

# The DESTROYER

By BURTON E. STEVENSON

CHAPTER II CONTINUED

Pigot, meanwhile, had spread his men out along the docks, where they listened to every one, asked questions of every one. Not a rumor escaped them, but, alas, for no rumor could they find foundation. The wreck in the harbor was illuminated by the searchlights of the other battleships, and Pigot caused himself to be rowed out to it, introduced himself to Admiral Marin-Dabel, maritime prefect of Toulon, who had taken personal charge of the rescue work, and spent half an hour inspecting the melancholy scene. Then he landed again and listened for a time to the reports of his lieutenants. There was among them not a single ray of light—not the slightest evidence to show that the disaster had been anything but an accident. The fire in the store room had, it was whispered, been much more serious than the officers would admit.

Pigot made his way slowly toward the hotel to report to his chief, but as he crossed the Place d'Armes, a hand was laid upon his sleeve. He turned, expecting to see one of his men. Instead, he found himself looking into a face he did not know.

"Pardon, sir," he said. "You are, perhaps, mistaken."  
"Oh, no, Pigot," said the stranger, with a little smile. "I am not mistaken. It is you whom I wish to see."

"I do not remember you, sir," said Pigot, looking at him more closely. "Have we met before?"  
"Many times,"

"Many times!" echoed Pigot, incredulously. "Surely not!" and he looked again to make certain that the stranger was not intoxicated. "Where have we met?"

"We met last," said the stranger, smiling again, "on La Savoie, in the harbor of New York city. To be sure, I was not in this incarnation, but I am sure you will recall the incident."  
"See 'The Mystery of the Boule Cabinet'."

Pigot drew a deep breath, and his face flushed.

"Ah," he said quietly, after a moment. "I remember. I wish you good evening, M. Crochard."

"One moment," Crochard commanded, his grasp tightening on Pigot's arm. "Forgive my recalling that meeting to your memory. It was indelicate of me. Nevertheless you would do well to listen to what I have to say."

Pigot stopped and turned.

"Well," he said, after gazing for a moment into Crochard's eyes, "speak quickly. What is it you have to say?"

"I wish to say to you, Pigot, that I have come to offer you my help."

"Your help?"

"In solving the mystery of this disaster."

Pigot looked at him coldly.

"We do not require your help," he said, at last.

"Perhaps not; and yet you would be mistaken to refuse it. I was at Nice; I have been on the ground since morning; I have discovered . . ."

"Well, what have you discovered?" asked Pigot, as Crochard hesitated.

"I have discovered," Crochard continued slowly, "what I can reveal only to M. Delcasse himself. I demand that you cause me to be introduced to him at once."

Pigot shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Impossible!" he said, and started on.

"Wait!" said Crochard sternly. "Consider whether you are willing to take the responsibility of this refusal!"

"Responsibility!" Pigot burst out, his anger getting the upper hand at last. "Responsibility! Yes, I take it! Who are you? A notorious character—a thief . . ."

Crochard's eyes were blazing, and his hand grasped Pigot's arm with a vise like grip.

"And with it all," he sneered, "a better man than you Pigot! Is it not so? A better man than you! How often have I proved it!"

Pigot's hand turned and closed like a flash upon the other's wrist.

"You will come with me," he said.

The anger faded from Crochard's face, and an ironic amusement took its place.

"me?" he asked.

"To the prefecture!"

"You are mistaken. You will conduct me to M. Delcasse. You cannot conduct me to the prefecture, Pigot; I will not allow it!"

"Allow it!" sneered Pigot, and pressed forward.

"Fool!" hissed Crochard in his ear. "Thickheaded fool! Have you learned no wisdom yet? I would smite you, Pigot, but that I have need of you. Listen! I and only I can save France! I demand that you take me to M. Delcasse."

Pigot felt himself waver; a vague uneasiness stirred within him as he met his companion's flaming gaze.

"On what pretext can I introduce you to M. Delcasse?" he asked at last.

"You will leave me outside the door," said Crochard rapidly, almost in a whisper. "You will go to M. Delcasse alone; you will say to him, 'Sir, I have outside a man who asserts that La Liberte was blown up by the Germans, and that he can prove it!' Then let M. Delcasse decide whether or not he will receive me!"

Pigot was staring at the speaker with distended eyes.

"By the Germans!" he repeated hoarsely. "By the Germans!"

Crochard answered with an impatient pressure of the arm.

"You are wasting time," he said.

