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THE TERRIFIC EXPERIMENT



by Hurley
Von
Ruck

THREE physicians, dyed-in-the-wool allopaths, were seated in the lounge of the Forest City Club enjoying an after-dinner smoke. Conversation had run the gamut of various and disputed cults, spiritualism, Christian Science, psych-analysis, and lastly hypnotism.

"Hypnotists have been proven fakers, every mother's son of them," asserted Hilliard, the younger of the trio; then continued: "Here comes Dr. Phil Roman. Psycho-therapy is his specialty, as you know. Suppose we ask for his views on hypnotism?"

Dr. Philip Roman, a tall, striking figure with flashing black eyes and snow-white hair, which contrasted noticeably with his unlined face, now approached the little group.

"Phil, what do you know of hypnotism?" queried Hilliard abruptly.

Dr. Roman put out his right hand as if to ward off a blow, and into his eyes a look came that none of the trio had ever seen there before. He seated himself and remained silent for several minutes, seeming to struggle with an emotion that mastered him for the moment.

Presently, however, he said: "Gentlemen, with your permission, I will relate a story as my answer to your

question, 'What do you know of hypnotism?'

"After my graduation from medical college, I served an internship in one of our New York hospitals, which contained an extensive psychopathic department. I became so interested in the different methods of treating cases of deranged mentality and disorders of the nervous system, that I resolved to specialize in that branch of medicine. Accordingly at the end of my year in the hospital I went to Paris, became a pupil of the eminent Dr. Paul Richard, who took a rather personal interest in me, giving me unusual opportunities of observing his methods and allowing me to be present at some of his experiments. As a hypnotist you know he stood unequaled, and I have seen him get results which bordered on the miraculous.

"I was an ardent admirer of his and tried in every way to deserve his favor, with the result that at the beginning of my second year under his instruction he called me one day after the clinic and said, 'Philip, together with a number of my colleagues, I am about to make an experiment in hypnotism which, up to the present time, has never been attempted. I want you to be present, also Maynard, who

will 'take notes. Meet me tomorrow evening at 8:30, No. 27 Rue ——.'

"You can fancy my surprize and delight. I rushed excitedly about in search of Maynard, that I might impart the wonderful news to him.

"Maynard, who roomed with me, knew how to keep his own counsel and had confided to me nothing of his history, nor did I ask any questions, although I always felt that there was some tragedy or sorrow in his past, but whatever it was it could have been nothing to his discredit, for he was at all times the soul of honor, and was so quiet and retiring in his manner that I affectionately dubbed him 'The Mouse'.

"Of course he was immensely pleased at my news, and in his quiet way as much thrilled as I was. We could hardly eat or sleep, and time never dragged as it did all the rest of that day and the next.

"**A**T LAST the hour of the rendezvous arrived and found us waiting a quarter of an hour too early at the door of 27 Rue —— . While we awaited the arrival of Dr. Richard and his associates we passed the time walking back and forth, studying the house which bore that number. It was a plain, three-story structure such as one may see in many streets about that neighborhood and was in no way distinctive in its outward appearance, yet as I looked at it, it seemed to assume a sinister aspect which ill accorded with the exuberance of my spirits.

"Finally, after what seemed hours to us, Dr. Richard appeared with four other men, and The Mouse and I were introduced to them and duly awed by their presence. Theirs were names we recognized as standing in the foremost ranks of the scientific world.

"Then we entered the house and proceeded up two flights of stairs, down an ill-lighted corridor to a room at the end of the passage. It was a

large room, almost devoid of furniture, the only articles it contained being a long, couchlike chair, half chaise longue and half operating table, over which burned a light of extreme brilliancy, about seven or eight chairs of the straight-back variety and a pair of scales. Two windows which looked out upon an alleyway and a door leading to an adjoining apartment summed up the features of the room.

" 'Gentlemen,' said Dr. Richard, addressing us as soon as we were gathered within its walls, 'I have asked you here to join me in attempting an unusual experiment of testing the effect of hypnotism upon the human body over an extended period of time. My subject is the notorious criminal, Jacques Voisin, who you all know has been condemned to death for the brutal murder of a little child. Through the influence of friends in high office I have obtained permission to use him in this experiment during the six weeks which intervene between this date and that set for his execution.

