

The DESTROYER

By BURTON E. STEVENSON

CHAPTER XXXI.—(Continued).

"To attack the fort at Strasbourg will not be easy," said Crochard, at last. "The Germans are no doubt already on their guard." Deleasse smote his forehead with his open palm.

"That is it!" he cried. "Lepine, that is the explanation! It is not for war they prepare; it is in terror they withdrew their fleets into mid ocean and throw cordons of soldiers about their forts! At this moment, in spite of their bold front, the emperor and his ministers are trembling! For of course they know that Pachmann failed—and that we succeeded!"

"Undoubtedly," Crochard agreed. "Pachmann would notify the emperor of his failure as soon as he regained consciousness!"

"Not a pleasant task," chuckled Deleasse. "He has my pity. What happened to the prince?"

"The prince was released next morning."

"You have friends, then, in New York?" asked Lepine, curiously.

"I have friends everywhere," answered Crochard quietly.

"When I think of the kaiser trembling!" cried Deleasse. "Ah, what anguish must be his! I have tasted it, and I know!"

Crochard took from his coat a long pocket book.

"This belonged to Admiral Pachmann," he said. "I paused long enough to secure it, because it contained a document which I was most anxious to possess. It will interest you, sir," and he drew out a black sealed envelope and passed it to Deleasse.

The latter opened it, took out the stiff sheet of paper he found within, read it, re-read it, and then stared at Crochard stupefied.

"That is what one might call an imperial power of attorney," said Crochard, with a little laugh. "It is sufficiently comprehensive, is it not?"

"It is unbelievable!" cried Deleasse, and handed the paper to Lepine. "And this was really given by the emperor to Pachmann?"

"I see no reason to doubt it. Though," Crochard added, with a smile, "I am of the opinion that Pachmann put it to uses and went to lengths which the emperor did not contemplate—perhaps would have forbidden."

Deleasse's eyes were glowing with an infernal joy.

"That does not matter," he said. "That was because his hand was forced. It is the emperor who is responsible—it is a risk he took. If he chose his instrument badly, it is he who must suffer for it. You permit me to retain this paper?"

"Certainly. Use it as you think best for France!"

Deleasse was out of his chair, striding up and down the room.

"So the wheel has turned!" he cried. "You may not remember it M. Crochard—to you it may have seemed a small thing—but six years ago, the emperor caused me to be driven from the foreign office because I did and said certain things which displeased him. Such was his power even here in Paris! You will scarcely credit it, but so it was. And now it is my turn! With this in my hand, all things are possible! He must have been mad to put his hand to such a paper—but, after all, it does not astonish me. He is always doing mad things; he has no balance, no self control. Ten years ago, with an imprudent telegram, he almost plunged his country into war with England—and at a moment, too, when it was wholly unprepared! Two years ago, a wild speech of his brought Germany to the brink of revolution. Last year, he nearly upset his empire by an indiscreet interview which was suppressed just in time. He is always in hot water, but heretofore his good fortune has been amazing. He has always succeed in extricating himself. This time, it seems, he has tempted the gods once too often—the game is in our hands. Our ultimatum I will prepare to-day, and I will invite to my office the German ambassador, and I will hand him that ultimatum, and I will say certain things to him which have long been biting at my throat for utterance, and then I will give him a glimpse of this document, and finally I will send him away. Ah, there will be consternation at Berlin tonight! Suddenly Deleasse stopped in front of Crochard's chair. "My friend," he said, in another tone, "you have

saved France. You must name your own reward. I grant it, before you ask it."

"Well, yes," said Crochard smiling. "I shall not refuse. At Toulon, on the quay opposite the spot where lies the wreck of La Liberté, a friend of mine conducts a cafe. It was he who noticed the two Germans—it was he who gave me my first clue. So he deserves a reward on his own account. He is an honest man, who has suffered unjustly. Four years ago he was condemned to prison for killing the betrayer of his daughter. He is called Samson. M. Lepine will no doubt recall the circumstances."

