More Stories of the War Path

By Frederic Villiers

To say that the roads were muddy in the Balkan Peninsula in the last week of the year of grace 1876 would be as mild a statement as to express the opinion that the atmosphere of Bombay in the full burst of the monsoon is rather moist.

The picturesque streets of the old Turkish town of Nisch were mere quagmires. In attempting to cross them there was always a doubt in the mind of the pedestrians whether the liquid mud would be over one's ankles, as high as one's waist, or up to one's neck. The highways and byways were rivers, estuaries, or pools of mud. The same unctuous material in concrete form constituted the walls of the houses, and in fact most things were muddy in that picturesque, ancient, ramshackle, frontier town of Turkey. To watch a squad of troops attempting to cross a road was an amusing sight to one comfortably seated at a first-floor window. The men would break off from the narrow sidewalk of cobbles into Indian file, extending at least three paces as they took running leaps through the mire. Fortunate were those who succeeded in arriving on the other side with the pasty soil only up to their knees. The cause of all this muddiness was a rapid thaw following on many weeks of hard frost, a thaw for its rapidity and thoroughness peculiar to this part of the Balkan Peninsula. In a few hours it would freeze just as quickly, converting the streets into glacier-like surfaces again, necessitating the immediate caulking of our horses' shoes, and covering our boots with raw hide, or perhaps discarding them altogether for the moccasin of the Bulgarian peasant.

The mirror-like surface of liquid mud reflected the deep cobalt blue of the bright sky the morning I rode from my lodgment to the hospital barracks, a few miles out of the town, and, for a wonder, I arrived almost spotless, although my horse's flanks were dripping little mud pies on the threshold of the lazaret as the Turkisr sentry saluted us. On account of all this mud, it had been my intention not to indulge in walking, driving, or riding till Nischava roads had assumed their normal state of hardness; but a letter that morning had been delivered to me by a hospital orderly from the chief surgeon, asking me to come and be of rather important service to him, I was always open to calls in this way from workers under the Red Cross; hence my fortitude in facing the mud in response to the urgent call from my friend Armand Leslie.

"Well, what is it, Doctor?" said I, after the usual welcome a la Turque, for he followed the Orientals in always offering coffee and cigarettes to visitors.

"It is, as stated in my note, rather important business," replied my friend. "Please don't smile. It is a question of waterproof sheeting, beef-tea, condensed milk, and blankets. I have just received from Constantinople a large supply of these things for hospital use. You are no doubt aware that I am the only British surgeon left in Nisch, and that I remain simply to wind up the British Red Cross society's affairs, and then to hand the hospital and the remaining stores over the Turkish authorities before the New Year. That, as you know, will be the day after tomorrow, when you and I will be en route to the Moslem capital, to taste once more luxury and civilization."

"Yes," I nodded.

"Well, these things" (pointing to the yet unloaded wagons in the yard) "must be distributed to the patients before we leave, and I want you to assist me in the work."

"Certainly, my dear fellow. But why not hand them over in store to the Turkish officials?"

"There's the rub—I can't do it?"

"Can't do it?"

"No! and for a very good reason," replied Leslie. "The majority of the officials are Armenians, a miserable, dishonest lot of medical students, who, if they got the slightest chance, would trade the beef and milk with the Franks in the town, and make winter jackets of the blankets, and mackintoshes out of the water sheeting to cover over their wretched bodies."

"The scoundrels!" I indignantly cried. But the doctor, quickly placing a finger on his lips, enjoined silence, for just then an Armenian surgeon, out of heels and in seedy tunic, passed below our window.

"You see that young man?" said he. "I caught him only yesterday stealing a sheet from under a comatose patient, and he boldly told me, with a twinkle in his eye, what an excellent capote to keep off the rain it would have made if it had been but a few inches longer. Any way, my poor patients shall not be robbed by these unscrupulous scoundrels if I can help it. First of all I intend to cut up the rubber sheeting into pieces that will not lend themselves to mackintosh manipulation. It is to assist in this work that I sent for you."

