CLOSE QUARTERS;

OR, THE HOUSE IN THE RUE BARBETTE

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd)

"Not the slightest," said Brett, ...ng, "except perhaps this, that ...d of calling on Miss Talbot ...ening you may be locked up ... charge of housebreaking."

"... said the earl, thoughtful... had not thought of that. It ... more fun to take her by sur... So here goes to get my traps ...d."

...r Lord Fairholme's depar... Brett took matters easily. He ... put in an appearance at ...ecture until late in the af... and, as he surmised, the ... whom he encountered ...s night had even then ...ed at his office. With... ...y, the barrister wa... ...he official, who evi... ...d an explanation, ... great curiosity.

... Brett began, ... monsieur, were ...roughout the w...

... is so," no... ...ing wh...

... that house?"

...urely. It was monsieur's ...sonal movements which called ...or observation."

"Then you do not know that an individual whose identity may be much more important than mine is an inmate of the apartment at this moment—probably a captive against his will, possibly a corpse?"

The Frenchman's huge moustache bristled with alarm and annoyance.

"It is a strange thing, monsieur," he cried, "that an English gentleman should come to Paris and know more about the movements and haunts of criminals than the French police."

It was no part of Brett's design to rub the official the wrong way, so he said gently—

"Your remark is quite justifiable, and under ordinary circumstances any such pretence on my part would be ridiculous. But you must remember, monsieur, that I came here from London possessed of special information which was not known even to the police authorities in that city. I am working solely in the private interest of persons high in English Society, and it would not serve the purpose of any of the Governments concerned were too much stress publicly laid on their connection with this mystery. If I can succeed in elucidating the problem it will be a comparatively easy matter for the police to bring the real criminals to justice. As a step towards that end I have come to you now to place you in possession of a clue which may reveal itself in the Rue Barbette. All I ask is, in the first instance, that the affair may be conducted with the utmost secrecy, and secondly, that you will permit me to be present when you examine the person whom I expect to find there. I may be able to help you very materially in your questions, provided the man is alive and well."

The commissary was soothed. The barrister's judicial reference to the importance and confidential nature of the inquiry raised in his mind a dazzling vision of personal distinction and preferment.

"The matter shall be conducted with the utmost discretion," he cried. "What force does monsieur consider to be requisite in order to examine this house thoroughly, and prevent the attempted escape of others whom we may find there in addition to the man described?"

Brett with difficulty repressed a smile. "I do not think that a large force of police will be necessary. If you yourself, monsieur, and another officer will accompany me in a cab, I am sure we will be able to deal with all possible opposition. There is no exit from the flat save through the main door, and the apartment is situated on the second story. Escape by way of the windows is practically impossible if we act with promptitude."

The commissary could not reach the Rue Barbette too rapidly. He bundled a subordinate into a fiacre, and the three were driven off at breakneck speed.

They stopped the vehicle at the corner of the street and walked quietly to the house, attracting no attention, as neither of the Frenchmen was in uniform.

Inquiry from the concierge elicited the information that none of the occupants of the flat tenanted by the Turkish gentlemen had put in an appearance since the previous afternoon. So the trio mounted the staircase, and without any preliminary summons the junior official applied his shoulder to the door.

The lock yielded quite readily. Indeed, the damage done by Lord Fairholme was but temporarily repaired, and no special precaution had been taken to fasten the place. All was quiet within. The first room they searched was empty. So was the second; but in a bedroom the door of which was locked and required forcible treatment, an extraordinary sight met their eyes.

Stretched on the bed, gagged and securely tied, was the figure of the diminutive Frenchman, who, little more than twenty-four hours earlier had so coolly suggested that Brett should be murdered.

"tout leather ...

want o... ...him a pitiable object.

They removed the gag and cut the bonds. The poor wretch remained on his back unable to move, though he flinched somewhat when the police, as gently as possible, loosened the leather straps from his wrists and ankles, for his useless struggles had caused the thongs to cut deeply into his skin.

Brett was the first to realize the unfortunate wretch's chief requirement. He procured some water, raised the man's head, and allowed him to take a deep and invigorating draught.

"Why, it is 'The Worm!'" said the junior policeman. "I know him well. He is a pickpocket, an expert rascal in his line, but hardly up to the standard of great events."

At the sound of his nickname a flicker of intelligence came into the little thief's eyes, but he was still dazed, and did not recognize his rescuers.

"I don't care what you do with me," he murmured at last, in weak and cracked voice. "Kill me quietly if you want to, but don't tie me up again; I have done nothing to deserve it. I really haven't. I have been acting quite square in this business." And then he broke down and whimpered further protestations of innocence.

"He is weak from want of food, and dazed with terror," said Brett quietly. "I suggest that one of you should get him some meat and wine, whilst the others remain here and endeavor to reassure him. Meanwhile we might examine the place."

The commissary thought Brett's suggestion a good one. His assistant summoned the concierge and attended to the wants of "The Worm," whilst Brett and the commissary conducted a careful scrutiny of the premises.

