
THE INTERNATIONAL

Edited by **GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK**

DECEMBER, 1915

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Editorials :

GREAT BRITAIN FACES POLITICAL CRISIS AT HOME.
TRIUMPH OF DELATION AT WASHINGTON.
THE POSTOFFICE SCANDAL OF LAST MONTH.
THE NAVAL AND MILITARY SCHEME OF PRESIDENT WILSON.
"BOB" GETS OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT AT LAST.
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION NEXT YEAR.
THE CLOWN OF THE WAR GOES THROUGH ANOTHER HOOP.

The New Delusion On the Subject of the War

SWEET REASONABLENESS
What Peace Should Bring the Nations
BY ALEISTER CROWLEY

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Sir Edward Bolden's Task	<i>Earl Wright</i>

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THE INTERNATIONAL

Edited by GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK

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Arthur E. Gringle, Editor. Indianapolis, Ind.

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THE SPIDER

By Hanns Heins Ewers.

(The International has for many years published stories of an exceptionally high and unusual quality. Many of the finest modern short stories have for the first time appeared in the columns of this magazine. The following powerful, symbolic tale is from the pen of Hanns Heins Ewers—The Edgar Allan Poe of Germany and one of the most notable authors writing in the German language. His fantastic imagination is perhaps best seen in the following story—unique, repelling, yet irresistible.)

And a will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of a will with its vigor?

Glanville.

WHEN Richard Bracquemont, medical student, made up his mind to take Room 7 in the Hotel Stevens, a small place at Rue Alfred Stevens 6, three persons on three successive Fridays had hanged themselves to its window-cross.

Of these the first was a Swiss traveling salesman. They found his body by Saturday evening. The doctor maintained it must have been between five and six o'clock Friday afternoon that death befell. The corpse hung to a great hook fixed in the transom sill. The window was closed. The dead man had used the curtain cord for a rope. Since it was a low window, the man's knees almost rested on the floor. Thus, the suicide must have exercised strong will-power to accomplish his design. It was further evidenced that he was married, had four children, enjoyed a very steady and remunerative position and had proved himself of cheerful, evenly sanguine character. They found not a scrap of writing that bore upon the suicide, much less a will. Also he had never given any of his friends the slightest intimation.

Not far otherwise did it chance the second time. Carl Krause, featured at the nearby *Cirque Médrano* as quick change bicycle specialty man, had engaged Room 7 two days later. When he did not appear for that Friday night's performance the manager dispatched a stagehand to the hotel. The room was not locked; so the fellow entering found the actor hanging from the window rail. The suicide appeared no less inexplicable. The popular artist drew a handsome salary; and, being a young man of twenty-five, knew how to enjoy life.

Here again, no papers, no verbal insinuations. The only living relative was his old mother, toward whose support he had been in the habit of sending two hundred marks the first of every month.

Madam Dubonnet, the proprietress of this cheap little hotel, counted for her patronage almost entirely on the neighboring Montmartre-Variétés. For her this second inscrutable case of death in the same room had very unpleasant results. By now, several of her guests had left, and other regular patrons had not put in an appearance. She turned to the police commissioner of the Ninth Precinct, who, as a personal friend, promised to do everything for her that lay in his power. Hence, he not only busied himself with especial zeal in the investigations toward some possible motive for the suicide of the two lodgers, but he also placed an officer at her disposal, who moved into the mysterious room. For this, the guardsman, Charles-Marie Chaumié, had volunteered his services. This sergeant, an old "Marsouin" and marine-infantrist of eleven years service, had stood guard in Tonkin and Annam so many a night alone at his post, had greeted with a rousing shot so many a surreptitious visit of cat-footed, yellow river pirates, that he indeed seemed capable of engaging the ghostly visitants, about which there was such great talk in Rue Alfred Stevens. Thus he moved into the room by Sunday

evening, and composed himself for peaceful slumber, but not before he had handsomely praised the food and drink of the worthy Madam Dubonnet.

Every morning and evening Chaumié paid the police precinct a short visit, in order to make a report. For the first days these amounted to the declaration that he had noticed not the slightest thing. Wednesday evening, however, he stated his finding a clue. When urged to say more, he begged to remain silent for the time, for he was by no means sure that his discovery had any real connection with the death of the unfortunates, and he quite dreaded to make a fool of himself and be laughed at. Thursday his appearance was less confident and more grave; yet, again, he had nothing to report. Friday morning he showed more excitement. He remarked, half laughing, half serious, that this window, at all events, had a peculiar fascination.

Nevertheless, he insisted that this stood in no relation whatsoever to the suicides, and that if he said more he would surely be made fun of. In the evening of this day he did not report again to the station-house, but was discovered, caught on the hook of the window-cross, dead.

