The Little Clockmaker's Adventure

BY OTTO FEIRMANN.

The Germans were marching on Paris. Already there were rumors in the city that French cannon had been taken at Beauvais and Gisort, to the northeast of the city, and gossip has it that those very guns would be presently thundering before the very walls of the city. It was a time of sorrow and despair of the French, and of utter terror for we Germans in the city.

Most of my countrymen had left Paris when war became a certainty, and many more had emigrated at the warning of the two governments, but I was not able to go at the time, being ill in the hospital of St. Michel. When I recovered from my illness it was too late to go, for the lines of the military were drawing closer about the environs and railroad communication was practically cut off.

Besides, although I was born in Berlin, I had lived in Paris since I was 14 years old, and I had built up a generous trade as a clockmaker. I was widely known to persons of wealth and standing, who would gladly vouch for my character, and I had nothing to fear from the authorities. Although in my heart I was in sympathy with the Fatherland, I was physically not fit for service in the field, and I am sure that I could have fought only half-heartedly against the people from whom I had been making a comfortable living.

But as the German lines converged and began to contract around the French capital like a giant rubber band, the people of the city grew to hate the Germans in their midst more and more. As I passed through the streets, bent on business, I saw surly glances cast at me, and flushed, excited Frenchmen jostled me, then started after me, trying to pick a quarrel. At the corners and on the boulevards groups of men and women gathered, and as I passed them I could hear them denouncing the Prussians and all the brood of Bismarck. Insults would be hurled at me and I must stand for them, for a man could not live a span of seconds against the mob that would have fallen on him.

Here and there about the city riots broke out, and several Germans were badly mauled, but the gendarmes broke up these fights before they resulted fatally. Gendarmes and soldiery were vigilant, always preventing bloodshed, and protecting us who had harmed the French in no manner save by the fact that we were Germans. But the rage of the rabble smoldered, although it dared not break forth into flames, and as bulletin after bulletin of discouraging news came from the front the mutterings grew louder, the attacks more bold and the police and soldiers were more sorely put to it to preserve order. Shops throughout the city were being closed, the windows boarded up and the Germans were barricading their stores and homes and keeping off the streets.

I lived in the rear of my little shop in the Rue de la Cherche, and, like others, I gave over trying to conduct my business, and boarded up the windows of the store. I cooked my own meals in those days, and so I laid in a big store of provisions to be ready for the time when I could not venture on the streets at all. I had lived thus for a day and a half when an old Frenchman for whom I had done a great deal of work called on me and advised me to go to the house of some of my friends, where I should not be all alone.

I decided to take his advice, and that night, after boxing up and packing away much of my valuable stock, I started on my way to the home of a friend who lived in the neighborhood of St. George's Church. In the streets I encountered many groups of ill-looking men and women, who regarded me with no friendliness. I paid no attention to them and hurried on my way, keeping close to the walls of the houses. When I reached the Conseil de Guerre I found a small mob collected, and a wicked-looking fellow was addressing them.

I tried to slip round the corner of the tomb-like building without attracting any attention, but just as I thought I was safe the orator spied me.

An accusing, skinny finger was levelled at me.

"There is one of the skulking Germans!" cried the man in French. "He is spying on us now. It is such as he and his breed who will turn our city over to the brutal Prussians."

More, he said, but I did not hear it. A woman who was near me had aimed a knife blow at my chest, but I dodged it and managed to wrench the weapon from her.

"See!" shrieked half a dozen voices. "He fights women and children!"

"Down with the murderer! He has a knife!"

The air was filled with such cries and threats, and a score of hands reached out for me. Into the Rue de Four I rushed, hatless and my coat torn half from my body. The mob was howling at my heels. I ran as I had never run before, and for a space I drew away from them, but the clamor in my rear struck cold terror to my heart. The screams of the women thirsting for blood sounded shrill above the shouts of the men, and with each scream my speed increased.