" 'It is my wish to hold him in the hypnotic state during this period. Every precaution will be taken to prevent his escape, and a heavy guard will keep him constantly under surveillance. The house will be surrounded day and night and no one will be permitted to enter or depart without an order from the prefect of police. So much for that!

" 'You are all familiar with the fact that in a state of trance the human body becomes lighter by several pounds, a phenomenon which has hitherto never been satisfactorily explained. We are convened here to study it, and we will endeavor to discover its cause by observing the results of a prolonged hypnotic sleep.

" 'Something, some tangible thing, must temporarily leave the body. If, as I dare hope, we are able to cause our subject's body to become extremely light in weight, we may perhaps be

able to minimize the physical obstacles so that they will cease to interfere with our studies, and we shall be enabled to observe the liberation of this tangible element, discover its true nature, and prove whether or not consciousness is a matter of pounds.

"I believe this is possible, and I ask your earnest co-operation in what may solve the problem of the human race since man made his first appearance upon the earth. Furthermore, I must exact from each of you an oath that not one word of our project or its developments will pass your lips until such time as I may give you permission to speak."

"He paused, and one by one we solemnly swore to keep inviolate the secrets of that room.

"When we had done so, Dr. Richard went to the door of which I spoke, unlocked it and beckoned to someone within.

"Almost immediately two gendarmes of enormous stature and apparent strength appeared, leading between them a man whose hands were manacled in front of him and whose feet were joined by a length of chain attached to anklets.

"He was not a large man and appeared rather slight. His features were unimpressive and somewhat commonplace, but his eyes were the strangest I ever saw, being of so pale and indefinable a color as to produce the impression that they were covered with a film of some sort.

"As I looked at him his expression was so mild it seemed to me incredible that he was the brute I knew him to be.

"DR. RICHARD motioned the gendarmes to lead the prisoner to the table, and when they had done so, the great hypnotist addressed his subject in the following words:

"Voisin, you are here by order from the prefecture of police to assist us in an experiment, the nature of

which you would not understand and which you need not know. Your life is forfeit to the republic and the date of your execution set. Therefore your death is inevitable. Should it occur during our experiment, you will be spared the ignominy of the scaffold; on the other hand, should you survive, your execution will take place as decreed. But this I will tell you: in the event of our success you will have been the instrument in giving to the world one of the greatest discoveries, if not *the* greatest, ever recorded in the annals of scientific research. Now do you desire to be the subject of our experiment, or will you return to your cell and there await the hour of your execution?"

"As Dr. Richard was speaking, the strange eyes of Voisin turned from one to the other of us, and lingered longest, I recall, upon The Mouse, who stood slightly in the background.

"Dr. Richard paused for a reply and Voisin asked quietly, 'What are you going to do to me?'

"His voice was surprisingly rich, vibrant and melodious.

"'You will not be made to suffer, Voisin,' replied Dr. Richard, 'and you will be given every care and attention, also you will be watched every instant of the day and night, and I warn you that any attempt at escape will be futile. All that you need to know is that you will be placed in a hypnotic state and kept there as long as we desire to continue our experiment. Do you consent or refuse?'

"It happened that as the doctor was speaking I kept my attention riveted upon Voisin, therefore I observed when the mention of hypnotic state was made that his eyes narrowed to mere slits and an indescribably cunning look appeared in their inscrutable depths. I noticed also a slight movement of the muscles of the jaw such as appears when a man sets his teeth and makes up his mind. Almost instantly, however, his fea-

tures resumed their former expression and he said:

"I consent, and am most anxious to assist in your noble project. I must thank you for the honor you have conferred upon me, and it is my hope that through me you may learn something which will astonish the world. I am ready, *messieurs*."

"At this the gendarmes lifted him to the table, and after making fast the chain uniting his feet to padlocks in the footpiece of the chair, and his hands to chains attached to the sides, withdrew at a sign from Dr. Richard.

"I thought as I watched these preparations that it was an unnecessary piece of cruelty to inflict bonds upon a man who was to be held in a hypnotic trance, but I had such confidence in and profound respect for my chief that I immediately experienced a keen self-reproach at entertaining even a critical thought, and stood respectfully aside as the men of science grouped themselves around the prostrate form of their subject.

"Come into the circle, Philip," said Dr. Richard, to my utter amazement and delight. "I want you to assist us. You, Maynard, draw a chair into the light and record everything you see and hear. Now, gentlemen, I will make the passes and you will please concentrate every ounce of your mental suggestion upon the success of our experiment. Voisin, look at me, and do as I tell you."

