CLOSE QUARTERS;

OR, THE HOUSE IN THE RUE BARBETTE

CHAPTER XVI.—(Cont'd)

"But what about Gros Jean and the Turks? Surely Paris cannot again have swallowed them up?" inquired Brett.

"Every effort is being made to trace their whereabouts," was the reply; "but you must remember, monsieur, that they had many hours' start of the police, and that this period of the day is the most difficult of the twenty-four hours in which to make successful inquiries. You must rest assured that the moment we receive even the slightest clue we will ring you up, provided, that is, you arrange for some one at your end to answer the telephone."

"Oh," said Brett with a laugh, "there is little fear of future delay in that respect. It will be daylight in another hour, and the servants are already busy about the place."

He rang off and then darted back to his sitting-room to consult a time-table, for the thought came to him that Gros Jean and the Turks had quitted the cafe in order to reach Marseilles.

He could not yet explain this strange alliance. It was impossible to believe that the innkeeper would betray his daughter to serve the ends of a political party. No; there must be some other explanation which the future alone could reveal.

He well knew that the last thought likely to occur to the Paris police would be to suspect the missing men of any desire to reach the south coast. It was with an almost feverish anxiety that he scrutinized the pages of the indicateur des chemins de fer, and he heaved a sigh of profound relief when he discovered that the first train Gros Jean and the Turks could travel by left Paris the previous evening, and was not due at Marseilles until 8.59 that morning.

It was now close on seven o'clock, so he went to his bedroom, effected some much-needed changes in his personal appearance, and then consumed an early breakfast of coffee and rolls. At half-past eight he called a carriage and was driven to the railway station, where, punctually to the minute, the Paris train arrived.

Brett managed to secure a favorable point whence he could observe the passengers without being seen, for on the platform were stacked hundreds of baskets of fruit and vegetables which had arrived by a local train.

There were not many passengers in the express, and among the first to alight were Gros Jean and the three Turks—Hussein-ul-Mulk and the two others he had seen in the Rue Barbette.

It would be idle to deny that the barrister experienced a thrill of satisfaction at his own shrewdness, and he smiled as he realized the consternation of the Paris commissionary when informed that he had so easily allowed the rogues to slip out of the net.

The travellers were evidently tired after a sleepless journey. Gros Jean, being a fat man, had wobbled about a great deal during the night. He much needed the restorative effect of a comfortable bed; whilst the Turks, though younger and more active, also showed signs of fatigue, for this long journey, in their case, was a sequel to many hours of detention in an ill-ventilated apartment.

So they paid not the slightest heed to their whereabouts, save in so far as to eye with suspicion a harmless gendarme who happened to be on the platform.

The policeman, of course, took no notice of them whatever. Gros Jean was to him merely a typical Frenchman, whilst persons of dark complexion and Moorish appearance are everyday sights in Marseilles.

A diminutive railway porter loitered near Brett in the conceit that perhaps this well-dressed stranger might have felonious designs on the oranges and cabbages. His intense joy may therefore be pictured when the barrister beckoned to him, placed a gold piece in his hand, and said—

"You see those Turks there. Go after them and find out where they are going. They are sure to take a carriage, as their luggage appears to be somewhat heavy."

The man darted off, secure in the belief that no one who could afford to give away twenty francs for such trivial information would be likely to pocket a cauliflower. In half a minute he returned.

"They have all driven off together, monsieur," he announced eagerly, "and the French gentleman first of all inquired of the driver how much he would charge to take them to the Jolies Femmes. Two francs was the fare, and this was agreeable, so they have gone there."

"I hope, in this instance," said Brett gravely, "that the Jolies Femmes is the name of a hotel."

"But certainly," replied the porter elevating his eyebrows.

He meditated on this question for five minutes after Brett's departure, and then an idea struck him.

"Ah," he cried, slapping his thigh with a grin, "he is a droll dog, that Englishman."

Brett, secure in the knowledge that his quarry had been located, drove back to the hostelry. He found Edith, Fairholme, and Talbot just sitting down to breakfast. He joined them, and had barely communicated his startling intelligence when Sir Hubert Fitzjames put in an appearance.

"Dear me," said the genial old soldier, smiling pleasantly at the assembled party. "I see you are all nearly as lazy as I have been myself. I hope you slept well and enjoyed a quiet night."

