

The DESTROYER

By BURTON E. STEVENSON

CHAPTER EIGHT—(Continued.)

Lepine recognized the cogency of this reasoning and nodded. "Continue," he said.

"She was a dark, slim girl, of about 20. They gave me no trouble. She scarcely left the house except for the marketing. But her father was away a great deal."

"Did he bring much baggage?" "Two pieces of hand baggage, sir, and that box yonder by the window. The box was very heavy—almost as if filled with iron—and he had great difficulty in getting it up the stairs, even with the assistance of the truckman."

"Did you enter this room while he was here?" "No, sir; I entered neither of the rooms. My rule is never to interfere in the affairs of my tenants—they do not like it. But on one occasion, as I passed the door, I heard him at work on his invention."

"Heard him, you say?" "Yes, sir; there was a deep humming noise as of a huge top, or perhaps a motor. It occurred to me that it was a flying machine which he was inventing. Then, on Sunday, came a telegram."

"A telegram?" "Yes, sir; I brought it up myself. He read it and his face grew very grave. He informed me that he would be compelled to depart next day—that his sister was dying. But he assured me that he would return as soon as possible to continue his experiments, and that I was to hold the apartment for him—at least until the month for which he had paid had expired."

"And he did depart?" "Yes, sir; quite early in the morning. I called a cab, and assisted to carry down his baggage. The box, as you see, remains against his return, also his apparatus," and he indicated the batteries.

"Oh, certainly," agreed Lepine, with irony, "there can be no doubt of his intention to return." And then his face grew dark and his eyes flashed. "How does it happen," he demanded sternly, "that you did not cause him to fill out a registration blank for the police?"

The little man twisted his hands nervously. "In that I admit I was most culpable, sir," he said. "But when I looked in my desk for a blank, I found that I had none. Every day I intended going to the prefecture to get a new supply, but every day something occurred to prevent me. And then came the day of his departure."

Lepine's face was very stern. "You have, indeed, been culpable," he said, "and I shall see that you are punished. You have broken one of the laws of your country. You have aided a malefactor!"

The little man's face was livid. "Oh, do not say so, sir!" he protested. "There must be some mistake! That kind gentleman, absorbed only in his invention—"

"I do say so," broke in Lepine, savagely. "Did he receive any letters?"

"One, sir, on the Saturday before the arrival of the telegram. No doubt it, too, spoke of the illness of his sister."

Lepine put his hand wearily to his head. "At least you noticed the address on the letter?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, sir. It was 'Monsieur B. Seguin, 80 Rue du Plasson, Toulon.' Seguin, that was the name of my ledger."

"But you said he was not a Frenchman?" "Perhaps he was a Belgian, sir. I have heard that they are sometimes dark."

office, inquired for the clerk of telegraphs, apologized for again disturbing him, and asked to see the telegram received for B. Seguin, 80 Rue du Plasson, the Sunday before. At the end of five minutes it was in his hands, and he read it with dismay. It had been sent from Brussels, and this is the English of its contents:

Our sister is very ill and asks for you. Come if you would see her alive.
Charles Seguin.

CHAPTER IX.

CHECKMATE.

"It is evident that this affair was not lightly arranged," said M. Delcasse, and ran his fingers nervously through his hair.

Lepine nodded gloomily. "You may well say so!" he agreed.

The two sat together in Delcasse's room, and Lepine had just finished his report. Evening was falling, and the room was growing dark, but neither desired a light.

"Everything has been thought of and provided for," said the Prefect, at last, "even to the telegram which gave an excuse for this man's abrupt departure. Perhaps the other telegrams were also intended to mislead us—just as they did mislead me—to convince us that those other men were only ordinary travelers. They must have foreseen that the police would investigate the presence of every stranger in Toulon. It was careless to send both telegrams from Brussels, but a coincidence so small might easily be overlooked. On one point only was there an oversight—they did not foresee that we might trace them by means of the money. There is our hope. Sooner or later, the man with the white hair will spend another of his 100 franc notes. There is a certain justice in it," he added, "that he should be betrayed by his blood money."

"Yes, blood money!" cried Delcasse. "That is the word for it! Oh, that I had my hands on the monster—for he is a monster, Lepine; he must be a monster! There he sat, in cold blood, and loosed the power that killed 300 men! Have you considered, Lepine, that the finding of this second installation furnishes, as Crochard foresaw, proof of his theory?"

"Yes," said Lepine, in a low voice; "this is the proof."

Delcasse was on his feet, striding savagely up and down the room. "But it is absurd," he cried, "it is incredible that here, under our very noses, such things should take place! What are our police for, Lepine—our secret service?"

"It is the fault of that miserable landlord," Lepine pointed out.

