro-financing institution, established by the Catholic Church to cut down on abuses by pawnbrokers and loan sharks.
“The magistrate,” he said, “has the right to ask anyone he likes for their services, as he sees fit, but …”

“Let’s not get upset, M. Gévrol,” interrupted Daburon. “I’ve known you quite a while. I know how valuable you are. Today we think differently. You’re set on finding the dark-haired man, and I don’t think you’re on the right track.”

“I have my reasons,” said the chief of the Sûreté. “I hope to be proved right. I’ll find the bastard, whoever he is.”

“I’d like nothing better.”

“But would the magistrate allow me to offer … how shall I say this respectfully … some advice?”

“Go ahead.”

“Very well … I’d suggest that the magistrate not trust old Tabaret too much.”

“Really? why not?”

“He’s too enthusiastic. He plays at being a policeman to get critical acclaim. Like an author. He’s prouder than a peacock. He gets carried away, he makes things up. As soon as he’s on the scene of a crime, like this one for example, he thinks that he can explain everything at once. And sure enough, he makes up a story that explains everything. He claims that he can reconstruct an entire murder from a single clue, like that scientist who could reconstruct dead animals from a single bone.⁵ Sometimes he’s correct, but a lot of the time he gets fooled. That’s why in the case of that tailor, Derème, if it hadn’t have been for me …”

⁵ The boast of the great paleontologist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832).
“Thank you for your advice,” interrupted Daburon. “I’ll take it to heart. Now, M. Commissioner,” he went on, “at all costs we must try to learn about the widow Lerouge’s origins.”

The procession of witnesses began to move again, this time past the magistrate.

But no new facts came to light. While alive, the widow Lerouge must have been a singularly discreet person, because for all her talk – and she talked a lot on any given day – none of her words made a significant impression on the women of the neighborhood.

That didn’t stop them from trying to sell the magistrate their personal theories and conjectures. Public opinion was on Gévrol’s side. With one voice they pointed to the man in the grey smock, the tall dark-haired fellow. He was certainly guilty. People remembered his brutal appearance, which had frightened the whole community. Many people, struck by his dubious looks, had kept out of his way. One night, he had threatened a woman; one day, he had beaten a child. Nobody could say which woman or which child, but that didn’t matter, everybody knew how abusive he was.

Daburon had given up on a single useful item coming to light, when somebody produced a Bougival grocer that the victim had frequented, and a boy of thirteen, who, it was said, knew some definite facts.

The grocer appeared first. She had heard the widow Lerouge talk about a son, still living.

“Are you certain?” the magistrate pressed her.
“As certain as I’m alive,” answered the grocer. “Even though that evening – it was evening, you see – she was - sorry - a little drunk. She stayed in my shop over an hour.”

“What did she say?”

“I can see her now,” the merchant went on, “she was leaning on the counter near the scales, she was joking with a fisherman from Marly, old Husson, he can tell you the same, and she was calling him a freshwater sailor. ‘My husband,’ she said, ‘was a sailor, a real sailor, and I know that’s true because his voyages would last years, and he’d always bring me back coconuts. I have a boy who’s a sailor, like his late father, and he’s in the merchant marine.”

“Did she say her son’s name?”

“Not then, but another time, when she was – sorry – really plastered. She told us that her son was called Jacques and that she hadn’t seen him for a long time.”

“Did she speak ill of her husband?”

“Never. Well, except that he was jealous, and rough. But a good man at heart. But he made her life miserable. He had a weak head and he’d make a big deal out of nothing. He was so sincere he was almost stupid.”

“Had her son come to visit her since she moved to La Jonchère?”

“She didn’t tell me.”

“Did she spend a lot in your shop?”

“Depends. Maybe sixty francs a month, sometimes more if she wanted good cognac. She paid cash.”

The grocer, knowing nothing more, was dismissed.
The boy who followed was from one of the better-off families in the community. He was tall and strong for his age. He had a sharp eye, a bright and bold face. The magistrate didn’t seem to intimidate him one bit.

“So, young man,” said the magistrate, “let’s see what you know.”

