The TRIFLERS

By Frederick Orin Bartlett

CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd.)

Monte, summoning all his strength, shook the fellow.

"Do you hear?" he called.

"Yes," muttered Hamilton.

"Then," said Monte, "I want you to get hold of the next point: that from now on you're to let her alone. Get that?"

Hamilton's lips began to twitch.

"Because if you come around bothering her any more," explained Monte, "I'll be there myself; and, believe me, you'll go out the door. And if you try any more gun-play—the little fellows will nail you next time. Sure as preaching, they'll nail you. That would be too bad for every one—for you and for her."

"How for her?" demanded Hamilton hoarsely.

"The papers," answered Monte. "And for you because—"

"I don't care what they do to me," growled Hamilton.

"I believe that," nodded Monte. "Do you know that I'm the one person on earth who is inclined to believe what you say?"

He saw Hamilton crouch as if to spring. Monte placed his left hand in his empty pocket.

"Steady," he warned. "There are still four shots left in that gun."

Hamilton relaxed.

"You don't care what the little fellows do to you," said Monte. "But you don't want to queer yourself any further with her, do you? Now, listen. She thinks you tried to shoot yourself. By that much I have a hunch she thinks the better of you."

Hamilton groaned.

"And because I believe what you told me about her," he ran on, fighting for breath—"just because—because I believe the shooting fits into that, I'm glad to—to have her think that little the better of you, Hamilton."

The interior of the cab was beginning to move slowly around in a circle. He leaned back his head a second to steady himself—his white lips pressed together.

"So—so—clear out," he whispered.

"You—you won't tell her?"

"No. But—clear out, quick."

Hamilton opened the cab door.

"Got any money?" inquired Monte.

"No."

Monte drew out his bill-book and handed it to Hamilton.

"Take what there is," he ordered.

Hamilton obeyed, and returned the empty purse.

"Remember," faltered Monte, his voice trailing off into an inaudible murmur, "we're engaged—Marjory and I—"

But Hamilton had disappeared. It was the driver who was peering in the door.

"Where next, monsieur?" he was saying.

"Normandie," muttered Monte.

The windows began to revolve in a circle before his eyes—faster and faster, until suddenly he no longer was conscious of the pain in his shoulder.

CHAPTER VI.

Gendarmes and Ether

When the gendarmes came hurrying to sixty-four Boulvard Saint-Germain, Marjory was the only one in the house cool enough to meet them at the door. She quieted them with a smile.

"It is too bad, messieurs," she apologized, because it did seem too bad to put them to so much trouble for nothing. "It was only a disagreeable incident between friends, and it is closed. Madame Courcy lost her head."

"But we were told it was an assassination," the lieutenant informed her. He was a very smart-looking lieutenant, and he noticed her eyes at once.

"To have an assassination it is necessary to have some one assassinated, is it not?" inquired Marjory.

"But yes, certainly."

"Then truly it is a mistake, because the two gentlemen went off together in a cab."

The lieutenant took out a memorandum-book.

"Is that necessary?" asked Marjory anxiously.

"A report must be made."

"It was nothing, I assure you," she insisted. "It was what in America is called a false alarm."

"You are American?" inquired the lieutenant, twisting his mustache.

"It is a compliment to my French that you did not know," smiled Marjory.

It was also a compliment to the lieutenant that she smiled. At least, it was so that he interpreted it.

"The report is only a matter of routine," he informed her. "If mademoiselle will kindly give me her name."

"But the newspapers!" she exclaimed. "They make so much of so little."

"It will be a pleasure to see that the report is treated as confidential," said the lieutenant, with a bow.

So, as a matter of fact, after a perfunctory interview with madame and Marie, who had so far recovered themselves as to be easily handled by Marjory, the lieutenant and his men bowed themselves out and the incident was closed.

Marjory escorted them to the door, and then, a little breathless with excitement, went into the reception room a moment to collect herself.

The scene was set exactly as it had been when from upstairs she heard that shot—the shot that for a second had checked her breathing as if she herself had been hit. As clearly as if she had been in the room, she had seen Monte stretched out on the floor, with Hamilton bending over him. She had not thought of any other possibility. As she sprang down the stairs she had been sure of what she was about too see. But when she entered she found Monte standing erect—erect and smiling, with his light hair all awry like a school-boy's.

Then, sinking into the chair near the window,—this very chair beside which she now stood,—he had asked her to go out and attend to madame.

Come to think of it, it was odd that he had been smiling. It was not quite natural for one to smile over as serious a matter as that. After all, even if Teddy was melodramatic, even if his shot had missed its mark, it was not a matter to take lightly.

She seated herself in the chair he had occupied, and her hands dropped wearily to her side. Her fingers touched something sticky—something on the side of the chair next to the wall—something that the gendarmes had not noticed. She did not dare to move them. She was paralyzed, as if her fingers had met some cold, strange hand. For one second, two seconds, three seconds, she sat there transfixed, fearing, if she moved as much as a muscle, that something would spring at her from below—some awful fact.

