CLOSE QUARTERS;

OR, THE HOUSE IN THE RUE BARBETTE

CHAPTER IV.

In less confident t nes Inspector Walters resumed his narrative:

"On Monday evening, sir," he said, "about eight o'clock, his Excellency and the two secretaries were dining downstairs, and matters had, thus far, gone on with the same routine as was observed every preceding day. The workmen quitted work at six o'clock. The three gentlemen went out for a drive as soon as everything was locked up, and came in again at a quarter to eight. They did not change their clothes for dinner, so there was no occasion to search them, as no one had gone upstairs since they had descended soon after six. They had barely started dinner when some one called at the front door, and I was sent for. The door bell, I may explain was always answered by one of the house servants, and he, if necessary, admitted any person who came, closing the door; but the visitor had to be examined by the policeman stationed in the passage before he was permitted to come any further. On this occasion I went out and found three gentlemen standing there. They were Turks, as could be easily seen by their attire, and appeared to be persons of some consequence."

"What do you mean by the words 'their attire?'" interrupted Brett. "Were they dressed in European clothes or in regular Turkish garments?"

"Oh," said the inspector, "I only meant that they wore fezes; otherwise they were quite accurately dressed in frock coats and the rest, but they were unmistakably Turks by their appearance. Two of them could speak no English, and the third, who acted as the leader of the party, first of all addressed me in French. Finding I did not understand him, he used very broken, but fairly intelligible English. What he wanted was to be taken at once to His Excellency, Mehemet Ali Pasha. I said that his Excellency was dining and that perhaps he had better call in the morning, but he replied that his business was very urgent, and he could not wait. He made me understand that if I sent in the cards of himself and his companions they would certainly be admitted at once. I did not see any harm in this, so I took the three cards and gave them to Hussein, who was crossing the hall at the moment."

"As the cards were printed in Turkish characters you could not of course, tell what the names were," said Brett.

A look of blank astonishment crossed the inspector's face as he replied: "That is a good guess, but it is so. The hieroglyphics on the piece of pasteboard were worse than Greek. However, Hussein glanced at them. He appeared to be surprised; he went into the dining room. Of course I had nothing else to do to let them in, which I did, accompanying them myself to the door of the dining-room, and making sure, before the door was closed, that their presence was expected."

"How did you do that?" said Brett.

"Well, although they spoke in what I suppose was Turkish, it is not very difficult to distinguish by a man's tones whether his reception of unexpected visitors is cordial or not, and there could be no doubt that the visiting cards had conveyed such names to his Excellency as warranted the introduction of the party into the house. The six gentlemen remained in the dining-room until 9.17 (I have the time noted here in my pocket-book). They then came out and went upstairs in a body to the ante-room, where they all sat down, as I could tell by the movement of the chairs overhead, and in a few minutes Hussein was rung for to bring cigarettes and coffee. This was at 9.21. Hussein was searched as he came downstairs after receiving the order, and again at 9.30 when he returned after executing it. I was relieved at ten o'clock, and beyond describing the three gentlemen, I know nothing more about the business."

"They were well dressed" inquired Brett; "they impressed you as Turkish gentlemen by their features, and they wore fezes?"

"Yes," said the policeman, with a smile; "but there was a little more than that."

"It is of no importance," said Brett.

"But really it must be," urged the inspector. "One of them, the man who spoke to me, had a bad sword-cut across his right cheek, whilst another squinted horribly; besides, they were all elderly men."

"Pardon me, inspector," said Brett, "but you admit, no doubt, that this is a very remarkable crime I am investigating."

"I should just think it is, sir," the answer

"Well, now does it not strike you that the perpetrators thereof, who were not afraid to be scrutinized by yourself and by several other policemen, and to be searched and further scrutinized by a different set of officers when they came out again, would be very unlikely persons to bear about them such distinguishing characteristics as would lead to their arrest by the first youthful police-constable who encountered them? I do not want to be rude, or to indicate any lack of discretion on your part, but, from my point of view, I would vastly prefer not to be furnished with any description of these three persons, nor would I care to have seen them as they entered or left the house."