I spent the whole morning with Leslie in measuring out the sheeting. In the afternoon we distributed to each man a pot of Liebig's extract and two tins of condensed milk. Then we passed through the rooms to explain the use and the way of preparing the food. On returning to the first ward for this purpose, to our surprise we discovered that the majority of the patients were sitting up in bed ravenously eating with their fingers their respective rations of comforts. We never heard what effect this concentrated nourishment had upon their digestive organs, for we left early the next morning for Constantinople. But at all events Leslie's patients were for once not robbed.

It was the eve of the New Year. A bitter frost had set in during the night, and the roads had become as hard as they were soft but a few hours before. The famous, or, rather, infamous, tower of skulls glistened with a ghastly shimmer in the bright sun as we halted to inspect the grim trophy half a league from the town. This monument of Turkish cruelty was the outcome of an unsuccessful attempt of the Servians at the beginning of last century to throw off the hated Turkish yoke. The wretched insurgent prisoners with their families were marched to this spot. Men, women, and children were ruthlessly butchered and decapitated, and their heads imbedded in the four walls of cement some fifteen feet in height. In horizontal rows three feet deep were the remaining relics of these unfortunate people, grinning from out the tottering walls of the tower. Many had shrunken and fallen out of their niches. The hair of some was still visible sticking in the hollow cavities; the bones had been trodden into the earth or carried away by jackals and wolves. Leslie picked up the vertebra of a small child. He told me that he could easily tell its age, and came to the conclusion that it was only four years old when some cowardly ruffian severed its poor little head.

We traveled all day, toiling over the rough, frozen roads of the Balkans to Lom Palanka, where we arrived as the sun, in a large red ball, set behind the long row of poplars flanking the picturesque, serrated walls of the old Turkish fortress on the left of the road. A strong aroma of roasting coffee tickled our nostrils as we entered the village, a sign that there was possible hospitality somewhere. By tracking the perfume of the fragrant bean we came to a quaint-looking inn facing the main road.

As we entered its courtyard darkness had fallen, but the bright flare from the metal braziers on the balcony of burning, crackling charcoal lighted our way to the stables.

As we descended from our voiture a grateful and hospitable sound was the crackle of that charcoal under the fans and bellows of the gaily-garbed boys as they converted the black sticks to the state of white ash necessary to its purity for heating purposes.

The inn was evidently well patronized that night, and rooms were scarce, so Leslie and I decided to share the same apartment, one opening—as they almost all did—on to the balcony of the courtyard.

We divested ourselves of our furs and assisted one another at our ablutions, which were very simple. We poured water over each other's hands from the long spout of a metal ewer resembling a half-gallon coffee-pot, while we held our heads over one of the spacious troughs fixed for draining purposes at each corner of the quadrangle balcony. The suds from our face and hands drained through the holes of the trough to the flags below, and fell on the backs of some stately herons nursing themselves to sleep on one leg in the yard. An irate bird, with shrill cries, flapping his enormous wings, floated upward and, half settling himself on the roof of the cook-house opposite, with sleepy eyes surveyed us with calm dignity, no doubt mightily puzzled as to why mankind should carry on its washing after the sun was down and all good birds were courting slumber. We dined in the cafe below on lentil soup and baked turkey, spiced with paprika, or red pepper. The wine of the country revived our drooping spirits, for our journey had been long and tiresome. After cigarettes and coffee we played a game of billiards on a rickety old French table, and soon after retired to rest.

Our bedroom was of the simplest description. Two plain iron bedsteads, set end to end on the side flanking the door of the room, and a squat table, constituted the furniture. A window, with wooden shutters, opened, as did the door, on to the balcony. In spite of the excessive cold of the room we resolved not to ask for a brazier, as charcoal is a questionable method of warming a bedroom, so we rolled ourselves in our furs instead, got between the blankets, and were soon fast asleep.

Suddenly I found myself wide awake, feeling very miserable and depressed, as if I had been through the throes of some horrible nightmare. The room, so bitterly cold when we went to bed, was now oppressively warm and stuffy. I tried to rise to relieve myself of one of the blankets, but all power of movement seemed to have left me, and presently a choking sensation seized me. I attempted to arouse the doctor by calling to him, but my tongue was dry and apparently powerless of articulation. At last, with great difficulty, I was able to repeat: "Leslie! Leslie!"