"He then passed his hand lightly over the subject's brow and gazed into his eyes. Every man's attention was concentrated upon the subject, who, however, showed no effect of the power directed upon him.

"Once more Dr. Richard passed his hand over Voisin's brow, extending the downward motion over the eyes. Presently the eyelids began to droop, and after a considerable time closed and the breathing became deeper and deeper.

"Again the passes, then Dr. Richard stepped back a pace and asked, 'Voisin, do you hear me speak?'

"I do."

"Good," said the doctor, and he reached down and deftly unfastened the locks which were attached to Voisin's fetters, leaving him unbound and free.

"Now, Voisin, you are bound hand and foot, you know you can not move and must remain as we have placed you until you are removed to your cell, but you will feel nothing and can trust us, so you will allow us to test your sensations by piercing your left cheek with this hat-pin. Open your mouth."

"Thereupon he drew from the lapel of his coat a long hat-pin and forced it into the flesh and completely through the cheek. Its point protruded from the mucous membrane of the mouth.

"Voisin did not flinch, but lay with closed eyes. The doctor withdrew the pin and a little stream of blood followed its removal.

"Now, I shall pass it through your right cheek and you will feel no pain nor will you bleed."

"And the pin was thrust through the right cheek, withdrawn, and no blood flowed.

"So far, so good," remarked Dr. Richard with satisfaction. "That area is completely anesthetized. Now I shall apply a lighted vesta to the sole of your foot. It will burn a hole in your sock, but will not blister your skin and you will feel no pain," the doctor continued, as he removed Voisin's shoes, then proceeded to light a long wax vesta, the blaze of which he held to the sole of the foot.

"Almost instantly an odor of burning wool filled the room and a smoke arose from the spot touched by the flame. Nothing perturbed, Dr. Richard continued to hold the vesta in the same position while we watched with

extreme interest the face of our subject. Not a change appeared in it, no contraction of the features to denote suffering, not the flicker of an eyelid, not a muscle twitched.

"When the vesta was burned almost to its end, Dr. Richard extinguished it and requested us to examine the foot. The sock was burned through in a place about the size of a franc-piece, but on its removal the foot was found to be not even irritated by the flame which had rested upon its naked surface.

"'Another anesthetic area,' remarked Dr. Richard. 'He is an excellent subject. Now for one more test. Voisin, this time I shall burn your foot and you shall feel pain. Tell me when you can endure it no longer.' And standing at least two feet away from the subject Richard produced another vesta and without lighting it held it in his hand. Almost instantly Voisin moved his foot uneasily and the muscles of his face contracted violently, while an expression of agony appeared upon them.

"'Mon Dieu,' he almost screamed. 'Doctor, I am suffering horribly.'

"'Very well,' Dr. Richard assured him, 'it is all over now and we will not hurt you again. Gentlemen, be kind enough to examine the patient's foot.'

"We moved eagerly forward and perceived on the sole a round red spot, precisely similar to that produced by a rather severe burn.

"'Fine, fine!'

"It was a chorus of approval, and Dr. Richard showed more enthusiasm than I had ever believed him capable of.

"'That will do for tonight. He is completely hypnotized. It remains only for us to weigh him in order to put our theory to its first test,' concluded Dr. Richard, opening the door and beckoning to the gendarmes, who advanced and lifted Voisin to the scales.

"'Stand up,' commanded the doctor, 'and then we will replace your fetters.'

"As straight and rigid as a man of wood the subject stood upright on the scales. Dr. Richard himself weighed him, and after consulting his notes announced that he was lighter by some three pounds than at the beginning of the séance.

"Voisin was then returned to the table and left in charge of his guard.

"Every night a similar scene was enacted with the same results. Voisin, contrary to our hopes and expectations, weighed precisely the same at the beginning of each séance as he had on the first night, and he never lost more than three pounds when tested at the conclusion. For some reason we could do nothing more than ask questions, make tests, and retire disheartened.

"ON THE evening of the eleventh day we convened as usual, and after the customary routine were preparing to take our departure when suddenly Dr. Albert, one of Dr. Richard's colleagues, cried, 'My God, look at that!'

"We turned as one man and an extraordinary sight greeted our astonished gaze. Voisin was sitting bolt upright; his terrible eyes were wide open and he was staring at us with an indescribably malignant look.

