CLOSE QUARTERS;

OR, THE HOUSE IN THE RUE BARBETTE

CHAPTER XV.—(Cont'd)

Men, women, and children lounged about the doorways and kept up a constant cackle of conversation in a mysterious patois which Miss Talbot, though an excellent French scholar, could make nothing of. The presence of these people naturally shielded her from the direct observation of La Belle Chasseuse, but nevertheless threatened a slight danger should it be necessary for her to stand still, for she well understood that in such a locality each person was known to the other, and the loitering of a stranger could not fail to arouse curiosity.

Soon after passing beneath the lamp mademoiselle vanished into a doorway. Edith perceived to her joy that at this point there was no group of loungers. Indeed, for a few yards the street was empty. Keeping her eyes sedulously fixed upon the exact spot where the Frenchwoman disappeared, she reached the door, and, after a moment's hesitation, stepped lightly into the interior darkness.

The narrow entrance was at once lessened to half its width by a staircase. She listened intently, and could hear the other woman ascending the second flight of stairs.

At the next landing mademoiselle paused and knocked three times. Presumably in reply to a question within, she murmured something which Edith could not catch, and was at once admitted. The shooting of a rusty bolt supplied evidence that the door was locked behind her.

Edith's next task was to identify the house. She stepped out into the street again and crossed to the opposite pavement. She looked up to the second story, but, owing to the short distance—barely fourteen feet—that separated her from the house—she could discern nothing, save that the windows on that floor were closely shuttered.

She rapidly noted that the door was the third removed from the lamp.

Whilst wondering what to do next, a couple of girls approached her. They were young and of course inquisitive. Without any dissimulation, they stood in front of her and scrutinized her face, wondering, no doubt, who this tall graceful newcomer could be.

"What is your name?" said one. "Where do you live? Have you just come here? Are you staying with old Mother Peter?"

With difficulty Edith caught the drift of their questions. But she answered smilingly—

"No, I do not live here, and I do not know Mother Peter. But I want you to tell me who lives in the house opposite?"

Her Parisian French greatly surprised the two girls who giggled at each other, and one of them cried —"Oh, here's a lark!"

But they scented an intrigue, and were quite ready to give all the information in their power.

"A lot of people there," said the elder one, trying, with the ready tact of her nation, to accommodate her words to the understanding of the stranger. "It all depends who youn want to know about. On the ground floor is Josef the barber and his wife, and three little ones. It cannot be them, I am sure, and it cannot be Monsieur Ducrot, who is their lodger, for he is seventy years old and a sacristan in the Church of the Sacred Heart. Then on the first floor there are three men, not a woman amongst them. One is a bill-sticker, another a fisherman, and the third a waiter in the Cafe du Midi. I do not know their proper names. We call the bill-sticker 'Paste-pot,' and the fisherman 'Crab.' The waiter is called 'Thomas' in the cafe, but when a letter comes for him it is in another name. Then, on the second floor —by the way, Marie, who is it that lives on the second floor?"

Edith with difficulty restrained her excitement. She felt that if only these youngsters rattled on a little longer she might gain some valuable information.

Marie, thus appealed to, was evidently of a more cautious temperament than her companion.

"If the young lady will tell us why she wants to know, we may be able to help her?" she stipulated.

"Certainly," cried Edith, instantly resolving to pursue the tactics of the penny novelette. "I have been deserted. My lover has been taken away from me by another woman—at least, that is what I am informed. I do not wish to make any trouble about it. There are plenty as good men as he left in the world; but, on the other hand, I must not act unjustly. I have been told that he lives in this house—that he is living with her at this moment, in fact. If I can make sure of it, I will go away and never set eyes on him again unless by chance, and then you may be sure I will take no notice of him. I am not one of those silly girls who break their hearts over a faithless sweetheart."

Marie was reassured.

"I should think not," she said, with a sympathetic and defiant sniff. "On the second floor, I am afraid you will find your man. They are a funny couple that live there. They only came on Monday. When did your young man leave you?"

"I saw him on Saturday."

"Where?"

This was a poser, but Miss Talbot answered desperately:

"At Lyons."

"What is he like?"

Another haphazard shot.

"He is tall and dark, and, oh! so good-looking, with a beautifully white skin and a pink complexion."

"That is he!" cried both girls together.

"The scoundrel! But tell me," went on Edith, whose excitement was readily construed as the pangs of jealousy, "who is the creature that lives with him?"

"We think she is a music-hall artiste," replied Marie. "At least, that is what the people say. I have not heard yet what hall she appears in. They say she is very pretty. Are you going to throw vitrol over her?"

