

THE TEETH OF THE TIGER

BY MAURICE LEBLANC

TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS

CHAPTER TWELVE. (Continued.)

No; one thing alone stood out above the situation: the sentence, "Bear in mind that the explosion is independent of the letters." And, as the explosion was put down for the night of the 25th of May, it would occur that very night, at 3 o'clock in the morning!

"Help! Help!" he cried.

This time he did not hesitate. So far, he had had the courage to remain huddled in his prison and to wait for the miracle that might come to his assistance; but he preferred to face every danger and undergo every penalty rather than abandon the prefect of police, Weber, Mazeroux, and their companions to the death that threatened them.

"Help! Help!"

Fauville's house would be blown up in three or four hours. That he knew with the greatest certainty. Just as punctually as the mysterious letters had reached their destination in spite of all the obstacles in the way, so the explosion would occur at the hour named. The infernal artificer of the accused work had wished it so. At 3 o'clock in the morning there would be nothing left of the Fauville's house.

"Help! Help!"

He recovered enough strength to raise desperate shouts and to make his voice carry beyond the stones and beyond the wainscoting.

Then, when there seemed to be no answer to his call, he stopped and listened for a long time. There was not a sound. The silence was absolute.

Thereupon a terrible anguish covered him with a cold sweat. Supposing the detectives had ceased to watch the upper floors and confined themselves to spending the night in the rooms on the ground floor!

He madly took a brick and struck it repeatedly against the stone that closed the entrance, hoping that the noise would spread through the house. But an avalanche of small stones, loosened by the blows, at once fell upon him, knocking him down again and fixing him where he lay.

"Help! Help!"

More silence—a great, ruthless silence.

"Help! Help!"

He felt that his shouts did not penetrate the walls that stifled him. Besides, his voice was growing fainter and fainter, producing a hoarse groan that died away in his strained throat.

He ceased his cries and again listened, with all his anxious attention, to the great silence that surrounded as with layers of lead the stone coffin in which he lay imprisoned. Still nothing, not a sound. No one would come, no one could come to his assistance.

He continued to be haunted by Florence's name and image. And he thought also of Marie Fauville, whom he had promised to save. But Marie would die of starvation. And, like her, like Gaston Sauverand and so many others, he in his turn was the victim of this monstrous horror.

An incident occurred to increase his dismay. All of a sudden his electric lantern, which he had left alight to dispel the terrors of the darkness, went out. It was 11 o'clock at night.

He was overcome with a fit of giddiness. He could hardly breathe in the close and vitiated air. His brain suffered, as it were, a physical and exceedingly painful ailment, from the repetition of images that seemed to encrust themselves there; and it was always Florence's beautiful features or Marie's livid face. And, in his distraught brain, while Marie lay dying, he heard the explosion at the Fauvilles' house and saw the Prefect of Police and Mazeroux lying hideously mutilated, dead.

A numbness crept over him. He fell into a sort of swoon, in which he continued to stammer confused syllables:

"Florence—Marie—Marie—"

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE EXPLOSION

The fourth mysterious letter! The fourth of those letters "posted by the devil and delivered by the devil," as one of the newspapers expressed it!

We all of us remember the really extraordinary agitation of the public as the night of the 25th of May drew near. And fresh news increased this interest to a yet higher degree.

People heard in quick succession of the arrest of Sauverand, the flight of his accomplice, Florence Levasseur, Don Luis Perenna's secretary, and the inexplicable disappearance of Perenna himself, whom they insisted, for the best of reasons, on identifying with Arsene Lupin.

The police, assured from this moment of victory and having nearly all the actors in the tragedy in their power, had gradually given way to indiscretion; and, thanks to the particulars revealed to this or that journalist, the public knew of Don Luis' change of attitude, suspected his passion for Florence Levasseur and the real cause of his right-about-face, and thrilled with excitement as they saw that astonishing figure enter upon a fresh struggle.

What was he going to do? If he wanted to save the woman he loved from prosecution and to release Marie and Sauverand from prison, he would have to intervene some time that night, to take part, somehow or other, in the event at hand, and to prove the innocence of the three accomplices, either by arresting the invisible bearer of the fourth letter or by suggesting some plausible explanation. In short, he would have to be there; and that was interesting indeed!

And then the news of Marie Fauville was not good. With unwavering obstinacy she persisted in her suicidal plans. She had to be artificially fed; and the doctors in the infirmary at Saint-Lazare did not conceal their anxiety. Would Don Luis Perenna arrive in time?