"Well, that is very curious," said Inspector Walters, dropping his hands on his knees in sheer amazement at such an extraordinary statement from a man whose clearness and accuracy of perception had been so fully justified by the incident of the window-blind.

"And now, Mr. Sharpe," said Brett, "what did you observe?"

"I came on duty at ten o'clock; posted my guards, and received from Inspector Walters an exact account of what had taken place before my arrival. Inspector Walters had hardly quitted the house, when one of the junior members of the mission came downstairs with a note which he asked me to send at once by a constable to Mr. Talbot."

"You are quite sure he was one of the members of the mission?" said Brett.

"Perfectly certain. I have seen him every previous night for nearly a month, as the gentleman often went out late to the Turkish Embassy, and elsewhere. I sent the note, as requested, and Mr. Talbot came back with the constable in about twenty minutes. Mr. Talbot went upstairs accompanied by Hussein; Hussein came down, was searched, went down to the kitchen, brought up more coffee, and never appeared again. The next time I saw him was about noon yesterday, when we broke open the door, and found his dead body. At 11.25 Mr. Talbot, accompanied by one whom Inspector Walters has described as the spokesman of the strangers, came down the stairs. Mr. Talbot looked somewhat puzzled, but not specially worried, and submitted himself to the searching operation as usual. The other man seemed to be surprised by this proceeding, but offered no objection when his turn came, and said something laughingly in French to Mr. Talbot, when he had to take his boots off. The two gentlemen went outside and called a cab. Mr. Talbot got in, and the constable at the door heard the foreigner tell the driver to go to the Carlton Hotel. He repeated the address twice, so as to make sure the man would make no mistake.

"Then they drove off, and there was no further incident to report until five minutes past twelve, when the other two foreigners came downstairs. Then we had a bit of a job. They knew no English, and one of our men, who could speak French, found that they did not understand that language. However, at last in dumb show we got them to perceive that everybody who came downstairs had to be searched. They submitted at once, and I took special care that the investigation was complete. There was nothing upon them to arouse the slightest suspicion, no weapons of any sort beyond a small pocket-knife carried by one man, and not much in the way of either papers or money. Before going out one of them produced a small card on which was written, 'Carlton Hotel.'

"I took it that this was their residence, so I instructed a constable to see them into a cab and tell the driver where to take them. I also showed them how much money to give the cabman. None of the gentlemen upstairs put in an appearance, nor did I hear them retire to rest. To make quite sure that all was right, I and a sergeant who looked in a little later went upstairs and tried the door of the ante-room. This was locked and everything was quiet within, so we returned to the hall, and the night was passed in the usual manner. Hussein always made his appearance about eight o'clock in the morning, when he came down to procure coffee for his Excellency and the others. As he did not show up I wondered what had become of him. When nine o'clock came, I determined to investigate matters. By that time the diamond cutters had put in an appearance, and were gathered in the hall, undergoing a slight search preparatory to their day's work."

"How many of these men were there?" broke in Brett.

"Fourteen exactly. They were mostly Dutchmen, with, I think, three Belgians. Taking a constable with me, I went upstairs, and ascended to the second story, where I knew his Excellency's suite was situated, and where I expected to find Hussein asleep on a mat in front of the bedroom door. The mat was there, but no Hussein. Then I went higher up to the rooms occupied by the two assistants. I knocked, but received no answer. One door was locked; the other was open, so I went in, but the room was empty, and the bed had not been slept upon. This seemed so strange that I knocked loudly at the other door, with no result. I returned to his Excellency's floor and hammered at the door, which was locked, sufficiently to wake the soundest sleeper that ever lived. This again was useless, so I returned downstairs and sent off two messengers post haste—one to Mr. Talbot, and the other to the Commissioner of Police at Scotland Yard. The man who went to Mr. Talbot's house returned first, bringing the startling information that Mr. Talbot had not been home all night, and that his uncle and sister were anxious to know where he was, as they had received no message from him since he quitted the house the previous night at 10.15. The Commissioner of Police came himself a little later. By that time Inspector Walters had reached here for his turn of day duty, and after a hasty consultation we decided to break in all the doors that were locked, commencing with that of the second assistant. His room was empty, and so was his Excellency's, neither apartment having been occupied during the night. We then returned to the first floor and forced the door of the ante-room, which, we discovered, was only secured by a spring latch, the lower lock not having been used. As soon as we entered the room, we found the four dead men. Hussein, the servant, was nearest the door and was lying in a crumpled-up position. He had been stabbed twice through the back and once through the spinal column at the base of the neck. His Excellency and the two assistants were seated in chairs, but had been stabbed through the heart. The instrument used must have been a long thin dagger or stiletto. There was no sign of it anywhere in the room, and most certainly none of the men who came out the previous night had such a weapon concealed upon him.