Then he awoke. I could hear him struggling to sit up in bed.

"Villiers!" cried he, "I think I am dying!"

"That's exactly my feeling," I was now able to whisper, for my head ached and throbbed as if a blacksmith were taking it for an anvil and, with swinging regularity, beating out a red-hot horseshoe upon it; and in addition to this excruciating agony an appalling sickness came over me. I heard Leslie, with a groan, fall back on to his bed, and in this way we both lay for some time.

Presently the doctor, in short, weak gasps, exclaimed: "How hot this room is! It was cold enough when we went to bed. Good heavens!" he cried, and with great exertion he struggled to a sitting posture. "Try with all your might, Villiers, to get out of bed, or you are lost!"

"No use," I faintly murmured. "I can't move."

"We must," groaned Leslie, "or we are dead men! Look! look!" and he pointed to the centre of the room.

My heavy eyes slowly followed the direction of his arm, and there, close to the floor, was a dull, ruddy glow, a glare like that from the eye of the fiery dragon of legendary lore.

"That fire!" gasped my companion. "has been built up of unpurified charcoal. We are being slowly and surely poisoned."

The terrible truth flashed on me in a moment. A brazier heaped up with the poisonous embers had been placed in our room while we were asleep.

"Villiers," continued Leslie, "unless we make a supreme effort to gain the door we shall probably never see the light of day! Listen to me, and do as I tell you. Now try and shift yourself to the edge of the bed, there's a good fellow, and then roll on to the floor."

This I managed, with great agony, to do.

"Now, for your life, drag yourself up to me!"

With excruciating pain racking every limb I turned over on to my back, and gradually wriggling, by alternate movements of my shoulders, I at last reached Leslie's side. Presently, by helping each other and with many halts by the way, we at last came to the door.

"Thank Heaven!" murmured the doctor, and I heard him suck in the sweet night air through a crack in the panel of the door.

I then greedily placed my mouth at the narrow opening. What a delicious draught that was! I seemed to gain strength in a moment. It so refreshed us that we were soon able to rise to our knees and presently unlatch the door, then we threw ourselves on to the balcony and lay with a wave of frosty air sweeping over us.

After an inexpressible feeling of thankfulness for our safety a reaction set in, and we felt bitter resentment towards the immediate cause of our miserable sufferings. We instinctively with one accord crawled back into the room, seized the copper brazier, and, dragging it upon the balcony, with all our remaining strength we tilted it to the cry of "One, two three, and away!" and over it fell into the courtyard below.

With a loud crash it struck the flags, scattering its contents of live coals into a thousand stars. The herons, disturbed once more, rose with angry screech, and with outspread wings beat their way to the roof of the inn. Then all was silent. After our supreme efforts we lay prone, regardless of the bitterness of the morning air, with throbbing heads, deadly sick, and absolutely helpless, watching the ruddy cinders of the detestable charcoal grow duller and yet more dull as they gradually turned from yellow to red and from red to white and grey, till at last with a final hiss they were swallowed up by the rime of frost.

The ringing of the swinging metal bars under the wooden hammers of the brawny Bulgarian watchmen in the signal tower of Lom Palanka had long since announced to the awakening inhabitants the dawn of a New Year before the servants of the hostelry turned out of their blankets.

The fat Bulgar cook, waddling over to the kitchen to prepare the morning coffee, was the first to notice the strange advent of the copper brazier in the middle of the courtyard. There was quite a motley group of ostlers, coachmen, sapticins, and boot boys gathered round the remains of the damaged brazier before anybody began to look about for the cause of the remarkable arrival. At last we were discovered, for our heads were still hanging over the balcony. With vacant, lack-lustre eyes we stared at the assemblage of upturned faces below. Almost unconscious, and stiff with cold, we were gently lifted up and placed on our beds, and not till the New Year was three days old were we in a fit enough condition to continue our journey.