The burst of merriment which greeted this remark not only amazed the worthy baronet, but startled the other guests in the dining-room. "That is a strange thing," whispered a Frenchman to his wife. "I thought the English never laughed!"

CHAPTER XVII.

After breakfast the party adjourned to their sitting-room, and there Brett detailed his immediate plan of action.

"The first point to determine is an important one," he said. "Which of you three—Sir Hubert Fitzjames, Talbot, or Fairholme—looks most like a Frenchman?"

The trio at once began to scrutinize each other carefully, to Edith's intense amazement.

Jack delayed the selection by inquiring—

"May I ask, Brett, why you wish one of ous to haul down the British flag?"

"Because it is necessary that some one should keep a close eye on Gros Jean and the Turks. Sir Hubert Fitzjames might possibly be made up to represent un vieux moustache, but it is essential that he should speak French well."

"Then," cried Sir Hubert decisively, "I am out of court, because my French is weak, and I always want to go off into Hindustani whenever I open my mouth."

"Very well," concurred the barrister, "it comes back to you, Talbot, and I regret to inform you that for the next few hours you must be content with the inferior cooking and accommodation of the Jolies Femmes Hotel. If you will come out with me now I will get you rigged up in a cheap French suit. That, and a supply of bad cigarettes, will provide a sufficient disguise for your purpose. You must pack a few belongings in a green tin box and betake yourself to the Jolies Femmes. Do not make any inquiries about Gros Jean. Simply watch him."

"Can't you find me a job?" demanded Fairholme.

"Yes, a most pleasant one. It will be your duty to accompany Miss Talbot and Sir Hubert, and show them the sights of Marseilles. I will meet you here at luncheon, but we probably cannot see Mr. Talbot again until late to-night, when he will have an opportunity to come here quietly and detail the results of his observations. Of course," he added, addressing the young man directly, "if anything important happens during the day you know where to find me, either personally or by messenger."

It was natural that Edith's first steps with her lover and uncle would tend towards the scene of her overnight adventure. But Miss Talbot was a clear-headed girl and took no risks. She knew well that in a chance encounter the sharp eyes of Marie and Eugenie might pick her out unless she was to some extent shrouded from observation. So she donned a large Paris hat and a smart costume, which, with the addition of a thick veil, rendered her very unlike the girl who twelve hours earlier was pursuing a recalcitrant lover.

Secure in the changed appearance effected by these garments, and especially in the escort of two such English-looking persons as Lord Fairholme and Sir Hubert Fitzjames, she walked with them down the Cannebiere and on the quay.

Then she strolled back around the harbor, still pursuing the track of Edith's midnight wanderings, when Fairholme suddenly whistled with amazement.

"By Jove, look there!" he cried. "That's a piece of luck."

He pointed to the upper part of the basin, in which a number of smart yacht were anchored side by side. Marseilles is a natural point of departure for Mediterranean tours, and many yacht-owners send their vessels here to be coaled and stored for projected trips.

"What is it?" queried Edith, when she could see nothing in the locality indicated save the vessels and the small expense of water dancing in the rays of a bright sun.

"The very best thing that could have happened. There is Daubeney's yacht, the Blue Bell. Suppose it becomes necessary for us to follow up Dubois and his fishing smack, and we let Daubeney into the know. The Blue Bell would pursue the Belles Soeurs to China. He would ask no better fun. I tell you that Brett will be delighted when he hears of it."

"Yes, dear, but we do not even know that Mr. Daubeney is in Marseilles."

"Let us go and see. It doesn't matter a pin anyhow, because a telegram from me to him would place the yacht at our disposal, and he would join us by express at the first possible stopping-place. You do not know what a good chap Daubeney is," and Fairholme continued to dilate upon the superlative excellencies of Daubeney until they reached the yacht itself.

A smartly attired sailor was pretending to find some work in carefully uncoiling a rope which did not satisfy his critical eye. Before Fairholme could hail the man, a rotund form, encased in many yards of blue serge, surmounted by a jolly-looking face on top of which was perched an absurdly small yachting cap, emerged from the companion.

"Why, there he is," shouted the earl. "Halloa, Daubeney! Yoicks! Tally-ho!"

The person addressed in this startling manner stopped as though he had been shot. He gazed at the sky and then gravely surveyed the gilded statue that surmounts the picturesque church of Notre Dame de la Garde.

