CLOSE QUARTERS;

OR, THE HOUSE IN THE RUE BARBETTE

CHAPTER XII.—(Cont'd)

"I know nothing of that, monsieur," said the little man, who seemed to be strangely crestfallen, "but I am telling you the truth this time. It was he who sent me the day before yesterday to the Rue Barbette, and again yesterday, although I was very unwilling to go the second time, because, as this gentleman will tell you, they looked very like murdering me on the first occasion."

"What was the object of your visit yesterday?" said Brett.

"There monsieur, I have told you the truth, although monsieur the commissary here thinks it was childish. My instructions really were to ask them to meet him on the Pont Neuf at 6.30 p.m., when he said he would explain everything to their satisfaction. But, above all, I was to warn them of the Englishman."

"Then, why should they seize and gag you for conveying such a simple message?" demanded the commissary.

"I cannot tell. I have done them no harm. Believe me, gentlemen both, I have not the slightest idea how these diamonds were obtained, or why there should be such a fuss about them. All I know is that these Turks are desperate fellows, and you won't catch me going near them again, I swear."

"How long have you known Dubois?" said Brett.

"Oh, two years more or less."

"Have you ever been associated with him before?"

"Never, monsieur. My record is there." And he again jerked his thumb towards the volume on the table. "It will tell you that I deal in small affairs. Dubois is an artist. If he found a woman's purse in the street he would return it to her with a bow, if she were rich and handsome—and with some francs added if she were poor."

"I know little about him," he continued, "except that he is a great man. They say that he once robbed the Bank of France of 200,000 francs!"

And the little wretch's voice became tremulous with admiration as he recounted the legend.

"He is a favored lover of La Belle Chasseuse?" demanded Brett sharply.

"The Worm" recovered his equanimity somewhat at this question. He softly drew his hand over his chin as he replied with a smirk: "There are others!"

"I think not," came the quick retort. "No; there are none on whom mademoiselle bestows such favors. She left Paris with him last night."

"The devil!" ejaculated the little man.

"Oh, yes; and she has just passed a fortnight with him in London."

"A thousand thunders!" screamed Petit. "Her father told me she was performing in a musical at Marseilles."

The barrister had evidently touched a sore point, and "The Worm" was more ready than ever to tell all that he knew about Le Jongleur. But his information amounted to little more of importance. The chief fact had been ascertained, its predominant interest was the identity of the man who had planned and carried out the "Albert Gate outrage."

Brett quickly realized that to question him further was useless. Petit evidently expected to be set at liberty at once. In this, however, he was disappointed, for the commissary curtly remanded him to the cells.

Brett, on the other hand, made up his mind that "The Worm" at liberty might be more valuable to him than "The Worm" in gaol. So he asked the commissary, as a favor to himself, to set Petit free, first giving the thief to understand that he owed his release to the barrister's intervention.

This was done, and "Le Ver" was voluble in his expressions of gratitude. Brett soon cut him short.

"Here," he said, "are a couple of louis for your immediate necessities. I am living at the Grand Hotel, and I want you to call there each morning at ten o'clock. You will inquire at the office if Mr. Brett has left any message for you. Then if I need your services, I will be able to reach you early."

Petit protested that he would serve monsieur most willingly, and soon afterwards the barrister took leave of the commissary, promising to keep him fully posted as to further developments, and secure for him, and him only, the ultimate credit of capturing such a noted thief as Dubois. Fate settled matters differently.

The French official was already much impressed by Brett's method of handling this difficult inquiry, and he consented readily enough not only to assist him in every possible way, but to restrain the police from further active interference in the case until matters had developed from their present stage.

During the afternoon Brett received a visit from his actor acquaintance, who brought him a telegram from Marseilles. It read—

"Mlle. Beauclaire has obtained an engagement here at the Palais de Glace. She makes her first appearance on Monday evening."

Brett smiled as he realized how accurately he had interpreted the actions of La Belle Chasseuse and her companion.

"This is certain," he said to himself. "They left Paris on Thursday night and they probably will not reach Marseilles until Monday. I have plenty of time to hear Talbot's story from his own lips before I take my departure for the South."

An hour later he was seated in his room smoking and reading a magazine when the waiter appeared. "A lady and three gentlemen wish to see monsieur," he explained.

He rose promptly, and accompanied the man to the foot of the staircase. There, near the elevator, he saw Edith Talbot, Lord Fairholme, and Sir Hubert Fitzjames, whilst with them was a tall, handsome young man, in whom the fair outlines of the girl's face were repeated in sterner and bolder characteristics.

Edith was the first to catch sight of him. She sprang forward and cried with an impulsiveness that showed how deeply her quiet nature had been stirred.

"Oh, Mr. Brett, I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you! Here is my brother!"

The two men shook hands and looked at each other with a natural curiosity, for seldom had an acquaintance been made after more exciting preliminaries.