"'Don't move, gentlemen. Not one of you can take a step or speak a word,' he said, and his melodious voice had a most discordant sound. 'You have had your fun with me; now it is my turn.'

"What passed through the minds of my companions at this announcement I can, of course, only conjecture, but I know that with all the force of my will I tried to call the guard and rush forward, but my jaws were as if clamped together and I could not move a muscle.

“‘You wanted to discover something about hypnotism, and have used me as your subject. You are about to learn more than you ever dreamed of, and from me. Perhaps, Dr. Richard, you will recall our first evening together,’ Voisin proceeded in a tone of blended menace and triumph. ‘I told you I hoped that from me you would discover something which would astonish the world. You will, but the world will not believe you should you make known your discovery.’

“‘You are hypnotists. So am I, and without flattery to myself I can assure you that what you have done is mere child’s play to me. From my earliest recollection I have possessed the power of bending other wills to mine; that has been the secret of my success as a murderer, for I have committed more murders than you will ever hear of. I shall commit another tonight.’

“‘As he spoke, Voisin’s face assumed an expression so diabolical that my blood runs cold today as I recall it. Fancy the effect his words produced upon us! There we stood, bound hand and foot and gagged, as it were. And as each man heard the menace in those words, you may imagine his thoughts, but I pray none of you will ever experience them.

“‘Someone was to die, that was certain, for as we looked at that terrible face we realized this was no idle threat. Which one of us would be the victim? And would those of us who were left be able to avenge the murder of our comrade? Or were we all to be annihilated by the awful power of our captor?’

“‘Before I make my selection,’ Voisin continued, ‘let me tell you something which may be of interest to those who survive.’

“‘So there was to be only one!

“‘I have boasted that I could always bend to my will the minds of other men, not one at a time, but num-

bers at once, and it was no vain boast. But once I failed—at my trial. If I could have had my judges alone, without the current of antipathy which surged about me from all sides and submerged me, I would tonight have been a free man. But then, Dr. Richard and you gentlemen,’ bowing desisively to the spot where we stood huddled together, ‘I should have been denied the pleasure of furnishing you the entertainment I have planned for you, and of showing you that as hypnotists you are the merest tyros. Before that demonstration is afforded you, I have a few things yet to tell you which may be of use to you in your future studies—to those of you who will be able to pursue them,’ and again a mocking look in our direction.

“‘He was torturing us with the ingenuity of a fiend. I felt, and I dare say so did the others, that anything was preferable to this agony of suspense. Yes, even the knowledge that his choice had fallen upon me would have been in the nature of a relief! But he showed no haste, seeming to enjoy our anguish, as he undoubtedly did to the fullest extent of his devilish and inhuman nature.

“‘I AM keeping you waiting, I see,’ he resumed. ‘That is unfortunate, but one of you will not object perhaps to a few minutes’ delay.’ And he laughed, displaying a row of gleaming white teeth.

“‘Your experiment has been very amusing and I have thoroughly enjoyed it, for, as you assured me, Dr. Richard, I have suffered no pain and on the whole have been very comfortable. Even when you performed that old test of passing a hat-pin through my cheek, I was not disturbed, for I have learned to make any part of my body insensible to pain. Therefore, the vesta you held to my foot did not annoy me, but I will confess it put my powers to a test preventing a blister from ensuing; but as I have learned

how to create anesthetic areas at will, so I have acquired the knowledge of materializing a thought when and where I please. I thought, "no blister," and no blister appeared. Also, I possess the secret of damming up the blood and of interrupting the circulation at my will. So you can readily understand how easy it was for me to prevent blood from following a wound in the cheek. That is a secret I should love to share with you, gentlemen, but I fear it will not be wise to impart it to so learned a body as yourselves lest in the future you—some of you, I should say—might write one of your delightful little brochures on the subject and give to a stupid public something it has taken the masters of black magic centuries to perfect. No, I fear I must deny myself that great pleasure and take the secret with me.

"And that reminds me, I am still keeping you in suspense. How thoughtless! Please pardon me. We shall soon arrive at the real business of this meeting, so fortunate for me, and shall I say so unpleasant for you—for one of you!