“Sir, a few days ago, the Sunday before Mardi Gras, I saw a man at Mme. Lerouge’s garden gate.”

“At what time of day?”

“Early in the morning. I was going to church to serve as altar boy at the second Mass.”

“Good!” said the magistrate. “So he was a tall dark-haired man, dressed in a smock.”

“Not at all, sir, he was short, squat, fat, and pretty old.”

“You’re not mistaken?”

“Me?” answered the boy. “I saw him up close, because I talked to him.”

“Go on, tell me about it.”

“Well, sir, I was passing by when I saw that fat guy by the gate. He looked furious, so furious you could hardly believe it. His face was red. His head was halfway purple, and you could see it really well, because he didn’t have a hat, or very much hair either.”

“And he spoke to you first.”

“Yes, sir. When he saw me, he called out, ‘Hey, kid,’ and I went over. ‘Hey,’ he said, ‘you’ve got good legs, right?’ I said yes. He took me by the ear, without hurting me, though, and said ‘In that case, you’re going to do an errand for me, and I’m going to give you fifty centimes. You’re going to run to the Seine. When you get
to the quay, you'll see a large boat tied up. Go aboard and ask for the skipper, Gervais. Don't worry, he'll be there. Tell him that he can get ready to go, that I'm all done.' And at that, he put fifty centimes in my hand, and I went off.”

“It would be a pleasure,” the commissioner murmured, “if all witnesses were like this young man.”

“Now,” said the magistrate, “tell us how you carried out the errand.”

“I went to the boat, sir, I found the man, I told him what I was supposed to, and that was all.”

Gévrol, who had been listening intently, leaned over and spoke in Daburon’s ear.

“M. Magistrate,” he said in a low voice, “would it be all right for me to ask this young fellow a few questions?”

“Certainly, M. Gévrol.”

“So, my young friend,” said the detective, “if you saw this man you've been telling us about, you’d recognize him?”

“Oh, sure.”

“Was there anything special about him?”

“Well ... his face was like a brick.”

“And that’s all?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But you know how he was dressed. Was he wearing a smock?”

“No. A jacket. It had large pockets, with a blue-checked handkerchief sticking halfway out of one of them.”

“What were his trousers like?”
“I don’t remember.”

“And his vest?”

“Should I remember?” the boy answered. “Did he have a vest? I don’t think so. But if he did ... no, I remember. No vest. He was wearing a big tie, fastened at his neck with a big ring.”

“Ah,” said Gévrol, satisfied, “you’re not stupid, my boy, and I bet if you think hard you can remember other clues.”

The boy lowered his head and stood quietly. You could see from the lines on his young forehead that he was straining to remember.

“Yes!” he shouted. “I remember something else.”

“What?”

“The man wore these huge earrings.”

“Bravo!” said Gévrol. “A full description. I’ll find the guy. M. Magistrate, you can make out the arrest warrant.”

“That young man’s testimony really is important,” answered Daburon.

And, turning back to the boy:

“Do you happen to know, my young friend, what cargo the boat was carrying?”

“I don’t know, sir. It was all covered up.”

“Was it headed up or down the Seine?”

“But, sir ... it was docked.”

“No, we understand that,” said Gévrol. “What the magistrate is asking is which way the front of the boat was pointed. Towards Paris or towards Marly?”

“Both ends of the boat looked the same to me.”

The chief of the Sûreté made a gesture of disappointment.
Then he said, “Ah, but you would have seen the name of the boat. I assume you can read. You should always look at the name of a boat before you go aboard.”

“I didn’t see the name,” said the boy.

Daburon intervened. “If the boat was at the quay, people in Bougival probably saw it.”

“You’ve got a point, sir,” said the commissioner.

“Fair enough,” said Gévrol. “Anyway, the boatmen would have gone ashore and headed to a cabaret. I’ll find out. But what was Gervais, the skipper, like, my friend?”

“He was like any other sailor, sir.”

The boy made ready to go, but the magistrate called him back.

“Before you go, my lad, can you tell me if you talked to anyone else about this encounter before today?”

“Sir, I told Mama everything on Sunday, after I got back from church. I even gave her the man’s fifty centimes.”