They found little, however, beyond a considerable accumulation of dirt; for the ways of Turks are primitive and their habits unpleasant in European households. It was evident that before taking their departure the occupants of the flat had carefully removed or destroyed all documents or other articles which might throw light on their proceedings.

The leather thongs which bound the prisoner evoked some comment from the barrister.

"These are somewhat unusual articles," he said to the commissary. "You will notice that they are cut from raw cowhide and well stretched. In other words, they are familiar 'bow-strings' of Constantinople, and warranted not to yield if twisted round the neck. I think they will answer for other purposes than tying people to beds."

"We must find these Turks," said the commissary. "They are desperate characters."

"Find them by all means," said Brett earnestly, "but on no account arrest them."

"And why, monsieur?" cried the other, with elevated eyebrows.

"Because if you do you will paralyze our future actions. When all is said and done, the only charge you can bring against them is a trivial one. It is evident they merely tied up this man, either with the object of frightening him into a confession, or leave their hands free whilst they dealt with his employers. Perhaps they had both objects in view. In either event the appearance of the police on the scene would close their mouths more tightly than an oyster. As it is, I expect they will return, and, if possible, you must compel the concierge to conceal the fact that you have visited the house. Let him put all the blame on me. They know that I am mixed up in the inquiry, and fear me far less than the recognized authorities.

"Oblige me in this respect and you will not regret it."

The policeman was wise enough to fall in with the suggestion.

An hour later "The Worm" was taken in a cab to the Prefecture, as his condition was yet so hopeless that little real benefit could ensue for a searching cross-examination.

So Brett parted company with the officials, having made an appointment with the commissary for the next day at noon, when they assumed that the prisoner would be considerably recovered from his weakness and fright.

The barrister subsequently made a round of the minor cafes in the neighborhood of the ...que d'Hiver. After mu... casual question... ing, he el... information ... t a ... s, of which ... time ... a ... ming at ... s. He as... ... the winter ... entertainment ... South of France. ...m whom he gleaned ...nt facts said that he ... worthy friend in Mar... ... would easily be able to ... whether or not La Belle ...se intended to rejoin her ... profession. Brett secured ...arty co-operation by a liber... ...nation for expenses.

The barrister resolved to pay another visit to the Cabaret Noir late that evening, but he waited in the hotel until nearly ten o'clock in anxious expectation of a telegram from Fairholme.

At last the message arrived. Its contents were laconic.

"Right first time," it ran. "Invalid lady's name 'Jack.' Somewhat exhausted, after long confinement. Edith delighted. Jack visits Under-Secretary to-night. We all propose joining you in Paris to-morrow. Do you approve?"

Brett promptly wired, "Yes," and then set out for Montmartre, dressing himself in the height of fashion so far as his wardrobe would permit, and donning a fierce moustache and wig, which completely altered his appearance. He looked like a successful impressario or popular Italian tenor.

CHAPTER XII.

The fair-ground of Montmartre was in full swing when Brett arrived there. The Cabaret Noir was in charge of his former acquaintance, the weary-eyed waiter, and other assistants.

The barrister wondered whether Mdlle. Beaucaire had taken her father completely into her confidence. To make certain he questioned the waiter.

"Is Monsieur Beaucaire in?"

"But yes, monsieur. You will find him in the billiard-room."

This time Brett was not conducted through the private passage that led through the rear of the bar. The man politely indicated another entrance, and brought him to the proprietor with the introductory remark—

"A gentleman who wishes to see you."

The room was tenanted by a nondescript crowd, whose attention was promptly attracted by the appearance of a stranger, and a well-dressed one at that.

The games in progress at the two tables momentarily suspended, whilst Gros Jean, a corpulent man above the middle height, whose legs seemed to be too frail to support his rotund body, advanced, peering curiously beneath his bushy eyebrows to get a glimpse of the newcomer, for the shaded light did not fall on Brett's features, and Mr. Beaucaire wondered who the stranger could be. The barrister almost started when he recognized his fellow-passenger, the man who travelled to Paris with Gaultier and himself. Gros Jean bowed politely enough, and murmured something about being at Brett's service.

"Oh, it is nothing of great importance," said Brett airily, as he was not anxious to attract too much observation from the unwashed humanity who took such interest in him. "I merely wish to know when it will be convenient for me to have some conversation with mademoiselle, your charming daughter?"

"May I inquire the reason, monsieur?" said the other.

"Certainly. I have heard of her skill as an artist, and it is possible I may be able to arrange a London engagement for her."

"Ah," said the landlord deprecatingly, "what a pity! Had monsieur called here yesterday he could have seen mademoiselle. She has now left Paris for some weeks."

"Perhaps," said Brett, "I may have the pleasure of meeting her elsewhere. I myself depart to-morrow on a tour in the South of France. It is possible that mademoiselle may be employed in some of the southern cities. If so I will certainly make it my business to call on her."