I dared not show myself on the Boulevard St. Germain, so I doubled from the Rue de Four into the Rue Bonaparte, skirted the St. Sulpice and tore through a garden into the Rue de Tournon. Running toward the river, I encountered another crowd at the corner of the Boulevard St. Germain, but it was too far from me to interfere with me. A single burly fellow stood in my path and aimed a blow at my face, but I caught him beneath the chin with the hilt of my knife and sent him sprawling.

The fresh mob followed me into the Rue de Seine and, with the whole pack at my heels, I dashed toward the Bridge of Art, but at the farther end I saw a band of rowdies moving toward me. The cries of the rabble were heard by them and they rushed in my direction.

Now because of the wall along the quay I did not believe the mob on the bridge had seen me as yet, for it was near the opposite end of the bridge. I knew I was out of sight of my pursuers for the moment, for they had not yet rounded the corner of the Institute of Art. It was a cold night, but it was life against discomfiture, and I leaped the wall along the water front. Not a boat in sight.

Another second and the crying of my angry pursuers drove me to desperation. I plunged into the icy waters and struck out downstream. The shouts of my baffled pursuers rang in my ears, and although I could see that they were searching everywhere for me, they had lost the trail.

In my heavy clothes and shoes I found it hard to swim, and the chill water almost numbed me. I could not last long in the river and I knew it. At that time of night the Pont Royal was likely to be deserted, and I struck in near the shore as I neared that bridge. As nearly as I could make out, there was not a soul on the bridge. Half exhausted, I dragged myself up the bank and managed to scramble on to the broad quay between the river and the gardens of the Tuilleries. The Rue des Tuilleries was dark and vacant and I hurried through it to the Rue de Rivoli, where I tried to mingle with the crowds, but my dripping clothes attracted attention and persons who looked at me recognized me as a German, which was just what I did not want. Finally I reached the Rue de Lafayette into safety, and was hurrying toward the Rue Bolivar, which would take me to my friend's house. All seemed to be going well with me, but suddenly at the corner of the Rue d'Hauteville, I was caught in a swirling mass of humanity which seethed out of a narrow alley just off the main street.

A fight of some kind was in progress, and in a moment I was carried by the freakish eddies of human units into the very midst of the group. There a tiny band of Germans were protecting themselves against the crowd, and my arrival with a weapon was a godsend to them. How I ever came to be catapulted into their midst I do not know.

It was nothing short of a miracle, for had any of the Frenchmen in the crowd recognized me as a German I would have been beaten and kicked into unconsciousness. It was only one of those strange exhibitions of the fortunes of battle. There were five of us in the centre of this seething crowd, and we stood back to back and fought off five times our number.

"There's no use standing here to be butchered in the end!" I shouted to my new-found companions. "We've got to fight our way out of this. If we don't we're lost."

Just then a single gendarme appeared round a corner and, shouting at the crowd to disperse, charged into it. For a second the rabble wavered, then the brave policeman was smothered under a dozen ruffians, who left us to attack him. But it gave us our chance, and while he was wielding his rapier and fighting off his opponents, who seemed to be getting the better of him, despite his arms, we formed, wedge-like, and smashed our way through our tormentors.

I am a small man, but the others had evidently been fighting for a long time and lacked initiative or were exhausted, and so it chanced that I led them. I still held the knife I had snatched from the French woman on the Boulevard St. Germain, and I must confess that there was murder in my heart. The first man I encountered dealt me a blow beside the ear before I could parry it, and in blind rage I sank the knife into his side while his arm was raised. He dropped log-like, nearly wrenching the weapon from my hand, and I made ready for the next scoundrel.

CRAMPED AND ACHING IN EVERY MUSCLE.

It was the first serious wound dealt by either side, and for what seemed a fraction of a second it stunned our opponents. It was as though they paused to gasp in astonishment at the fate of their comrade, then with a howl of anger they fell on us anew.

A big, clumsy fellow made for me, but I was ahead of him and cracked his skull with a blow from the hilt of the knife. We fought like demons there in the flickering light from the street lamps, and the rabble, who had hitherto encountered only defensive opposition, was soon swept from its feet.