"You are right," Pigot agreed. "Come with me," and he led the way across the square.

## CHAPTER III.

### TWO GREAT MEN MEET.

M. Delcasse and M. Lepine were still in conference when Pigot was announced. He was admitted without delay, and made his report briefly and clearly. It could have been summed up in a sentence: neither by him nor by his agent had anything been discovered to indicate, even remotely, that the catastrophe had been the result of intention; every rumor to that effect had been sifted and disproved; La Liberte had been destroyed from within and not from without.

"Another 'accident,' then," grunted Delcasse gloomily. "But I do not believe it! Something—something here"—and he smote his forehead—"tells me that it was not an accident!"

Pigot, as a practical detective, had no faith in intuition; but whatever his thoughts may have been, he managed to mask them behind an impenetrable countenance.

"Our investigations have but just begun," Lepine pointed out. "They will be continued without pause. I will conduct them in person. No circumstance, however trivial, will be overlooked."

"I know you are a good man, Lepine," said the minister wearily; "I know there is none more clever. But something more than cleverness is needed here—we need genius, inspiration. He stopped abruptly and rose from his chair. "I am sure you will do your best. Remember, if there is any discovery, I am to be told at once."

Pigot, who had been standing with lips compressed, undergoing a violent inward struggle, at last managed to open them.

"I have a man outside," he said, as though repeating a lesson, "who requests an audience with M. Delcasse. He asserts that La Liberte was blown up by the Germans, and that he can prove it."

Delcasse whirled as on a pivot and stared at the speaker.

"But, name of God!" he stammered, barely able to speak for excitement, "why have you not introduced this man at once? Why have you wasted our time . . ."

He stopped and took a rapid turn up and down the room. When he spoke again, his voice was quite composed.

"Introduce the man at once," he commanded.

"I think it would be well," said Pigot tonelessly, "that M. Delcasse should first be informed as to the name and character of this man."

"What were they?"

Again Delcasse stared.

"Explain yourself!" he cried. "Who is the man?"

"His name is Crochard, sir,"

"You assert that!"

"I do. And furthermore, I assert that it was the work of German!"

Delcasse sprang from his chair, his face livid.

"The proof!" he cried. "The proof!"

"The proof, sir, is this: at five minutes before dawn, this morning, two strangers, attired as pedestrians, with knapsacks on their backs, stopped in the recess of the doorway of Number Ten, Quai de Cronstadt. They stopped well within the shadow, as though not wishing to be seen, and stood gazing out on the harbor. Directly before them, at a distance of not more than 300 yards, La Liberte was moored. It was at her they stared, with eyes expectant and uneasy. At dawn, La Liberte blew up, and one of these men cried out some words of German."

"And the men?" cried Delcasse.

"What became of them?"

"They strode rapidly away along the quay, and were lost to sight."

Delcasse dropped into his chair, his face dark with passion.

"What do you infer from this circumstance?" he demanded.

"There is only one possible inference," answered Crochard.

"At five minutes before dawn this morning, there were, in this city of Toulon, two Germans who knew that La Liberte was to be destroyed."

A moment's silence followed. Those words, terrible as they were, astounding as they were, carried conviction with them.

"Tell me," said Delcasse, at last, "how you discovered all this."

"I have been spending the month at Nice," Crochard explained. "I learned of the disaster as soon as I was up this morning, and I came at once to Toulon. Monsieur will understand that, in the many years during which I have been at variance with society, I have made many friends and gained a certain power in quarters of which monsieur knows little. One of these friends is the proprietor of the cafe which occupies the ground floor of the house on the Quai de Cronstadt. I stooped to see him because his house is close to the scene of the disaster—so close, indeed, that all of its windows were shattered. It was he who gave me the first clue."

"Go on," said Delcasse, who had been listening intently. "I need not say how deeply all this interests me."

"My friend had arranged to go to Marseilles this morning," Crochard continued, "to make a purchase of wine. The train, he tells me, leaves at 6 o'clock. It was about 15 minutes before that hour when, as he started to open his door, two men stepped into the little vestibule, as though to screen themselves from observation. He peered through the curtain, thinking they might be friends, and found that he did not know them. Gazing from the darkness of the interior, he could see them very well. They were staring at La Liberte, as I have said, their faces rigid with emotion; and then came the explosion, which, without question, they anticipated."

"You have a description of them?" broke in Delcasse.