"But before we do so, I must tell you that I have never been hypnotized, and you will have to admit that I am a fair actor—will you not, Dr. Richard?" with a grin at the doctor. "However, it suited my plans to pretend, as the children say, in order that while you were studying me I might have the opportunity of studying you and of discovering which of you would best answer my purpose. I know now."

"He paused to enjoy our agony, and when he had satiated himself upon it went on in his low, even tones, which could by no possibility have penetrated the walls and heavy doors behind which were the guards who might have saved us.

"This thought crossed my mind, but no sooner had it done so than its place was taken by others, passing

with incredible swiftness the entire gamut of human emotions. Now he was about to choose. Well, let it be over! If I were the victim I was as ready to go as I had ever been, and if by going I could save the others, well and good; at least my death would not have been in vain. They were all men who were of use in the world, men who could and would benefit mankind, and their lives were valuable to the world of science, while mine was not at all important, and dear as I was to my parents I knew time would soften their grief at my loss.

"My parents! At the thought of them I felt so keen a desire to live it seemed I must be spared, I must return to their arms. Yes, I would live! I would not die here in this miserable obscure room, trapped like a rat, and done to death by the fiend who stood before me. No! Just one supreme effort of my will—just one! I would break the spell which bound me and my companions!

"My companions! Ah, they were suffering as intensely as I at that moment. Perhaps after all, I should not be chosen. Perhaps it would be Albert, or one of the others, or Dr. Richard.

"As this thought came to me I recoiled in horror from the selfish cowardice of my previous thoughts. My beloved chief, who had always been kindness itself to me, who was so noble and wise and whose continued efforts might bring health and happiness to thousands! What was my life compared to his?

"I believe without an instant's hesitation, if it had been within my power to do so, I would have thrown myself at Voisin's feet and begged him to let me offer my life in exchange for Dr. Richard's had the lot fallen upon him.

"But no notion of accepting a vicarious sacrifice was in the monster's mind. He had made his choice,

and we were soon to know upon whom it rested.

"You told me, Dr. Richard," he spoke again with tormenting deliberation, 'that if I survived your experiment my execution would occur according to schedule. It is set for November 6 at sunrise, is it not? Good!

"On that day and hour an execution will take place—but it will not be mine.'

"He paused as if awaiting a reply, and a thrill of horror ran over me as I sensed the veiled, undefined threat in his last words.

"No, on that date one of you gentlemen will take my place on the scaffold, and I shall be far away, disguised so that God Himself could hardly recognize me.

"How will the substitution be accomplished? you are asking me. Why, in the simplest way possible to him who knows the secret. I shall take possession of one of your bodies and leave you mine in its place, after carefully ensconcing therein one of your delightful personalities. The result will be most diverting, will it not? Even amusing. I will walk calmly out of the door of this house and pursue my plans without fear of detection, while you, at my good pleasure, will arouse the guard, who will rush and seize the one amongst you whom I have selected for the honor of occupying my body, bear him off to his cell, and at the appointed hour escort him to the scaffold, where he will be duly executed. Meanwhile, I shall be thoroughly enjoying myself elsewhere. That is my plan, gentlemen. Is not the prospect delightful?"

"**H**ORROR of horrors! Could such a monstrous, unheard-of thing be done? It was so far beyond the bounds of possibility that at first it sounded like the raving of a maniac. Yet that tone of deadly assurance in which Voisin stated his dreadful purpose filled me with a terror which al-

most deprived me of my reason and caused all hope to die within my breast.

"Upon you, Dr. Richard, I should have conferred the honor,' said Voisin slowly, 'but for the fact that I do not care to occupy your place in the world. Its demands would fatigue me and its duties prove irksome, nor are its rewards tempting. So I am sure you will pardon me for so flagrantly slighting you and for selecting your young assistant.'

"So, after all, I was chosen! I braced myself as best I could. But wait—Voisin was speaking again.

"Monsieur Maynard, come up into the light.'

"It was to be The Mouse.

"Gentlemen, you may observe this little experiment, but do not move or speak.'

"As Maynard heard the dread summons he moved mechanically forward, drawn by an irresistible force, and stood with his frail form drawn up to its full height, rigid as if hewn from stone. His eyes were fixed upon those strange and terrible eyes of Voisin, who drew him with their power so close that they were nearly touching face to face.

"Voisin's eyes narrowed to mere slits, but from them emanated a force so tremendous it was almost tangible, while in those of The Mouse an expression of horror and despair was mingled with resignation to his awful fate. Never have I seen such a look.