I am not a fighting man, but by sheer mad fighting, guided only by instinct, I slashed my way to the gendarme, who was all but overpowered. It surprised me, the very strength in my arms, and I found time to wonder at the joy I found in giving and taking blows. Three of us fought clear and dragged the gendarme to his feet, and he stood tottering, but fighting bravely against the heavy odds.

We were too few to attempt to rout the enemy, so, once free from them, we fled into the Rue de Hauteville, but another crowd was marching to us, singing and flaunting banners. In the excitement we scattered, and I found myself alone, fleeing through the Rue de Paradis. The street was lined with houses set in gardens, and there were low walls about the grounds. I did not know when I might encounter another rabble, so I leaped at the wall, just under the branches of a tree which grew the other side of it.

My fingers barely clutched the top of the coping, but I managed to scramble up, and swinging from the branches of the tree, dropped to the ground below. I found myself in a spacious garden surrounding a large house three storeys high. There were lights shining from the window, and at first I thought to rouse the tenants and ask for protection, but I could not know whether even a respectable family would care to harbor a fugitive German, and besides, I feared to risk my terrible appearance. My clothes were all but torn from my back. I still clutched the bloody knife which had served me so well, and I could not hazard throwing it aside. My face was covered with dirt and bleeding, and my clothes were drenched from the bath in the Seine.

All this flashed across my mind as I stood for perhaps a fraction of a minute beneath the tree and pondered on what next to do. Then there came to my ears the murmur of the mob, part of it turning into the Rue de Parans. Another moment and they were scaling the walls of the gardens along the street and I could hear them thrashing about in the bushes and shrubbery.

There was no more time for reflection. Windows were thrown open noisily and the neighborhood was being aroused by the racket of the chase. The house near which I was crouching had a piazza which was covered by a roof on a level with the second-storey windows. This was my only chance, and I ran to one of the pillars and, with my knife in my teeth, climbed to the top of the piazza. All the time I was wondering what would be the thought of any person who might throw open a window just as my battered face, knife and all, should jut above the covering.

I had hardly dragged my aching body onto the piazza roof before I heard my pursuers clambering over the wall. There was a light in the window before me, but the curtains were drawn, and stealthily I crept to the water main and shinned up to the roof. It was not much of a climb, but there was danger of the pipe pulling loose or the enemy discovering me from the clatter.

By the time I had gained my place of vantage the master of the house was demanding of the crowd what they wanted in his garden. With scant ceremony they told him and continued the search. For a long time the night was filled with the cries of the searchers, and lanterns moved to and fro below me.

I was beginning to feel safe when I learned from the messages shouted about that the roofs were to be searched, for apparently some one had seen me enter one of the gardens and the searchers were sure I had not escaped. Then I thanked heaven I had been made small and thin, almost to emaciation. On the roof where I was hiding was an old-fashioned chimney, with a spacious flue, and into this I climbed, although it was a tight squeeze and I could not descend very far.

I had not been there long when I began to choke and almost cough. Then the realization came that a fire was being built beneath me. Smoke was all about me, stinging my nostrils and all but suffocating me. If the fire was built on purpose to smoke me out, should I be in the chimney, there was little doubt that I would be forced from my haven. If it was only a case of starting a new fire, it might be that I could stand the smoke long enough to elude my pursuers. Even yet I might be able to fight my way to fredom, I thought.

Then came voices on the roof, and I knew that ladders had been placed and men were already on top of the house. I heard them tramping over the shingles.

"Look in the chimney," shouted a voice.