Lastly, there was that one other thing, the threat of an explosion which was to blow up Hippolyte Fauville's house ten days after the delivery of the fourth letter, a really impressive threat when it was remembered that the enemy had never announced anything that did not take place at the stated hour. And, although it was still ten days—at least, so people thought—from the date fixed for the catastrophe, the threat made the whole business look more and more sinister.

That evening, therefore, a great crowd made its way, through La Mède and Auteuil, to the Boulevard Suchet, a crowd coming not only from Paris, but also from the suburbs and the provinces. The spectacle was exciting, and people wanted to see.

They saw only from a distance, for the police had barred the approaches 100 yards from either side of the house and were driving into the ditches of the fortifications all those who managed to climb the opposite slope.

The sky was stormy, with heavy clouds revealed at intervals by the light of a silver moon. There were lightning flashes and peals of distant thunder. Men sang. Street boys imitated the noises of animals. People formed themselves into groups on the benches and pavements and ate and drank while discussing the matter.

A part of the night was spent in this way and nothing happened to reward the patience of the crowd, who began to wonder, somewhat wearily, if they would not do better to go home, seeing that Sauverand was in prison and that there was every chance that the fourth letter would not appear in the same mysterious way as the others.

And yet they did not go: Don Luis Perenna was due to come!

From 10 o'clock in the evening the Prefect of Police and his secretary general, the chief detective and Weber, his deputy, Sergeant Mazeroux, and two detectives

were gathered in the large room in which Fauville had been murdered. Fifteen more detectives occupied the remaining rooms, while some 20 others watched the roofs, the outside of the house, and the garden.

Once again a thorough search had been made during the afternoon, with no better results than before. But it was decided that all the men should keep awake. If the letter was delivered anywhere in the big room, they wanted to know and they meant to know who brought it. The police do not recognize miracles.

At 12 o'clock M. Desmaliens had coffee served to his subordinates. He himself took two cups and never ceased walking from one end to the other of the room, or climbing the staircase that led to the attic, or going through the passage and hall. Preferring that the watch should be maintained under the most favorable conditions, he left all the doors opened and all the electric lights on.

Mazeroux objected: "It has to be dark for the letter to come. You will remember, Monsieur le Prefet, that the other experiment was tried before and the letter was not delivered."

"We will try it again," replied M. Desmaliens, who, in spite of everything, was really afraid of Don Luis' interference, and increased his measures to make it impossible.

Meanwhile, as the night wore on, the minds of all those present became impatient. Prepared for the angry struggle as they were, they longed for the opportunity to show their strength. They made desperate use of their ears and eyes.

At 1 o'clock there was an alarm that showed the pitch which the nervous tension had reached. A shot was fired on the first floor, followed by shouts. On inquiry, it was found that two detectives, meeting in the course of a round, had not recognized each other, and one of them had discharged his revolver in the air to inform his comrades.

In the meantime the crowd outside had diminished, as M. Desmaliens perceived on opening the garden gate. The orders had been relaxed and sightseers were allowed to come nearer, though they were still kept at a distance from the pavement.

Mazeroux said: "It is a good thing that the explosion is due in 10 days' time and not tonight, Monsieur le Prefet; otherwise, all those good people would be in danger as well as ourselves."

"There will be no explosion in ten days' time, any more than there will be a letter tonight," said M. Desmaliens, shrugging his shoulders. And he added, "Besides, on that day, the orders will be strict."

It was now ten minutes past two.

At 25 minutes past, as the Prefet was lighting a cigar, the chief detective ventured to joke:

"That's something you will have to do without, next time, Monsieur le Prefet. It would be too risky."

"Next time," said M. Desmaliens, "I shall not waste time in keeping watch. For I really begin to think that all this business with the letters is over."

"You can never tell," suggested Mazeroux.

A few minutes more passed. M. Desmaliens had sat down. The others also were seated. No one spoke.

And suddenly they all sprang up, with one movement, and the same expression of surprise.

A bell had rung.

They at once heard where the sound came from.

"The telephone," M. Desmaliens muttered.

He took down the receiver.

"Hullo! Who are you?"

A voice answered, but so distant and so faint that he could only catch an incoherent noise and exclaimed:

"Speak louder! What is it? Who are you?"

The voice spluttered out a few syllables that seemed to astound him.

"Hullo!" he said. "I don't understand. Please repeat what you said. Who is it speaking?"

"Don Luis Perenna," was the answer, more distinctly this time.

The Prefet made as though to hang up the receiver; and he growled:

"It's a hoax. Some rotter amusing himself at our expense."