"When the full realization of what was occurring dawned upon me I prayed God to give me back control of my will, my power of locomotion, command of my voice. He had restored Samson's strength in his hour of need so that he might annihilate the Philistines. Would He not give us ours that we might destroy this monster before us? Surely He would not permit so horrible a crime to be committed, so frightful a sacrifice to be made!

"But despite my prayers, despite my efforts, before us was being enacted a scene the like of which had never been seen by mortal eyes.

"'Come closer, Maynard,' said Voisin. 'Hold my hands and put your mouth up against mine. So,' he continued. 'You are nearly my size and will fit me better than one of the others would. Now in a few minutes all will be over.'

"The poor Mouse did as he was commanded, and for several minutes there reigned a silence so intense that the beating of every man's heart could be distinctly heard. A silence like the grave! You have often said it, but you do not know what silence is. There we stood, huddled together, helpless to prevent the frightful tragedy, unable to save our comrade and friend from the power of the fiend. We could only watch and suffer.

"I remember every little detail—how I wish I did not!—the blue suit Maynard wore, how neatly his boots were polished, the gleam of his clasp-knives as his hands were clasped in those of the monster.

"Presently two or three sharp exhalations of breath from one or the other of the men (they were so close together it was impossible to tell from which), a rending sound, a groan, a prolonged sigh, and then as God is my witness from Maynard's body spoke the voice of Voisin:

"'That is all! You may now go to the table, lie down on it, and close your eyes. When you awake you will be Jacques Voisin, the condemned murderer, and will fulfil his destiny. You gentlemen remain where you are, and after thirty minutes have passed, call in the guard who will conduct your subject to his cell.'

"When I heard the words in Voisin's voice proceeding from Maynard's lips I realized that all the horrors I had experienced were as nothing compared to that which now filled

my soul. The monstrous exchange had been made, the foul crime perpetrated, the impossible had happened, and nature's laws had been shattered before our eyes.

"Voisin, or Voisin's body, stood looking fixedly into the eyes of his *vis-à-vis*, but Voisin's beautiful voice uttered the following commands from Maynard's lips:

"'You gentlemen will report that the experiment is concluded and that it was a failure. This is the truth from your standpoint, but I shall always consider it the most brilliant success of my life, and I thank you, one and all, most heartily for the opportunity you have given me of so satisfactorily putting my theory to the test. It has been most diverting. Get up on the table, Maynard, or, pardon me, Voisin, and you, Dr. Richard, be kind enough to fasten the fetters. Thank you,' as his commands were obeyed.

"'Now, gentlemen, I will bid you good-night and farewell. My very best wishes to you all.'

"With that he deliberately selected Maynard's topcoat from those hanging on a chair, slowly donned it, and walking to the door turned and bowed mockingly to us. Then he descended the stairs and we soon heard the outer door close behind him.

"OF THE half hour which intervened between his departure and our release I shall say nothing—I cannot endure even the thought. But suffice it to say that at the exact moment the time was up, we rushed as one man to the door behind which were the guards who at our summons came forward, rubbing their eyes and looking like men just awakened from a profound slumber.

"Dr. Richard told them the experiment was over and ordered them to return their prisoner to his cell, for the commands of the monster must

still be carried out; despite the united efforts of our agonized hearts to shriek aloud the awful truth, we were still bound by his tremendous power.

"The Mouse was the only one who had recovered himself, and I recall how he looked from one to the other of us when he was taken away by his guard. As he passed me he said in a low, quiet tone: 'Don't be so cut up about it, Phil; you couldn't help it, and it's best that I am the one he chose. Come to see me before the 6th.'

"My eyes were so blinded by tears I could not see him go, but I heard one of the gendarmes mutter crossly: 'Here, come along, Voisin; it's no use talking foreign lingo to any of these *messieurs*. They're our friends, not yours.'

"That's right,' replied his mate. 'You can't get help from them even if they did teach you to talk English while you were asleep.'

"At that they both laughed and proceeded down the stairs with their prisoner.

"I SHALL not go into the details of the weeks that followed, nor of our frantic efforts to save The Mouse. We interviewed the prefect of police, the minister of justice, the president of the French Republic, the American ambassador. We told the unvarnished truth and gave the harrowing details of that terrible night. All in vain.

