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SIOUX CITY PTG. CO., NO. 26--1917

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Asphyxiating Shells Fired in Great Quantities by Both Sides in Struggles on British Front.

Andre Tudesq, writing of the battles on the British front, says there was such an expenditure of asphyxiating shells one day that six hours after the last deluge of them suffocating smells were still passed through.

Lavish expenditure of gas on both sides form a characteristic of the furious attack and counter-attacks which have been delivered day and night round these two villages. The mask is here as preccious as the grenade or the rifle.

As in a frightful carnival, in the manner of Edgar Allan Poe, one could see in the night on the slopes west of Fresnoy entire regiments in masks, fighting and killing each other in the midst of black vapors, which were rendered more fantastic by the light of the moon.

The hand-to-hand struggle thus took on most singular forms. Throwing away their arms the combatants would fly at each other's throats and try to tear away each other's masks. Few prisoners were taken in these encounters, and the wounded are fewer still. Death alone receives the lion's shar."

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"You never think of the future. Have you made the slightest provision for a rainy day?"

"I should say so. I've borrowed a silver-handled silk umbrella."

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The DESTROYER

By BURTON E. STEVENSON

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CHAPTER II.

FRANCE IN MOURNING.

To. M. Theophile Delcasse, minister of Marine, and first statesman of the republic, slumbering peacefully in his bed at Paris that morning, came the sound of urgent knocking. He sat up in bed and rubbed the sleep from his eyes, for he knew that not without good cause would any one dare disturb him at that hour. Then he stepped to the floor, thrust his feet into a pair of slippers, his arms into the sleeves of a dressing robe, and opened the door.

"A telegram, sir, marked 'Most Important'," said his valet, and passed it in to him.

It was from Vice Admiral Bellue, commander at Toulon, and a moment later M. Delcasse had learned of the terrible disaster.

He ordered his carriage and dressed rapidly with trembling hands. He was shocked and distressed as he had rarely been before. Would these disasters never cease? First the Jena, now the Liberte—both ships the pride of their country, the last formidable word in marine architecture! He gulped down the cup of coffee which his valet brought him, seized hat and gloves, hastened to his carriage, and drove straight to the Elysee palace.

The president was already up, and his broad face, usually so placid and good humored, was convulsed with grief as he greeted his minister. He held in his hand a telegram, which he had just opened.

"See," he said, after the first moment, "the sad news is already abroad," and he held out the message.

Delcasse took it and read it with astonished eyes. It was from the German emperor, and expressed his grief at the catastrophe, and his sympathy with France, which he had directed his ambassador to call at once in person to convey more fully.

"The kaiser is certainly well served!" muttered Delcasse, reading the message again, his lips twitching with emotion. "There is something ironical in this promptness. He must have had the news before we did!"

The president nodded gloomily. Then the other members of the cabinet came whirling up, and were convened at once by their chief in secret session.

Not many hours later, as a result of that session, a special train rolled out of the Gare de Lyon, and headed away for the south, with a clear track and right-of-way over everything. Aboard it were the president himself, the minister of marine, the minister of war, and a score of minor officials. There was also a thin little man with white hair and yellowish-white beard—M. Louis Jean Baptiste Lepine, prefect of police, and the most famous hunter of criminals in the world; and in the last car were a dozen of the best men of his staff, under command of his most trusted lieutenant, Inspector Pigot.

At each station, as the train rolled on, great crowds gathered to meet it—crowds strangely silent, inarticulate with grief, furious, suspicious of they knew not what. Terrible rumors were abroad — rumors of treachery, of treason striking at the very heart of France. No one dared repeat these rumors, but nevertheless they ran up and down the land. The Jena and now the Liberte! True, the board of inquiry, which had investigated the destruction of the Jena, had decided that that catastrophe was due to the spontaneous combusion of the powder in her magazines. France had accepted the verdict; but now a second battleship was gone. It would be too much to ask any one to believe that this was spontaneous combusion, also! Such things do not happen twice.

And at every station telegrams were handed in giving fresh details of the disaster—horrible details. The ship was a total loss; of that splendid mechanism, built by years of toil, by the expenditure of many millions, there remained only a twisted and useless mass of wreckage; and in that wreckage lay 300 of France's sailors. Small wonder that the president sat, chin in hand, staring straight before him, and that the others spoke in whispers, or not at all.