"An excellent description. They were men of middle age, heavily built and clean shaven. Their faces were deeply tanned, as with long exposure, and had that fulness about the lips which bespeaks the German. They wore caps and walking suits with knee trousers. Each had strapped upon his back a small knapsack."

Lepine, who had been taking rapid notes, looked up with gleaming eyes.

"We shall find these men," he said. "It will not be difficult."

"More difficulty than you suppose, M. Lepine," said Crochard dryly.

Lepine looked at him.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

Crochard turned to Delcasse with a little deprecating gesture.

"Before I proceed," he said, "I must be certain of my position here. With you, sir, no explanations are necessary; we understand each other and we have no past to prejudice us. But M. le Prefect and I are old enemies. We respect each other, but we always welcome an opportunity to try conclusions. Until this affair is ended, I propose a truce."

"I will go further than that," retorted Lepine, "and call it an alliance. I shall welcome your help. I have already told M. Delcasse that you are probably as good a patriot as he or I."

Delcasse evidently did not recognize the name, but Lepine's face was suddenly illumined.

"Crochard," he explained, "is the most adroit, the most daring, the most accomplished scoundrel with whom I have ever had to deal. Surely Monsieur remembers the affair of the Michaelovitch diamonds?"

"Ah, yes!" cried Delcasse, his face, too, lighting. "So that was Crochard!"

"Crochard the Invincible, he calls himself," growled Pigot. "He is a great braggart."

"And with some reason," added Lepine. "We have never yet been able to convict him."

"He restored the Mazarin diamond to the Louvre, did he not?" queried the minister. "And also the Mona Lisa?"

"The Mazarin certainly," assented Lepine. "As for the Mona Lisa, I have never been quite certain. There is a rumor that the original is now owned by an American millionaire, and that the picture returned to the Louvre is only a copy—a wonderful one, it is true. Where did you meet him, Pigot?"

Pigot related the story of the meeting, while Delcasse listened thoughtfully.

"Is he to be trusted?" he asked, when Pigot had finished.

"In this affair I believe so," answered Lepine quietly. "He may be as good a patriot as you or I. If he is really in earnest, he can be of immense assistance. He has absolute command of the underworld, and a thousand sources of information which are closed to the police. At least, it can do no harm to hear what he has to say."

Delcasse agreed with a nod, and sat down again.

"Bring him in," he said, and a moment later Crochard entered.

If M. Delcasse had expected to perceive anything of the criminal in the man who bowed to him respectfully from the threshold, he was most thoroughly disappointed. What he did see was a well built man in the very prime of life, with clear and fearless eyes of greenish-gray flecked with yellow, a face singularly open and engaging, and a manner as easy and self-possessed as Delcasse's own. The only sign of approaching age was the sprinkle of gray in the crisp, brown hair, but this served rather to accentuate the youthfulness of the face, covered now by a coat of tan which bespoke a summer spent in the open. In any company, this man would have been notable.

"M. Crochard, I believe," said Delcasse, and involuntarily the great minister arose and returned his visitor's bow. "Be seated, sir."

"Thank you," said Crochard, and sat down. "I see that we are going to appreciate each other," he added, and looked at Delcasse with a friendly smile.

That gentleman's eyes were twinkling behind his glasses, and his lips twitched under his heavy mustache.

"It always pleases me to meet a distinguished man," he said, "in whatever field of endeavor. M. Lepine tells me that you are most distinguished."

"M. Lepine has every reason to know," agreed Crochard, and glanced smilingly toward the prefect.

"Though, since I have eyes, I can see that for myself," added the minister. "Why did you wish to see me?"

"I wished to see you, sir," answered Crochard, suddenly serious, "because I have long recognized in you the only man whom France possesses who sees clearly the struggle which is ahead of her, who prepares ceaselessly for that struggle, and who is strong enough to guide her through it triumphantly."

"To what struggle do you refer?" inquired the minister, but his shining eyes belied his careless tone.

"The struggle to regain possession of Alsace-Lorraine and to avenge ourselves upon the nation which once humiliated us."

A slow flush crept into Delcasse's cheeks, and his lips tightened.

"You foresee such a struggle?" he asked.

"As clearly as you do yourself, sir."

"Well, yes," cried Delcasse, and smote the arm of his chair a heavy blow. "I do foresee such a struggle—I have never denied it; and for 20 years I have labored to prepare for it. You can understand, then, what a blow it is to me—how terrible, how disheartening—to have all my calculations blasted by such accidents as that of today!"

"Pardon me, sir," said Crochard, in a low tone, "but the destruction of La Liberte was not an accident!"

