

the pike-keeper refused to open the gate. Dick would not, because of his low funds, offer him more than a shilling, and the fellow was too boorish to give way to persuasion.

"Bess," said Dick, then, pointing to the gate, "can you take it?"

At the sound of her master's voice the mare whinnied.

"You must try, Bess," he said, "or I am stranded." He led her back, away from the gate, and scrambled into the saddle, for he was already stiff with riding.

"Now, Bess," he said, as she cantered sidling to the barrier, "over!"

The beautiful mare took the jump like an unleashed hound and was away over the remaining miles to London Town.

All night before the inn sat the innkeeper, his servants and a company of villagers. Many wagers had been made, and the possibilities of the journey discussed pro and con.

"If he ain't no fool—and he ain't—he'll change horses every post house," said one.

"There never was a horse foaled could do it in a night," said another.

"But Dick Blaine on his black mare can do it," said Bob Ostler and the innkeeper.

When the light began to tinge the elm groves mine host took from his fob his large hunting-piece. "It's half-past four," he said. "In an hour and a half you'll see Dick Blaine coming over the hill. Here, Bob Ostler, hold my watch, and wake me at five-and-twenty to six."

The ostler did as he was told, but Dick was not there at the innkeeper's time. Some of the men thereupon gave it up and went home, but just as the church clock began to strike six, a maid at the window above cried, "He's coming!"

And sure enough, there was Dick Blaine riding with bowed head, his hands clutched to the mane of his once beautiful mare. Her knees were cut, and dust and sweat had caked over her sleek skin. The men at the inn crowded round him. Dick did not speak. His eyes were closed, and from his coat sleeve the blood trickled. They took his feet from the stirrups and he rolled from the horse's back on to the ground.

"Brandy, Mary, quick!" said the innkeeper to one of the maids. He poured the cognac down Dick's throat.

"Where's the horse?" he said as he opened his eyes.

The mare heard his voice, and, pushing her head through the crowd, breathed upon his face. He seized her bridle and kissed her. As he did so she fell on her knees, and then rolled over on her side with a groan.

"O God! Bess," said Dick, leaping to his feet with new life, "you mustn't give in now; the victory is won. Fetch some water, give her brandy; where is the ostler? Oh, my God, they'll let my beautiful mare die! St. must not die!"

He knelt on the ground beside her and took her head in his arms.

"It's half-past six, Master Dick," said the innkeeper as he offered him the bottle. "Take another drink of this and get up to the Hall. We'll look after the mare."

The man rose to his feet, half-blindly, clutching at his pocket. He walked a few feet and then turned. The mare raised her head looking after him, and whinnied a farewell. Then her head dropped, and Dick Blaine strode to the great House of Blaine with a sob.

"Madame," said Dick Blaine, standing in the library half an hour later in the presence of the Squire and his daughter, "for this service your father, in a moment of excitement, promised me your hand. You know my people. My father is Dick Blaine, the smith, but the blood in his veins is as blue as yours."

* * *

"I have been a soldier of fortune. For what he has been pleased to call my bravery in the field, my Lord of Dorset obtained for me a commission in His Majesty's Guards. I now serve the King as a special equerry, under my Lord of Dorset, who will be pleased to vouch for me. I do not hold your father to his hasty promise, but if, my

lady, the lifelong worship of a man's heart is of value, it is yours."

Dorothy Blaine had been standing, with eyes on the ground, but now she lifted them to his and held out her hand.

"You know," she said, and there was pride and humility mingled in her tones, "my father but promised what I had already given. Had you failed, you had not lost what was already yours, even though this could not have gone

with it," and she quietly laid her hand in his.

In the greenest and sweetest paddock of Blaine, in the hollow, there is a mound. An iron fence guards it from marauding cattle, and riveted to the rail is a bronze plate with this inscription:

Sacred to the Memory of
Bess.

She laid down her life for a friend.

The Frenchman's Story.

By Charles Edwardes.



I MET Napoleon Bouget in an obscure East-end club that was not supposed, by the police, to have a very good character. The curate of St. Mark's—an East-end church—took me there. That will, at any rate, fairly whitewash the club's reputation. As a matter of fact, it was an innocent enough little house—the resort of a number of foreigners who had idle moments on their hands and wished to breathe an atmosphere rather more tranquil or bracing (which

suspicion that we're not running smooth in harness, I say to her, 'and I'll not mind what I do.' You see, it awes her, words like that."

