

EXECUTION OF PRANZINI.**THE MURDERER OF MME. REGNAULT EXPIATES HIS CRIME.**

PARIS, Aug. 31.—Henri Pranzini, the Rue Montaigne assassin, was executed at an early hour this morning.

The triple murder in the Rue Montaigne, for the commission of which Henri Pranzini has just surrendered his head to the guillotine, was one of the most sensational tragedies which even Paris has furnished to the criminal records of the world. Marie Regnault was a leading member of the demi-monde of Paris. She lived on the third floor of the house 17 Rue Montaigne with her femme-de-chambre, Annette Gremeret, and Annette's daughter Marie, a little girl of 12 years. On the morning of Thursday, March 17 last, the body of Marie Regnault, who was also known as Mme. de Montille, was found on the floor of her chamber dead, her throat cut and her body terribly mutilated. Lying near the door leading from the chamber to the drawing room was the dead body of Annette, whose throat had also been cut, and in her bed in another apartment was little Marie Gremeret, her head almost severed from her body by the murderer's knife. It was evident that Annette had gone to the rescue of her mistress, and had been struck down by the assassin, and that the little girl had been murdered to put out of the way the only other witness of the terrible crime.

A number of jewels which it was known were in the possession of Marie Regnault the day before, including a gold watch, shaped like a heart and richly ornamented with diamonds, was stolen by the assassin, and bloody marks on the safe of the murdered woman, in which were money and valuables amounting to nearly \$40,000, showed that he had attempted, but unsuccessfully, to force this. On the floor were found a pair of cuffs and a leather suspender, on which was the name Gustav Geissler, and in a drawer of the bureau was a letter signed Geissler. These were seized upon by the Paris detectives as clues to the assassin, and a hunt was begun for Gustav Geissler.

In the meantime, on the Saturday following the triple crime a man registered as Henri Pranzini at the Hotel de Noailles, Marseilles. He inquired anxiously for a packet which he was expecting from Paris, and, finding it had not arrived, left the hotel and spent the night wandering about the cafés and houses of ill repute. In one of these latter he offered for 20f. Marie Regnault's heart-shaped watch, and the girl to whom the offer was made recognized it at once. She notified the police as soon as Pranzini left her on Sunday, and they traced him to the Palace of Longchamps, where he had gone after receiving the expected packet at the hotel. The lakes and other receptacles of Longchamps were drawn, and the result was that a number of the missing pieces of jewelry stolen from Rue Montaigne were fished up. Pranzini, becoming frightened, had taken the packet to Longchamps and emptied its contents in a cesspool. The man was finally arrested at the theatre on Sunday night, where he was listening, apparently with the utmost calmness, to "The Barber of Seville."

Nobody had seen Pranzini murder the three inmates of Marie Regnault's apartments, and he stoutly denied the crime, but the detectives of Paris, after the Marseilles police had captured their man, wove about him such a web of circumstantial and direct evidence that his guilt was made as plain as though he had confessed it. His entire history was hunted up, from his birth to the assassinations which made his infamous reputation world-wide. That history showed that he was a thief who lived upon his thefts and the earnings of unfortunate women who became infatuated with him. The last of these women was a Mme. Sabbatier, with whom he lived at 40 Rue des Martyrs. This woman at first tried to save him by declaring that on the night of the triple crime Pranzini never left her house; but as she saw the strong evidence which had been secured against her lover she retracted this statement, admitted that he was not at home that night, and told the story of his proceedings on the following day, which were enough of themselves to convict him. Mme. Sabbatier implored Pranzini to make a clean confession and throw himself on the mercy of the court; but he was deaf to her appeals, and declared his innocence to the last moment, notwithstanding the terrible array of unanswerable evidence against him.

Pranzini's trial began on July 11 before the Assizes of Paris and lasted four days. A great number of witnesses were examined, and from them a complete story of the crime, the flight of the murderer, and his capture, was extracted. It was shown by experts that the letter found in the dead woman's room, signed "Geissler," was in the handwriting of Pranzini, though disguised. This letter was addressed "Mme. Montille," and it was proved that Pranzini always called Marie Regnault "Montille," while she was known to all her other friends as "Mme. de Montille." No person except Pranzini was known who ever omitted the particle "de" in giving Regnault this name. Geissler himself was produced and testified that Pranzini, while engaged as his assistant clerk in a Naples hotel, had robbed the safe. The dealer of whom the assassin purchased the murderous butcher's knife with which three lives were taken identified him fully. Another witness swore that Pranzini on the day before the crime asked him for a loan of 50f., and assured him that he would have several thousand francs on the following day. It was shown that on the day after the assassinations Pranzini had sent this cable to a young lady in this city, to whom he claimed he was engaged to be married: "Completely cured; I leave for Nice with mother." This cable was signed "Dr. Foster," the name by which Pranzini was known to the American girl. The theory of the prosecution was that Pranzini intended to get Regnault's \$40,000, and go to America to marry the young woman whose confidence he had secured, but his inability to open the safe prevented his carrying this scheme into execution.