Here again the circumstances matched in the minutest particular those of the other cases. The legs spraddled on the floor, the curtain cord used as a rope, the window closed, the door unlocked, and death in the sixth hour of the afternoon. The dead man's mouth gaped wide open. The livid tongue curled out—

This third death in Room 7 brought about the departure that very day of all guests, with the exception of a German high school teacher in No. 16, who used the chance to reduce rent by a third. It was a feeble consolation for Madam Dubonnet when Mary Garden, star of the Opéra Comique, rode by in her Renault, and bargained for the red curtain cord at two hundred francs—first of all because that brought luck, and then because it appeared in the dailies.

If this affair had happened in the summer, say in July or August, then Madam Dubonnet might well have secured three times that amount for the cord. The papers would not have failed to fill their columns, even for weeks, with this stuff. But here, in the middle of the season, with elections, Morocco, Persia, bank-crash in New York, and not less than three political affairs, really they scarcely knew where to find room for it. Consequently, the topic of Rue Alfred Stevens became perceptibly less bruited than it really deserved; and, further, the reports, direct and short, rehearsed but the police records and kept themselves free from exaggeration.

This evidence was all that the medical student, Richard Bracquemont, knew of the matter. He was aware of one other little circumstance. It appeared so extraneous that neither the commissioner nor any other of the witnesses mentioned it to the reporters. Only later, after the adventure of the medical student, did anybody recall that, when the policeman cut down the body of Sergeant Charles Maria Chaumié from the window-cross, there crept out of the open mouth of the corpse a great black spider. The porter flipped

it away with his finger, crying, "The devil! Another damned bug!"

In the course of those later investigations that had to do with Bracquemont, he declared that, when the body of the Swiss traveling salesman was carried out, a very similar spider had been seen by him running over the shoulder.

Of this Bracquemont knew nothing.

He moved into the room on a Sunday, a good fortnight after the last suicide. What he there experienced was daily recorded with great fidelity in a notebook.

* * *

DIARY OF RICHARD BRACQUEMONT, MEDICAL STUDENT.

Monday, February 28.

MOVED in here yesterday evening. Unpacked both suitcases and put things to rights; then went to bed. I slept well. It just struck nine o'clock when a knocking woke me. It was the housekeeper, who herself brought me breakfast. She is very anxious about me; that's proven by the eggs, ham and excellent coffee. I washed, dressed, then looked on as the porter tidied the room, the while smoking my pipe.

Well, then, here I am! I know perfectly well that the affair is risky, but I also realize that there's a fortune in it for me if I succeed in getting at the bottom of it. And if Paris long ago was reckoned at a holy mass—(one couldn't get it so cheaply today)—why, then, I can put up my bit of a life for such a prize. Here is a chance—all right—I'll attempt it.

Besides, a lot of people were clever enough to get into my game—not less than twenty-seven persons. Some through the police, some directly through the proprietress, wanted to secure the room; among them three ladies. There was plenty of competition; all of them apparently just as hard up as myself.

But I "got the job." How? Well, it seems I was the only one who could offer the wise police an idea! A fine idea! Of course it was a bluff.

Since those reports are prepared for the eyes of the police, it amuses me to tell the gentlemen, right at the beginning, that I have led them by the nose. Suppose the commissioner is sensible. He'll say: "Hm! just for this reason Bracquemont appears to be the right man!"

But it's all the same to me what he says later on; for the present here I sit. And I regard it as a good omen that I have started my activities by hoodwinking the gentlemen so thoroughly.

I first looked up Madam Dubonnet, who directed me to the station-house. I loafed around there every day for a whole week. It was always "Your application will be considered," which amounted to the request that I come again. Most of my rivals had cleared out; probably had more urgent business than to drowse in the musty old guard-room. The commissioner was showing signs of anger at my obstinacy. Finally, he gave me to understand that I needn't apply any more. To me, as to the others, he was extremely grateful, but he simply couldn't use the promising suggestions of outsiders. Unless I had some sort of a worked-out plan—

So I told him that's the very thing I had. And really I could not have gotten beyond the first word. Nevertheless, I stipulated, I would declare my plan if he would give his word of honor to carry it out himself, for it was really dangerous, and might well come to the same end as the efforts of the unfortunate policeman. He very cordially answered that he had not a moment to spare for anything

like that. But I saw that I was gaining ground when he inquired whether I could not give him at least a hint—

And that I did. I gave him a piece of blooming nonsense that had come into my head a second before. I am in the dark where this sudden notion came from. I told him that of all the hours of the week there was one marked by a singular and mysterious power. That was the hour in which the Christ vanished from His grave and descended into hell—the sixth hour in the evening of the next to the last day of the Jewish week. And he, perchance, recalled it was this hour Friday between 5 and 6 o'clock in which all three suicides occurred. I might not tell him more at that time except to refer him to the Revelations of St. John.