At Dijon, which was reached about the middle of the afternoon, there was a tremendous crowd, thronging the long platforms and pressing against the barriers, which threatened at every moment to be swept away. The president went out to say a few words to them, but at the first sentence his voice failed him, and he could only stand and look down upon them, convulsive sobs rising in his throat. Suddenly a little red legged Turco, weeping too, snatched off his fez and shouted "Vive la France!" and the cheer was taken up and repeated and repeated, until it swelled to a vast roar. As the train rolled out of the station, the crowd, bareheaded, was singing the Marseillaise.

M. Delcasse's eyes, behind his heavy glasses, were wet with tears.

"It is the same people still!" he said, pressing the president's hand. "They are as ready to spring to arms as they were 100 years ago. Now, as then, they need only to know that their country is in danger!"

His voice had grown vibrant with emotion, for the passion of his life was and always had been revenge upon Germany. He made no effort to conceal it or to dissimulate. Alsace and Lorraine were always in his thoughts. To placate Germany, indeed, France had once been compelled to drive him from the Quai d'Orsay, where, for so many years, he had been to his contemporaries a sort of Olympian in the conduct of her foreign affairs. But even in retirement he remained the most powerful man in France; and now he was back in the cabinet again, a giant among Lilliputians, building up the navy, building up the army, strengthening the forts along the frontier, increasing the efficiency of the artillery, experimenting with airships, devoting his days and nights to the study of strategy, the discussion of possibilities, always with the same idea, the same hope! And now, this catastrophe!

As he sat gnawing his nails, the president glanced at him, read his thoughts, and shook his head.

"No, my friend," he said, sadly, "the country is not in danger; or, if it is, the danger is from within, not from without. This is an accident, like all the others."

"You believe so? But it seems to me that we have had more than out share of accidents!"

"So we have," the president agreed. "Let us hope that this will be the last—that it will teach us to guard ourselves, in future, from our own carelessness."

"England, America, Germany," Delcasse went on, speaking half to himself, "these nations, with navies greater than ours, never have such accidents. Small explosions, sometimes, it is true, wrecking a gun or damaging a turret—but never destroying a whole ship! Is it merely because they are never careless?"

"There was the Maine," the president reminded him.

Delcasse's hand went to his moustache to hide the ironic smile upon his lips. In that close cropped head of his, along with many other such secrets, was that of the cause of the catastrophe in Havana harbor. In all the chancellories of Europe, it was agreed that the Maine had been destroyed by the spontaneous explosion of her own magazines. Four men kne wthe truth, and Delcasse was one of them. there had been a fifth, but an assassin's bullet killed him.

In an instant Delcasse's face was composed, and his eyes, behind their immense glasses, as inscrutable as ever. The president, so ingenuous and child like, must never suspect the truth!

"True!" Delcasse agreed. "There was the Maine! I had forgotten that!" and he relapsed into thoughtful silence.

Evening came, and still the train rolled southward, past Macon, past Lyons, past Vienne, everywhere greeted by surging crowds. At the latter place, Delcasse arose and, with an almost imperceptible nod to Lepine, entered the last car. The prefect followed him, and a few minutes later, they were closeted together in a compartment, where, at a word from his superior, Inspector Pigot had joined them.

"And now," began Delcasse, when the door was closed and the train had started again, "tell me what you think of this affair, Lepine."

The lattle gray man spread his hands wide with a gesture of helplessness.

"At this moment I know no more than you, sir," he answered; "probably not so much. By morning, I shall have a report ready for you."

"We shall not arrive until after midnight," the minister pointed out.

"Nevertheless, my report will be ready, sir," said Lepine, quickly. "Between midnight and dawn there are six hours."

Delcasse looked at him. He knew that this little man never made an empty promise.

"Did you go through the papers at the time of the Jena disaster?" he asked.

"I did, sir. I assisted the investigating board."

"You are, then, familiar with the theories in that case?"

"There were four theories," answered Lepine. "The first was that the ship had been blown up by treachery; that is always the first thought! But in the case of the Jena, it was quickly discovered that treachery was impossible, unless it was that of the highest officers, for only they had access to her magazines. That was unthinkable, for all of them had served France for many years. More than half of them were killed. I myself investigated the life of every one of these men, for it was necessary to be absolutely certain—but not a breath could be raised against them."

"And the second theory?"

"That there had been carelessness of some sort. That, too, was disproved, for no one had entered the magazines for many hours previous to the explosion. It is a rule of the service that, except when in use, the keys of all magazines shall be in keeping of the commander, who is responsible for them. At the inquiry, the commander of the Jena testified that the keys had not left his possession during the two days preceding the accident. There had been no occasion to enter the magazines during that time. The Jena, you will remember, was at anchor in Toulon harbor, just as the Liberte was."