"Not I," said Edith, with a fine scorn. "Do they live there alone?"

"Yes, quite alone. They rent the place from Pere Didon. He owns most of the houses in this street, you know, and is a regular skinflint. He won't let any one get behind with their rent for an hour. He is old, so old that you would not think that he could live another week, yet he is that keen after his francs you would imagine he was a young man anxious to get money for a gay life. You ought to have heard the row here last Saturday when he turned the people out from their rooms where your lover now lives with his mistress. It was terrible. There was a poor woman with two sick children."

How much further the revelation as to Pere Didon's iniquity might have gone, Miss Talbot could not say, but at that moment there came an interruption.

From the opposite doorway appeared the figure of Mlle. Beaucaire, carrying a small bag. She was followed by a man, tall, slight, and closely muffled up, who shouldered a larger portmanteau. Edith grabbed both the girls, and pulled them close to her against the closed door behind them.

"It is he!" she whispered tragically. "Silence! Let us watch them!"

The man darted a suspicious glance up and down the street. There was no one whom even the clever Henri Dubois could construe as an enemy—no one save some chattering Marseilles loitering around their doorsteps, and three girls huddled together in close concave directly opposite.

Thus reassured, he strode after La Belle Chasseuse, who cried out impatiently:

"Come quick, Henri, what are you waiting for?"

"Is his name Henri?" whispered the awe-stricken Marie.

"Yes. Isn't he a villain? I wonder where they are going now!"

"Let's follow them and see," suggested Marie.

"Yes, let us follow them and see," chimed in the other one, who delighted in this nocturnal romance. It was a veritable page out of one of Paul de Kock's novels.

The programme suited Miss Talbot exceedingly well.

They strolled off down the street, nestled together, Edith in the centre, and keeping the shrouded couple in front well in sight. This time, when Mademoiselle Beaucaire and her companion reached the point where the street emerged on to the harbor, they did not cross over towards the broad and brilliant-lighted Cannebiere, but hurried on through darkness in the direction of a cluster of fishing smacks that lay alongside the Quai de Rive Neuve.

"My faith, Eugenie!" cried Marie, "they must be going on board one of the vessels."

"What a lark!" was the answer. "I suppose they fear you," she added, turning her sharp eyes on Edith. "What is your name?"

"Lucille," came the answer on the spur of the moment.

"Lucille what?"

"Lucille Beauharnais."

"My gracious!" cried Eugenie, "what a swell name!"

"Oh, let us hurry," interrupted Miss Talbot desperately. "You girls know everybody. You must know all the vessels. If they are going on a boat an dyou find out the name and number for me I will give each of you a whole louis. I will give them to you now—I mean, that is, if you will walk with me afterwards to my lodgings."

Even amidst the exciting circumstances surrounding her, Edith recognized the absolute necessity there was to maintain the credibility of her previous narrative.

Unquestionably Dubois and the lady intended to embark on one of the fishing boats. They hastened to the further end of the harbor, through whose tiny entrance Edith could now see the dark waters of the bay beyond, for the night was beautifully clear and fine, and the bright stars of the south lent some radiance to the scene, when the girls quitted the deep shadow of the houses.

A solitary boat, a decked fishing smack of some forty tons, was lying by the side of the quay, apart from the others. Edith, who knew something about yachting, recognized that her gearing was not fastened in the trim manner suggestive of a craft laid by for the night. At the same instant, too, she caught sight of a third form—that of a man who had been seated on a fixed capstan, and who now strode forward to peer at the newcomers.

Some few words passed between the three, but it was impossible for girls to hear a syllable. Instantly the sailor assisted Dubois and Mademoiselle Beaucaire to step down from the quay on board the smack. He followed them, and three other men, who appeared out of the chaos of sails and ropes, commenced to labor with a large pole in order to shove the sturdy vessel out into the harbor.

"Quick!" murmured Edith, in an agony lest the opportunity should slip. "Tell me what vessel it is."

"I think," said Marie, "it is the Belles Soeurs. Anyhow, we can easily make certain. All we have to do is to go back around the top of the harbor, walk down the Quai du Port, and watch her as she passes under the lighthouse of the Fort St. Jean. They will hoist her sail then and we shall see her number."

"Oh, come," cried Edith, "let us run!"

"We can run if you like," replied Marie coolly, "but there is no need. They have to get out by using the sweeps, and we will be underneath the lighthouse at least a minute or two before they pass, even if we walk slowly."

Whilst they were talking the three girls put their words into practice, and Edith found herself battling with a logical dilemma. Dubois was evidently escaping from France —making out from Marseilles at this late hour on a vessel capable of sailing to almost any point of the Mediterranean.