"Doctors were at once sent for, and the first medical gentleman to arrive said that each of the four had been dead for many hours, but they also imagined that the coffee, the remains of which we found in some cups on the table, had been drugged. So, before disturbing the room and its contents in any way, the Commissioner sent for Dr. Tennyson Coke. After careful investigation Dr. Coke came to the same conclusion as the other gentlemen. He believes that his Excellency and his two assistants were first stupefied by the drug and then murdered as they sat in their chairs, whilst the appearance of Hussein and the nature of his wounds seemed to indicate that he had been unexpectedly attacked and killed before he could struggle effectually or even call for assistance.

"Of course, the diamonds had vanished, whilst in the safes or on the tables we found the keys which had evidently been taken from his Excellency's pockets. We were all puzzled to account for the disappearance of the diamonds and the dagger, but you have clearly shown the means whereby they were conveyed off the premises. Dr. Coke took away the coffee for analysis. The four bodies were carried to the mortuary in Chapel Place, and the fourteen workmen were conveyed to Scotland Yard, not because we have any charge against them, but the Commissioner thought it best to keep them under surveillance until the Turkish Embassy has settled what was to be done with them, in the matter of paying such wages as were due and sending them back to Amsterdam. The men themselves, I may add, were quite satisfied with our action in the matter. That is really all I have to tell you."

"It is quite clear, then," said Brett, "that two men succeeded in murdering four and in getting away with their plunder and arms without creating the slightest noise or exciting any suspicion in your mind."

"That is so," admitted Inspector Sharpe ruefully.

"Then," said Brett, "there is nothing else to be done here. Will you come with me, Mr. Winter?"

"Where to, sir?" inquired the detective.

"To find Mr. Talbot, of course."

"Easier said than done," remarked Inspector Walters, as the door closed behind the visitors.

Inspector Sharpe was less sceptical.

"He's a very smart chap is Brett," he said. "Neither you nor I thought of punching that wire screen, did we?"

(To be continued.)

Eight Years of Bad Eczema on Hands

Miss Mary A. Bentley Montreal

Cured by Cuticura Soap and Ointment

Miss Mary A. Bentley, 93 University St., Montreal, writes, in a recent letter: "Some nine years ago I noticed small p mples breaking out on the back of my hands. They became very irritating, and gradually became worse, so that I could not sleep at night. I consulted a physician who treated me a long time, but it got worse, and I could not put my hands in water. I was treated at the hospital, and it was just the same. I was told that it was a very bad case of eczema.

"Well, I just kept on using everything that I could for nearly eight years until I was advised to try Cuticura Ointment. I did so, and I found after a few applications the burning sensations were disappearing, I could sleep well, and did not have any itching during the night. I began after a while to use Cuticura Soap. I stuck to the Cuticura treatment, and thought if I could use other remedies for over seven years with no result, and after only having a few applications and finding ease from Cuticura Ointment, it deserved a fair trial with a severe and stubborn case. I used the Cuticura Ointment and Soap for nearly six months, and I am glad to say that I have hands as clear as anyone. It is my wish that you publish this letter to all the world, and if anyone doubts it, let them write me."

Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold by druggists and dealers everywhere. For a liberal sample of each, with 32-p. book, send to Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Dept. 5P, Boston, U. S. A.

A HIT.

What She Gained by Trying Again.

A failure at first makes us esteem final success.