Then finally she did move. She moved slowly, with her eyes closed. Then, suddenly opening them wide, she saw her fingers stained carmine. She knew then why Monte had smiled. It was like him to do that. Running swiftly to her room, she called Marie as she ran.

"Marie—my hat! Your hat! Hurry!"

"Oh, mon Dieu!" exclaimed Marie. "Has anything happened?"

"I have just learned what has already happened," she answered. "But do not alarm madame."

It was impossible not to alarm madame.

The mere fact that they were going out alarmed madame. Marjory stopped in the hall and quite coolly worked on her gloves.

"We are going for a little walk in the sunshine," she said. "Will you not come with us?"

Decidedly madame would not. She was too weak and faint. She should send for a friend to stay with her while she rested on her bed.

"That is best for you," nodded Marjory. "Au revoir."

With Marie by her side, she took her little walk in the sunshine, without hurrying, as far as around the first corner. Then she signaled for a cab, and showed the driver a louis d'or.

"Hotel Normandie. This is for you—if you make speed," she said.

It was a wonder the driver was not arrested within a block; but it was nothing less than a miracle that he reached the hotel without loss of life. A louis d'or is a great deal of money, but these Americans are all mad. When Marie followed her mistress from the cab, she made a little prayer of thanks to the bon Dieu who had saved her life.

Mademoiselle inquired of the clerk for Monsieur Covington.

Yes, Monsieur Covington had reached the hotel some fifteen minutes before. But he was ill. He had met with an accident. Already a surgeon was with him.

"He—he is not badly injured?" inquired Marjory.

"I do not know," answered the clerk. "He was carried to his room in a faint. He was very white."

"I will wait in the writing-room. When the surgeon comes down I wish to see him. At once—do you understand?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

Marie suspected what had happened. Monsieur Covington, too, had presented the driver with a louis d'or, and—miracles do not occur twice in one day.

Marjory seated herself by a desk, where she had a full view of the office—of all who came in and all who went out. That she was here doing this and that Monte Covington was upstairs wounded by a pistol shot was confusing, considering the fact that as short a time ago as yesterday evening she had not been conscious of the existence in Paris of either this hotel or of Monsieur Covington. Of the man who, on the other hand, had been disturbing her a great deal—this Teddy Hamilton—she thought not at all. It was as if he had ceased to exist. She did not even associate him, at this moment, with her presence here. She was here solely because of Monte.

He had stood by the window in Madame Courcy's dingy reception room, smiling—his hair all awry. She recalled many other details now: how his arm had hung limp; how he had been to a good deal of awkward trouble to keep his left arm always toward her; how white he had been when he passed her on his way out; how he had seemed to stumble when he stepped into the cab.

(To be continued.)

Conscripting Sharks.

There have been "sharks" in the boot trade ever since it was a trade, of course, but only since the war has it occurred to the ingenious to conscript the shark for making of footwear.

The scarcity of leather has led to numerous experiments with the skins of sharks and other large fish. These skins have been tanned quite successfully, and before very long we shall be covering our feet with this new material. It is said to be soft and pliable and durable, and, considering that Nature fitted the shark to live in the sea his skin should be watertight.

The supply of shark-skins is practically unlimited at present. From Alaska alone 11,000 pounds of skins were exported in one month.

The lyre-bird of Australia, which is about the size of a pheasant, is the largest songbird in the world.

Gunns Shur-Gain Fertilizer

From Industrial Agent to Flight Commander

Interesting despatches of incidents in the lives of flying men in England are given in letters to friends written by Acting Flight Commander Graham Waters Curtis, formerly Industrial Agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Montreal, who is now a flying instructor in England. The school in which he teaches is a vast expanse of country close to a beautiful seaside resort. He writes: "The view from the air is superb, and we often fly out over the sea, and dive down near the British warships and wave to the sailors. When diving we only travel at the rate of about 175 miles an hour! I am kept very busy instructing and am turning out a lot of expert pilots. The school I am connected with is one in which flyers finish their course of training. A lot of chaps from Borden come to us to get final lessons, and then they are sent to France. We do all kinds of fancy performances—loop the loop, roll, make spinning nose dives, side slips, and vertical turns."

He describes how "little excitements" happen when one aeronaut gets into the "wash, or slip-stream of air" made by a preceding navigator. The letters indicate that Acting Flight Commander Curtis is a lucky master of the high school in which he soars. He says: "We have a lot of smashes, but very few deaths, considering everything. None of my pupils has been killed yet."

Acting Flight Commander G. W. Curtis and his machine just after a "crash" at a training camp in England.