Nevertheless, in spite of himself, he went on in a gruff voice:

"Look here, what is it? You say you're Don Luis Perenna?"

"Yes."

"What do you want?"

"What's the time?"

"What's the time?"

The Prefet made an angry gesture, not so much because of

the ridiculous question as because he had really recognized Don Luis' voice beyond mistake.

"Well?" he said, controlling himself. "What's all this about? Where are you?"

"At my house, above the iron curtain, in the ceiling of my study."

"In the ceiling!" repeated the Prefet, not knowing what to think.

"Yes; and more or less done for, I confess."

"We'll send and help you out," said M. Desmaliens, who was beginning to enjoy himself.

"Later on, Monsieur le Prefet. First answer me. Quickly! If not, I don't know that I shall have the strength. What's the time?"

"Oh, look here!"

"I beg of you—"

"It's 20 minutes to 3!"

It was as though Don Luis found renewed strength in a sudden fit of fear. His weak voice recovered its emphasis, and, by turns imperious, despairing, and beseeching, full of a conviction which he did his utmost to impart to M. Desmaliens, he said:

"Go away, Monsieur le Prefet! Go, all of you; leave the house. The house will be blown up at 3 o'clock. Yes, yes, I swear it will. Ten days after the fourth letter means now, because there has been a ten days' delay in the delivery of the letters. It means now, at 3 o'clock in the morning. Remember what was written on the sheet which Deputy Chief Weber handed you this morning: 'The explosion is independent of the letters. It will take place at 3 o'clock in the morning.' At 3 o'clock in the morning, today, Monsieur le Prefet!"

The voice faltered and then continued:

"Go away, please. Let no one remain in the house. You must believe me. I know everything about the business. And nothing can prevent the threat from being executed. Go, go, go! This is horrible; I feel that you do not believe me—and I have no strength left. Go away, every one of you!"

He said a few more words which M. Desmaliens could not make out. Then the voice ceased; and, though the Prefet still heard cries, it seemed to him that those cries were distant, as though the instrument were no longer within the reach of the mouth that uttered them.

He hung up the receiver.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a smile, "it is 17 minutes to 3. In 17 minutes we shall all be blown up together. At least, that is what our good friend Don Luis Perenna declares."

In spite of the jokes with which this threat was met, there was a general feeling of uneasiness. Weber asked:

"Was it really Don Luis, Monsieur le Prefet?"

"Don Luis in person. He has gone to earth in some hiding hole in his house, above the study; and his fatigue and privations seem to have unsettled him a little. Mazeroux, go and ferret him out—unless this is just some fresh trick on his part. You have your warrant."

Sergeant Mazeroux went up to M. Desmaliens. His face was pallid.

"Monsieur le Prefet, did he tell you that we were going to be blown up?"

"He did. He relies on the note which M. Weber found in a volume of Shakespeare. The explosion is to take place tonight."

"At 3 o'clock in the morning?"

"At 3 o'clock in the morning—that is to say, in less than a quarter of an hour."

"And do you propose to remain, Monsieur le Prefet?"

"What next, Sergeant? Do you imagine that we are going to obey that gentleman's fancies?"

Mazeroux staggered, hesitated, and then, despite all his natural deference, unable to contain himself, exclaimed:

"Monsieur le Prefet, it's not a fancy. I have worked with Don Luis. I know the man. If he tells you that something is going to happen, it's because he has his reasons."

"Absurd reasons."

"No, no, Monsieur le Prefet," Mazeroux pleaded, growing more and more excited. "I swear that you must listen to him. The house will be blown up—he said so—at 3 o'clock. We have a few minutes left. Let us go. I entreat you, Monsieur le Prefet."

"In other words, you want us to run away."

"But it's not running away, Monsieur le Prefet. It's a simple precaution. After all, we can't risk—You, yourself, Monsieur le Prefet—"

"That will do."

"But, Monsieur le Prefet, as Don Luis said—"

A WAR TIME IDYL.

From the Continental Edition of the London Mail.

The English country side had a new sensation when the hay baling lasses came along with their train of artillery and parked it under the elms beside the big agrant hay stack.

It was a considerable train. First, the puffing tractor, then the baler veiled in green tarpaulin, a truck, and the house on wheels. With the martial maids were three or four soldiers released for work on the land. The men brought a clattering service wagon, drawn by a pair of mules.

