

# CLOSE QUARTERS ;

OR, THE HOUSE IN THE RUE BARBETTE

CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd)

"I rang the bell and promptly put my ear to the keyhole. It seemed to me that a couple of doors were hastily closed, and then some one slowly approached. The outer door was opened and a man's head appeared. I could see his face and a portion of his left shoulder, because the chain was on the door, and the opening was not more than eight or ten inches. Speaking in broken English he said—'Vat you want?' His accent showed that he was a Frenchman.

"I answered in my best French, 'I wish to see madame, your mistress, at once.'

"'It is impossible,' he said in the same language, and simultaneously he tried to shut the door in my face. I shoved my foot against the jam and prevented him. At the same instant my own servant and I—as, if there was to be trouble, I thought it best to keep the others out of it—applied our utmost force to the door and succeeded in snapping the chain. It might have been a tough job, as you know that to force a way through anything that yields slightly and yet holds fast is much more difficult than to smash a lock or a couple of bolts. Luckily the flats were jerry built, so the chain broke, and so suddenly that the Frenchman was pitched violently backwards. We nearly fell after him. The ex-policeman was a splendid chap. His first idea was to jump towards the switch of the electric lights and turn on every lamp in the place.

"I shouted, 'Talbot, are you there? It is I, Fairholme.'

"I got no answer, but a woman darted out of a room which proved to be the kitchen, screaming something which I could not catch, and handed a revolver to the Frenchman, who was just struggling to his feet. That was where my prize-fighting butler came in useful. Before you could say 'Wink' he gave the man an upper-cut that settled him effectually for the next minute. Almost with the same movement he caught the woman a slap over the ear that upset her nerves considerably. She had a revolver in her hand too. It fell to the floor, and Smith, your servant, seized both weapons.

"The ex-policeman called out—'I do not think we are making any mistake, sir. They would not act in this manner if they were on the square.'

"I must say it seemed to me that so far it was we who had been acting in an extraordinary way, but there was no time to discuss the ethics of the case then. Whilst my butler and Smith took care of the couple, your assistant and I hastily examined three rooms. They were empty, save for a small quantity of furniture. The fourth door resisted our efforts, so, of course, we burst it open. And the first thing that met our eyes was poor old Jack lying on his back on the bed, and glaring at us in a way that made me think at first he was mad."

"I should think so," interrupted Talbot. "I would like to see your face if you were trussed up as I was—not able to speak a word—and a fiendish row going on in the passage outside."

"You were gagged," questioned Brett, "and your wrists and ankles were secured to the four corners of the bed, your limbs being distended in the form of an X?"

Fairholme glanced around admiringly. "Of course," he cried delightedly, "I knew you would guess it. That is the pleasant way these Turks have of securing their prisoners."

"It is an awfully uncomfortable one," said Talbot. "My joints are still stiff at the mere recollection of it. I have lain in that way, Mr. Brett, for countless hours. Occasionally the brutes would allow me to change my posture, but the moment any one came to the door I was strapped up in an instant and a gag slipped into my mouth. What used to make me so furious was the knowledge that if only I got the chance of a second I could have broken that Frenchman's neck and escaped, but he and his wife always took such precautions that I never had the liberty to do more than reach with some difficulty the food that they gave me. However, I must not interrupt."

"I really have not much more to say," went on Fairholme. "You may be sure it did not take me long

to release Talbot, and what do you think his first words were when he slowly sat up in bed and tried if his leg would bend?"

"I cannot guess," said Brett. "He said: 'Have they got the diamonds?'"

"I answered 'Yes.'"

"'But it was impossible,' he said. 'They could not have mastered all those policemen.'"

"'But they did,' I replied, and then and there, before he would budge an inch, he made me tell him the whole story. Just as I had ended we heard a scuffle in the passage. We went out, though Jack was hardly able to walk at first. It was Smith wrestling with the woman, who was a regular wild cat, and he would, even then, have done us any mischief in her power. There was nothing for it but to tie her hands behind her back, and then fasten her securely in a chair. After this was done we took counsel as to our next movements."

"'Wait a little,' said Brett. 'How many rooms were there in the flat? You have accounted for four.'"