"You assert that!"

"I do. And furthermore, I assert that it was the work of German!"

Delcasse sprang from his chair, his face livid.

"The proof!" he cried. "The proof!"

"The proof, sir, is this: at five minutes before dawn, this morning, two strangers, attired as pedestrians, with knapsacks on their backs, stopped in the recess of the doorway of Number Ten, Quai de Cronstadt. They stopped well within the shadow, as though not wishing to be seen, and stood gazing out on the harbor. Directly before them, at a distance of not more than 300 yards, La Liberte was moored. It was at her they stared, with eyes expectant and uneasy. At dawn, La Liberte blew up, and one of these men cried out some words of German."

"And the men?" cried Delcasse.

"What became of them?"

"They strode rapidly away along the quay, and were lost to sight."

Delcasse dropped into his chair, his face dark with passion.

"What do you infer from this circumstance?" he demanded.

"There is only one possible inference," answered Crochard.

"At five minutes before dawn this morning, there were, in this city of Toulon, two Germans who knew that La Liberte was to be destroyed."

A moment's silence followed. Those words, terrible as they were, astounding as they were, carried conviction with them.

"Tell me," said Delcasse, at last, "how you discovered all this."

"I have been spending the month at Nice," Crochard explained. "I learned of the disaster as soon as I was up this morning, and I came at once to Toulon. Monsieur will understand that, in the many years during which I have been at variance with society, I have made many friends and gained a certain power in quarters of which monsieur knows little. One of these friends is the proprietor of the cafe which occupies the ground floor of the house on the Quai de Cronstadt. I stooped to see him because his house is close to the scene of the disaster—so close, indeed, that all of its windows were shattered. It was he who gave me the first clue."

"Go on," said Delcasse, who had been listening intently. "I need not say how deeply all this interests me."

"My friend had arranged to go to Marseilles this morning," Crochard continued, "to make a purchase of wine. The train, he tells me, leaves at 6 o'clock. It was about 15 minutes before that hour when, as he started to open his door, two men stepped into the little vestibule, as though to screen themselves from observation. He peered through the curtain, thinking they might be friends, and found that he did not know them. Gazing from the darkness of the interior, he could see them very well. They were staring at La Liberte, as I have said, their faces rigid with emotion; and then came the explosion, which, without question, they anticipated."

"You have a description of them?" broke in Delcasse.

"An excellent description. They were men of middle age, heavily built and clean shaven. Their faces were deeply tanned, as with long exposure, and had that fulness about the lips which bespeaks the German. They wore caps and walking suits with knee trousers. Each had strapped upon his back a small knapsack."

Lepine, who had been taking rapid notes, looked up with gleaming eyes.

"We shall find these men," he said. "It will not be difficult."

"More difficulty than you suppose, M. Lepine," said Crochard dryly.

Lepine looked at him.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

Crochard turned to Delcasse with a little deprecating gesture.

"Before I proceed," he said, "I must be certain of my position here. With you, sir, no explanations are necessary; we understand each other and we have no past to prejudice us. But M. le Prefect and I are old enemies. We respect each other, but we always welcome an opportunity to try conclusions. Until this affair is ended, I propose a truce."

"I will go further than that," retorted Lepine, "and call it an alliance. I shall welcome your help. I have already told M. Delcasse that you are probably as good a patriot as he or I."

## INTRICACIES OF TOUCH.

Most of us have been taught that there are five special senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. We know now that there are many others besides. Among the better recognized of these other special senses are the sense of hunger, of thirst and the muscle sense. Among others that are still less well known and still less clearly recognized are the sensations of equilibrium and balance from the internal ear and certain sensations from the visceral organs.

The sense of touch is by no means a simple sense. It is commonly divided into temperature, pain and pressure sense. Each of these in turn is further subdivided.

By cutting the nerve fibers and testing the skin as the fibers regenerate physiologists have grouped the fibers which carried sensation into the spinal cord—the posterior root—into three groups: the skin sensory fibers, the deep sensory fibers and certain inborn fibers which do not carry sensations.

The skin sensory or touch fibers, Howell divides into two groups. One carries pain sensation and sensations stimulated by high and by low temperatures, but not by temperatures in between. This set of sensations, called protopathic, are not closely discriminating. Another set, called epicritic, are sensitive and critical. These nerves discriminate nicely between delicate shades of hot and cold, between light pressures and between the locations of touch impulses.

The deep sensory fibers carry to the brain impulses which are regarded as pressure pain or what is known as muscle sense.