“And you really told us the whole truth?” the magistrate continued. “You know that making a false statement is a very serious thing. We always find out, and I have to warn you that there are particularly awful punishments reserved for liars.”

The young witness got red as a cherry and dropped his eyes.

“You see,” Daburon pressed on, “you’re hiding something from us. Don’t you know that the police know everything?”

“Oh, I’m sorry, sir,” said the boy, melting into tears. “I’m sorry, don’t do anything bad to me, I won’t do it again!”

“Just tell us how you tricked us.”
“Aw, sir, it wasn’t fifty centimes that the man gave me. It was a whole franc. I gave Mama half and kept the rest to buy marbles.”

“Young friend,” said the magistrate, “I pardon you this time. But let that be a lesson to you your whole life long. Go off and think about it. You can’t hide the truth; it always comes out.”
These last two depositions collected by the magistrate finally held out some hope. In the darkness, the smallest candle looks like a lighthouse.

“I’m going to go down to Bougival, if M. Magistrate thinks it best,” Gévrol proposed.

“Perhaps you’d better wait a bit,” answered Daburon. “That man was seen on Sunday morning. Let’s find out about the widow Lerouge’s activities that day.”

Three neighbor women were summoned. They all said that the widow Lerouge had stayed in bed all day on the Sunday before Mardi Gras. When one of the women had gone over to ask what was wrong, the widow said, “Ah, something terrible happened to me last night.” But nobody had taken that statement seriously at the time.

When the women had gone, the magistrate said, “The man with the earrings is becoming more and more important. It’s vital to find him. That’s your department, M. Gévrol.”

“I’ll find him within a week,” said the chief of the Sûreté, “even if I have to personally canvass the boats on the Seine, from source to mouth. I know the skipper’s name: Gervais. The navigation office will give me more information.”

He was interrupted by Lecoq, who arrived out of breath.

“Here’s old Tabaret,” he said, “I met him just as he was leaving home. What a guy! He didn’t want to wait for a train. He gave a cab driver I don’t know how much money, and we got here in less than an hour. Stick that to the railroad!”
Just then an old man stepped over the threshold. Honestly, his appearance didn’t correspond to your idea of an ace detective.

He was at least sixty years old and didn’t wear it lightly. Short, thin, stooped over, he leaned on a stout walking-stick with a carved ivory head.

His round face had the expression of perpetual uneasy surprise that has made the fortune of more than one star comedian. Scrupulously shaven, he had a receding chin, kind-looking full lips, and a nose turned up like the bell of one of M. Sax’s instruments. His eyes, soft grey, small, slightly bloodshot, revealed nothing, and wore you out with their constant movement. A few hairs lay flat across his forehead, which sloped back like a greyhound’s, and did little to hide his large, wide-open ears, which stood well out from his skull.

He was comfortably dressed, neat as a new 5-centime coin, sporting a blindingly-white shirt, silk gloves, and gaiters. A long, heavy gold chain, in deplorable taste, wound three times around his collar and cascaded into his vest pocket.

Old Tabaret, nicknamed Tiraclair, stopped at the door and bowed almost to the ground, arching his old spine. As modestly as possible, he asked:

“Was it the magistrate’s pleasure to call for me?”

“Yes!” answered Daburon. But aside, in a low voice, he muttered, “I really don’t get the impression that he knows what he’s doing.”

“I am here,” said the old gentleman, “entirely in the service of justice.”

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6 Adolphe Sax invented and popularized the saxophone in the 1840s.
“We’ll see whether you’ll be more fortunate than we were,” said the magistrate. “Can you find any clue here that would put us on the track of the killer? Someone will sum up the case for you.”

“Oh, I know enough,” old Tabaret interrupted. “Lecoq told me the main facts on the way here, at least everything I needed to know.”

“But, still,” the commissioner began to object.

“Trust me, M. Magistrate. I like to work without a briefing, so as not to have any preconceptions. When you know someone else’s opinion, it influences you, in spite of yourself, to the point where ... well, anyway, I’ll just start my investigation, with Lecoq’s help.”