What could she do? Was it possible to invoke the aid of a policeman and get some authority to hail the craft and order her to return, or was there time to take a cab in the Cannebiere and drive furiously to the hotel, where Brett, Fairholme and her brother must be anxiously awaiting her return?

Rapidly as these alternatives suggested themselves, she dismissed them. It was best to fall in with Marie's suggestion and ascertain beyond doubt the identity of the fishing smack. Then, at any rate, Brett would have a tangible and definite clue.

So she hastened with her companions along the three sides of the now almost deserted quay, and, in accordance with the prediction of her youthful guides, she reached the promenade beyond the small lighthouse of the inner port before the vessel had quitted the harbor. To move a forty-ton boat with oars is a slow matter at the best.

As the craft came creeping steadily through the narrow channel Edith saw, to her great relief, that two of the men drew in their sweeps and commenced to haul upon ropes whilst the clanking and groaning of pulleys heralded the slow rising of the mainsail.

(To be continued.)

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SUFFICIENT UNTO HERSELF.

Small and independent Mamie was exploring a toy-shop with her mother and two older brothers. To see what she would do in an emergency, they hid behind a counter and watched her. After looking around and finding herself quite alone, she serenely resumed her trudge, gazing complacently at the array of dolls and toys. Presently a floor-walker, who had taken in the bit of fun, approached her and said:

"Why, hello! Aren't you lost?"

"O, no," she smiled, patronizingly, "I isn't; dem is."

Thugs are terrorizing Vancouver despite the warning that those who are caught will get the lash.

Sick headaches—neuralgic headaches—splitting, blinding headaches—all vanish when you take

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Marriage vows are too often followed by marriage rows.

Everybody has to hustle, even the egg is compelled to scramble, oftentimes.

Those who rise early in the morning are the more likely to rise above their troubles.

Men are like hens, the harder they have to scratch for a living the more useful they become.

The physiologists tell us that we have five senses, and yet some folks act as if they had none.

One of our contemporaries advises scales for the farm, and that San Jose critter is doing its best to supply them.

Some men never miss the water until long after the wells have failed.

PRIVATE OFFICE

Gone to lunch Back in ten minutes

Cramming down ill-chosen food, and rushing back to work, leads straight to dyspepsia, with all it means in misery.

Proper habits of eating, with a Na-Dru-Co Dyspepsia Tablet after each meal, restore good digestion, health and happiness.

A box of Na-Dru-Co Dyspepsia Tablets costs but 50c. at your Druggist's. National Drug and Chemical Co. of Canada, Limited. 148

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LAST CHANCE.

Mrs. N. Peck—Did you ever notice that about half of the pictures in photographers' windows are of bridal couples? I wonder why they always rush off to a photographer as soon as the knot is tied?

Mr. N. Peck—The husband is responsible for it. He realizes that it is about his last chance to ever look pleasant.

The difference between a meteor and a meter is that the former always comes down and the latter always goes up.

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are fast replacing the disease-breeding, draughty privy-pit closets of a few years ago. No man who values the health of his family will hesitate between the insanitary back yard cesspool and a

Parkyte Improved Chemical Closet

Instal one in your house at little cost. Absolutely odorless and endorsed as sanitary by leading physicians. Highest quality materials and workmanship. Lasts a lifetime. Avoid inferior makes. They cost as much, yet are flimsily built of poor materials, last only a short time and are positively insanitary, because built on wrong lines.

Ask your dealer or order direct.

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ADD $250 TO ALL PRICES FOR POINTS WEST OF ROCKIES

The Traders Bank of Canada

Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual General Meeting.

The Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting was held at noon on Tuesday, the 23rd of January, 1912.

Mr. C. D. Warren, the President, having taken the chair, the General Manager, Mr. Stuart Strathy, was requested to act as Secretary of the Meeting. On motion, Messrs. E. Galley and J. K. Niven were appointed Scrutineers. The minutes of the last Annual Meeting were taken as read.

DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors have much pleasure in submitting their Twenty-seventh Annual Report and balance sheet of the affairs of the Bank, as of the 30th December, 1911, together with Profit and Loss Account, showing the result of the operations of the Bank for the year which ended that day. The net profits of the Bank, after making full provision for all bad and doubtful debts, amount to $601,133.78, being 13.80 per cent. on the paid-up capital of the Bank, which has been applied as follows:

The net profits for the twelve months, after making provision for bad and doubtful debts, and reserving accrued interest, amount to	$601,133.78
Balance at credit of Profit and Loss last year	153,434.79
	$754,568.57
Appropriated as follows, viz.:	
Dividend No. 60, quarterly, at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum	$ 87,090.00
Dividend No. 61, quarterly, at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum	87,090.00
Dividend No. 62, quarterly, at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum	87,090.00
Dividend No. 63, quarterly, at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum	87,090.00
Transferred to Rest Account	200,000.00
Written off Bank Furniture	15,000.00
Transferred to Officers' Guarantee Fund	5,000.00
Transferred to Officers' Pension Fund	5,000.00
Balance at credit of Profit and Loss, new account	181,208.57
	$754,568.57

You will observe $200,000 has been added to Rest Account. The Rest Account is now $2,500,000, or about 58 per cent. of the subscribed and paid-up capital of the Bank.

