

long look at the hall and stairway, and went out whistling. He stopped, and wetting a stick, left one on the park gate.

CHAPTER XV.

The recovery of Napoleon Smith was rapid, as is generally the case with wounds in the head. With the return of memory came that ambition which is a spur to the reparative powers, and causes every force of nature to hasten to the assistance of treatment as ready soldiers hasten to the line of works under a leader's eye. In a week he had so far overborne the objections of the Doctor as to appear in my office with a bandaged head, and that sidewise droop at the neck from which he would never recover. He even, in a spirit of banter, attempted to whistle the ridiculous air to which I had made such strenuous objection.

"All right," said I, "whistle if you wish, and take out your knife and whittle a chair if you wish. Anything to remind me of home. I tell you, Smith, I am getting tired of France, and I think we are nearly at the closing scene of the siege. Trochu would be a madman to hold out now that the Germans are sending shells into Paris. I had hardly expected this in the nineteenth century—shelling a city like Paris is nothing but vandalism and murder."

"That is your unmilitary view of it," said Smith. "So the world looked at the horrid campaign of Grant in the Wilderness; but it was only heroic treatment with military medicine. The fiercer the means, the quicker the return of peace. Sixty pound shells crashing through the palaces of Paris are the great bolus pills of the old school of heroic medicine. You see, Mister Secretary, I am lately from the hospital, and use medical terms," and he laughed.

"If I remain in Paris much longer I shall be qualified to give an opinion on military affairs as well as the affairs of state. But, Smith, have you forgotten the mission which brought you to Paris?"

"I have not forgotten it," said Smith, "I have only allowed a more momentous subject to eclipse it for a time. I guess that is the experience of mankind generally. When close to death's door, the thought of wealth has to take a secondary position, and when a deeper passion than the love of life gets hold of a man, wealth is totally obscured," and he blushed like a boy.

"So you think now the winning of the Lieutenant's little girl Aimee is the great and supreme object of your life?" said I, thinking of the strange scenes I had seen in the hospital.

"I not only think so—but I know it! Say, Mister Secretary, I could die for that little woman, and I am impatient to be out and at work at her release, wherever she may be. I left her in company of her worst enemy—the old Marquis—and in the power of a gang of bandits, but I believe she is hidden away by her uncle, and her life, at least, held sacred. I will get a passport from the General, and start out as I am, if I do not soon hear of her."

"I believe we shall sooner hear of her at the Legation than we should by any attempt to seek her out. In the meantime, while we wait, I want to ask you what you meant by the hint in your note, that you found the hidden treasure. You may be as romantic as you wish in your fury of love, but I am still a practical Yankee, and would like to know something of that misty fortune in which I begin to believe," and I gazed with interest into the face of Smith, awaiting an answer.

"Well," said Smith, thoughtfully, "do you remember the copper colored N in the paper I gave?"

"Certainly I do—two of them. One on each side of the room in the diagram," I answered.

"Well," said Smith, "I have had my hand on those two letters."

"No!" said I, in astonishment.

"Yes, on the night of the terrible rising of the Commune, when I came here at daylight all bruised and bleeding, and Aimee nursed me back to life; and he seemed to forget the great discovery in the sweet recollection of Aimee's tender care.

"Where, then, are those letters? Where is the building in which you saw them?" I asked in breathless interest.

"I do not know," said Smith, carelessly.

"That is strange," I answered. "Cannot you tell in what part of the city it was?"

"I cannot. I only know I was forced along by the mob, and at a certain place they tore down a building; the soldiers fired on the mob; I was forced through a window, and fell on a stone floor. There I saw the letters of copper, and a garden," said Smith, dreamily.

"Perhaps you were delirious and dreamed it," said I.

"I am not that kind of a man, and furthermore, dreams do not break a man's head or tear his clothes off his back," said Smith, testily.

"Very well, then," said I. "A walk will do you good, and there is a way in which we can locate this building in which you fell. Now, you go out into the street and stand exactly where you stood when the mob closed around you, and then pass along where you think the mob forced you to pass. In this way I think the thread of memory will catch up the vanished pictures of the strange experience of that day. Will you do it?"

"Come on," said he; "let us try it."

After quite a long walk he stopped, and looking around said:

"Here is where the mob closed up around me. That is the side street down which came another crowd with red flags. Come on!" and he walked rapidly ahead.

"Ha!" said he, "here I fell, and was about to be trampled to death, when Sturgis pulled me up and put a red cap on my head. Strange fellow that Sturgis!"

(To be continued.)

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