While the old gentleman spoke, his small grey eyes lit up and sparkled like gems. His face spoke of joy within, and even his wrinkles seemed to laugh. His posture improved, and he stepped almost lightly into the back room.

He stayed there half an hour, and then bolted out. He went back in, came out again, and kept disappearing and reappearing. The magistrate couldn’t help remarking on his energetic focus, intense as a hunting dog’s. His bell-like nose kept sniffing, as if to pick up some subtle trace of the killer. As he kept coming and going, he spoke in a loud voice and made gestures; he talked to himself, he berated himself, he gave little shouts of triumph, and he egged himself on. He didn’t give Lecoq a moment’s peace. He needed this, that, or the other thing. He wanted paper and pencil; then, he wanted a garden spade. Next, he shouted for some plaster, some water, and a bottle of oil.

After more than an hour, the magistrate, who was starting to get impatient, asked what his volunteer was up to.
“He’s in the road,” answered the captain of gendarmes, “stretched out in the mud, mixing plaster on a plate. He says he’s almost done and will come in soon.”

He came in soon enough, happy, triumphant, seeming twenty years younger. Lecoq followed him, carrying, very carefully, a large bucket.

“I’ve altogether figured it out,” he told the magistrate. “I’ve brought it to light. Easy as saying hello. Lecoq, my boy, put the bucket on the table.”

Gévrol too came back from his mission, just as satisfied.

“I’m on the trail of the man with the earrings,” he said. “The boat went downstream. I have a full description of Gervais, the skipper.”

“Go ahead, M. Tabaret,” said the magistrate.

The old gentleman emptied the contents of the bucket onto the table: a big chunk of clay, some large pieces of paper, and three or four little bits of still-damp plaster. Standing at the table, he looked bizarre, like one of those street hustlers who make nutmegs – and people’s money – disappear. His clothes were much the worse for wear. Even his back was muddy.

“Let me begin,” he said with conceited modesty. “Robbery had nothing to do with this crime.”

“Oh, yes, it did,” muttered Gévrol.

“I have the evidence to prove it,” said old Tabaret. “And I will give my own humble theory about the motive for the crime, but not till later. So the killer arrived before 9:30, in other words, before it rained. I did not find any muddy footprints, any more than M. Gévrol did, but under the table, where the killer placed his feet, I picked up traces of dust. That fixes the time frame. The widow Lerouge wasn’t
expecting her visitor. She had begun to get undressed and was in the process of winding her clock when someone knocked.”

“Such detail!” said the commissioner.

“Well, it’s easy to show,” said the volunteer detective. “Look at the clock on the desk. It’s one of those that can run for fourteen or fifteen hours, no more than that, I’m sure. It’s more than likely – it’s certain – that the widow wound her clock at night before going to bed.

“So why, then, is the clock stopped at five? It’s because she last wound it when someone knocked. In support of my theory, I offer the chair underneath the clock, and on the chair cushion, the strong impression of someone’s foot. In addition, look at the victim’s clothes: the bodice of her dress is undone. To get to the door faster, she didn’t do it up again; she just drew this old shawl around her shoulders.”

“Cripes!” said the captain, stunned.

“The widow,” the old gentleman went on, “knew the person who knocked. Her haste to open the door leads one to suspect that, and the event proves it. The killer was allowed inside without any trouble. He’s a young man, of a little more than average height, well-dressed. That evening, he was wearing a top hat, carrying an umbrella, and smoking a trabuco\(^7\) with a cigar-holder …”

“Oh, right,” said Gévrol, “that’s a bit much!”

“A bit much, perhaps,” old Tabaret shot back, “but in any case the truth. If you’re not a detail person, I can’t help you. But I happen to be. I search and I find. It’s a bit much, you say. Well then. Look if you will at these bits of damp plaster. They show you the heels of the killer’s boots. I found a beautifully clear indentation

\(^7\) A short, blunt, expensive brand of cigar.
from them near the ditch where the key was spotted. On these sheets of paper, I have traced the whole footprint, because I could not make a mold of it: the impression of the sole was made on sand.