We note that there is a difference between touch and pain. Also between touch and temperature. The sense which tells us just how hard to hit and just when and just what muscles to use when we hit a golf ball or a baseball is tied up with what we call muscle sense.

The capacity of feeling hot or cold is not painted smooth over the surface of the skin. The skin is mottled with hot and cold spots. In certain spots only hot can be felt and in others only cold. Physiologists make use of delicate apparatus to locate these hot and cold spots. For instance, when they have located the hot and cold spots on the face and dotted each with red ink the skin looks as if it were affected by scarlet fever.

In general there are more cold spots than warm ones and they react more promptly to stimulation. A cold spot can feel nothing but cold. Anything hot applied to a cold spot gives a sensation of cold. If there is no touch or pain in the spot, any normal touch or pain impulse would be registered as cold. As has been said above, certain nerves of touch can feel high temperatures or low temperatures, but nothing in between. Others can feel delicate shades in temperature.

The pain nerve and nerve endings are widely distributed throughout the body. The skin is abundantly supplied with them. Certain of the internal organs are fairly well supplied also. For instance, the stomach cannot feel hot or cold, can only feel pressure or touch very imperfectly, but it can feel pain. The gall bladder and ducts are well supplied with pain nerves. The liver is but poorly supplied. The intestines cannot feel much except pain, or at least not much registers at the brain except pain. The kidneys are almost free from pain nerves, but the ureters are well supplied. The lungs are almost without pain nerves.

The pain nerve endings are distributed in the skin in the same point arrangement that prevails with the temperature point nerves. When a pain nerve ending is stimulated it registers pain. The stimulus may be due to changes in temperature, pressure, chemical stimulus, or traumatic. Whatever the stimulus may be the nerve registers pain.

### Peter Pan.

(The boy for whom Barrie wrote Peter Pan—the original of Peter Pan—has been killed in battle.)

In general, Peter Pan is dead? Not so: When mothers turn the lights down low And tuck their little sons in bed, They know that Peter Pan is dead.

That little rounded blanket-hill; Those bedtime eyes, so deep and still— However wise and great a man He grows, he still is Peter Pan!

And mothers' ways are often queer; They pause at doorway, just to hear A tiny breathing; say a prayer, And then go tiptoe down the stair.

—Christopher Morley.

## "SLEEPING BEAUTY" OF THE PRESENT DAY



Compare the "sleeping beauty" of the fairy tale with this photograph and then admit that the girl of today with the novel pajama makes the prettier of the two. The pajamas are made of pink satin combined with georgette. The jacket is also of georgette.

## Is Your Work Hard?

Work which brings any unusual strain on the back and kidneys tends to cause kidney ailments, such as backache, lameness, headache, dizziness and distressing urinary troubles. Kidney complaints make any kind of work doubly hard and if neglected there is danger of gravel, dropsy or Bright's disease. If your work is hard on the back, keep your kidneys in good condition with Doan's Kidney Pills. Thousands rely on them.

### An Iowa Case

O. W. Emery, retired farmer, Decorah, Iowa, says: "My back got so bad I couldn't sleep. I had to put pillows under my back to get any ease at all. The pains were awful and it seemed as though my kidneys were being torn loose. The kidney secretions became painful in passage and I lost weight until I was but a shadow of myself. Doan's Kidney Pills restored me to good health, and I have not had any trouble since."

Get Doan's At Any Store, 50c a Box  
**DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS**  
FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

## WAS OVERRULED BY HIS SON

Sir Edward Carson Tells How the Young Man Got Into the British Army.

Sir Edward Carson introduced a personal note into a speech which he made the other day when he was the guest of the British Empire Producers' organization, at the Savoy hotel, says the London Chronicle.

"I remember," said Sir Edward, "when a little son of mine came to me and said 'Father, I want to join the navy class at school.' I said, 'What rubbish! You are going to be a lawyer.' He told me plainly that I was wrong, and I explained to him how much better it would be to make money in the Temple than lose it at sea. He said, 'You don't seem to recognize the importance of the navy; it is the great connecting link between the mother country and the colonies.'"

"I replied, 'Well, if you put it on that high plane, I must alter my views.' He is now commanding a submarine, and only yesterday, in my capacity of first lord of the admiralty, I had to read an account of an attempt of one of our destroyers to sink his submarine."

## DANDRUFF AND ITCHING

Disappear With Use of Cuticura Soap and Ointment—Trial Free.