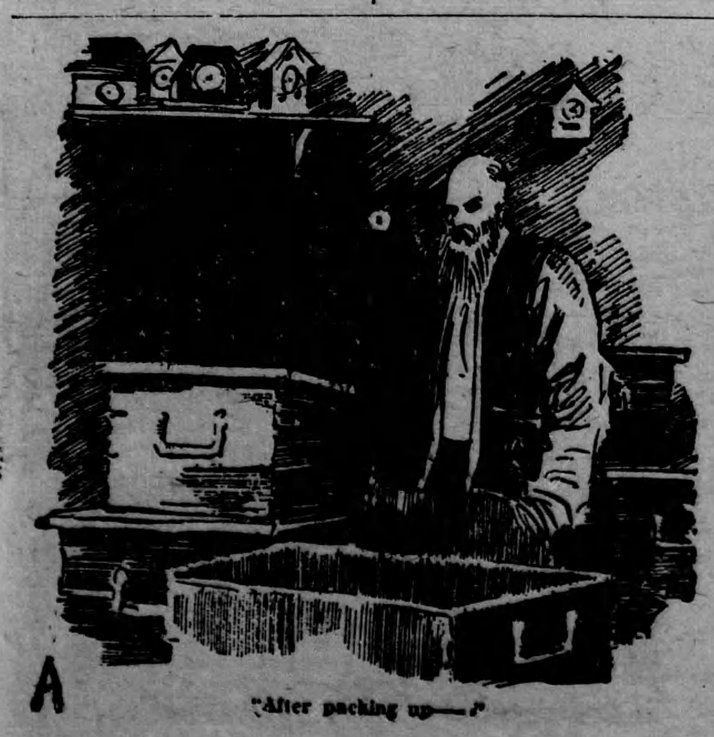
I heard the heavy tread of a man walking straight to my last refuge. With a monster effort I restrained myself from crying out and scrambling from the chimney to meet them there on the roof face to face. It would be better than being slain like a rat in that hole. The footsteps ceased at my very ears. The last moment had come. It was torture to keep from coughing.

I believe some one tried to look into the chimney. I heard him cough violently and stamp away cursing.

"The scoundrel can't be in there!" he shouted. "If he is, he's dead."

It was silent on the roof, but I dared not leave my dirty hiding place. For what seemed an hour I remained there, and the smoke had ceased to rise. The sounds of the mob had died away, but I waited long before drawing myself into the fresh air, cramped and aching in every muscle. It was dark and few windows showed lights. Taking off my shoes, I tiptoed to the water main and slid down to the piazza roof. Once over the garden wall and in the street, I darted among the shadows and by devious ways found the Rue Bolivar, on which my friends lived.

I reached there more dead than alive, but food and medical care revived me, and although it was some days before we Germans ventured into the streets, the city fell again under the authority of the police and the military, and there was little further rioting.



"After packing up—!"

To Save Money on Farm Buildings.

You can save a lot in the cost of building stone foundations and stone walls for the first story of barns and other farm buildings if you have stones on your farm. You can build the walls at less than one-third of the ordinary cost, if you do the work at odd times and with ordinary farm labor.

Forms of two-inch planks are put up to the height of about two feet and far enough apart to make the wall of the desired thickness. Common stone, either flat or round, is used. Fill in the larger ones against the planks on each side, and throw in smaller ones to fill up the interstices. After the stones are put into the depth of about a foot, the wall is slushed on top with concrete or cement, sand and gravel.

Skilled labor is not required to lay the stone, as the planks keep the sides straight. The stone occupies more than half of the space, so that less than half the usual amount of concrete is required for the wall. When the walls set, the planks can be shoved up; thus, two feet more of wall can be built without going to the expense of buying plank for the entire height of the wall. The wall can be smoothed up by pointing up the holes, if any are left after the planks are removed.

Rabbits in Winter.

Are the winter quarters cozy? Rabbits, like any other kind of stock, must be comfortable to do well. Their hutches must be stormproof. It is best to house rabbits indoors during cold weather, not only because the animals are better protected, but it is more comfortable to get about and look out for the stock.

With plenty of food on hand—such as hay and roots, which are the principal foods during winter—as many rabbits can be quartered as can easily be handled. In estimating the number that can safely be quartered, one should count upon the spring being backward. Some rabbit keepers do not breed for several months during the winter in order to be able to keep more breeding stock for spring work.

The matter of bedding is also worth considering. The wise man gathers all the leaves he can find in the fall and stores them away. Leaves make a very satisfactory and cheap litter, but they must be stored where they do not become damp, for leaves take up moisture very quickly.

In selling carcasses, it is best to move the skins before delivering to the customer. The customer not only prefers it, but the skins are worth taking care of nowadays. These should be carefully dried, stored and sold in bulk to some firm paying good prices.