"Of him an example shall be made. But that does not help us. This man must not escape! Think what it may mean for France if he escapes!"

"I have thought, sir!" and Lepine's voice was trembling.

Delcasse turned on him fiercely. "Where is Crochard?" he demanded. "What is he doing all this time?"

"I do not know, sir. I have not seen him since yesterday."

"Rest assured that he has not been idle. Do you know where to find him?"

"I have his address."

"Go to him, then, and say I wish to see him. We must lay these discoveries before him—though no doubt he has already made them for himself. Tell him he must not desert us—that without him, we are lost!"

Lepine was grateful for the darkness, for his cheeks were red with humiliation. But, after all, M. Delcasse was right. He rose with a sigh.

"I agree with you, sir," said Lepine, and took his leave.

The Cafe des Voyageurs was crowded when he reached it, and he had some difficulty in finding a seat. The marines who had been searching the wreck had, at last, been released from duty, and had, with one accord hastened ashore to refresh themselves at the expense of a populace eager to listen to every detail. The cafe hummed with talk; weird and revolting stories of the search were told with gusto; the completeness of the destruction was described; the survivors dwelt upon their sensations at the moment of the explosion; the heroism of the rescuers was not forgotten; but, and Lepine noted this with a little sigh of relief, nowhere was there an intimation that the disaster was other than an accident.

He sat there for half an hour, listening to all this, and then, as Crochard made no sign, he summoned the head waiter and requested a word with the proprietor. With a nod, as of one who expected the request, the man turned and again led the way to the door at the rear of the room.

"In there, sir," he said, and closed it when Lepine had entered. A single candle burned on the table in the center of the little room, and beyond it sat a man. At the first glance, in the semidarkness, Lepine fancied it was Crochard; then he saw that this man was slighter, that his face was bloodless, and that he was staring with hunted eyes.

With a little start of surprise, he looked again; then he sat down. "So, Samson, it is you!" said Lepine, quietly.

"Yes, sir," answered Samson. "I was expecting you. But I did not think you would recognize me so readily."

Lepine laughed shortly. "I have a good memory," he said. "Crochard told you, perhaps, that I might come?"

"Yes, sir; and he directed that I give you this."

He handed Lepine a note. The latter broke the seal, held it to the light and read carefully:

"My Dear M. Lepine—I have found it necessary to leave Toulon, in the pursuit of a certain business, whose nature you can guess. I hope soon to have good news for M. Delcasse and yourself. Meanwhile, I would remind you of our agreement as to my friends. Samson is one of them. He has already been of some service in this affair, and may be of more. We can discuss his future upon my return. I will answer for him."

"Crochard, L'Invincible!" Lepine refolded the note and slipped it into his pocket.

"When did Crochard leave," he asked.

"He gave me the note at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, sir, and stated that he was about to depart. I have not seen him since."

"Did he mention his destination?"

"No, sir."

Lepine regarded his companion thoughtfully.

"There is one thing that perhaps you can tell me, Samson," he said. "Previous to his departure, did he visit the house at 80 Rue du Plasson?"

"I think it very probable," answered Samson, after a moment's hesitation. "I myself furnished M. Crochard with that address, when he returned to the cafe yesterday for his lunch."

"Ah!" said Lepine. "So it was you discovered it!"

He fell a moment silent, studying the other's countenance.

one regretful glance in the direction of the dining room, hurried up the stairs to the minister's apartment. He found him dictating to his secretary, a great pile of letters before him.

Without pausing in his dictation, Delcasse picked up a telegram which lay at his elbow, and handed it to Lepine. It was dated from Paris, and had been filed but an hour before. It read:

"Seven notes 100 francs B162810R to B162816R deposited today by Thomas Cook & Son. 'Linne, Governor Bank of France.'"

Lepine laid the telegram on his desk and glanced at his watch. "I must be in Paris in the morning," he said.

Delcasse nodded. "Yes," he agreed. "And Crochard?"

"Is no doubt already there," and he handed Delcasse the note which Samson had given him.

Delcasse read it, and looked up with an amused smile, in which there lurked a trace of malice.

"What a man!" he said. "Nevertheless, Lepine, I think you would better go. You may be able to assist him! Give him my compliments, and keep me informed," and he turned back to his secretary.

The Paris office of the Messrs. Cook is at the corner opposite the opera house, and here, about 10 o'clock on the morning of Thursday, September 28, a little grey bearded man descended from a fiacre, entered, and, after a short delay, was admitted to the presence of the manager, who made it clear at once that he was entirely at the service of his distinguished visitor.

Lepine sat down and produced from his pocket seven notes of the Bank of France, for 100 francs each. They were quite new and had not even been folded.

"These notes were deposited by you yesterday afternoon," he said. "I should like to know from whom they were received."