I noticed my neighbor the Frenchman shrug his shoulders unobtrusively. Then he drank from his glass.

The men continued their remarks, which were really very absurd. The Frenchman and I, little by little, fell into a sort of sympathetic relationship unconsciously. We nodded to each other over the various stupidities of these silly Eastenders. At length, feeling interested in my neighbor's face, which was pathetic for all its little affectations of tufted beard and waxed mous-

be delighted to hear anything about his personal history that he cared to tell me. For my own part, I added, I had no personal history, though I hoped time would remedy that defect.

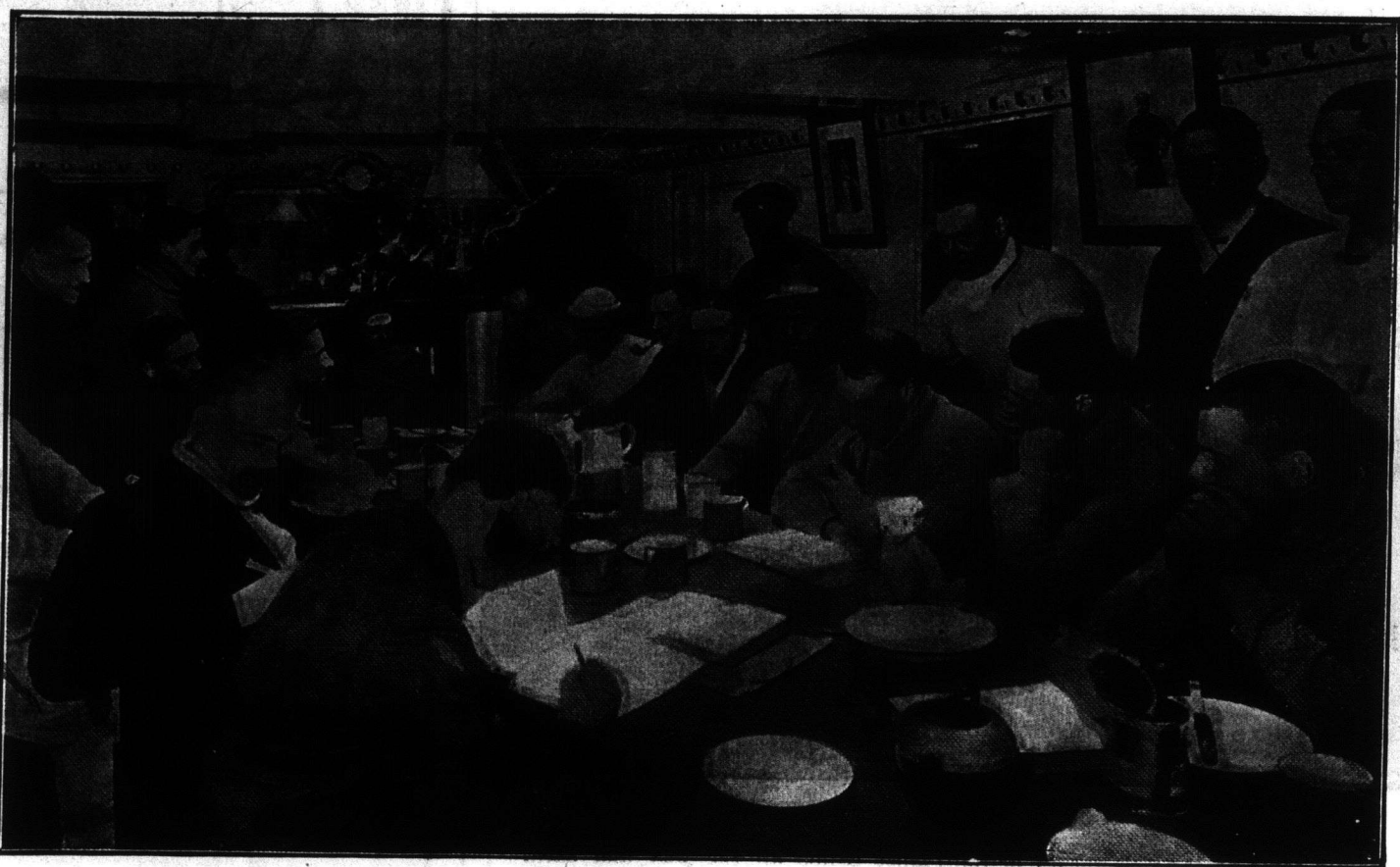
"Perfectly," replied the Frenchman. "I do not know why I tell you, if it is not only because you have the sympathetic face. But, besides, I often, late in the night, feel a desire to speak of her. It was a lesson she taught me. Mon Dieu, what a lesson! And it did me no good; that is the bad part. It only fill me with regrets that serve no purpose but to pain me. Perhaps it do you good, my friend, to hear; and so I speak."