"Here I am, you idiot," continued Fairholme. "I am not in a balloon. I am on the quay. Come here quick. I want to introduce you to Edith and Sir Hubert."

The meeting on the quay was hearty in the extreme.

Miss Talbot thought Mr. Daubeney rather curious. But still he was very nice, and unquestionably the services of the Blue Bell might be more than useful.

So she was graciousness personified in her manner, and promptly determined to invite him to luncheon, thinking that the chance direction of their conversation with Mr. Brett might lead towards the use of the yacht being hinted at.

She counted without Fairholme. The latter slapped his heavy friend on the back.

"Look here, old chap, are you fixed up for a cruise? Plenty of coal, champagne, and all that sort of thing?"

"Loaded to the gunwales."

"That's all right, because we may want the Blue Bell for a month or so."

"There she is," said Daubeney; "fit to go anywhere and do anything."

The Blue Bell was an extremely smart little ship of 250 tons register, and an ordinary speed of twelve knots. Incidentally Miss Talbot discovered that the owner made the vessel his home. He was never happy away from her, and the Blue Bell was known to every yachtsman from the Hebrides to the Golden Horn.

To eke out her coal supply she was fitted with sails, and Daubeney assured his visitor that the Blue Bell could ride out a gale as comfortably and safely as any craft afloat. Altogether Miss Talbot congratulated herself on Fairholme's discovery, and she could not help hoping that their strange errand to Marseilles might eventuate in a Mediterranean chase.

When the tour of inspection had ended Daubeney suggested an excursion.

"I understand you have never been to Marseilles before, Miss Talbot. In that case, what do you say if we run over and see the Chateau d'If—the place that Dumas made famous, you know?"

"Is it far?" said Edith.

"Oh, not very; about a mile across the harbor. Monte Cristo swam the distance, you know, after his escape."

"Shall we go in the yacht?"

Daubeney bubbled with laughter.

"Well, not exactly, Miss Talbot. You cannot swing a ship of this size about as easily as all that, you know. I have another craft alongside that will suit our purpose."

He whistled to a tiny steam launch which Edith had not noticed before, and without further ado the party seated themselves.

(To be continued.)

BOVRIL

IS THE

GREAT BODY-BUILDER

See the British Medical Journal, Sept. 16, '11, and the Medical Times, Nov. 18, '11.

B-2-12

PLACER GOLD MINING IN QUEBEC.

By the expenditure of a large sum of money, and with no noise or publicity, there has been opened up in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, right here at home and not thousands of miles away, the largest placer gold mining proposition east of the Canadian and American Rockies. The holdings consist of 71,000 acres of land, known as the Seigniory Rigaud Vaudreuil, Beauce Co., including a number of rivers following the beds of ancient streams, with their immense deposits of gold-bearing gravel. Gold had, until a few years ago, been mined from these gravel beds in a primitive way for many years. Differences as to mining rights checked operations until very recently, when a strong company, organized by prominent business men of Montreal, purchased from the original owners of the seigniory the perpetual rights to mine for precious minerals on the 71,000 acres. They entered into the practical exploration and development of the wonderful gold deposits on the seigniory, and expended many thousands of dollars in exploitation. A complete hydraulic plant, with all necessary machinery, has been installed on one of the many gold-bearing river beds, and actual mining operations established. Three large "giants," throwing solid streams of water under immense pressure, wash the sand and gravel into a sluice where the nuggets and dust are collected and recovered. Three short "clean-ups" were made before the event of freezing weather last November, resulting—for the first clean-up—in a recovery of 36 cts. in gold per cu. yard. The second clean-up gave 42 cts. in gold per cu. yard, and the last one, after only two hours of washing on virgin ground, gave values of $152.00.

The Company owning this valuable property is capitalized for $1,000,000, in shares of $1.00 each, fully paid, and a small amount of stock, being the balance of Treasury Stock, is now offered for sale to the public. This is a profitable and permanent investment. A real, producing gold-mining proposition, not a prospect. The Company will pay large dividends from the work of this one alone of their many gold deposits, while incomes from the operations of proposed subsidiary companies on other deposits of their large holdings, will swell the profits to shareholders of the original company. It is a worth-while investment!