"We were laughed at, or what was even worse for our cause, were treated with kindly forbearance and gently but firmly shown the door, which we observed on our repeated attempts to gain a second interview was well guarded and remained closed upon us.

"We were regarded as if we were mentally unbalanced, and, as I was later informed by a friend of the embassy, were beginning to be looked upon as persons inimical to the peace and safety of the community. But

nothing deterred us in our efforts, and in truth I believe the agony we endured rendered Dr. Richard and myself nearer insane than anyone suspected.

"Dr. Richard was now a broken man, upon whose face were stamped the lines of intense suffering. He could not sleep or eat, but walked constantly up and down wringing his hands and uttering feeble moans. As I contrasted him with the virile, middle-aged savant so full of hope and desire to benefit his fellow-men, who had only a few weeks before addressed us upon our first entrance into that fatal house, I was filled with compassion for him, measuring the extent of his mental anguish by my own, and knowing that the added burden of self-reproach he was bearing would soon bring to an end his brilliant and useful career.

"Of myself I had not much time to think, for all my thoughts were with my poor friend, who through no fault of his own was soon to expiate on the scaffold another's crime.

"All of my time was given to making effort in his behalf and in attempting to console my beloved master, in whose house I had taken up my abode at his request. And I am thankful that it was so, or I doubt if my mind would have stood the strain.

"As frequently as I was allowed, I visited The Mouse, who was calmly awaiting his hour of doom with Christian resignation and in his eyes the look of a man who is not afraid to meet his God.

"He thanked me for all the efforts in his behalf, but appeared to take little interest in their results, seeming to feel that no power on earth could save him. His manner was so gentle and kindly that the guards who kept watch over him became devoted to him, and one of them on my de-

parture one day asked me what we had done to Voisin, who seemed totally changed. I could not answer for the lump in my throat, and he would have laughed if I had.

"As the date of the execution drew near and all of our efforts were unavailing, I gave myself up to despair, but perceiving how much my visits meant to The Mouse, I continued to make them as often as I was allowed to do so.

"At the last one on the night before his execution I could not control my emotions and burst into tears, of which I have never been ashamed. He drew me down on the cot beside him, and placing his arm around my shoulders comforted me in the tenderest manner.

"Don't feel so bad about it, Phil," he said. "I am ready to go and think I shall be able to bear myself as a man and an American. There is no one who will grieve much over my going, except a little girl back in the States, and she is young enough to find the comfort time will surely bring. I want you to take her my class-ring, and tell her I died—oh, any way you can think of. Never try to tell her the truth. She would not believe it; she couldn't, and the story would only frighten her. I want you to have anything of mine you fancy (there isn't much); and, Philip, won't you come tomorrow? It will help me to know that you are there. If it will distress you too much, noticing the expression on my face, 'why, never mind, but—well, do just as you feel about it. I am the last of my family. I have been proud of my name and have tried to be worthy of it, so I don't want to fail its standard of courage at the last.'

"Of course I promised, although if the choice had been given me I would rather have gone to the scaffold myself than have been present at the

scene I must witness on the morrow. I would gladly have given my life to save The Mouse, and I told him so in all sincerity, but he smiled and patted my shoulder while he said: 'Nothing like that, old man! You can't be spared, for you are going to make your mark in the world. You'll be a big man one of these days, while I'd never have done much, I suspect, but take notes. So it has worked out all right after all. Now good-night and good-bye. You must go, for I am going to sleep. Cheer up!' And he clasped my hand in both of his and looked at me a long moment.

"Good luck!" he added as I turned abruptly away lest I break down again.

"Never shall I forget the sound of his cell door closing for the last time behind me. I hear it often in my sleep, and sometimes in quiet moments its clang reverberates through every fiber of my being and reaches my very soul, which turns faint at the remembrance it calls forth.

"I turned for one moment, and through the little grating I saw Maynard's hand waving me a last good-bye.

"OF THAT night and the next morning I shall say no more than that they passed. Maynard met his fate with heroic fortitude, but something in me died with him, and as I left him in his last resting place and turned away I felt myself an old man.

"Perhaps you will think my story the child of a disordered brain, the chimera of a heated fancy, but every word of it is true. And although many years, alas, have elapsed since the tragic occurrence, each separate detail stands out as vividly as if it were but yesterday.

"This, gentlemen," concluded Dr. Roman, "is my answer to your query."