A family in Minnesota that now enjoys Postum would never have known how good it is if the mother had been discouraged by the failure of her first attempt to prepare it. Her son tells the story:

"We had never used Postum till last spring when father brought home a package one evening just to try it. We had heard from our neighbors, and in fact every one who used it, how well they liked it.

"Well, the next morning Mother brewed it about five minutes, just as she had been in the habit of doing with coffee without paying special attention to the directions printed on the package. It looked weak and didn't have a very promising color, but nevertheless father raised his cup with an air of expectancy. It certainly did give him a great surprise, but I'm afraid it wasn't a very pleasant one, for he put down his cup with a look of disgust.

"Mother wasn't discouraged though, and next morning gave it another trial, letting it stand on the stove till boiling began and then letting it boil for fifteen or twenty minutes, and this time we were all so pleased with it that we have used it ever since.

"Father was a confirmed dyspeptic and a cup of coffee was to him like poison. So he never drinks it any more, but drinks Postum regularly. He isn't troubled with dyspepsia now and is actually growing fat, and I'm sure Postum is the cause of it. All the children are allowed to drink it and they are perfect pictures of health." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

CARE OF CHICKENS.

All the old birds, and young, too, should be examined frequently during the hot months, because then it is that the lice and mites thrive.

If cut bone or chopped meat is fed during the summer, extra precautions must be taken to have it perfectly fresh.

Many birds die from eating bone and meat scraps which have been allowed to lie around exposed to the heat and the flies.

In feeding chickens always remember that they are provided for to produce fresh eggs for human food and, therefore, their own food should be just as pure as that we eat ourselves.

The hot sun will cause young goslings and ducklings as well to topple over and die. Provide shade for them until they are strong on their pegs.

ONE PIE FOR 70 GUESTS.

Seventy guests banqueted on a single pie at Gorleston, and there was plenty to spare when they had finished, says London Sketch. The pie had three inch crust and weighed a hundredweight and a half. It was made in three sections or water tight compartments and each hold had a substantial bulkhead of crust. Its interior was packed with six rabbits, six kidneys, twenty-eight pounds of beefsteak and potatoes, turnips, carrots and sprouts. The sea pie, as it is called, is boiled, not baked, and its builder, Skipper Harman, made the cooking process an eight hours watch. This three decker provided a savory meal which more than satisfied the guests, and its wrecked and dismantled hull provided ten gallons of excellent soup that was gladly welcomed by the poor of Gorleston.

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LETTERS OF A SON IN THE MAKING TO HIS DAD.

—By REX McEVOY

[Mr. McEvoy will write for this paper a series of letters from the west. They will appear from time to time under the above heading, and will give a picture of the great Canadian west from the standpoint of a young Ontario man going out there to make his way. These letters should be full of interest for every Ontario father.]

No. 5.

Kamloops, Sept. 14th, 1911.

My Dear Dad,—

Although this letter is dated Kamloops we have just left that place and am getting further from it every minute. I am writing this in a corner of the observation car on the Imperial Limited, the name the C. P. R. gives the train that runs through from Montreal to Vancouver. The observation car has a deep platform behind where you can sit out on camp stools and watch the scenery without and glass or window frames to interfere with the view. You get the real mountain air, too, as the train slides past the silent peaks, and while going through one of the mile-long tunnels today I heard the splash of an underground stream, and felt the drip of the water. Just where I am sitting there is a writing desk, and close beside it is a book case with a couple of hundred books to choose from if you want to read. I notice that they are not used much. I didn't see anyone reading them, the scenery is too attractive for that. The magazines, however, which belong to the library, were much in demand.

Well, it has been a wonderful day for me. I was up early, for the train leaves Calgary at 3.15 a.m. right on the dot. That's one thing that has surprised me on this trip. While a local train in Ontario may be anywhere from half an hour to an hour late, these trains which make a run for nearly three thousand miles pull out of the station right on time. Of course, they must lose in winter when the snow drifts. Then a train may be excused for being a day behind time.

We ran out of Calgary in the dark, but it was daylight by the time we reached Exshaw, when you are right close up to the mountains. Here I noticed a number of long, dusty-looking buildings. They are part of one of the largest cement works in Canada. Then we went through what is called "The Gap," right into the heart of the mountains.