“Look: high heel, distinct curvature, small narrow sole: an elegant boot for a well-treated foot, clearly. If you look for this footprint along the road you will find two other instances. And then you will find it repeated five times in the garden, where nobody else entered. That proves, incidentally, that the killer knocked, not at the door, but at the shutter of the window, seeing a line of light beneath it. Near the entrance to the garden, our man jumped to avoid a vegetable patch; the deeper toe impression proves it. He cleared almost two meters easily. So he’s light. And young.”

Old Tabaret spoke quietly, but with a piercing clarity. His eyes darted from one of the listeners to another, noticing their reactions.

“Maybe it’s the hat that surprises you, M. Gévrol?” Tabaret went on. “Consider the perfect circle outlined on the marble top of the desk, which had been a little dusty. Or are you surprised at how I established his height? Take the trouble to examine the top of the armoires, and you’ll see that the killer ran his hands along them. Therefore he is a lot taller than I am. And don’t tell me that he climbed on a chair, because in that case he could have looked on top and wouldn’t have had to feel. Are you flabbergasted by the umbrella? This chunk of earth preserves a wonderful print, not just of the tip, but even of the wooden roundel that secures the fabric. Does the cigar confuse you? Here is a trabuco butt that I found in the ashes. Look at the tip: has it been chewed? is it wet with saliva? No. So the person who smoked it used a cigar-holder.”
Lecoq didn’t hide his glowing admiration very well. He clapped his hands together noiselessly. The commissioner seemed stupefied, the magistrate enchanted. On the other hand, Gévrol’s face grew longer. As for the captain, he seemed frozen.

“Now,” said the old gentleman, “listen closely. Imagine the young man having gotten inside. How he explained his presence at that hour, I don’t know. What is certain is that he told the widow Lerouge that he hadn’t eaten yet. The good woman was delighted, and at once got busy fixing him a meal. The meal wasn’t for her at all.

“In the armoire, I found the leftovers from her dinner. She ate fish. The autopsy will show it. Besides, as you see, there is only one glass on the table, and just one knife. But who is this young man? It’s clear that the widow thought of him as a good deal superior to herself. There’s a perfectly good napkin in the armoire. Did she use it? No. For her guest she produced white linen, her very best. She gave him a beautiful glass, a gift from someone, no doubt. Finally, it’s clear that she didn’t use that knife with the ivory handle every day.”

“It’s all exactly so,” said the magistrate, “precisely.”

“So the young man was sitting down. He had started to drink a glass of wine while the widow put the pan on the fire. Then, lacking resolve, he asked for spirits and drank about five small glasses. After an internal struggle that lasted about ten minutes, time enough to cook the ham and eggs to the point they reached, the young man got up, approached the widow, who was still bent over and leaning forward, and struck her two blows on the back. She did not die immediately. She pulled herself around and grabbed the killer’s hands. He drew back, raising her briefly, and dropped her there where you see her.
“The position of the body shows evidence of that short struggle. That’s why she was struck on the back but also landed on her back. The murderer used a sharp thin instrument – if I’m not mistaken, it must have been a fencing sword with the button removed, and then sharpened. He left us a clue by wiping his weapon on the victim’s skirts. The struggle left no traces on him. It’s true that she grabbed him by the hands, but because he hadn’t taken off his grey gloves ...”

“This is straight out of a novel,” remarked Gévrol.

“Did you examine the widow Lerouge’s fingernails, chief? Well, go inspect them – tell me if I’m mistaken. Anyway, here’s the woman, dead. What did the killer want? Money, valuables? No, a hundred times no. What he was looking for, what he needed, were papers that he knew the victim possessed. To get them, he turned everything upside down, he went through the armoires, he unfolded the linen, he broke open the desk when he couldn’t find the key, and he emptied the mattress.

“Finally he found them. And do you know what he did with those papers? He burnt them – not in the fireplace, but in the little stove in the front room. With that, he’d accomplished his objective. What next? Escape, while taking valuables, in order to suggest a robbery and lead the investigation astray. After seizing things, he wrapped them up in the napkin he was supposed to use at dinner, and, blowing out the candle, locked the door from the outside and threw the key into the ditch. Voilà.”