"I recall them very well," said Lepine. "Samson escaped the day after he was sentenced. I could find no trace of him, until I saw him at Toulon."

"But you did not arrest him!" said Crochard quickly.

"I promised to take no action until you and I had talked together."

"Thank you, M. Lepine," said Crochard warmly. "I have always respected you as a man of your word. It was I who assisted Samson to escape, since his punishment seemed to me undeserved; it was I who secured false papers for him and established him at Toulon. He has done well, but he dare not have his family with him. He loves his family, and without them he finds life sad. M. Deleasse, you have told me to name a reward—I ask that Samson may be pardoned."

"It is granted," said Deleasse, in a low voice; "but is there nothing else? Is there nothing I can do for you, my friend?"

Crochard had risen and he and the great minister stood face to face. "Yes, there is something, sir," he said, "which you can do for me, and which will make me very proud. You are a great man, and I admire you. There are not many men to whom I raise my hat; but I salute you, sir, and I hope you will accept my hand!"

Deleasse's hand shot out and seized Crochard's and held it close.

"It is I who am honored!" he said thickly.

But at the end of a moment, Crochard drew his hand away.

"Do not idealize me, sir," he said. "I am outside the law; you and I go different ways. If for once, M. Lepine and I have worked together, it was because France demanded it. We admire each other; we found that we possess certain qualities in common. But now I have done my part; the rest is in your hands. So I say adieu; our alliance is over; we are enemies again—"

"Not enemies," broke in Deleasse, quickly. "Antagonists perhaps; but not enemies. I wish—"

"No, do not wish," said Crochard. "My life satisfies me. I have a certain work to do, and I am happy in doing it. But I accept your word—henceforth we are antagonists, not enemies. Adieu, sir."

The door closed, and Deleasse, dropping heavily into his chair, gazed mutely into Lepine's inscrutable eyes.

CHAPTER XXXII.
STRASBOURG.

A mile or two back from the Rhine, on the banks of the Ill, stands the fair city of Strasbourg. Once she was proud as well as fair; but her pride has been trailed in the dust. For four centuries a free city, defending herself virgin like against all comers, for two centuries more the happy capital of the loveliest of French provinces, she has borne for 40 years the chain of the conqueror and bowed her head beneath the lash. But she is French still—French to the very core of her; and though her hands are bound, her soul is free!

The oldest part of the town has changed but little with the centuries. There are the narrow crooked streets, the tall half timbered houses with their many domed roofs, and there is the grey minister, which has looked down on the city through all her fortunes. To the north lie the newer quarters of the town, spick and span, and to the south are great arsenals and barracks, guarded by a mighty fortification.

For Strasbourg is now one of the great strong holds of the Ger-

man empire. Haunted by the fear that France may one day come pouring up from the south to regain her lost city, the engineers of the kaiser have labored with their every talent for her defense. Far flung, a circle of 14 forts girdles her round, and within them rampart follows rampart, culminating in the mighty citadel.

What hope can an army, however great, have of capturing such a place? In the mind of every German engineer there is but one objective, and always one, associated with it—impregnable.

And yet, in this mid-month of October, there was in the air a feeling of uneasiness, impalpable, not to be defined or even spoken of—but present, ever present. From far distant posts of the empire, troops had been hurried southward, until the usual garrison of 15,000 had been more than doubled. Every rampart was manned, every wall had its sentry, and through the streets, patrols moved constantly, their gaze directed at the house tops. Their orders were to see that no one stretched a wire to any building; to arrest any one found doing so, and send him at once to Berlin, under guard.

The restaurants, the hotels, the cafes—every place where crowds assembled—swarmed with strangers, speaking French, it is true, but with an accent which, to acute ears, betrayed their origin and made one wonder at their pro-Gallic sentiments. The French and German residents of the town drew imperceptibly apart, grew a little more formal, ceased the exchange of friendly visits. No one knew what was about to happen, but every one felt that a crisis of some sort was at hand.