The commissioner put on a visage of comprehension, was again cordial and made an evening appointment with me. I walked into his office on the dot. I saw the New Testament spread out before him on the table. In the meantime I had looked up the same reference as himself. Had hunted through the Revelations and found them absolutely unintelligible. Perhaps the commissioner was a brighter man than I. At all events, he informed me very courteously, that in spite of my vague suggestions he believed that he understood my train of thought. He added his readiness to follow out my wishes and to further them in every way possible.

In fact, I must credit him with having been very helpful to me. He made arrangements with the housekeeper whereby I was to be boarded free during my stay at the hotel. He also loaned me a splendid revolver and a police whistle. The policemen on duty were ordered to go through Rue Alfred Stevens as often as possible and to rush to my assistance at the least sign of trouble. But his chief kindness was to have brought into my room a portable telephone, through which I have direct connection with police headquarters. Since this is scarcely four minutes away, I can obtain quickest help in any emergency. Thus fortified, I can't very well see what should make me afraid.

Tuesday, March 1.

NOTHING has occurred, neither yesterday nor today. Madam Dubonnet brought a new curtain cord from another room—surely she has enough of them empty! She does not miss any opportunity to visit me, and brings something along every time. I asked to hear again each detail of what had happened, but have gained nothing new. Concerning the death motives she has her own opinions. The trouble with the artist she believes was an unhappy love affair. When he was with her last year, a young lady called upon him frequently, but this year she had not shown herself. What had touched the Swiss gentleman to desperate impulse, she simply did not understand—one couldn't know everything! But the sergeant, the sergeant, undoubtedly committed suicide just to spite her.

I must confess that these explanations of Madam Dubonnet sounded a bit thin. But I tolerate her prattling—anyhow, it serves to break the monotony.

Thursday, March 3.

Still absolutely nothing. The commissioner rings me up several times a day. Although I told him that all goes well, he is clearly not reassured. I lugged out my medicine books and now I study. My self-imposed durance is not without one good purpose.

Friday, March 4, 2 P. M.

Dandy lunch today! To crown all, the landlady brought me half a bottle of champagne. It was a regular hangman's feast. She regards me as already three-quarters dead. Before going out she implored me, with tears in her eyes, to

come away with her. She indeed dreaded that I too would hang myself—"just to spite her."

I have scrutinized the new curtain cord. Must I go to work and choke myself with it? Hm, I haven't the least desire. Then, too, the rope hangs rough and stiff and forms a clumsy loop. Surely, a fellow would need a strong bent in order to emulate the example of the others. Here I sit at the table, with the telephone to my left and to my right the revolver. Fear I have none, but I'm very curious.

6 P. M.

Nothing has occurred. I was about to write—"unfortunately." The ominous hour came and sped, and was like all the rest. Of course, I will not deny that several times I had a certain impulse to be at the window. Oh, yes; but for other reasons. Between 5 and 6 the commissioner must have rung me up at least ten times. He was just as impatient as I myself. But Madam Dubonnet is delighted; for a whole week somebody has lived in No. 7 without hanging himself. Preposterous!

Monday, March 7.

I am now convinced that I shall find out nothing, and I incline to the belief that the suicides were mere coincidences. I requested the commissioner to have further investigations into all three cases, as I am convinced that they will eventually be cleared up. As for me, I am going to stay on as long as I can. 'Tis true that I will not master Paris here, but this is high living, all right, and I'm getting fat on it. Then, too, I'm studying faithfully and my progress is noticeable. Besides this, I have a new purpose to hold me here.

Wednesday, March 9.

So now I'm advanced a step further. Clarimonde— Ah, yes; I have related nothing yet of Clarimonde. She is my purpose for remaining here. And it is she, too, in whose behest, gladly would I have gone in that impending hour to the window—but most certainly not to hang myself. Clarimonde—must I call her merely that?—I have no knowledge of her real name. But Clarimonde, I feel, it must be. And I'd bet that's the very way she'd call herself if one were to ask her. Right at the very start I noticed Clarimonde. She lives on the opposite side of this close street, and her window directly faces mine. She sits there behind the curtains. I may as well confess that she espied me sooner than I noticed her, and surely betrayed an interest in me. No wonder! Thanks to the tongue of Madam Dubonnet, the whole neighborhood knows the fact and the reason for my being here.