"'I forgot,' said Fairholme. 'The place had six rooms. The small apartment in which Jack was confined was a sort of dressing-room, and the bedroom beyond looked out into the well of the block of flats. They had carefully nailed the blind of this dressing-room, so that not even a chance puff of wind could blow it aside and reveal its secret to any one in the flats on the opposite story or higher. The remaining room was empty. Your friend the policeman subsequently searched the place from top to toe, but he found nothing. The only document of any importance was an address on a card which he discovered in the Frenchman's pocket.'"

"'Ah,' said Brett, 'what was that address?'"

"'Here it is.'"

The earl produced a small piece of pasteboard on which was scribbled, 'Monsieur Jean Beaujolais, chez Monsieur Henri de Lisle, 41, Rue Bonnerie, Paris.'

"That is important," said the barrister. "Why did you not wire it to me last night?"

"I had a reason," said the earl eagerly, "but that comes in with Jack's part of the story." And he turned towards Talbot, who thus summoned to the stage, began to explain matters.

"I understand, Mr. Brett," he said, "that you are accurately acquainted with all that transpired until the moment when I entered the Albert Gate mansion on that remarkable night?"

"That is so," said Brett.

"Well, when Inspector Sharpe met me at the door on my arrival he told me that his Excellency Mehemet Ali, with three strange gentlemen and the junior members of the commission, awaited me in the dining-room. I went in and was surprised to find the three visitors, for during the preceding month not a single stranger had entered the house save a member of the Government and one or two important officials of the Foreign Office, who came with me out of sheer curiosity to see a collection of remarkable diamonds.

"The strangers bowed politely when I was introduced. Two of them spoke neither French nor English, but the third man spoke French fluently. He had, by the way, a somewhat peculiar accent, different from that to which I was accustomed in the Turks. It was softer, more sibilant, and impressed me as that of a man who was accustomed to speak Italian. He was a good-looking chap, about my height and build, and were it not for his brown skin, one would not have regarded him as a Turk. One side of his face was deeply scarred with a sword cut, but, if anything, this did not detract from his appearance, and it gave a manly aspect to an otherwise effeminate face."

Brett could not help smiling involuntarily.

"Are you sure it was a sword cut?"

"It certainly looked like one."

"And his skin was very brown?"

"On, quite. Indeed it was a shade deeper than that of most Turks. I have seen very many of them. Although dark-featured, they are often pallid enough in reality, and their deep-hued complexion is due more to their black hair and eyebrows than to the mere color of the skin." Brett smiled again.

"I think," he said, "I will show

you the same gentleman in a somewhat different aspect. But proceed."

"The explanation given to me by Mehemet Ali was both extraordinary and disconcerting, especially at such a late hour. He told me that the three gentlemen to whom I had been introduced—I am sorry by the way, that I cannot remember their names, as they were all Mohammeds, or Rasuls, or Ibrahims, and the dramatic events of the night subsequently drove them from my mind—had been sent post haste from Constantinople on a special mission. They had only reached London that night, and they bore with them a special mandate, signed by the Sultan himself, directing Mehemet Ali to hand over the diamonds to their charge and at once to return with his assistants to Yildiz Kiosk.

"There could be no questioning the authenticity of the Sultan's instructions. The document was in his own handwriting, was endorsed with his private seal, and conveyed other distinguishing marks which rendered his Excellency assured on this important point. He told me that he was compelled to obey implicitly, and were it possible he would have started from London that night. This, however, was out of the question, but he had not lost a moment in sending for me and acquainting me with his Majesty's wishes.

"You will readily perceive that the affair placed me in an awkward predicament. I was, so to speak, representing the British Government in the matter, and the Foreign Office had pledged itself, through our Ambassador at Constantinople, to undertake all the precautions for safeguarding the diamonds with which you are acquainted. It seemed to me that notwithstanding the urgency of the Sultan's order, I should not be doing my duty to permit the transfer to be made in such an irregular manner. So I said quite plainly that the matter could not be settled that night. They must all wait until the morning, when I would consult my Department and Mehemet Ali, together with his aides, could leave for Constantinople by the evening train, after my superiors had been acquainted with the Sultan's wishes.

"Turks are difficult people to understand. It seemed to me that my decision gave some satisfaction to Mehemet Ali, who was undoubtedly very much upset by the queer manner in which he had been deposed from his important trust. At once an animated discussion took place."

"In French?" interrupted Brett.

"No; in Turkish."

"Did the gentleman with the sabre-cut on his face take any part therein?"