A limited number of beautifully illustrated 20 page booklets, in English or French, have just been issued, showing, among other things, photographs of nuggets washed out at the "workings"; the exploration work; hydraulic "giants" in operation; the "clean-up," maps, etc., etc., and giving a complete history of placer gold in Quebec. The book is extremely attractive and will be mailed free, upon request, to anyone interested. Address, E. E. Helmick, Special Representative, Champs d'Or (gold fields), Rigaud Vaudreuil, Limited, Board of Trade Building, Montreal, Canada.

FRENCH NAVAL OFFICERS.

Orders Conferred in Connection with Delhi Wreck.

A recent issue of The London Times says:—

We are officially informed that in recognition of the gallant aid rendered by the officers and crew of the French cruiser Friant on the occasion of the wreck of the Pennisular & Oriental Company's steamship Delhi off Cape Spartel on December 13 last, the King has been pleased to confer on the officer commanding the cruiser, Captaine de fregate Andre Paul Marie Lequerre, an honorary commandership of the Royal Victorian Order, and to appoint Lieutenant Charles Jerome Alexandre Drujon to be an honorary member of the same Order (fourth class).

His Majesty has also conferred on the following officer and men who formed the crew of the cruiser's steam barge which went to the assistance of the steamship Delhi the gold medal for gallantry in saving life at sea:—Lieuetnant C. J. A. Drujon, Louis Boussard, Jacques Thomas, Albert Marius Durien and Jean Louis Le Camelec.

The King has also presented to the families of Joseph Noel Remond, Florent Emile Carel and Georges Marie Lagadec, the members of the crew of the barge who lost their lives on the same occasion, the gold medal for gallantry in saving life at sea, which would have been conferred upon them had they survived.

The British Government, in token of their appreciation of the gallant conduct of the officers and crew of the Friant, have presented to the officers a piece of gold plate, and they have made a grant of £50 each to the families of the men who lost their lives.

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INVENTOR'S TROUBLES.

Thirty-six years ago last Wednesday—on February 14th, 1876—Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, formerly of Brantford, Ont., invented the telephone.

Like other scientific discoverers, he had a hard time at first to get people to understand and believe in his invention. Dr. Bell says that it was his work among the deaf and dumb which led to the telephone idea, and he tells a deaf man's story to illustrate public distrust of anything new.

One Sunday a man appeared in a country church with an ear trumpet—something unfamiliar to the congregation. Just before the service began an official approached the stranger.

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell.

"Say," he said, excitedly, "you can't play that horn in here. If you try it, I'll put you right away."

Dr. Bell is a Scotchman by birth. His residence in Canada was brief. After going to the United States he became professor of vocal physiology at Boston University, and founded the American Association to Promote Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, to which organization he donated $250,000. Dr. Bell is sixty-five years of age, and now lives in Washington.

TOO LATE.

She looked at him sadly after she had promised to be his wife.

"Why do you gaze at me like that?" he asked. "You look as if you were unhappy."

"I'm sorry this couldn't have happened before," she replied. "Now everybody will think I took advantage of my Leap Year privilege."

HIS PREFERENCE.

What a curious question this must have seemed to little James!

Hostess:—"What part of the chicken do you like best, my little man?"

James (passing his plate timidly):—"I like the meat."

LOW COLONIST RATES TO THE PACIFIC COAST,

Via Chicago and North Western Ry., on sale daily, March 1st to April 15th, from all points in Canada to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Victoria, Vancouver and many other points. Through tourist sleepers and free reclining chair cars from Chicago. Tickets via variable routes with liberal stop-overs. Full information on application to B. H. Bennett, Gen. Agt., 46 Yonge St., Toronto.

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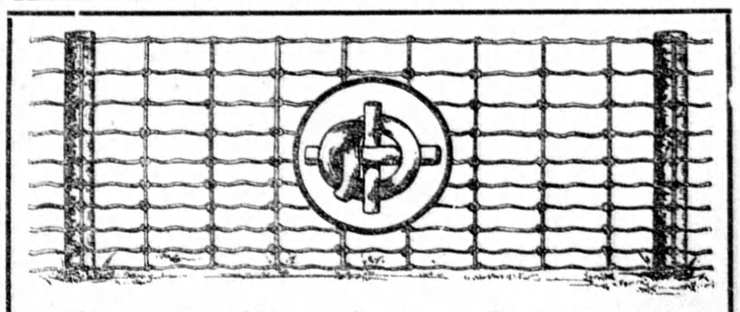

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