The commandant changed, in those days, from a bluff, self confident and brave soldier to a shrunken craven, trembling at shadows. If he had known where the danger lay, or what it was, he would have met it valiantly enough; but he knew scarcely more than did his humblest soldier. He knew that the peril was very great; he knew that at any moment his magazines might blow up beneath his feet; he knew that what he had to guard against was the stringing of wires, the establishment of a wireless plant. Every stranger must be watched, his registration investigated, his baggage at all times kept under surveillance. A stranger carrying a bundle in the streets must always be followed. Every resident receiving a roomer, a boarder, or even a guest from another city must make immediate return to the police.

How many times had the commandant read these instructions! And always, at the last, he read twice over the paragraph at the bottom of the sheet, underlined in red:

At all hours of the day or night, two operators will be on duty at every wireless station, their receivers at their ears, their instruments adjusted. Should they perceive any signal which they are unable to explain, especially a series of measured dashes, they will report the same immediately to the commandant, who will turn out his entire command and cause a thorough search to be made at once of all house-tops, hills and eminences of every sort within a radius of five miles. All wires whose use is not fully apparent will be torn down and all persons having access to such wires will be arrested and held for interrogation. SHOULD THE SERIES OF SIGNALS BEGIN A SECOND TIME, ALL MAGAZINES WILL AT ONCE BE FLOODED.

This last sentence, printed in capitals to give it emphasis, the commandant at Strasbourg could not understand. To flood the magazines meant the loss of 1,000,000 marks; besides, why should it be necessary? What possible danger could threaten those great ammunition store houses, buried deep beneath walls of granite, protected from every conceivable mishap, and whose keys hung always above his desk? He was completely baffled; worse than that, he felt himself shaken and unnerved in face of this mysterious peril.

A copy of this order was sent to every fortress in Germany, and it is therefore not remarkable that, three days after it was issued, it should be in the hands of M. Deleasse. He read it with a lively pleasure. He was beginning to enjoy life again. He knew that the tone of his ultimatum had astonished the German ambassador; but he also knew, that, while the German press still talked of the national honor and of Germany's duty to Morocco, the inner circle about the emperor was distinctly ill at ease. The emperor himself had been invisible for some days, and was reported to be suffering with a severe cold.

After reading the order, Deleasse summoned Marbeau.

"How do your plans shape themselves?" he asked.

"Admirably, sir," answered the wireless chief. "We shall be ready to start tomorrow."

"When is the test to take place?"

"If everything goes well, one

week from yesterday, at noon."

"You must use great care. The Germans are on their guard. Here is something that will interest you."

Marbeau took the order and read it carefully.

"If the magazines are flooded," Deleasse pointed out, "we can do nothing."

"It will be something to have occasioned the destruction of so much ammunition," Marbeau rejoined; "but we are not taking that chance. All our instruments will be tuned and tested before we start. The Germans will hear those signals but once."

A little tremour passed across Deleasse's face.

"You believe in this invention," he asked. "You have investigated it?"

Marbeau shrugged his shoulders.

"I know nothing more of it than you do, sir. M. Vard tells me nothing, shows me nothing, persists in working alone. He is most jealous of it. But yes—I believe; when I remember the 25th of September, I cannot but believe."

Deleasse was pacing to and fro, his hands behind him.

"Sometimes I doubt, Marbeau," he said. "Sometimes I doubt. The destruction of La Liberté may have been one of those strange coincidences which sometimes happen. And sometimes I hesitate; sometimes I draw back before the idea of this demonstration. For Morocco we no longer need it; I have in my possession a paper which will win that battle for us. But then, when I falter, the thought of France's future nerves me. So I stand aside and let the test proceed. But I warn you again, Marbeau, to be most careful. Do not neglect to provide a way of escape. Failure this time is of little consequence—we can always try again; but under no circumstances must this machine fall into the hands of Germany; and for you and for Vard it must be death before capture. He must not be taken alive."

"I understand, sir," said Marbeau, quietly.

"If you think Strasbourg too difficult, it is not too late to draw back. It was, perhaps, unwise for me to select it."