Field Husbandry.

The report of the Dominion Field Husbandman (Mr. E. S. Hopkins, B. S.A., M.S.,) for 1924 just published at Ottawa is replete with interest. It supplies meteorological records for the past thirty-five years and goes largely into the cost of producing oats, hay, silage, corn, mangels, potatoes and other crops. It then furnishes particulars of crop yields at the Central Experimental Farm, the methods of cultivation followed, how weeds are controlled, improvement of silage from legume crops, respective yields of sunflowers and corn on different soils, rotation of crops, farm manure and commercial fertilizers and the work generally of the field husbandry division. An account of soil moisture investigations in the Prairie Provinces is of special interest to that immense section of the country. Graphs are also given showing at a glance the average yield of various crops at the Central Experimental Farm compared with Ontario generally and of the relative yields of corn and sunflowers on heavy clay and fertile sandy loam, indicating at the same time the respective quantities of water, dry matter and green weight in tons.

Save Trees From Mice.

Remove grass from around the young fruit trees. It is now time for the mice to build their nests, and the grass about the trees provides an ideal place for them. Shield the trees from these pests by using galvanized screening, wood veneer protectors, or ordinary newspapers. The last named protection should be removed in the spring but the wire may be left on all year.

What 'Ud Be the Use?

"If only we could see ourselves as others see us."

"Well, we wouldn't believe what we saw."

A bridge made entirely of porcelain stands near Pekin, in China.

THE BOUFFANT MODE.

Blue taffeta makes this extremely bouffant frock for dance wear. Two huge medallions composed of silver ribbon, tiny flowers and taffeta, are placed slightly to the left side at the raised waistline. Silver ribbon outlines the round neck and short kimono sleeves, and helps to accent the effect of fulness at the lower edge of the short skirt. The flower adorning the right shoulder, and the medallions may be purchased at any shop, and make it possible for the home sewer to fashion one of the smartest frocks of the season from this pattern. The diagram pictures the simple design, and No. 1112 is in sizes 16, 18 and 20 years (34, 36 and 38 inches bust only). Size 18 years (36 bust) requires 2⅞ yards 36 or 40 inch material. Price 20 cents.

The designs illustrated in our new Fashion Book are advance styles for the home dressmaker, and the woman or girl who desires to wear garments dependable for taste, simplicity and economy will find her desires fulfilled in our patterns. Price of the book 10 cents the copy.

HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS.

Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Pattern Dept., Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Patterns sent by return mail.

To Get Good Photos Expose Film Uniformly.

To get good pictures with your camera, all exposures on a single roll of film should be uniform. If each picture is made under different conditions of light, length of exposure and shutter opening, poor pictures are almost sure to be the result.

The photographer develops a roll of film as a unit. The length of time it takes to develop pictures depends a great deal on the length of time they were exposed or the amount of light reaching the sensitive film surface. If a roll of film is so exposed that a different amount of light has reached each exposure on the film, one or two are likely to be developed just right, while the others will be either undeveloped or overdeveloped.

If you are developing your own films, and there are pictures of different exposure on the same film, cut the film apart and develop each picture separately. This is too much trouble for the commercial photographer, however, in view of the extremely low prices charged for film development and picture printing.

It is usually best, therefore, to set the time of exposure and lens opening and not change these adjustments until a whole roll of film is exposed, making all pictures, of course, under the same conditions of light. In this case, the only adjustment necessary for individual pictures is for distance, or focus. If you have a fixed-focus camera, even this is unnecessary. This arrangement will not do when you are "hunting" with a camera, for some shots will require different time and shutter opening. In that case, take your films to a shop where they will be developed with special care. —D. T. H.

In tying and wrapping a parcel so it will stay wrapped there are several essentials to keep in mind: Use enough paper and wrap well. Pull the wrapping string tightly at each turn, taking up all slack and not letting it slip. Then make a loop or half-hitch every time the string crosses. Finally, tie securely with a knot that will stay tied. If this be done, there will be no complaints, nor will the packages become undone before they can be delivered.