The most important witness was Mme. Sabbatier, who swore that Pranzini was out all night on the night of the crime, and returned to her late the next day. Suddenly he began to cry, and told her he had witnessed a terrible scene. He said that he was with Marie Regnault when a knock was heard at the door. She told him it was her lover, who was very jealous, and pushed him into the wardrobe. The man then entered and murdered the two women and girl before his very eyes, and he dared not step forth to protect them. The Sabbatier believed this story, and pawned her jewels to get the money for Pranzini to go to Marseilles. He explained his flight by saying that Regnault had his photograph, and the police might suspect him of the crime. Pranzini, when confronted with Mme. Sabbatier, declared that she lied, but that the woman told the truth was evident from her manner and from corroborative evidence. The witnesses from Marseilles completed the story, and Mme. Regnault's watch and other jewels in the possession of Pranzini were in themselves mute but eloquent witnesses to his crime.

The mysterious packet about which Pranzini was so anxious in Marseilles, and which he received on Sunday, was traced from its leaving Paris until it found its way into the cesspool at Longchamps. It was proved by a shopkeeper of the Rue de la Paix that on the Saturday after the assassination Pranzini bought a new hat, giving the name of "Dr. Foster." Then he went to the Théâtre Français Postal Station.

"What did you go there for?" asked the President of the court.

"To inquire for a letter," said the prisoner.

The postal officer testified that Pranzini asked for no letters, but he deposited a package, which was addressed: "From Dr. Foster to Dr. Pranzini, Hotel de Noailles, Marseilles." Added to this address was the word in brackets, "Instruments." This packet was identified as the one which Pranzini himself received at the hotel in Marseilles on the following day. The coachman who took him to Longchamps swore that when he left the carriage he had the package in his hands and when he returned the package was gone. The coachman asked him if he had not left it in some place and forgotten it, and Pranzini answered that it was a package of biscuits, some of which he had eaten and the rest he had thrown away. The men who fished out this package, which contained the jewels of Marie Regnault, completed this part of the story.

After Pranzini's arrest in Marseilles he was placed in a cell in a police prison, and the first thing he did was to tear into strips the covering of the bed and attempt to hang himself to the cell door. He was discovered in time to save his head for the guillotine, and the fact of this attempt was brought forward in the court as presumptive evidence of his guilt of the crimes charged against him. Pranzini declared that he had a rush of blood to the head, but had no recollection of having attempted to commit suicide. His memory was unpleasantly refreshed by the guard who cut him down, and the doctor of the prison who examined him and who swore that the marks of his improvised rope were visible on his neck for several hours after his attempt on his own life.

A singular feature of the assassinations in the Rue Montaigne was the appearance with Pranzini on the day after the crimes of a dark-complexioned man who has been described by several witnesses, but who has never yet been identified. This man, according to the coachman who drove Pranzini to the station when he left for Marseilles, rode with him and saw him off on his journey, but that is the last that has been heard of him. If, as is the theory, he was an accomplice of the assassin, Pranzini refused to the last to betray him and contradicted flatly every witness who testified to seeing them together. This unknown man went with Pranzini to the telegraph office from which the cable to the American lady was sent, to the Post Office, and to the railroad station, and there he was lost, forming the ugly mystery yet unsolved involved in the great crime of the 17th of March.

Pranzini himself, while stolidly denying that he killed the woman and girl, refused to tell where he was on the night of the triple crime. To all questions on this point he answered, "I am not at liberty to say. I decline to compromise a lady." This effort to play the part of a gentleman of nice honor was made the subject of many scathing sarcasms by the President of the court, and it did not deceive the jury, who, after an absence of two hours, returned with a verdict of guilty, on all the counts, of murder and robbery. Then for the first time the assumed fortitude of the assassin gave way. He turned pale, and tore the handkerchief which he held in his hands to shreds.

"What have you to say?" asked the Presi-

dent, turning his face toward the convicted man.

"I have nothing to say," he hissed between his teeth, "but that I am innocent."

The sentence of death on the block was at once pronounced. Pranzini staggered and would have fallen but for the officer who quickly grasped him. As he was led from the court he muttered again and again, "I am innocent, innocent," and with this lie on his lips he was taken to the cell which he never left again until brought forth to confront the guillotine.