"I am indeed glad to see you," said Brett, shaking Talbot's hand with more demonstrativeness than was usual to one of his quiet temperament.

"Then how shall I find words to express myself?" was the reply, "for in my case there is joined to the pleasure of making a much-desired acquaintance the knowledge that to your efforts I am indebted for my liberty and possibly for my reputation."

"We have much to say to each other," said the barrister. "I suppose you have secured rooms in the hotel?" he continued, turning to Miss Talbot.

"Oh, yes, everything is settled," she cried. "The servants are looking after our trunks. I simply would not wait a moment until I had seen you. Please take us all somewhere at once where we can talk quietly."

Brett answered with a smile: "Lord Fairholme and I have a sitting-room which we use in common, and which has already been the scene of many earnest conferences. Let us go there."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Now, who talks first?" Brett cried, once the door was fairly closed behind them.

"I do," burst forth Fairholme. "My story will not take long to tell, and if I do not get it off my chest, I shall simply explode."

"We must not have any more tragedies," said Brett, "so proceed."

"Well, thanks to your foresight, I found the two servants and your ex-policeman waiting for me, on the platform at Charing Cross. As I only carried a handbag, I had no trouble with the Customs, and we walked straight out of the station. In less than five minutes we were standing outside the building which contained the invalid lady's flat. Your agent told me, so far as he knew, there were no other persons in the place except the tenant and her two servants, an elderly French or Italian married couple. Our collective wits could not devise a plausible pretext for gaining access to the lady, so I determined to settle the business in the brutal British fashion. We marched quietly up the stairs to the second story, and your assistant pointed out the right door. There were only two flats on that landing, and the other one was apparently empty. Your man had made a somewhat important discovery since he wrote to you. This empty flat had been taken by the agents who acted for the parties opposite, and although the place was not tenanted, the landlord was, of course, satisfied, as the rent had been paid in advance. This seemed to indicate that the place was left vacant simply to prevent the others from being overlooked."

Brett marked his appreciation of Fairholme's sagacity by a nod, and the earl continued—

"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 after 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 furinture. 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?"

(To be continued.)

QUEEN OF PIPES.

The Queen of pipes belongs to the Shah of Persia. Why is the great chieftain of pipes a queen? Probably because a pipe is a feminine noun in French. The little Shah's pipe was smoked by his father before him, and by his uncle and by his grandfather, and how many more of the rulers of Darius' kingdom Tip knows not. The pipe is adorned with all the precious stones, and is said to be worth $50,000. It is constantly guarded by a high court functionary, for once upon a time a Grand Vizier was caught trying to pry out a stone from the pipe with his poinard. He was immediately beheaded, and the brave soldier who prevented the theft was made guardian of the pipe, with a pension for life.

THOUGH IT'S "ONLY A COLD"—STOP IT BEFORE IT STOPS YOU

Have you ever heard of a case of catarrh, bronchitis, inflammation of the lungs, or pleurisy that did not start with a common cold?

Every cold you catch has in it the makings of one or other of these diseases, if it can break down your defences. And even if it does not develop into something more dangerous, it will keep you thoroughly miserable for a week or two at least.

The wise course, as soon as you feel the cold coming on, is to start taking Na-Dru-Co Syrup of Linseed, Licorice and Chlorodyne, and keep it up till the cold is knocked out completely. This splendid cough syrup will do the trick quickly and thoroughly.

You can feel perfectly safe in taking Na-Dru-Co Syrup of Linseed, Licorice and Chlorodyne, or in giving it to your children. We'll gladly give your physican a list of its ingredients if you like. Your Druggist can supply either 25c. or 50c. bottles. The National Drug & Chemical Co. of Canada, Limited. 117

On the Farm

WINTER CARE OF HORSES.

Why do so many farmers neglect their teams during the winter months? By neglect I mean, why are so many farm horses kept shut up in close stables when not actively at work, fed a heavy allowance of heating grain, all the forage they can stuff and only given exercise when actually at work in the field or on the road? writes Mr. J. M. Bell.

In a natural state in any clime the horse, like all animals, must necessarily take exercise in seeking a means of subsistence, therefore a horse which is kept by man must have exercise in the open air (whenever practicable) in order that he may be able to give his owner the full equivalent in good honest work for the feed that he eats.

Farm teams are used to working hard all spring, summer and fall. The dull season for the farmer is when inclement weather prevails. Outdoor work for the faithful farm team will be uncertain.

Don't let them stand up in the stable for days at a time, fed heavily on heating food, breathing only the vitiated air of the stable.

Under the most favorable conditions the average farmer's stable does not furnish pure oxygen to horses or cattle that are kept up constantly, only getting the much needed daily exercise at irregular intervals and in consequence suffering from many ailments incident to close confinement along with heavy feeding.