I have truly a very impassive nature and my connections with women have always been rather cold. When a fellow leaves Verdun and goes to Paris to study, taking scarcely enough money along to be well fed three days out of the week, he has something else to think about than love. So, you see, I have little experience, and probably I play the silly ass in this case. After all, it suits me just as it goes. At first I had a desire to bring her nearer. I thought to myself that since I am here on the watch and, do what I may, have nothing to find out, why, then, I might as well gaze at the creature opposite. How the deuce can anybody sit still the live long day over nothing but books?

I have determined that Clarimonde is apparently solitary in her tiny quarters. She has three windows, but she always sits at the window opposite my own—sits there and spins—spins from a small old-fashioned wheel. I once saw a spinning wheel like hers at my grandmother's, but the old lady had never used this heirloom of some great-aunt. It was a surprise to me that anybody still used one. Moreover, the spinning wheel of Clarimonde is a wee, precious contrivance—white, as if of ivory. Surely those must be subtle threads

of her spinning! Through the long day she sits there behind the curtains and pauselessly weaves, ceasing only at twilight. In these dark days it soon becomes dusk over this narrow street. At five o'clock we have the very beauty of sunset. I have never seen light in her room.

Her appearance—Oh, I'm not quite sure. Her black tresses are sleek and close, and she has a certain pallor. Her nose is aquiline and delicate and the nostrils quiver. Her lips are blanched and I feel as if the little teeth were pointed like the teeth of carnivora. The eyelids give great shadows, but when they open her large dark eyes are luminous. Yet I have intimations of all this rather than direct knowledge. It is difficult to perceive anything exactly behind those hangings.

One thing further: She always wears a snug black garment—great lilac tufts distinguish it—and she is forever wearing long black gloves—no doubt to preserve her hands from toil. Now and then, as I regard the antic black fingers plying away, in and out, plucking and leading the filaments, it actually reminds me of the spasmodic twitching of insect tentacles.

Our mutual bearing? Well, it is rather superficial, and yet it occurs to me that it may be much deeper. It began, you see, in her looking over to my window and I to hers. She gazes at me and I at her. Evidently she must have been pleased with me, for one day when she gazed over she smiled. I did the same, of course. So things continued for several days. We smiled more and more often to one another. Next I resolved to greet her, but ever experienced some intangible restraint. At last I took that step—this very afternoon. And Clarimonde greeted me. Quite delicately, you may be sure, but I am convinced that she inclined her head.

Thursday, March 10.

Yesterday I wearied myself with books. I can't exactly say that I studied a good deal. I have been building air-castles and dreaming of Clarimonde. Slept restlessly until far into the morning.

When I stepped to the window there Clarimonde sat. I saluted and she nodded again. She smiled and peered long at me.

I meant to study, but could not concentrate. I placed myself at the window and stared at her. Still another thing I noticed, how she placed her hands in her lap. I tugged at the curtains and almost at the same instant—she did likewise. We both smiled and looked upon each other. I believe we certainly sat there an hour.

Then she continued spinning.

Saturday, March 12.

THESE days run along thus: I eat and drink and sit down at the desk; I then light my pipe and pore over a book, but I do not read a single syllable. I am trying right along, but I feel that it is entirely fruitless. Then I go to the window and wave a greeting. Clarimonde shows thanks. We smile and look fixedly at each other, hours at a time—

About six o'clock yesterday afternoon I was a bit restless. Twilight stole over us very early, and I caught some foreboding. I sat and waited. I received an indomitable impulse toward the window—of course, not to hang myself, but just to look at Clarimonde. I leaped up and stopped behind the curtain. Never had I seen her so distinctly, in spite of its being now quite dark. She was spinning, but her eyes, her eyes were fastened upon me. I experienced a strange pervading comfort, and the least touch of misgiving.

The telephone bell!

I could have killed the doddering commissioner, who with his gruff questions rasped me out of my dreams.

This morning he paid me a visit, together with Madam

Dubonnet. She is pretty well pleased with what I am doing, and is quite content with my two weeks' occupancy of Room 7. But the commissioner's one idea is to get results. I have hinted that I am on the track of a most singular discovery. The ass believed every word of it. So my bunk is safe for weeks more—and that's my one desire. Not because of Madam Dubonnet's cakes and wine—Good Lord! how soon food becomes wearisome when one has his fill!—No, only because of the window that she hates and fears and which I am so fond of; this window which lets me see Clarimonde.

When I light my lamp she vanishes. I have peered my eyes out to know whether she goes elsewhere. But never have I seen her set foot on the street. I have a big, snug easy chair and a green shade on the lamp, whose light pours warmly over me. The commissioner brought me a large package of tobacco, the best I've ever smoked—and yet with all this I can't work. I read over two, three pages, and at the end I know that I haven't grasped any of it. Only my eye catches up letters, my brain resists every new impression. Odd! As though it carried a sign: "No admittance"—as though it now entertained no other thought but—Clarimonde.