"Not in the least. He sat and smoked cigarettes in the most unconscious manner possible, leaving his two associates to carry on the conversation."

As the barrister appeared to have no further question to ask at the

Headaches—nausea—indigestion—muddy complexion—pimples—bad breath—these are some of the effects of constipation. The mild, sensible, reliable remedy is

## NA-DRU-GO LAXATIVES

They contain the latest discovered and best evacuant known, which empties the bowels without the slightest discomfort and without disturbing the rest of the system. Constantly increased doses are not necessary. 25c. a box. If your druggist has not yet stocked them, send 25c. and we will mail them. 25 National Drug and Chemical Company of Canada, Limited, Montreal.

moment, Talbot continued—

"Several times Mehemet Ali appealed to me to change my mind and formally ratify the transfer at once. I was quite firm in my refusal, and did not hesitate to describe the Sultan's demands as ridiculous. I was rendered more determined, if anything, in this attitude by a growing certainty in my mind that his Excellency himself approved of my attitude. Ultimately, it seems, they hit upon a compromise. The whole party would remain together all night in a sort of dual control, and then the change of guardianship would take place next day in accordance with my views as to what was right and proper. I must admit I was intensely relieved when this decision was arrived at. Looking back now over the events of the night, I can perceive that from that mo-

ment the gang who effected the murders and the robbery had me in their power, for they had completely succeeded in allaying my suspicions, and I can only plead in extenuation of my shortsightedness that Mehemet Ali himself, and the other gentlemen with whom I had been acquainted during the past month, were willing accessories to the arrangement."

"I do not see," said Brett, "that you have the slightest cause to reproach yourself. You acted quite properly throughout, and I am sure that when all the facts are known your status at the Foreign Office will be improved rather than diminished by this incident."

(To be continued.)

Fortunately the average man is unable to realize how homely he is.

## Investments for the New Year

We have to offer several first-class bond investments yielding 6 per cent. net, carrying our unqualified recommendation.

WRITE FOR FULL DETAILS

### CANADA SECURITIES CORPORATION, LIMITED

179 James Street, Montreal. 308 McInnon Building, Toronto. 14 Gornhill, London, England



## 3 FEEDS FOR ONE CENT

This is all it costs you to keep your stock in prime condition with the world's most famous animal tonic—

### International Stock Food

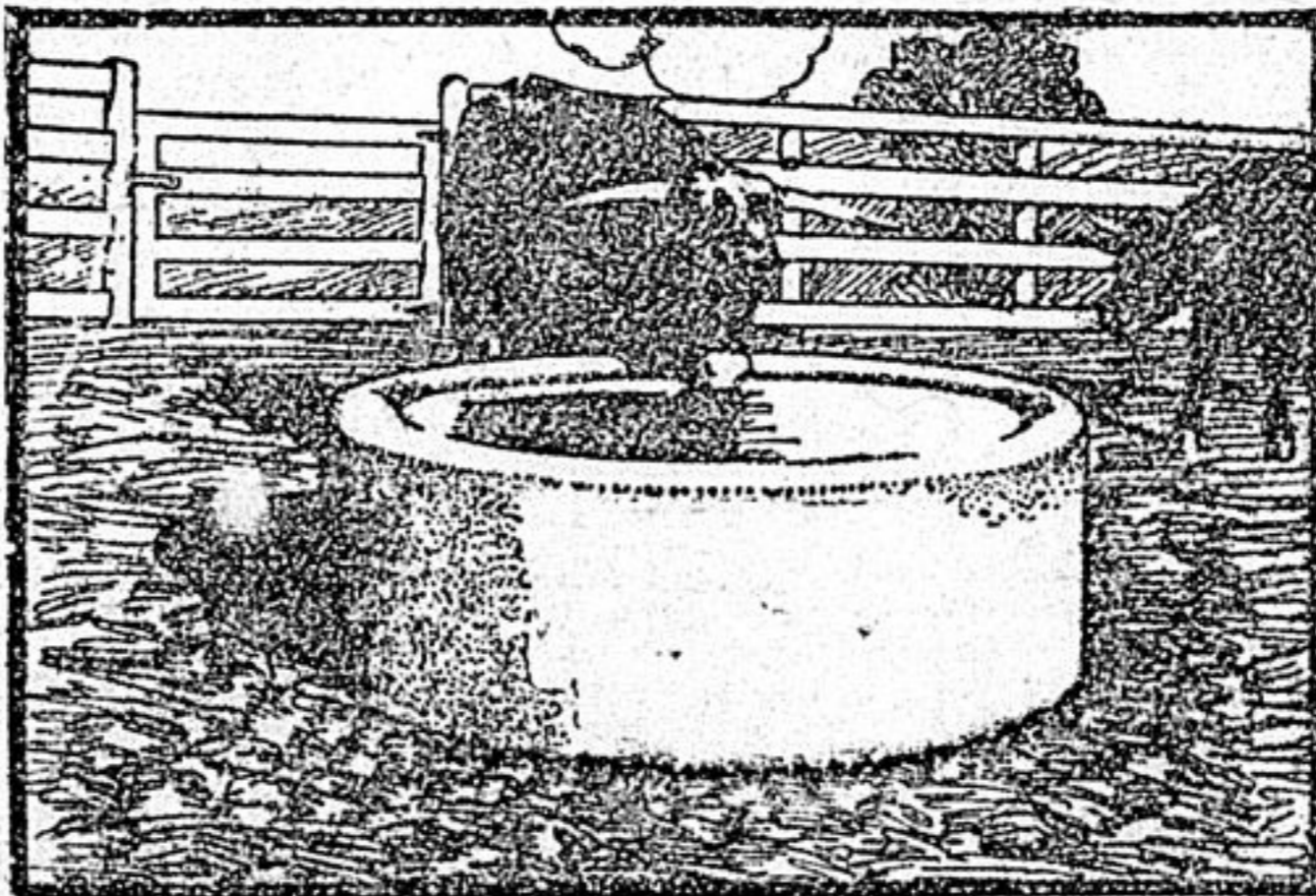
Every cent invested in this wonderful health-giver, brings back dollars in strong, healthy horses, cows, sheep and hogs. Careful tests show that 4 quarts of oats and the regular feed of INTERNATIONAL STOCK FOOD will keep horses in better condition than FIVE quarts of oats without it.