It was at Canmore that I first realized what mountains were. I simply cannot describe the feeling of awe that is experienced in looking on them for the first time. The other side of a level valley, perhaps some five miles away, they rose up, up, up, grey, silent, majestic in the grey light of early morning, with the mists still clinging about them. They seemed to lift themselves above and out of the world, and to be altogether apart from man and the little things that busy him. They were solitary, remote, and there was no sign of living thing near them. And in between the solemn, grey peaks, miles beyond, a glimpse might be caught of another, higher peak, snow-covered, gilded with the bright, fresh sunlight of early morning. They were grand. I just hung on to the railing at the back of the observation car and gazed, and gazed, and gazed.

All the time I was drinking in the wonder of the mountains I was thinking that I had never before realized what a mountain was. Pictures give you no idea at all any more than a portrait of a person can speak to you. And I was thinking, too, what a pity it was that all my folks could not be with me to see and appreciate this wonderful bit of our Canada. Perhaps one of the things that makes the mountains impressive is that they help you to understand the vast scale of creation. These tremendous monuments of rock have been tossed about at some time as the plaything of some tremendous power. Their very mass and weight compels thought of the incomprehensible violence which has of old torn them from their place and reared them up on end. At one place where we came along to-day, right at the foot of Mount Macdonald, the rock rises sheer up from the track a mile in the air—as far as from our place to the school-house set up on end.

I was out on the back of the train till we got to Field, when I went in to the dining car for dinner. The mountains all the way were unutterably grand. In places they were a series of peaks, with snow gleaming like crowns or necklaces about them, in other places they were in broken piles. In one place, for instance, there is what looks just like a castle cut out of the rock, with doorways, turrets, and all. It is on a tremendous scale, some eight miles long. After passing that you run out along the side of the mountain with a valley below you and a river running through it. You see bridges and tracks some distance below the track your train is on, and running parallel. Then you run slap bang into a tunnel and run along for a mile in the dark. When you come out you find that you have turned right round with the track you were on before above you. Then into another tunnel, and you find that you have turned again, the track looping round in the solid rock. This whole giant "S," some seven miles long, cost $1,500,000. Seventy-five car loads of dynamite costing $250,000 were used in blasting the tunnels. The wonders that the engineers have accomplished in putting the railroad through is next to the wonder of the mountains themselves. After you have been running in the maze of hills for a whole day, you wonder that anybody ever found their way through, let alone build a railroad.

When the tunnels are left behind, you come out along the Kicking Horse River. The track runs along a narrow ledge cut in the side of the mountain with the river far below, hundreds of feet. Gradually the track gets lower and lower, till it is running close beside the leaping, dashing, greeny-white water of the river.

At Glacier I got my first fine view of one of the glaciers that feed these mountain rivers. It was sweltering hot where we were at the station, but up on the side of the mountain lay a great expanse of snow that glistened in the sun. You and mother should come through here and see this country, but if you do, be sure you bring a dictionary with you, or you will run out of adjectives before you have been in the mountains very long.

In the evening, after passing Sicamous Junction, where the line branches off to the Okanagan Valley—the peach and grape belt of the province—we ran along beside Shushwap Lake, and the sunset lights and reflections in the still calm water were very peaceful, and contrasted with the rugged beauty of the mountains. The lights were lit when we ran into Kamloops, and the town was outlined with bright dots where the street lights stood in the darkness under the shadowy mountains.

Good-bye now, Dad. I have quite a piece to go yet, but I'm not tired of travelling, as I expected to be, as there's always something to see.

Your loving son,

JIM.

COLOR-BLIND.

A form of defective vision which will impair the usefulness of anybody, no matter what his employment, is touched upon in this pithy conversation:

Inquisitive Passenger—What has become of Stokes, who used to be a conductor on this line?

Conductor—Why, the company laid him off some time ago.

Inquisitive Passenger—Laid him off? What for?

Conductor—It was found upon investigation that he was color-blind.

Inquisitive Passenger — Color-blind? What difference did that make in a conductor?

Conductor—A good deal. He couldn't tell the difference between the color of his money and the company's.

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