At last I stick the books away, snuggle back into my cushions and dream.

Sunday, March 13.

THIS morning I witnessed a little spectacle. I paced up and down the corridor while the porter put my room in order. Before the small courtyard window hangs a web wherein a crossbacked spider sways. Madam Dubonnet will not have it brushed away; spiders bring luck, and she has had quite enough misfortune in her house. Then I noticed how another and much smaller spider, a male, was running guardedly about the web. Up a frail gray filament it drew cautiously toward the middle, but at the slightest movement of the female it swung back, made for another strand and again struggled to draw near. At least, the taut pudgy female seemed to tolerate his advances; she stirred no more. Gently, at first, then more assuredly, did the male tug at a gossamer, till the whole weavement fluttered, but his adored one stayed quiescent. Nearer and nearer, quickly, but with unceasing precaution he ascended. The female took it composedly, and was gently and yieldingly indulgent to his passionate embracings. Immovably, then, they two hung together upon the ample web.

Next I regarded how the male spider gradually released one leg from another; it was as if he would gently withdraw and leave the consort alone in her voluptuous musings. Suddenly he pulled away and scampered affrightedly out of the net. But in the same instant a wild life stirred in the female. Madly she hunted him down. The spindling male let fall on a thread; at once the beloved matched his art. Both dropped to the windowsill. With a summoning of his supremest energy, the hunted one tried to escape. Too late! Relentlessly even then the consort gripped him and hauled him again up into the very middle of the net. And this place, which had just served as bed for lustful cravings showed now another picture. In vain the lover writhed, ever stretching out the weakening legs, striving to avoid this wild embracement. Never more would the beloved release him. In a few minutes she had spun him motionless. Now she was plunging her sharp pincers into his belly, and sucking in full gulps his new white blood—

I regarded also how she finally freed the wretched, unrecognizable mass of legs, skin and fiber, and contemptuously cast it from the web.

So this is the way these creatures love! Well, I'm glad that I am no spider-youthing.

Monday, March 14.

Haven't a glance more for my books. I spend the live long day at the window. And when it is dark, even then I remain sitting. She is no longer there, but I shut my eyes and still see her—

So! This diary has certainly become different from my anticipations of it. It runs on about Madam Dubonnet and the commissioner and spiders and Clarimonde, but not a syllable about the discoveries that I wanted to make. But what should I care?

Tuesday, March 15.

We have hit upon a rare game, Clarimonde and I, and this we play the whole day long. From her I receive an immediate response to my greetings. Thereupon I drum with my finger against the pane, which she no sooner notices than she begins to do the same. I wave my hand to her and she waves back. I move my lips, as if I were speaking to her, and she mutely answers me. Then I push back the hair from my temples, and at once her hand, too, is on her forehead. A regular child's play, and the two of us laugh over it. This is, of course, she doesn't laugh—it is merely a smile, gentle, indulgent. I believe I must smile very similarly.

But now, all this is not quite so stupid as it might seem. It is no mere imitation. We would both very soon tire of that. Something of thought transference must surely be in it; because Clarimonde follows my motions in the merest fraction of a second. With scarcely time to notice them, she already responds. Many a time I get the notion that all is simultaneous with us. To put into action an entirely unexpected whim gives me a delicate thrill, and mine the astonishment at her immediate answer. I have often endeavored to confound her. I twist a rapid succession of varied contortions. Once more the same, and yet again—I end with a third repetition of these antics, but change the sequence, or throw in something new, or leave something out. It is quite extraordinary that Clarimonde never makes a slip, although I change so quickly that she can scarcely have time to observe every little variance.

And so I trifle the hours away! But it never seems to me that I am merely killing time. On the contrary, I think I never have pursued anything more necessary.

Wednesday, March 16.

How strange it is that I have never entertained the idea of placing my relations with Clarimonde upon a more reasonable basis than these childish diversions! Last night I thought the matter over. There is nothing simpler than to take hat and coat and go down two flights of stairs, five steps across the street, then up two flights. On the door is a little plate with the name "Clarimonde"—Clarimonde—What? I do not know, but surely "Clarimonde" is there engraven. I knock, and then—

So far I can anticipate every least detail; every slightest motion I would make I see before me. But I cannot picture what might follow. The door opens, that is clear. I stop there in front of it and stare within, into a blackness that reveals nothing, absolutely nothing. She does not appear. Nothing appears. Really, there is nothing there—only black, impenetrable gloom. Often I imagine that there is not or could not be a different Clarimonde than the one I see yonder at the window, the one that plays with me. I cannot conceive of this woman wearing a hat, or wearing clothes, or anything other than the black habit with the startling lavender rosettes. I cannot even portray her without the gloves! See her on the street, or perhaps in a restaurant, eating, drinking, conversing?—I must laugh, it seems so impossible. Sometimes I ask myself whether I love her. I cannot answer that strictly,

since I have never yet been in love. If this feeling that I entertain toward Clarimonde is really love, then, at all events, it is very, very different from what I have seen among my comrades or read of in novels.