The business of the Bank continues to grow most satisfactorily, as the comparative statement submitted shows. The deposits during the year have increased $4,193,898.29, and the circulation has increased $583,595.

The Head Office and all the Branches have been carefully inspected during the year, and a full report of each office brought in review before your Directors, and, in addition to these inspections, a Committee of the Directors, other than the officers, and composed of Mr. E. F. B. Johnston, K.C., Mr. W. J. Sheppard, Mr. C. S. Wilcox, and Mr. H. S. Strathy, was appointed to examine and appraise all the securities held at the Head Office, which they did, and reported to the Board that they are as represented to it.

The increase in Bank premises is partly accounted for by discharging the encumbrances which existed at the time of the purchase of Vancouver and Winnipeg properties, and partly by the purchase of the property immediately east of your Head Office Building, which was acquired at a reasonable figure, a portion of which will be used for the purposes of the Bank. This purchase will be of great advantage in protecting the lighting of the east side of the Head Office Building. Your Bank premises now comprise 34 separate buildings.

The Directors have much pleasure in testifying to the good work performed by the Staff during the period under review.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

CHAS. D. WARREN, President.

The General Manager read the General Statement of the Bank, as of 30th of December, 1911, as follows:

COMPARATIVE GENERAL STATEMENT
30th December, 1911

LIABILITIES

	1911.			1910.	
Capital Stock paid up		$4,354,500.00		$4,354,500.00	
Rest Account		2,500,000.00		2,300,000.00	
Dividend No. 63, payable 2nd January		87,090.00		87,090.00	
Former Dividends unpaid		984.52		602.52	
Interest accrued on Deposit Receipts		2,811.70		4,351.85	
Balance of Profits carried forward		181,208.57		153,434.79	
			$ 7,126,594.79		$ 6,899,979.16
Notes of the Bank in circulation		$4,373,675.00		$3,790,080.00	
Deposits bearing interest, including interest accrued to date	$31,566,224.11		$29,077,697.41		
Deposits not bearing interest	8,411,414.14		7,000,137.18		
		39,977,638.25		36,077,834.59	
Deposits made by Banks in the United States		612,943.46		318,848.83	
Balance due to other Banks in Canada		14,974.51		20,786.14	
Balance due to London Agents		322,001.41		45,208.17	
			45,301,232.63		40,252,757.73
			$52,427,827.42		$47,152,736.89

ASSETS

Gold and Silver Coin current	$ 541,680.67		$ 487,750.57		
Dominion Government Demand Notes	5,439,670.00		3,843,353.00		
		$5,981,350.67		$4,331,103.57	
Notes of and Cheques on other Banks		2,517,278.41		2,020,936.82	
Balance due from other Banks		588,326.52		291,070.56	
Balance due from Foreign Agents		1,385,380.74		1,154,912.70	
Dominion and Provincial Government Securities		552,316.37		561,569.37	
Railway and other Bonds, Debentures and other Securities		1,815,894.44		1,726,172.48	
Call and Short Loans on Stocks, Bonds and other Securities		1,723,515.35		1,445,605.24	
Call and Short Loans on Stocks, Bonds and other Securities in United States		301,284.21		200,000.00	
			$14,865,346.71		$11,731,370.74
Bills discounted current		$34,592,917.84		$32,810,351.82	
Notes discounted overdue (estimated loss provided for)		199,121.74		74,698.75	
Loans to other Banks, secured		133.05		7,250.77	
Deposit with Dominion Government for security of general Bank Note Circulation		197,395.35		167,374.13	
Real Estate, the property of the Bank (other than the Bank premises)		2,864.15		3,509.05	
Mortgages on Real Estate sold by the Bank		24,950.00		24,500.00	
Bank premises		2,307,501.71		2,093,332.22	
Bank furniture, safes, etc.		237,590.87		240,439.41	
			37,562,480.71		35,421,366.15
			$52,427,827.42		$47,152,736.89

TORONTO, 23rd January, 1912.

STUART STRATHY,
General Manager.