"The more difficult it is, the more it will dismay the enemy," Marbeau pointed out. "Let us try Strasbourg, at least. If we fail there, we can try again somewhere else."

"Well, I agree. Remember, you are not to spare expense."

"We have had to purchase two houses in order to be quite secure."

"Purchase a dozen, if you need them. The date, you say—"

"Is one week from yesterday."

"And the hour?"

"The hour of noon."

Deleasse turned to the day on his desk calendar, and wrote a large "12" upon it.


"Adieu, then, Marbeau," he said, and held out his hand. "My prayers go with you."

(Continued Next Week.)

THE GENEROUS THOUGHT.

John Greenleaf Whittier.
God blesses still the generous thought,
And still the fitting word He speeds,
And Truth, at His requiring taught,
He quickens into deeds.

PUTS HAWAII ON SUFFRAGE MAP



Mrs. B. F. Pitman.

Mrs. B. F. Pitman of Boston, known as the financial genius of the party because of the numerous successful bazaars she has conducted, watches eagerly the Hawaiian suffrage bill in congress. It was she who dug it out of its hiding place in committee and she has looked on its early passage.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

The Heads of Canada's Western Provinces, and Their Message.

The United States having been in the great world's war for about nine months, the touch of war's spirit has permeated the great commonwealth, and in every hamlet and district is felt and shown the interest that was to be expected from a people whose love of liberty and justice rises supreme to all else. Day by day their appreciation of what it means to give up now for the future happiness of themselves and the generations that follow grows greater and greater. There will be losses of loved ones, but there will be no badge of mourning to indicate the great sorrow that will be felt. It is realized that the sacrifice is the toll that is demanded for making the world better, and, sensing this, there is preparation and willingness to sacrifice until the goal—the defeat and downfall of despotism—is assured. When the people look back, and see what Canada has done, and learn that Canada today is bigger and better than ever, they will take heart, and with increasingly growing vigor carry on with a greater courage. Canada has been in the war for three and a half years. She has sent 400,000 out of a population of eight million, she has subscribed to Victory Bonds over and over again and there is no sound of a whimper. At each demand that is made upon her resources, she meets it, and gets ready for the next. Recently her people were asked to subscribe \$300,000,000. She handed over \$460,000,000.

Having already contributed 400,000 soldiers, Canada was recently asked to approve of sending another 100,000. With a sweeping majority, consent was given.

How the war affects Canada is best shown by the willingness of the people to contribute. They, too, realize the great and noble part they are taking in this great conflict. They are a unit in making the world better. Canada's wealth was never shown to better advantage than in the present struggle. It possesses great wealth in the soil, in its mines, its other natural resources, and wonderful riches in the tenacity and courage of its men and its women. The soil and the climate, and the hardihood and determination of the farming class to win, by cultivating and cultivating, growing wheat and raising cattle to build up the resources so necessary to carry on the war, are factors that will count.

Probably the best word of encouragement comes from the Premiers of the three great provinces where the bulk of the food products will come from. When one reads what these men, prominent in their country, say, it gives inspiration. If there are any who may be pessimistic of the future, the message that these gentlemen send forward should remove all doubt. Three and a half years in the war, able to speak as they do, the future should look bright to those who may have their seasons of doubt!

Hon. T. C. Norris, Premier of Manitoba, says:

"Manitoba has prospered exceedingly during the year 1917, and the new year finds us not only still ready and willing, but unceasingly able to bear whatever burdens the fourth year of the war may bring.

"Manitoba farmers, generally speaking, have never been in better condition to carry on. Out of her prosperity Manitoba is giving lavishly toward the winning of the war. Every appeal for funds has met with quick and generous response. The people of the Province are well settled into the collar in all war efforts. There's a spirit of determination, of willingness to make sacrifices, of confidence in the certain outcome, of which there is no room for pessimism. Manitoba will carry on."

Saskatchewan had a prosperous and successful year in 1917, and when Premier Martin sent out his New Year message it was filled with an optimism that was fully warranted.