It is becoming more and more difficult to comprehend the states of my mind. It is growing exceedingly difficult to think of anything that does not center in Clarimonde, or rather, in our game. For undoubtedly it is this game which excites me, and nothing else. And that's the very thing I least understand.

Clarimonde—yes, I feel myself being drawn toward her, but there steals in a furtive sense that I am in dread. Dread? No, not that! But a sort of timidity—an intangible fear—of something or other that I cannot know. And it is just this fear, holding something compelling, strangely passionate, which wards me off from her and yet lures me closer. It seems as if I were coursing about her in a great circle, oft times coming nearer, then swinging further away, venturing toward another point and the shrinking back until at the last I know I must eventually go to her.

Clarimonde sits at the window and spins—long, thin everlastingly fine threads. From them she prepares a fabric whose nature I do not know; and it is incomprehensible to me how she can ply this intricacy without perplexing and severing those flimsy threads. There form wondrous devices in her nice handiwork, feverous fervid creatures and fascinating grotesques.

But come, now—what's this I am writing? In sober truth it is utterly impossible for me to see what she is really spinning; the web is imperceptible, and yet it impresses me that her work is exactly as I see it—when I close my eyes. Exactly so: A great net and many inwoven animal-fablings, and pattern-monsters, and awful, hideous grotesques.

Thursday, March 17.

I AM in a remarkable state of excitement. No longer do I speak to anybody, not even a "good morning" to Madam Dubonnet or to the porter—Scarcely allow myself time to eat. I want to be at the window and play with her. It is an enthralling game, really, without doubt, and I have the apprehension that something must come of it.

Friday, March 18.

Yes, yes, something must befall today, I keep telling myself—(Quite loudly I soliloquize in order to hear my voice)—that I am here for that single reason. The worst of it is, I am afraid. And this fear that something terrible might visit me just as it has my predecessors in this room fuses curiously with the other dread—that of Clarimonde. I find them quite inseparable. I am afraid. I would like to scream.

6 P.M.

Just a few words with my hat and coat on—

At the stroke of five I felt my strength at its ebb. But now I believe that it must have some connection with this sixth hour of the next to the last day of the week. I no longer find the deception I perpetrated against the commissioner at all amusing. Seated within my wide armchair I struggle to remain firm. But always I am hauled, almost torn to the window. I must play with Clarimonde! And then again that hideous horror of the window. I saw them hanged there—the Swiss traveling salesman—bulky, fat-necked, stubble-faced—the slender artist—and the squat, powerful sergeant. All three I saw there, first one by one and then together—all three on the same hook; all with gaping mouths and thick tongues, far-lolling. And then I saw myself hanged in the midst of them.

Oh, what fear! I felt that I had as much fear of the window-cross and the devilish hook up there as I have of Clari-

monde. She must forgive my thinking so; but in my contemptible dread I repeatedly pictured her presence fitfully flitting among the three hanged men, whose legs sprawled to the floor. It is true I never for a moment received a longing to strangle myself. I had not even fear of doing so. No, my terror was only of the window itself and of Clarimonde, of something alarming, inconceivable, which was now in event. I had the gripping, unshakable desire to get up and rush to the window. And I was driven to do it—

Then the telephone rang out. I took the receiver, and before I could distinguish a word, I had myself yelled into it: "Come at once; Come!" It seemed as if the piercing cry of my voice had instantly chased all of the shadows right into the cracks of the floor. At once I was calm. I brushed the drops from my brow and drank a glass of water. Then I cast about to find what I could say to the commissioner when he arrived. At last I returned to the window, nodding and smiling.

And Clarimonde nodded and smiled. Five minutes later the commissioner was on the scene. I informed him that now I had gotten down to the very bottom of the matter. Today he might spare me further questioning, but I would shortly make him remarkable disclosures. The funny part of it was that while I was brazenly lying to him the conviction was deepening upon me that I was telling the truth, and of that, at this very minute, I am quite as certain—despite my better knowledge

He remarked my somewhat peculiar manner, especially when I attempted to excuse and make as commonplace as possible my anguished cry over the telephone—but still could not appreciate a vital cause. He then observed very graciously that I need take no consideration for him. He would ever be at my service: that was his duty. Better to come a dozen times in vain than that he should once fail in a crisis. Then he invited me to go out for the evening. That would tranquillize me. It was not well for me to remain so entirely alone. I accepted—although with a twinge. I do not care to part from this room.