The manager took the notes and glanced at them.

"That will not be difficult, sir," he said. "Our cashier can no doubt tell us from which of our clerks he received them. Excuse me a moment."

He hurried from the room with the notes in his hand, and Lepine, strolling to the window, relapsed into his favorite amusement. At no other corner in the city could it be practiced so profitably, for here, at the meeting of the boulevards, all Paris, sooner or later, passed; and not Paris only, but vagrants from every nation. So Lepine watched the crowd intently, his bright eyes skipping from face to face—a mere glance at one, a longer glance at another, a close stare at a third. Perhaps, at the back of his mind, there was the hope that some incredible good fortune might send past this corner a shrunken, white haired man, leaning on the arm of his dark haired daughter.

The opening of the door behind him broke into his thoughts, and he turned to find that the manager had brought another man back with him.

"This is the clerk who received the money," said the manager, and returned the seven notes to the detective.

Lepine motioned the clerk to be seated, and himself sat down facing him.

"Tell me all that you remember of the transaction," he said.

"It was Tuesday afternoon, sir," the clerk began, "about 4 o'clock. I should say, that a man came to the counter and stated that he desired a stateroom, with two berths, second class, for the Prinzessin Ottilie, the sailing of yesterday."

A Woman of 100 Years Ago. From the Philadelphia Ledger. One hundred years ago, on the anniversary of the battle of Sedgewick, the daughter of Finance Minister Necker, whose dismissal from office had so close a connection with the events of July 4 and whom his daughter idolized that in her last illness she said: "I have always been the same, gentle and sorrowful. I have loved God, my father and liberty."

Everyone knows the story of her precocious youth, about which Sainte-Beuve held that there was "a kind of antique fascination," and of her years of celebrity, when as a perpetually blushing girl she sometimes dazzled and sometimes bored the literary lights of England, Germany and Italy.

It was to her that Napoleon delivered his truly Napoleonic verdict that the greatest woman was she who bore the most children. The critic Francis Jeffrey called her "the greatest female writer of any age or country," and Byron said of her: "Her works are my delight, and so is she herself—for half an hour. Her works, by the way, were not written in the English poet with at least two thoughts for poetical treatment; for in the fourth chapter of the first book of 'Corinne' is a fair copy of the same, in the familiar lines in 'Childe Harold,' published a few years later, which begin: 'Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll! Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain, and in a discourse 'De l'Influence des Passions' she anticipates a famous couplet in 'Don Juan' by avowing that 'Love is the history of the life of women; it is an episode in that of men.'"

For two other very famous sayings the world is in part indebted to Mme. de Staël: it was Goethe who said, according to Bekermann's 'Conversations,' that architecture is frozen music. The same definition is contained also in Schelling. But in 'Corinne' (book iv, chapter 3) the probable germ of this saying is found, when, speaking of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, the heroine exclaims: "La vue d'un tel monument est comme une musique continuelle et fixe." In the same work (book xviii, chapter 5) Corinne declares, "tout ce qu'on entend de la langue," which in the form of a misquotation better than its original, "To understand all is to understand none," has gained wide popularity in both French and English.

Kitchener's Successor. Gen. Sir William Robertson, in proposing the toast of the president of the United States, roused much enthusiasm by his tribute to President Wilson, who, he held, had largely achieved the United States' wholehearted and unreserved entry into the war despite the differing interests of a great people spread over a whole continent, and despite the presence of a considerable German element. The result of President Wilson's success was that today America stood higher in the eyes of the world than she had ever stood before.

Sir William dwelt on the importance of the United States organizing her resources quickly to suit the exigencies of modern war. "Germany says America will not count; it is America's opportunity and privilege to show not only that she will count but count a great deal and at once. President Wilson has a greater and more splendid task before him than that of England. By following the principles on which American independence was first established, he can assist in laying the foundations, not merely of a nation, as in 1776, but let us hope a new world."

Replying to this toast, and proposing a toast of Mr. Balfour, Dr. Fiske, the American ambassador, said that hitherto Americans had been concerned chiefly with the development and extension of liberty at home.

"We have now entered upon a higher crusade," he added, "to help in the extension of liberty in this old world, since the foundations of liberty throughout the whole world have been assailed. This commitment," he said, "leads us to victory, and to permanent victory, and then it leads us imperially and joyfully to perfect and permanent understanding with all other steadfast friends of freedom. This kingdom is the steadfast friend of freedom."

In conclusion, he paid tribute to Mr. Balfour, saying that no man had crossed the Atlantic on a nobler mission, and no man had done a nobler task more successfully than he.