The writer was well acquainted with one of the most successful breeders of horses in this country, a man who owned at one time over 100 head of thoroughbreds, many of them horses that are known from the Atlantic to the Pacific for their successful performances on the turf.

It was his invariable custom to let all of his studs have exercise in the open air whenever the weather conditions permitted. Brood mares, stallions and colts were all turned out to run about and get the benefit of fresh air and exercise, sometimes even when the weather seemed unpropitious.

Oftentimes the stallions were taken out and ridden from ten to fifteen miles a day. They would get muddy and dirty, but retained their vigor in the stud until an advanced age.

The brood mares and colts of all ages were kept in good condition by being allowed to run around in paddock or field, gaining strength and vigor all the time.

The farmer's team needs the same recreation as does the racehorse and will not be ready for the heavy spring work unless he has the proper care and attention during the winter months.

In the Far West or North there are, no doubt, days when the farmers' teams must stay in the barn. Let them be as few as possible. Remember that an hour's exercise, turned loose in stable lot, paddock or field will start the blood to coursing, take the swelling out of stocky legs, fill the lungs with pure, fresh air and in the end save veterinary bills.

BURNING THE ROADSIDE.

A great many people have the mistaken idea that the time to burn the roadside in order to kill the many insects that winter in these places, is in the early spring of the year.

If you will watch closely at such a place where the roadside has been burned in the spring you will see the insects coming out of the ground very thickly on the warm days.

This proves that the insects were not killed. Most of them are in the ground and the heat of the fire passing over them does not harm them and the trash burned from above them makes it all the easier for the insects to come forth. While no doubt a few of them are killed the majority of them are uninjured.

The right time to burn these roadsides to do effective work is in the late fall of the year, after the cold weather has already set in and all the tender vegetation is dry.

Then, if the roadsides are burned, the insects in such places will be killed by heavy freezing, as they usually do not go very deeply into the ground, but seem to depend on the covering of trash to protect them from the cold.

This is a great bit more effective in the killing of hte insects than the spring burning.

Not only does the fall burning of the roadsides do good by the killing of the insects that winter there, but it also helps to keep the road in better shape by allowing less snow to collect in the drifts as it usually does in places where there is much grass and weeds.

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MAKING IT UP.

Two men who had quarreled violently and had not been on friendly terms for some months met by accident one night at a social function. One of them made a friendly overture to his enemy. Going up to him, he offered his hand, and said:—

"Look here, Jenkinson, I've often guilty of causing you considerable annoyance, and if I make that confession I dare say you won't mind admitting on your side that you've been a little unjust to me, too."

Jenkinson took the outstretched hand, and the negotiations for peace proceeded satisfactorily until, in his concluding remark, the first speaker observed, somewhat pompously:—

"On this pleasant and auspicious occasion, Jenkinson, I would like you to feel that I wish you—the same as you wish me."

"What!" cried Jenkinson, angrily. "Are you beginning it again?"

THE SCOTCH THISTLE.

The origin of the thistle as the national badge of Scotland is thus given by tradition: When the Danes invaded Scotland, it was deemed unwarlike to attack the enemy by night, instead of pitched battles by day; but on one occasion the invaders tried a night attack. In order to prevent their tramp being heard, they marched barefooted, and they had succeeded in creeping close up to the Scottish forces unobserved, when one of them stepped on a thistle and uttered a cry of pain. The alarm was given and the attack was beaten off. Out of gratitude the thistle was adopted as the insignia of Scotland.

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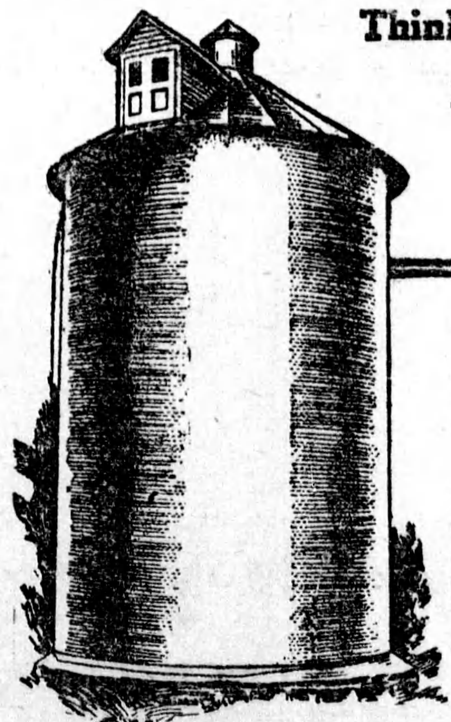

THE construction of a Silo affords an excellent example of what the farmer can do with Concrete—and of the superiority of Concrete over all other material for various structural work about the farm.

The usual wooden silo, besides being expensive, is far from satisfactory. In the first place, it does not endure; and, more important still—being far from weather-proof—its contents become water-logged—producing an unsanitary condition.

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