“M. Tabaret,” said the magistrate, “your investigation is admirable, and I am persuaded that you are correct.”

“Hey,” cried Lecoq, “isn’t old Tiraualair awe-inspiring!”
“Monumental,” Gévrol chimed in ironically. “Although I think that the nice young man would have been hampered a little by a bundle in a white napkin that people could see from quite a distance.”

“And so he didn’t carry it any great distance,” said old Tabaret. “He wasn’t stupid enough to take a bus back to the train station. He went on foot, and the shortest route was along the water. When he got to the Seine, unless he was much more devious than I suppose, his first concern was to throw away the indiscreet bundle.”

“You think so, Papa?” asked Gévrol.

“I’ll wager so, and to prove it, I have sent three men, under the supervision of a gendarme, to drag the Seine at the closest point. I’ve offered them a reward if they find the bundle.”

“Out of your own pocket, you old madman?”

“Yes, M. Gévrol, out of my own pocket.”

“Think, what if they find the bundle,” said the magistrate.

Just as he was saying that, a gendarme came in.

“Here it is,” he said, holding out a sopping napkin that contained silverware, “the silver and jewels that the men found. They’d like the hundred francs you promised them.”

Old Tabaret took a banknote out of his wallet and gave it to the gendarme.

“Now,” he said, glancing witheringly at Gévrol, “what does the magistrate think?”

“I think that, thanks to your remarkable insight, we have reached a conclusion...”
But he never finished. The doctor who had been assigned the autopsy arrived.

After doing his repellent duty, the doctor only confirmed old Tabaret’s assertions and conjectures. He explained the position of the body as the old gentleman had. He too was of the opinion that there had been a struggle. He even found a bluish mark on the victim’s neck, barely perceptible, that showed where the murderer had grabbed her. Finally, he declared that the widow Lerouge had eaten about three hours before being struck.

The only thing that remained was to gather up some items of evidence that could be used later on to convict the perpetrator.

Old Tabaret examined the dead woman’s nails attentively. With extreme care, he removed some small traces of leather that had lodged there. The largest of these bits of glove-leather wasn’t even two millimeters long; but one could easily make out its color. He also preserved the section of skirt where the murderer had wiped his weapon. That, along with the bundle recovered from the Seine and the various footprints lifted by the old gentleman, were the only traces that the killer had left behind him.

Nothing much; but that nothing much was huge in Daburon’s eyes, and he was optimistic. The biggest stumbling-block in the investigation of a mysterious crime is error about the motive. If the search starts out in the wrong direction, it will lead farther and farther from the truth. Thanks to old Tabaret, the magistrate was sure he wasn’t fooled.

Night had fallen, and the magistrate had nothing more to accomplish at La Jonchère. Gévrol, smitten with the desire to find the man with the earrings, said that
he would stay in Bougival. He promised to make good use of his evening, by going into all the cabarets and winking out new witnesses.

As everyone was leaving and saying goodbye to the commissioner, M. Daburon proposed to accompany old Tabaret.

“I was about to solicit that honor,” said the old gentleman.

They left together, and naturally, the crime preoccupied them both, and became the subject of their conversation.

“Do we know this old woman’s story, or don’t we?” asked old Tabaret. “That’s the main question now.”

“We know her story,” the magistrate said, “if the grocer was right. If the widow Lerouge’s husband was a sailor and her son also went to sea, then the shipping bureau should be able to tell us what we need to know. I’ll write to them this evening.”

They arrived at Rueil station and took the train. Luck was with them. They found themselves alone in a first-class compartment.

But old Tabaret didn’t speak. He reflected, he put things together, and you could see the efforts of his thinking in his face. The magistrate looked at him with wonder, intrigued by the odd old gentleman’s character, by that passion – original, to say the least – that he displayed in the service of the Rue de Jérusalem.8

“M. Tabaret,” he said suddenly, “tell me: have you been doing police work for a long time?”

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8 A street that used to run near the Palais de Justice on Paris’s Île de la Cité, and so, shorthand for “the police.”
“Nine years, M. Magistrate, nine years now, and I don’t mind telling you I’m a little surprised that you’ve never heard of me before.”