M. Napoleon Bouget, there and then, while we walked up the long Mile End Road together, told me the following story, which I try and give in his own words. He had been resident in London ever since 1872. Naturally, therefore, he spoke very good English, though not quite the English of an Englishman.

* * *

"I was only nineteen when I became in love with my poor Susanne. She was the daughter of my concierge in a house of the Rue des Martyrs that I used to visit to dress the hair of a madame who was very proud of her appearance. I go to that house three times every week to dress madame's hair, and four more times to see Susanne.

"I loved her and she loved me. Her



Captain Scott, the explorer, and his men, on board the ship "Terra Nova" in the Antarctic.

ever you please) than that provided by their domestic apartments.

The police are a respectable association of men; but their intelligence is often much at fault. I had already learned this in other directions. Therefore, when a celestial-nosed young officer to whom I chanced to speak in the neighborhood of the club ventured to warn me about the danger I ran by frequenting the place, it was pretty much as if he dared me to visit it again.

I went there three times that very week, and it was on the last of these occasions that I became personally known to Napoleon Bouget. He and I were sitting smoking at a side table, while three or four others were discussing a certain subject. This subject was nothing less than the difficulties of matrimony. One of the greatest difficulties seemed, in the opinion of the disputants (for they were really angry with each other on other points), the due control of their wives so as to prevent cause for jealousy.

"It is for this reason," said one of them, most amusingly, though he was serious, "that I don't mind having my mother-in-law in the house."

"What rot!" said another. "My way is this: I make it plain to my missus that it's her own interest to keep straight. Let me have any grounds for

tache, I begged him to fill his glass again at my expense.

"With pleasure, if you wish," he replied, with a neat bow.

We commented mutually on the general talk, the bulk of the observations coming from me.

Then those sillies with wives, and ridiculous nostrums for control of their wives, separated; it was getting late, and toward eleven o'clock I also made a move.

"I am not married," I said jocosely. "I'm not a bit anxious about my home life."

The Frenchman looked at me narrowly, with somewhat contracted brows.

"I shall accompany you," he said.

In the street he took my arm very gently. We hadn't gone far when he said:

"My friend, you are young, and I think I shall tell you of myself. You shall marry, yourself, one day, and perhaps—it is possible—come to think like those imbeciles that spoke in there."

"Not I," I protested. "If I thought so I'd never marry."

"Oh, but you cannot tell. You are English, and possess the English mind, is it not so? But I shall fatigue you, and so—"

I begged his pardon and said I should

father and mother did not disapprove. I make my sixty francs the week at only nineteen, and I do not spend my sous, like some others, in roulette cafes or in drinking more than is good for the health. That was the situation. There was nothing to stand between us. And so we marry, and I take Susanne to a charming little apartment au troisieme, and we have one little blonde-haired baby, and I know not how more happiness could have come to us two simple, loving and contented young Parisians that we were.

"That is what it was for three years, my friend. Then a thing happen. There comes a young diable of an artist to the house, and he occupy the etage over our apartment, and he become infatuated with my poor Susanne, and his passion it is the conversation of the entire house.

"He meet her on the stairs when she go with her little basket to buy greens in the Halles for our dinner, and he meet her again when she return, and he make her compliments of the kind that all Paris girls like and see no harm in, and being a handsome diable and with a good manner, it is only nature to think that he make an impression on my poor Susanne's tender little heart.

"Of all this I, being the husband, am