(To be continued.)

Fond Mother—"Oh, professor, what do you think of little Arthur as a violinist?" Professor—"I like the way he puts the fiddle back into the case."

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On the Farm

WINTER PIGS.

There is a decided difference in caring for the pigs of autumn farrowing and those of the spring litters. On the average farm the latter have the advantage over the former of coming in previous to the advent of the springing grasses, and have a more generous supply of milk and other laxative foodstuffs to keep them growing and in perfect order. writes Mr. G. W. Brown.

It has been my practice for a number of years to raise two litters of pigs a year. To do this successfully I find that one must not allow over-stocking, but rather should sell off a portion of the pigs soon after weaning time, keeping only so many as he knows he can accomm... with good quarters and ...uate with ... One must not generous feeding. On... ...er slight pigs during cold weather, either in housing or feeding.

Besides dry nesting-quarters, the pigs should have a good-sized lot in which they may get plenty of exercise. Growing pigs should not be crowded into close, filthy quarters, exposed to vermin and disease.

Our winter pigs are very profitably fed upon whole corn in the fodder, as they delight in getting their feed from this material. I find that they eat very much of the fodder, which forms a fine diet. The cobs and coarse stalks are raked up and burned frequently, affording the pigs a generous supply of charcoal.

I aim to keep a cow, for every litter of milk-stuffs I can grow a bunch of winter pigs, and with the milk and a supply of pigs equal to the spring litters.

KEEP SEED POTATOES COOL.

Potatoes intended for seed should be kept hard and plump during the winter, and this can be done only by keeping them so cool that they will not sprout. When potatoes sprout they take part of the starch that is stored up in them and manufacture it into living cells. This energy is all wasted, for the sprouts have to be pulled off.

Some farmers make it a point to sprout their potatoes once or twice during the winter, this being done to prevent their growing. But the amount of energy thus lost is considerable and the loss increases as the winter draws to a close.

I raise potatoes in large quantities, and each year place them in cold storage. I prefer to pay the expense of the storage and be sure that they are kept in a perfectly plump state, rather than to keep them in a room with a high temperature, as is done by some.

In the spring the potatoes come out of the cold storage house in perfect condition, and it takes but a few weeks for them to develop strong sprouts that rise out of the soil and develop strong stalks and leaves.

Many farmers have not the opportunity to put their potatoes in cold storage houses, but they should endeavor to keep their potatoes at a very low temperature. The nearer 33 degrees potatoes are kept, the better.—W. S.

POULTRY NOTES.

Never make the mistake of feeding commercial feed that contains ground oyster shell to very young chicks. It is all right to give it to a full grown bird, but it is death to youngsters as it causes white diarrhoea of which they die in three or four hours.

Many persons feed their fowls oats, but we do not believe it is a good thing, as it is likely to cause irritation in the intestines.

If you have a male bird that has proved a good breeder do not discard him until you are quite sure that his days of usefulness are over—but keep watch for that event.

The best prices for breeding birds are obtained at the poultry shows. Beginners generally get the fever about that time.

Men who have lost money in the business say it costs fully fifteen cents per pound to place a broiler on the market. That is the cost of eggs, hatching and feed, leaving nothing for the man who does the work.

LIME IN THE STABLE.

To disinfect a stable and destroy decaying animal or vegetable matter lime is excellent to use. But manure should be preserved and not destroyed, consequently lime should never be used in or about a stable where manure is made or kept. Its use decomposes the manure and liberates the ammonia—the most valuable element of plant food.

Acid phosphate, ground rock phosphate and land plaster are the three best materials to use if other absorbents are scarce.

Air slacked lime contains a mixture of carbonate and hydrate of lime. It is not so caustic as fresh burned lime. Limestone is perfectly neutral and has the same value as dirt or road dust as an absorbent. It also possesses a value on sour, heavy soil because it neutralizes the soil acidity and improves its physical condition.

GERMAN RED TAPE.

A Comical Instance of the Way It Is Carried Out.

Those who insist upon the Government regulating everything and curing everything, from individual soft corns to insuring bank deposits, should take warning from the condition in which the Germans find themselves. Endless red tape binds every German's actions; he is never for a moment allowed to feel himself free from some restriction, and the officials are continually poking into every detail of life and regulating it. A comical instance of the way in which these officials proceed is furnished by an incident from Berlin. A country girl employed about a thrashing machine was injured so as to have both of her legs amputated. She applied to the State insurance fund, and received a monthly pension of $3.50. One day the officials notified her that the pension was reduced to $3. She kicked as well as a girl could who had only wooden legs, and in the course of time the officials in their own leisurely way informed her that they had carefully examined her case. They had found that since she had no longer any legs she was saved the expense of shoes and stockings, and she ought to be grateful to the Government for having furnished her, without cost, a pair of wooden legs. To rub it in, they reminded her that she had not been charged with the alcohol in which the amputated members were preserved. Government officials seem very much alike whether they speak our language or German.

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