Tractor and baler entered the meadow and took up action positions. The house on wheels remained outside at a corner of the road where it was out of the way of traffic. Covers were stripped, the hand from the fly wheel and the machine ready to be used by the baler, and the engine stoked afresh, and then the smoked and legged land girls, Dianas in physique and all pretty attacked the stacks.

Very soon they had flung up a big, loose heap of hay at the side of the baling machine and were ready to start it up. With a whirl and rhythmic pulsation the work began. Up and down went the beam, its energetic nose ramming the hay tight into the box, while from below emerged a steady stream of neatly wired bales passing along a platform.

Meanwhile another girl had set up the weighing beam, like a see-saw on a tripod. It swung the bales lightly off, with a touch of a girl's hand. A marvel of leverage it is, and the means, by the way, for a quiet lark. For one of the lasses, seeking an easy return from the stack, and the machine fairly to herself across the longer end of the beam. Chloe knew her job. Laughing, she depressed her end of the stick, and high in the air rose the figure in khaki; mademoiselle swung the steelyard round on the swivel, and let her lad down gently just where he wished to alight. All through the course of pleasant spring sunshine the maidens piled their forks, feeding the hungry machine, and the lads loaded the bales.

It was the idyll of this new, strange world, a quaint product of war, a mingling of the martial and the pastoral; very curious, but very good to see.

At meal times the house on wheels plays its part. The crockery cannot be called egg shell, the mugs are serviceable rather than elegant, but this is all in the day's work. Health and happiness and the satisfaction of doing their bit in the struggle for freedom make the land girls' lot a thing to envy.

The machine whirred, the stack grew less and less, and at length, as the sun was westering, the mule wagon went off with its final load of bales. Time had to be made up by jogging. The baler was draped anew in its green tarpaulin, loose ends were tucked up and made shipshape in a manner that would please the most exacting sergeant major, the tractor pulled out into the road again, train was coupled up, and away went this little park of peaceful ordnance to attack and reduce a new position.

The village will be sorry when all the haystacks have vanished and the land girls take their hay bales elsewhere. They are a bright note in anxious days. Better still, they plead their own cause. Lady Vere de Vere, a taxi for her energetic in flag days and charity matinees, to the ruin of her nerves and looks, has seen a new field of usefulness and has gone off to enlist.

PLAN SOME CHANGES IN DAYLIGHT SAVING

Interstate Commerce Commission May Take Hand Before Opening of Spring 1919.

Washington, D. C.—Present application of the daylight saving law, as it affects localities, will probably be changed in detail by the Interstate Commerce commission before the 1919 spring advance touches American clocks, though in many investigations now proceeding find the hour advance working satisfactorily. Examiners for the commission have completed the taking of evidence on the subject in eastern and mountain cities, but still have to conclude hearings in the middle west. At El Paso, Tex., June 17, the final hearings will be completed, and after that formal reports to the commission will be available.

While the duty of prescribing the limits of the four time zones in the United States fell to the commission, as a temporary expedient it adopted the demarcations of eastern, central, mountain and Pacific time as made by railroads, and fixed a fifth belt to govern Alaska. The examiners were sent out to see whether changes in the railroad time limits would not convenience business and social life if adopted. They have found to date a number of points, generally on the eastern edges of time belts, which already had systems of daylight saving by running on the hours of the belt adjacent to them. A dual system of time has been found in several places in the United States, where "railroad time" and "town time" have both been customarily recognized, the latter being one hour faster than the former. Some points have continued the system, even under the general time advance last spring, while others have adopted a single standard. Rules will perhaps affect these.

The law is not compulsory, except for persons doing business with the government and railroads, but the examiners are finding that compliance with it is almost universal. Specifically, the law defines the hour zones across the United States as centering respectively upon the 75th, 90th, 105th and 120th meridians west of Greenwich, with borders equidistant between the meridians. The commission exercised its power to set aside these standards, and adopted the existing railroad zones, which are only roughly similar to the legal ones. In order not to confuse and disturb the course of life. In the main, it is expected that the examiners will report the railroad zones suitable, though changes in them will be made where workability of the law and ease of application can be secured.

X-Rays For Metals.

The use of X-rays in medicine for revealing the conditions existing in the hidden structures of the human body is well known to every one, but their application to the study of the internal anatomy of metals is a newer and less familiar development. Metals used to be regarded as opaque to such rays, but the case has changed with the introduction of the Coolidge tube, which enables a beam of rays to be generated so intense that it will penetrate four inches of hard steel. Photographs can thus be taken of the interior of the metal, and will reveal a flaw with a diameter so small as one-fiftieth of an inch.