“I knew of you by reputation, if not directly,” answered Daburon, “and it was in expectation of enjoying your talent that I had the excellent idea of sending for you. I just wonder what it was that propelled you into this career.”

“Sadness, M. Magistrate. Loneliness, boredom. Ah, I haven’t always been a very happy man.”

“They told me you were rich.”

The old gentleman gave a great sigh which spoke of cruel private disappointments.

“I’m comfortable, sure,” he said, “but it wasn’t always that way. Until the age of forty-five my life was full of absurd sacrifices. My father wasted my youth and ruined my life.”

There are professions where you can never entirely be off work. Daburon was always and everywhere a prosecuting attorney.

“Do you mean to say, M. Tabaret,” his interrogation began, “that your father was to blame for all your misfortunes?”

“Alas, yes, sir. I forgave him a long time ago, but for many years I cursed him. I used to heap the most hateful insults I could think of on his memory, until I knew ... but I should tell you the whole story. I was twenty-five years old, and I was earning 2,000 francs a year at the Mont-de-Piété, when one morning my father came to my apartment and told me that all of a sudden he was ruined, that he didn’t even have enough left to feed himself. He seemed desperate; he spoke of ending his life. Now, I loved him. Of course, I reassured him. I made my circumstances out to be
better than they were. I explained to him that as long as I was able to earn a living, he would lack nothing. To start with, I told him, we could move in together. No sooner said than done, and for the next twenty years he was my charge, the old man ...

“Don’t tell me that you regret such honorable conduct, M. Tabaret!”

“Regret? Better that I should have poisoned the bread I gave him.”

Daburon let slip a gesture of surprise that the old gentleman noticed.

“Hear me out before you condemn me,” he went on. “So there I was, at twenty-five, imposing the strictest privations on myself, for my father’s sake. No friends, no lovers, nothing. In the evening, to make more, I went and copied records in a notary’s office. I even gave up tobacco. It was hard work; the old man did nothing but complain, lamenting his past comfort, needing pocket money for this and that. No matter how hard I worked, I couldn’t seem to satisfy him. God knows what I suffered!

“I was not born to live and grow old alone like a dog. I had the family bump. My dream would have been to get married, dote on a good wife, be loved a little in return, and see a swarm of children growing around me. But enough of that ... when such thoughts clutched at my heart and provoked a tear or two, I pulled myself up. I said to myself, my boy, when you only make 3,000 francs a year and you have a beloved old father, you smother your feelings and remain unmarried. And meanwhile, I met a young woman! Think of it, that was thirty years ago, and look at me, blushing red as a tomato. Her name was Hortense. Who knows what became of

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9 I.e. on the head, in terms of the 19th-century pseudoscience of phrenology.
her! She was beautiful and poor. And at last, I was old when my father died, the miserable ...”

“Please, M. Tabaret!” interrupted the magistrate.

“But I told you I had forgiven him, M. Magistrate! It’s just that you have to understand my anger. The day he died, I found securities in his desk worth 20,000 francs a year in income!”

“What? He was wealthy?”

“Very wealthy, because that wasn’t all. He owned land near Orléans that added another 6,000 a year. He owned a building, too. The one where I lived. We lived there together, and like a stupid, idiotic, imbecile of an ass, I paid the rent to his agent every three months.”

“That’s really something,” Daburon couldn’t help saying.

“Isn’t it, sir? Stealing money right out of my pocket. To add insult to injury, he left a will where he declared in the name of the Father and the Son that he had no concern in doing so except my own best interests. He wrote that he wanted to instill in me a sense of organization and thrift, and prevent me from doing anything stupid. There I was, forty-five years old, and for the last twenty years I had been beating myself up over every centime I’d wasted. It was as if he’d been speculating with my good nature, as if he’d ... well, honestly, it’s enough to turn you sour on filial obligations.”

Old Tabaret’s anger was well-founded, but at the same time so ridiculous, that the magistrate could barely keep from laughing despite the sad nature of the story.