Acting Flight Commander Curtis has lately been recommended by his commanding officer for a first lieutenancy, and expects to be sent to France at any time. He joined the Royal Flying Corps on November 15th, 1916.

About the House

Correct Diet as Health Insurance.

Isn't it queer that when so much that is vital in life depends upon food and correct feeding, so few of us understand a thing about balanced ration, or pay any attention to feeding the human family sanely. We are told that food will play a big part in winning the war, yet we go about conserving with only a hazy idea of what we can best use as foods if we wish to conserve our strength and development, as well as conserve wheat for the allies.

Yet the whole thing is so simple that "even the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein." We eat to promote growth and to give us srtength, or, as the experts say, to give us heat or energy. There are three classes of food and everything we eat may be placed in one of these three. They are the proteins, or the foods which promote growth, and the carbohydrates and fats, which give us heat and energy. The proteids consist of lean meat, eggs, milk, and the legumes. At least these are the important proteids, though many cereals contains proteins, and the proteins contain others of the food elements. For instance, milk contains fat in the shape of cream, and wheat contains proteid—the gluten which makes wheat bread elastic. The carbohydrates are the starches and sugars, and the fats we all know.

It will be seen at once that children must have plenty or proteids if they are to keep up a normal growth, while adults who have attained their full development may get along with just the amount of proteids necessary to replace wornout cells, that is, to build the body up daily as it is burned out with work.

Here is where our danger will come in during these days when we are asked to save food. We will be tempted to economize on the milk and eggs given our children, a thing we have no right to do. The children must be properly nourished or their health will be impaired for life. Those of mature growth may get along on skimped rations with only temporary inconvenience, provided the food shortage does not last too long. But children must be fed.

Up until seven months the baby should be fed nothing but milk. Mothers' milk preferably. Failing that, consult the best doctor you can secure as to the right way to modify cow's milk. Don't give your baby a prepared baby food because some one else gave it to her child and it "got along." And don't give condensed milk except as a last resort and on a physician's order. It is too sweet for a perfect food.

At seven months the salivary glands are able to do their part in digesting starch. Begin with a wheat breakfast food, or rice. Either is more apt to be digested by the average child than is oat meal. Feed only a teaspoonful the first day, and note the effect. If the cereal you choose is not digested, causes distress, choose another. Remember each child is a law unto itself and you must decide what yours can best digest. If there is a tendency to constipation oat meal is good as a corrective. If the tendency is the other way, rice is a good food.

After a few days' trial, if the starchy feed is properly digested, try to introduce egg into the dietary. Half a coddled egg, or soft boiled, is enough to begin with. Give this in the morning, and if it is properly digested, add a little more at each feeding until the baby can eat the whole egg. Crackers and hard toast, not toast soaked in hot water or milk, may be given. Watch the child to see that it does not nibble off pieces large enough to choke on. Orange juice, a tablespoonful to begin with, and scraped apple should be given each day. Home-made sugar cookies may also be given occasionally in moderation.

Remember, these foods should not all be introduced at once. Never give more than one new thing on any one day, and wait for at least twenty-four hours to see its effect, forty-eight hours is better. Otherwise you can not tell which food upset the child.

Remember, that you child's future depends to a large extent on how you feed it, for health plays a large part in our ultimate success or failure. An eight-year-old boy in our block developed tuberculosis of the hip bone. He had practically nothing to eat until he was two years old except condensed milk in a bottle. His mother would not cook him cereals, it took too much time to sit down and feed him. Fresh eggs were too expensive. He used to throw the bottle away and lie on the floor and cry with hunger, but the mother declared he could take the milk or go hungry. She had too much to do to bother with "a kid."

When tuberculosis developed the mother blamed a fall at school. Other mothers, whose boys had worse falls with no ill effects, blamed wrong feeding. And they were right.

What Waste Costs.

The waste of 500,000 pounds of paper a week, Canadian authorities estimated, entailed the cutting of at least 2,000 trees a week. Every ton of old paper recovered means a saving of eight trees of mature growth, says the Christian Science Monitor. The saving of woollen rags for the manufacture of shoddy saves land for crops which othrewise would be required for the raising of sheep; men, money and material—capital and labor—are conserved every time a bit of material is re-employed which formerly was destroyed.