Delcasse glanced at his companion keenly.

"Does that fact suggest nothing to you, Lepin?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir," said Lepine firmly. "I have thought of it all day, and I can see in it nothing except coincidence."

"Coincidence! Coincidence! I detest the word—I do not believe in coincidence!" muttered the minister.

"Nor I," agreed Lepine; "but even less do I believe in vague theories and vague suspicions. We must have a firm foundation before we begin to build."

"Well, and the third theory?" said Delcasse, at last.

"The third theory was most interesting. It was that the explosion had been caused by waves from the wireless telegraph. It was asserted that these waves had upset the unstable equilibrium, either chemical or electrical, which sometimes exists in the components of modern powder, and that the explosion had resulted."

"And this theory also was disproved?"

"The most exhaustive tests failed to confirm it."

"Ah," said Delcasse; "but to fail to confirm a thing is not to disprove it."

"Our wireless experts agreed in pronouncing the theory absurd."

"Wireless waves penetrate metal, do they not?"

"Every metal except lead."

Delcasse turned this over for some moments in his mind.

"If that had been the cause," went on Lepine, at last, "there would have been other explosions, many of them — and our navy would not have been the only one to suffer. The whole atmosphere is charged with such waves, of every length and every degree of intensity."

"Perhaps you are right," agreed the minister. "What was the fourth theory?"

"The fourth theory was that finally adopted by the board. It was that a certain kind of powder, known as 'B' powder, degenerates under heat, and becomes, in time, extremely combustible, so that it will sometimes explode apparently without any exciting cause."

"In what manner was the truth of this theory demonstrated?" demanded Delcasse.

"In a most convincing manner. A certain amount of this powder, which the board was examining, did explode in this way, under their very hands. Had the amount been larger, not a member of the board would have escaped. But, sir, you know all this as well as I."

"I wish to refresh my memory," Delcasse explained. "I wish to see if your memory, which I admire so much, agrees with mine. Now tell me this: what was done to prevent a recurrence of such an accident?"

"The powder in all French magazines was overhauled, and that which there was any reason to suspect was destroyed. To prevent future deterioration, the magazines of all our battleships were equipped with a special cooling apparatus. In this, we were soon followed by all other nations."

"And yet," said Delcasse, in a low voice, "the latest and best of our battleships blew up this morning!"

"I have brought my best men with me, as you suggested, sir," said Lepine. "If there were any suspicious circumstances attending this explosion, depend upon it, they will be laid before you when you awake!"

"Do not wait for me to awake!" cried the minister. "If any such circumstances comes to light, wake me—wake me on the instant!"

Lepine bowed.

"I will do so, sir," he promised.

It was some time past midnight when the train reached Toulon; but apparently no one of her 100,000 inhabitants had thought of sleep. The streets before the station were crowded from house front to house front. The carriage containing the president and his ministers had the greatest difficulty in proceeding. Everywhere there were cries for vengeance, shouts of treason, threats, wild imprecations. Men stood with arms extended cursing the heavens. The Place de la Liberte was massed with people, facing the fountain in honor of the revolution, bareheaded, singing the Ca Lra. It seemed as though the wheels of time had rolled back a century, and that at any moment the Seagreen Incorruptible himself might arise to thunder denunciation. But at last the president and his staff reached their hotel.

M. Lepine, after final instructions to Pigot, joined them there, and listened to the reports made by the surviving officers of La Liberte. They were in despair, these men, ready to kill themselves at a word; their faces were blackened, their uniforms in tatters, their hands torn and bleeding, for they had labored all day at the work of rescue. They spoke between sobs, but it was little they had to tell.

Commander Jaures, it seemed, had been absent on leave, the second in command was ashore, so that Senir Lieutenant Garnier was in charge of the ship. Just before dawn, the watch had discovered a small fire in one of the store rooms, but it was so insignificant that no one thought of danger; the fire was not near the magazines; in any event, the magazines were all securely closed—the officer in charge had seen to that. Suddenly, apparently without cause, there had been three explosions, about a minute apart, first of the forward magazine, then of the after magazine, then of the man magazine—it seemed almost as though they had been fired at spaced intervals, like a heavy gun. There had been time to get the crew on deck, but the final explosion had come before the boats could be lowered. It had broken the ship in two; the forward part had turned over and sunk with all on board; the after part was a mere mass of twisted wreckage. The explosion had been so violent, that the neighboring ships also suffered—La Republique so seriously that it was only by hurrying her to a dry-dock she was kept from sinking. No one had any theory, any explanation; there had been no warning, no premonition. An instant, and it was over. But all agreed that the fire could have had nothing to do with it.