INTERNATIONAL STOCK FOOD will make your cows gain 1 to 4 quarts of milk per day. Nothing like INTERNATIONAL STOCK FOOD to fatten animals for market. Your hogs need it. Ask your dealer for it.

**TESTIMONIAL**  
Hayfield Sta., Man., Nov. 15, 1911.  
International Stock Food Co. Ltd.  
Toronto, Ont.  
Dear Sirs— I want to say that your Stock Food is all right. I have had more good from its use than any other kind I ever used, and do not care to start winter feeding without it. Please ship as soon as you can to Carroll. Yours very truly (signed) JOHN BOURGESS

We have a copy of our \$3.00 Stock Book for you. Send us your name and address, and tell us the number of head of stock you own.

INTERNATIONAL STOCK FOOD CO. Limited  
TORONTO ONTARIO  
MENTION THIS PAPER.



## Which is Your Choice ?

Sloppy, leaky wooden troughs, or clean, durable Concrete ?

Wooden drinking troughs are about as reliable as the weather.

They are short-lived and require replacing every few years—not to mention continual patching to keep them in repair.

The best of wood cannot withstand, for long, constant dampness and soaking. Its tendency to rapid decay soon shows itself in leaks and stagnant pools of water around trough.

Contrast with this the durability, cleanliness and well-ordered appearance of Concrete.

Which ?

The dampness which destroys lumber only intensifies the strength and hardness of Concrete.

You can impair a wooden trough with comparatively little use; but it takes a powerful explosive to put a Concrete water tank out of business.

Which

is your choice—expense-producing Wood, or money-saving Concrete?

We'd be glad to send a copy of our book, "What the Farmer Can Do With Concrete,"—Free—if you'll ask for it. It tells the many uses of Concrete in plain, simple language—tells how to make

- |                |                |            |
|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Barns          | Hens' Nests    | Stables    |
| Cisterns       | Hitching Posts | Stairs     |
| Dairies        | Horse Blocks   | Stalls     |
| Dipping Tanks  | Houses         | Steps      |
| Foundations    | Poultry Houses | Tanks      |
| Fence Posts    | Root Cellars   | Troughs    |
| Feeding Floors | Silos          | Walks      |
| Gutters        | Shelter Walls  | Well Curbs |

## Canada Cement Co.

Limited

23-25 National Bank Building, Montreal