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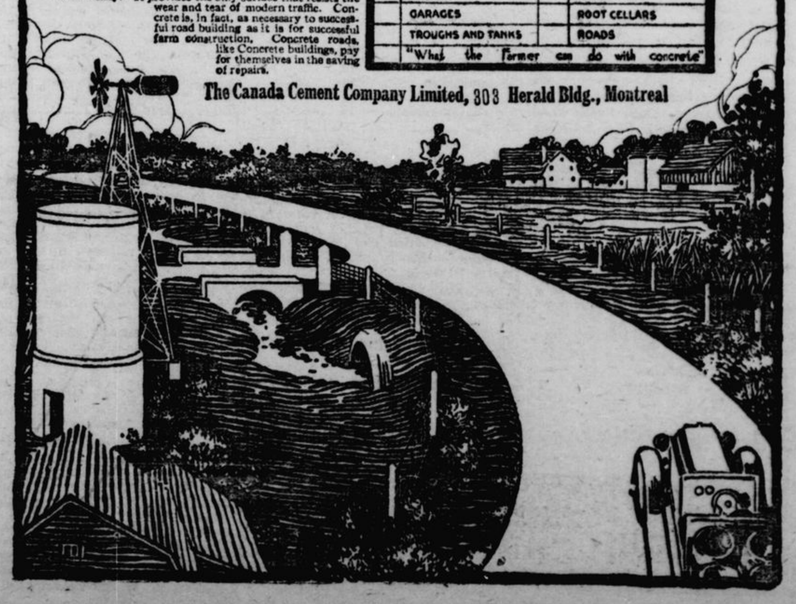

Food Control Corner

The Food Controller is urging that the greatest possible production of maple sugar and maple syrup be undertaken by farmers and all those who are in close proximity to available sugar maple bush. The sugar shortage will mean that there will be an absolutely unlimited market in 1918 for cane and beet sugar substitutes of any and every kind. Maple sugar and maple syrup can be used in many other ways for sweetening purposes than commonly practised, and if necessary can be so treated as to take the place of the ordinary commercial sugar. It is calculated that if the full resources of Eastern Canada in sugar maple trees could be made available, the total domestic requirements for sugar could be provided without aid of imports. While this is not feasible with the present equipment and organization, still by an increased effort of farmers and others, the maple sugar production could easily be increased by, it is said, 100 per cent. this spring.

"Now is the time to establish the maple sugar industry of Canada on a wide, permanent foundation," says the Food Controller. "The soldiers of the Canadian Army are making maple sugar known in Great Britain and France. The demand in those countries will continue and increase after the present conflict is over."

Through the United Grain Growers' organization, which has supplied its mailing list for the purpose, the Food Controller is sending 32,000 letters to the farmers of the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, explaining the food situation which requires that every effort be made to produce the largest possible amount of bread grains and other food products during the current year. The farmers are asked to make arrangements, well in advance of planting time, for their supplies of seed, etc., and to have their farm machinery overhauled and every possible preparation made to produce a bumper crop.

FIRE WALKERS OF FIJI.

So-Called "Miracle" Which Has Been Satisfactorily Explained.

Many so-called "miracles" are among the most interesting of natural phenomena. Take, for example, the "fire walkers" of the Fiji Islands. They are the priests of a native religion who, with bare feet, walk over red-hot—nay, flaming—stones and yet are not scorched.

It is really a wonderful performance and has astonished many strangers who have witnessed it. The explanation offered is that the fire walker is enabled to do the trick by prayers addressed to a goddess, or female devil, who controls the fire.

A shallow pit twenty-odd feet long is filled with burning logs on which many large stones are placed. At the end of four hours the stones are visibly hot, many of them being red-hot. Flames leap up between them. Then it is that the "mystery men," half naked and wearing garlands of flowers, walk over them.

Not long ago, however, Prof. Henry E. Crampton, of Columbia University, was traveling in the South Seas and happened to witness a fire walk. He did not pretend to understand it, but felt sure that it was a fake somehow. In fact, he decided that he would do some fire walking on his own account.

Not without fear, but inspired by scientific enthusiasm, he and three companions bided their time. When the priests had passed over the flaming stones they followed, to the amazement of the assembled spectators. They did it first in tennis shoes then they repeated the feat barefooted.

The secret of the whole business, as explained by Professor Crampton, is that the stones (of pumice lava) are poor conductors of heat. The bare feet of the fire walker move from stone to stone at a quicker rate than the conduction of heat from the fire beneath to the upper surface of the stones. Hence his feet are not burned.

If (as happened to Professor Crampton) he paused for an instant, his feet would be blistered. The Fiji natives say that to look backward while doing the fire walk is likely to be fatal to the performer. At all events, it would mean burned feat.

In all ages there have been fire miracles. They have been a common feature of the performances of professional magicians, who in early days were priests of various religions. It is only within comparatively recent years that magic has become a lay vocation.

Can Recite All of the Bible.

The most wonderful memorizing feat on record has recently been accomplished by William Frederick, a New York salesman.

He has learned the entire Bible off by heart, and can repeat any passage in it from Genesis to Revelation and state where it may be found. It has taken him eighteen years.

A similar task was once undertaken by an eighteenth-century strolling player, about whom Sir William Robertson Nicoll has written. But he gave in after eleven years, by which time he had succeeded in memorizing about two-thirds of the Old Testament.

Pins were first invented and used in 1543 in France in the time of Francis I. Up to that time women used small wood, bone and ivory skewers.

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