Saturday, March 19.

We went to the Gaité Rochechouart into the Cigale and into Lune Rousse. The commissioner was right. It did me good to get away from here and to breathe other air. At first I had quite an unpleasant feeling, just as if I were doing something wrong, as if I were a deserter, who turns his back upon the colors. That feeling vanished. We had many drinks, laughed and chatted. When I went up to the window this morning I thought I could detect a reproach in Clarimonde's glance. But perhaps that was only imagination, for how could she possibly know that I went out last evening. Anyway, that only lasted a minute—then she smiled again.

The whole day we played.

Sunday, twentieth of March.

Today I can but write again: "The whole day we have played."

March 21st, Monday.

The whole day we have been playing.

Tuesday, March 22.

Yes, and we were at it today as well. Nothing, absolutely nothing else. Now and then I ask myself: Well, to what end, and why? Or—

What do I really want; where will this take me? But I cannot reply to my own questions. For it is settled that I want nothing. Just that! And whatever may be the outcome of this—that is what I'm longing for.

We have been talking together these last few days; but of course, without a spoken word. Many times our lips ha

moved. More often we have simply looked at each other. But even then we have well understood.

I was not in error. Clarimonde did reproach me for running away last Friday. I replied by begging her pardon, and declaring that now I could see how stupid and hateful of me it had been. She forgave me, and I vowed that I would never more stir from the window. And we kissed one another, pressing our lips against the pane.

Wednesday, March 23.

I know now that I love her. It must be so. I am pervaded with her to the very last fiber. Maybe the love of other people is different. But is there then a head, an ear, even a hand, which truly resembles one of a thousand million? All are at variance! No love is ever like another. And strangely remarkable is my love, I am sure. But is it, therefore, less beautiful?

I were contented in my love, but for this dominance of fear. Often it sleeps and I forget about it; but only for a few minutes, when it wakes again and grips me firmly. It appears to me like a poor little mouse struggling against a huge, splendid snake, whose mighty coils seek to crush it. Just wait, you silly little fear, you will soon be devoured by this great love.

Thursday, March 24.

I MADE a discovery. I am not playing with Clarimonde—it is she that is playing with me. It appeared this way: Last night I was thinking as usual about our game. Then I put down in ink five new sequences with which I intended surprising her in the morning. Each movement bore a number. I practiced them over in order to obtain the greatest agility, forward and then backward, now only the even numbers and again only the odd, and all the initial and terminal antics of the five series. This was exceedingly wearisome, but very delightful, for Clarimonde was brought closer to me, even though I could not see her. For an hour at a time I kept practicing until it went fine as silk. So this morning I approached the window. We exchanged the usual greetings, and the pastime began. Around about and in and out—she caught on, following every motion I made with unbelievable readiness.

Then there was a knocking. The porter had fetched my boots. I took them. Just as I was going back to the window my glance fell on the paper with the directions for my flourishes. And then I saw that I had not carried out a single one of these movements. I staggered and almost fell. I clutched the arms of the chair and let myself drop. I could not believe my eyes. I scanned the paper over, but there it was. I had just gone through a series of gestures at the window—and not one of them my own!

I had a feeling come over me again that a door was opening wide—her door. There I stood and gaped within. Nothing, nothing. Only this vacant darkness. And I realized if I could leave right now I were saved. And I really felt that I had the power to go, and yet did not. That was because I had the decided conviction, I was holding the secret fast in my hands. Paris, Paris to be conquered. For a single moment the call of Paris prevailed over Clarimonde.

Oh, I scarcely ever think of that any more. I am swayed only by love; and with it this silent, passionate fear.

But at that moment it brought me strength. Once more I coned my first set of gestures, and made sure of each distinct motion. Then I returned to the window, paid strict attention to what I was doing, yet could not stir a muscle according to my own plan. Then I proposed to rub my nose with the index finger, but found myself kissing the window pane. It was in my mind to drum upon the window frame,

but I ran my fingers through my hair. Thus it was final; Clarimonde was not bound to repeat my promptings, but it was I who copied her imperative signals. And so rapidly, so lightning fast did it happen that I could still imagine the motive as proceeding directly from me.

I, then, I the proud one at influencing her thoughts, it is I, who so completely am influenced. Yet—this direction is so gentle, so imperceptible, that there is nothing could be more gracious.