The first short course of agronomy and animal husbandry at the University of British Columbia is now in full progress.

POPULAR OFFICER IN FLYING CORPS



Brig. Gen. Charles Saltzman.

Among the officers in the aviation corps of the signal department General Saltzman has been popular. He has not been involved in any of the inquiries or criticisms directed at the department. He is expected to get a conspicuous place in the department when the air division is made a distinct unit.

YANK POLICE IN LONDON.

By George T. Bye.

Piccadilly circus these nights is a pinwheel that whizzes with the glory of armies and navies of allied nations, the sparks flying up Regent street, Shaftsbury avenue, Piccadilly and Coventry street. In the day time its ill assorted buildings have the disappointing drabness of Broadway, Manhattan, but at night, in spite of heavily shaded lights it is brilliant with its military maelstrom, and hauntingly seductive as ever—the gateway to London's theatrical, cafeland, clubland, the rendezvous of light spirits.

All tides of London humanity tend toward Piccadilly, and it is no wonder that we should find Americans there in some profession, probably more officers than men because there are more officers than men of the A. E. F. in London. But there are enough Yank privates drawn toward Piccadilly each night to warrant some attention paid to their good conduct.

When I had been wheeled by the crowd around Piccadilly twice I stopped in a little doorway next to the Pavilion theater, where Maud Allan is dancing this week, and studied the saunterers. A major took a beautiful young woman to the theater entrance, said he would leave his club at 10:15 and be waiting in a taxi for her at 10:30. Soldiers recognized each other and paired off to talk over old trench days, after separation caused by wounds and redistribution of forces.

Two noncommissioned officers were upbraided by a little white faced woman, who cried, "You Yanks are no good at me 'ome, and a dear wee baby," whereupon the soldiers protested their innocence and disappeared. A Jap officer mingled in the circling throng and people studied his "Yank" uniform, derided at his rank. "Then I'll Come Back to You When the Daisies Droop with Dew," sang a woman under her breath, and smiled. Then she quickly changed to something that sounded like "When the Sweet Magnolias Bloom, My Boy, I'll Wait for You in Illinois." I looked to my right and there stood two khaki statures made in America.

"I'm from Missouri," I said. They were from New York, one from Manhattan and the other from Syracuse. I further introduced myself and offered them a smoke. "No, Yank, we don't smoke, they were our duty. On duty, yes, military police. One turned and showed his M. P. brassard on his left arm.

Both of them looked as tidy as tall-order dummies, and one wore his uniform especially well. He was tall with steel grey hair and the easy manner of a matinee idol. No question now as to whom the strolling chattrass was attracted.

And he had been an actor for 14 years. His last name was Parker but I couldn't coax him to give the other, "Come on, Parker. It's time we were up the street," interrupted the other military policeman of Uncle Sam, whose last civilian occupation had been leader in a theater orchestra in Syracuse.

"Fine pair of policemen, aren't we?" laughed the actor. "We haven't been over long—were at a base in France for a few weeks. They took out a few men who had been in Europe before the war to act as M. P's. I've been over often; in fact, I know this grand old town and Paris nearly as well as New York, so I suppose I'll be walking a beat for the rest of the war."

I strolled along with them. "We haven't found any boys in trouble yet," they said. "They all act like gentlemen. We're supposed to keep any Yanks from getting boisterous, and take charge of them if they become disorderly. So far our only work has been to act as guides. Some boys will want to know the way to his underground station. He looks for an American M. P. and we help him out."

Soon we reached the point of junction of their beat with that of two other Yank M. P's. Then they returned to Piccadilly Circus where the merry-go-round had lost much of its density in the open doors of theaters.

Military Terms Will Stay.

From the Columbus Dispatch. They were talking about military terms coming into general use, when one of them predicted that they would not readily die out, even after the war came to an end. "It was just this way at the time of the civil war," said one of the older members of the party, "and for a long time after the war. I remember asking a young woman in Boston then if she did not like Mozart's Twelfth Mass. 'Superb,' she replied. 'Why I had two brothers in that regiment.'"

"Don't Lose Your Grip."

From the Emergency Fleet News. A new illuminated motto has made its appearance on the wall in the office of Chairman Hurley of the shipping board in Washington.

"Noah was 600 years old before he knew how to build an ark," it says. "Don't lose your grip."

The Manchurian barbers are likely soon to blossom forth as full fledged "tonorial artists." Consular reports say they are replacing their antiquated and time honored Chinese equipment with modern American barber supplies.

(Continued Next Week.)