“But at least,” he said, “that fortune should have brought you some pleasure?”
“Not at all, sir. It came too late. Having food when you have no teeth anymore, that’s a great improvement! I was past marrying age. But I did hand in my resignation so that somebody poorer than I could take my job. A month later, I was bored to death. It was then, in order to compensate for the love that I’d missed out on, that I decided to adopt a passion, a mania. I started to collect books. Maybe you’d think, sir, that to collect books you need to study certain subjects, to acquire some knowledge?”

“I know, dear M. Tabaret, that above all you need money. I know a famous bibliophile who ought to be able to read, but in fact is incapable of signing his name.”

“It’s certainly possible. I can read, though, and I read all the books that I bought. I collected only those that had something to do, in some way, with police work. Memoirs, reports, pamphlets, theoretical works, letters, novels, I loved it all, and I ate it up – so much so that little by little I found myself drawn towards that mysterious force that, from the heart of the Rue de Jérusalem, watches over and guards society, penetrates everywhere, lifts the thickest veils, looks at the reverse of every tapestry, divines things that no-one admits, knows the true worth of men and the price of their conscience, and preserves in its files the most honorable as well as the most shameful secrets.

“Reading the memoirs of famous policemen, as intriguing as the best-woven fables, I got excited by these men of refined talents, finer than silk, tensile as steel, penetrating and clever, teeming with unexpected resourcefulness - pursuing the track of crime, statutes in hand, through the thickets of law, as the savages in Cooper
novels track their enemies through the forests of America.\textsuperscript{10} I wanted to be a cog in that admirable machine. I, too, wanted to become a kind of small-scale Providence, helping to punish crime and vindicate innocence. I tried it out, and I found that I wasn’t too bad at the trade.”

“And you enjoyed it?”

“Sir, I owe my most vivid pleasures to it. Farewell boredom, once I abandoned the pursuit of books for the pursuit of my peers. Oh, what a wonderful thing! I shake my head when I see some fool pay 25 francs for the right to shoot a hare. Some catch! Talk to me instead about man-hunting! That at least puts all your faculties into play, and victory is not without glory. There, the prey is equal to the hunter; he has the same intelligence, power, and tricks; their weapons are equal. Ah, if people knew how exciting the games of hide-and-seek played by the criminal and the detective can be, everyone would want to work for the Rue de Jérusalem. The only problem is that it is a dying art, fading out. Really good crimes have become rare. A powerful race of fearless villains has given way to a bunch of common thieves. The few shameless types who get themselves talked about far and wide are as stupid as they are lazy. They sign their crimes and take care to leave behind their calling cards. There’s no merit in catching them. Once you hear of a crime, you can go arrest them straightaway.”

“On the other hand, it seems to me,” Daburon interrupted with a smile, “that our killer isn’t so clumsy.”

“This one, sir, is an exception; and so, I will be delighted to find him. I’ll do anything, I’ll compromise myself, if need be. Because I should confess to M.

\textsuperscript{10} Such as \textit{The Last of the Mohicans} (1826).
Magistrate,” he added with a hint of embarrassment, “that I don’t boast to my friends about my exploits. In fact I conceal them as carefully as I can. They might take my hand less eagerly if they knew that Tirauclair and Tabaret were the same person.”

Imperceptibly, the subject shifted back to the crime. It was settled that on the following day, old Tabaret would start work in Bougival. Over the next week, he would do his best to question the whole neighborhood. For his part, the magistrate would keep him abreast of the least bits of information that he collected, and recall him to Paris once they’d found the file on the widow Lerouge, if they ever managed to get their hands on it.

“For you, M. Tabaret,” said the magistrate in conclusion, “I will always be available. If you have something to tell me, never hesitate to come, night or day. I don’t go out often. You will invariably find me either at home in Rue Jacob, or at my office in the Palais. Orders will be given to admit you whenever you present yourself.”

At that moment they reached the station. Daburon, having sent for a carriage, offered M. Tabaret a ride. The old gentleman declined.

“It’s not worth the trouble,” he said. “I live, as I had the honor of telling you, in the Rue Saint-Lazare, right around the corner.”

“Till tomorrow, then,” said Daburon.

“Till tomorrow!” replied old Tabaret, and added: “We’ll find him.”