Yes; I have made still other experiments besides. Thrust my hands into my pockets, resolved not to move them, and at the same time staring over at her. And I perceived how she was lifting her hand and smiling, and how her pointing-finger was gently threatening. I did not move. My right hand itched to be out of the pocket, but I tortured my fingers into the cloth. Finally, after some minutes, the fingers had to relax, the hand drew out of the pocket, and the arm moved upwards. I threatened her with my finger and smiled. It appeared as if I were not doing it at all, but rather some stranger whom I was watching. No—no—that was not it. I, it was really I, and a stranger was watching me.

This same stranger who so desired to make a great discovery. But I was not this man—what matters a fool discovery to me. Here I am to do the will of Clarimonde, whom I love in precious dread.

Friday, March 25.

I HAVE severed the telephone wire. I haven't the slightest wish to be disturbed by a nonsensical commissioner just when the peculiar hour approaches—

—God in Heaven! Why am I writing this now? Not a word of it is true. It's just as if some one were moving my pen. But I will—will—will write down the truth. It is costing me a frightful effort, but I will do it, if only once more—what—what I will.

I cut the telephone wire—

Because I had to! There it stands at last! Because I had to do it, had to. We stood at the window this morning and played. Our sport has changed since yesterday. She makes a motion which I resist as long as I can, until at the last, I must give in, and do her will without volition. And I cannot declare the wonderful pleasure it is—this investment, this surrender to her will. We were playing, when suddenly she stood up and went back into the room. It was so dark that I could not perceive her any longer. She seemed swallowed in the black. But she returned soon, bearing in her hands a portable telephone, exactly like mine. Smiling, she put it down on the windowsill, took a knife, cut the cord through and carried the 'phone back.

For a good quarter hour I fought it off. My terror was greater than ever before; and all the more acute this terror because of the long delay. At length I got my telephone, snipped its wire and put it back on the table.

So it's done.

I am sitting at my table. I have had a cup of tea. Just now the porter took out the dishes. I questioned him about the time, for my watch is slow: Five-fifteen o'clock, five-fifteen o'clock.

I know, if I raise my head now, Clarimonde is going to do something. She's going to do something or other that I must repeat.

Well, I am looking up. She stands there and smiles. Oh, if I could only turn my eyes away! Now she is moving toward the curtain. She loosens the rope—just like that of my window, it is red—she is making a loop. She hangs the rope up on the hook of the window-cross.

She sits down and smiles. No, I've passed beyond anxiety. It is a terrible, smothering revulsion. Yet nothing in the

world would make me want to feel differently. It is so unspeakable a force, and yet so sweetly insinuating with its inevitable cruelty.

I burn to leap up and obey, but I wait, struggle, resist. I feel her becoming stronger and stronger every minute . . .

So I am sitting here again. I sprang up quickly and did what she wanted: Took the rope, made the loop, and hung it on the hook—

And now I am determined not to look up again. I know what she will do if I look at her once more— Now in the sixth hour of the next to the last day of the week. See her again and I must do what she wants. I must then—

I will not look at her.

There I was laughing aloud. No, I didn't laugh, but something within me. I know at what; at this: "I will not—"

I will not, and yet I know for sure that I must—Must do it—and then—the rest.

I wait only to linger out the torment still longer. These breathless agonies which are the keenest ravishment.

I write fast, fast, in order to sit here still longer, to drag out these aching seconds while the lusts of my love mount and mount—

Still more, longer still—again the dread, again!—I know I will look at her—will stand up—will hang myself. Not of that am I afraid. Oh, no! That is enticing, that is precious.

But something, something else creeps in—that which is to come! I don't know what's going to happen—but it is surely

inevitable. . . . The bliss of my torment is so outrageously strong that I feel, oh I feel, that something atrocious must follow.

Only keep from thinking!

Write something, write something, never mind what. But fast, don't think—my name—Richard Bracquemont, Richard Bracquemont, Richard—Oh, I can't go any further,—Richard Bracquemont, Richard Bracquemont, now—now—I must look at her—Richard Bracquemont—I must. No, still more—Richard Bracquemont—

* * *

THE commissioner on the Ninth Precinct, who, upon repeated efforts to establish communication by telephone, had received no answer, reached Hotel Stevens at five minutes past six. He found the corpse of the student Richard Bracquemont in Room 7, hanging at the window-cross in exactly the same posture as the three other suicides.

One thing was different: The face was twisted in hideous fright,—the eyes, wide open, bulged from their sockets—from the strong, powerfully locked teeth the lips stretched tightly back.

And between the teeth stuck, fanged and mashed, a great black spider, with strange violet mottlings.

On the table lay the diary of the medical student. The commissioner read it and rushed straight to the house opposite. He ascertained that the second-story had been empty and unoccupied for months.