The Mistake of George III. Continuing, he referred to the mistake Great Britain made, almost inevitably at that particular period of the world's history, in supposing that unity was possible, so long as one part of the empire, speaking the same language, having the same traditions and laws, the same love of liberty and the same ideals, would consent to remain a part of the empire except on absolutely equal terms. All he could say in excuse for his forefathers, he added, amid laughter, was that the British colonial policy in the eighteenth century was far better than the colonial policy of any other country.

Great Britain had learned her lesson, Mr. Balfour went on, and today they were endeavoring to carry out, by slow degrees, an imperial constitution combining the advantages of each of the different communities with machinery for the better attainment of common imperial ends.

"I think," Mr. Balfour added, "the separation of America from Great Britain may properly carry memories of triumph on your side, but it should be triumph seen in its true perspective, and by this true perspective so seen that it does not interfere with continuity in the development of free institutions with a consciousness of common kinship and common ideals, and the considerations which bind us together and which year by year, generation by generation are going to bind us still closer in the future."

Hitherto the battles on American soil have been battles between peoples of the same speech and the same traditions. In the future, ideas which were always fundamentally and essentially the same, find a sphere of action outside the ample limits of the United States, and bind us together in a world task.

"We are working together in the freedom of great hopes and with great ideals. We have them in common from a common history and from a common ancestry. We both spring from the same soil, we both cultivate the same great aims. We both have the same hopes as regards the future of western civilization, and now we find ourselves united in this struggle against a power which, if it is allowed to prevail, is going to destroy the very roots of western civilization from which we draw our strength."

"Are we not bound together forever? Will not our descendants see that among the incalculable circumstances which this unique episode in the world's history produced, the most beneficial and permanent was that it brought together and united for one common purpose, in one common understanding, the two great branches of the English-speaking race?"

When Our Rights Are Invaded. President James Monroe, in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, for our duty is to support with our policy and our common sense when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense.

No Babies—No Wars. Some women socialists of Los Angeles have injected life into a new scheme to do away with wars and horrors. Briefly, they propose to refuse to bear children until a permanent and enduring peace is established.

The reason: No babies, no men; no wars. No socialists?

IN BED FOR WEEKS

Mr. Smith Was in a Bad Way, But Doan's Restored Him to the Best of Health.

In April, 1916, Louis Smith, 90 New St., Hackensack, N. J., said: "Words fail to describe the misery I endured from kidney complaint. In my work I have to do a lot of heavy lifting and this weakened my kidneys."



At first I only suffered from a slight backache, but almost before I knew it, I was all bent over like a man a hundred years old.

"I began to grow worse as the days passed and finally I had to take to my bed where I remained for weeks. My head pained terribly and my back just throbed. I was always dizzy and it seemed as if everything was whirling. Little black specks came before my eyes and I also suffered from painful and scanty passages of the kidney secretions. Everything seemed dark and dreary."

"Doan's Kidney Pills completely cured me and I am enjoying the best of health now."

"Sworn to before me." E. M. Johnson, Justice Peace. On March 19, 1917, Mr. Smith added: "I will never forget what Doan's did for me. Whenever I catch cold on my kidneys, I can depend on Doan's to fix me up all right."

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One-Sided Recognition. They passed on the street without speaking, but their eyes had mutual recognition and challenge. She was accompanied by a female friend, and he had a male companion. When they had passed the girl said:

"That was poor Jack Jurgens. He didn't speak, but you noticed his look, didn't you? Poor boy, it hurts me to think how he has never got over my refusal to marry him. Of course he was all broken up at the time, but I thought he would soon get over it. He's thinner, isn't he? I do hope that he hasn't plunged into dissipation. He couldn't trust himself to speak, could he? Oh, dear!"

And the man was saying: "Did you see how that dame gave me the eye? I suppose I should have spoken to her, because I can't help thinking I've met her somewhere—her face is familiar, but I can't place her." —Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Get-Rich-Quick Scheme. Two young Irishmen in a Canadian regiment were going into the trenches for the first time, and their captain promised them five shillings each for every German they killed.

Pat lay down to rest, while Mick performed the duty of watching. Pat had not lain long when he was awakened by Mick shouting: "They're comin'! They're comin'!"

"Who's comin'?" shouts Pat. "The Germans," replies Mick. "How many are there?" "About fifty thousand." "Begorra," shouts Pat, jumping up and grabbing his rifle, "our fortune's made!" —London Opinion.

Once Was Enough. "My wife never rouses me up to cut the grass before breakfast." "Is that so?" "Yes; she tried it once and I was so sleepy that I ran the lawn mower all over her flower beds."

Not a Rare Case. "Do you love your ma-in-law?" "You bet I do. My wife would break my neck if I didn't."

Doing His Best. She—Are you a freshman? He (confused)—I try to be.—Brunonian.



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"There's a Reason"