"There is no doubt that the province today is in a better condition financially than ever before. True, the effects of the town and city real estate boom have not altogether passed away, but speaking generally, the farmers on the plains and the merchants in the towns are in a better financial position today than at any previous time. Our people are industrious and progressive.

"While we have in some portions of the Province a mixed population, education and scientific methods are making rapid strides and we are looking forward with every confidence to a glorious future and the development of a people on the central plains of Canada, of which the whole Dominion and the British Empire will have every reason to be proud."

While Alberta has given over to the war thousands of her virile manhood, thus taking from the farmer a large percentage of its producers, it still stands up big and buoyant. The farm help thus temporarily removed means a demand for farm help and increased farm effort to till its highly productive acres. Hon. Chas. Stewart, Premier of Alberta, in a message to the people on the 1st of January, speaks with such buoyancy and hope of the future and so highly of the work of the past year, that his statement is reproduced. He says:

"The prosperity of the farming communities is reflected in the towns and

cities by increased wholesale business and bank clearances. Wholesalers report increases from 20 per cent to 25 per cent and their collections the best in the history of the Province. Alberta being essentially an agricultural Province at the present time, these conditions are a source of great gratification to our people, and no doubt will be to Canada as a whole—taking into consideration the fact that Alberta forms no small part of the granary to which the Empire at present looks as the source of its food supply."—Advertisement.

BROUGHT THEM UP STANDING

American Soldiers Misunderstood Cockney's Announcement and Wanted a Cut of That "Pie."

Stories of the Thanksgiving day dinner which certain tea shops and restaurants prepared for American soldiers in Paris are still current with guesses as to how many turkeys with their "fixings" were consumed.

One of the best yarns is told of a party of Uncle Sam's engineers who had their spread at an English tea place near the Madeline, where an elaborate menu at a fixed price had been advertised.

The soldier boys came early and ate steadily and thoroughly. Their persistence and failure to show any signs of faltering began to get on the nerves of the little cockney waiter.

After serving the second or third round of dessert and filling the coffee cups several times he became quite jumpy as the boys showed no signs of their intention to leave the table. Then he had an idea—such as it was—he would suggest it was time to settle for their dinner.

"Py at the end!" he shouted.

Every American soldier was on his feet in a flash.

"Where's that pie, cockney?" they demanded.

But that waiter had started for Blighty.

More Conservation.

"In times like these when food is so high," remarked the Observer of Events and Things, "a man thinks twice before 'casting his bread upon the water.'"

The Quinine That Does Not Affect Head Because of its tonic and laxative effect, Laxative Quinine can be taken by anyone without causing nervousness or ringing in the head. There is only one "Laxative Quinine." H. W. GROVE'S signature on box. 30c.

A bushel of fun is sometimes followed by a peck of trouble.

When you climb a water wagon don't ask for a transfer.

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Every woman should help with bandages, socks or "kits" for the soldiers who are our defense on the firing line. But many women are not strong enough to carry on their ordinary household duties. You get strong, if you're a tired-out or "run-down" woman, with Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. And, if you suffer from any "womanly complaint" or disorder, you get well. For these two things—to build up women's strength, and to cure women's ailments—this is the best medicine to benefit or cure.

Send Dr. V. M. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y., 10 cents for trial package of tablets.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA.—"Through over-work I developed woman's weakness. I became all run-down, weak, nervous, could not eat nor sleep, suffered with severe pains in my back and side and bearing-down pains. For my ailment I took Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and it was the means of restoring me to health and strength. It is a fine medicine."—Mrs. MARY YUN, 3619 Avenue A.

OTTUMWA, IOWA.—"I had a bad case of nervous prostration. I was that way about four or five years. I took Doctor Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery for about one and one-half years when I stopped taking it because I was about cat nor sleep, suffered with severe pains in my back and side and bearing-down pains. For my ailment I took Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and it was the means of restoring me to health and strength. It is a fine medicine."—Mrs. S. E. OWENS, 410 E. Fourth Street.

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