(Continued Next Week.)

From the Grandstand.

From the Kansas City Star.

"Well, I wish him luck," said Mr. Jones the other night, after reading in the evening paper an account of the wedding of a popular member of the local football team. "But," he added, in a ruminating tone, "marriage is very much like football."

"Don't talk so ridiculous," snapped Mrs. Jones. "However can you compare football to marriage?"

"Why," replied Jones, "it looks so easy to those who haven't tried it!"

In the Shell.

From the St. Louis Globe.

"How's the grub here?" a new boarder asked genially, rubbing his hands, at the dinner table of a boarding house.

"Well, sir, we have chicken every morning for breakfast," an old boarder grunted.

"Chicken every morning?"

The new boarder positively beamed.

"Chicken every morning? And how is it served?"

"In the shell!" grunted the old boarder.

FARMS THE SOURCE OF WEALTH

Careful Tillage, Good Management and a Beneficent Soil.

Reading the reports of the managers of the chartered banks in Canada, one is struck by the wonderful showing that they have made during the past two or three years. They are careful in their statements, and while they attribute the success that they have met with, together with that which has followed other lines of business, they are careful to emphasize the fact that the condition of big business may not continue. On the other hand, they point out that the material and fundamental source of wealth is the farm. While other lines of business may have their setbacks, and while care and scrupulous care, will have to be exercised to keep an even balance, there is but little risk to the farmer who on economic and studied lines will carry on his branch of industry and endeavor to produce what the world wants not only today, but for a long distance into the future, with a greater demand than ever in the past.

Speaking recently before a Canadian bank board at its annual meeting, the vice president, once a farmer himself, said:

"The farm is the chief source of wealth. We have now three transcontinental railways with branches running through thousands of miles of the very best undeveloped agricultural land in the world. In the natural course of things, these must attract immigration. The products of the farm are now commanding the highest prices ever known, and in my opinion even after the end of the war, high prices for foodstuffs must continue to prevail. With the mechanical appliances now available for farm work, the farmer needs no considerable supply of extra capital, but should be helped to the extent needed upon good security. The food supply of the world is short, the demand is likely to increase rather than decrease. Development of mines, extension of factories and the reconstruction of devastated Europe must all call for supplies for the workers. On the whole, the farmer has been helped rather than hurt by the war, and will continue to be, at least for a long time to come."

Many men of authority and intelligence support what the vice president has said, and their statements are borne out by the facts that readily present themselves. The different grain-producing countries of Europe have been robbed of the man power that developed their agriculture, the farms have been devastated and laid waste. Full and complete reliance will have to be placed on the United States and Canada, and from what we see today, it will take the combined forces of these two countries to come anywhere near meeting the cry that will go out for food. The warnings and appeals sent out by the heads of these two countries are none too soon nor too urgent. Therefore, it becomes necessary for those who can produce to exert themselves. Secure land, rent it buy it. Get it somewhere, some way, and have it operated. The Canadian Government, sending out its appeal, is not selfish in this matter. Thousands of acres in the United States await the tiller's efforts, and none of it should be idle. Canada, too, offers wonderful advantages, with its free lands and its low-priced lands, to those desirous of helping the nation, and improving their own condition at the same time. Many are taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity.—Advertisement.

Fully Qualified.

The clergyman had advertised for a butler, and the next morning after breakfast a well-dressed, clean-shaven young man in black was ushered into his study.

"Name, please?" asked the clergyman.

"Hilary Arbuthnot, sir."

"Age?"

"Twenty-eight."

"What work have you been accustomed to?"

"I am a lawyer, sir."

The clergyman started. This was odd. However, he know many were called in the law, but few chosen.

"But," he said, "do you understand the conduct of a household?"

"In a general way, yes," murmured the applicant.

"Can you carve?"

"Yes."

"Wash glass and silver?"

"I—er—think so."

The young man seemed embarrassed. He frowned and blushed. Just then the clergyman's wife entered!

"Are you married?" was the first question.

"That," said the young man, "was what I called to see your husband about, madam. I desire to know if he can make it convenient to officiate at my wedding at noon next Thursday week."

Just Like Us.

"That son of yours isn't very bright, but he has a big appetite."

"Yes; I expect he'll make a fine college athlete."

Many a woman who thinks herself a beauty never succeeds in convincing her mirror.

When Your Eyes Need Care
Try Murine Eye Remedy
No Smarting—Just Eye Comfort. 60 cents at Druggists or mail. Write for Free Eye Book.
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