By whom the brazier was placed in our room we were never able to discover. Appalled by so serious an accident, the servant denied all knowledge of it. Was it wilfully done? and could the dastardly act have been committed by anyone who bore enmity towards us?

"My dear Lesie," said I "you are probaby the cause of this attempt to suffocate us."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"I mean this. It is very possible your Armenian colleagues have concocted this little affair out of revenge for cutting up that waterproof sheeting," laughed I.

"By Jove! Villiers, it's possible, for these gentlemen are capable of any atrocity."

The last time I saw Leslie was in a land far different from the Balkan peninsula—a weary, waterless, sun-stricken desert, and he a poor worn-out shred of humanity lay dead.

(Fiercely fighting, with revolver in right hand, sword ready in left, his fair beard begrimed with dust, and from head to foot bespattered with blood, stood the gallant doctor five years after the little adventure I have related—one of the few white men who remained to rally the cowardly rabble of Egyptians who in the spring of 1884 were gathered together under that valiant English cavalry commander, the famous Baker Pasha, for the relief of the garrison of Tokar, in the Eastern Soudan. Desperately but hopelessly Leslie fought, his hot Irish blood flashing through the pallor of his handsome sunburnt features as he fired his last cartridge. Then, hurling the useless weapon into the surging crowd of fanatics, he raised his sword; but, before he could strike, the cruel Arab spearman overcame him. Took our orders was well known to me. His name was Paul De Garro, and despite his menial employment here he belonged to the nobility of France. His fellow-countrymen always told me that he was a count who had been exiled from France ever since Louis Napoleon III. when that monarch seized the throne and proclaimed himself Emperor. History records that barricades were erected in the streets of Paris by the populace, who were mowed down by the new Emperor's cannon until 50,000 lives had been lost and the empire firmly established on the blood thus shed. Paul De Garro was among those who opposed the new regime and in consequence he was exiled with many others to California in 1851. He came to Victoria in 1856 to visit the Catholic bishop Demers. The bishop had acquired a printing press with a small quantity of French type and with the assistance of a tramp printer, who was brought over from Puget Sound to set the type, two numbers of a weekly newspaper were got out in the French language. The title was almost as long as one's arm, for it was called La Courrier de la Nouvelle Caledonie. Among the archives of the Catholic diocese there may be preserved a few copies of this the first newspaper published on the British Pacific Coast. Personally, I never saw a copy. It is worthy of remark here that when, two years later, Mr. De Cosmos gave birth to the British Colonist he printed the first and many succeeding numbers of his paper on the type and the antiquated hand-press that had been employed in the production of De Garro's Courrier. The count was a very lugubrious-looking person at the time of which I write. He could not accept his changed fortunes with easy grace or good temper. As a waiter he was not a success, because he was condescending and patronizing and intensely irritable. If a guest objected to a dish with which he had been served the Count would flare up and pick a quarrel with the objector. After a volley of "sacres" he would retire to the kitchen to sulk and the proprietor, who was also the cook, would come into the restaurant and apologize for the impatience of the waiter-count who could not forget that he had once lived in a palace and had himself been waited upon by "vassals and slaves." A peace having been patched up, the Count would pocket his pride and resume his duties until another complaint aroused his ire and started the ball again rolling in the wrong direction. To address him as "garcon" was a deadly insult and he would never answer to any call that did not begin with "Monsieur" or "Count."

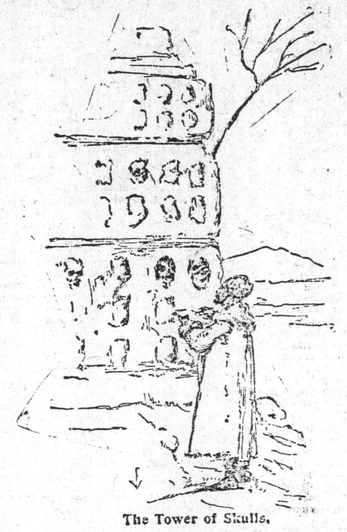
With all his brusqueness I rather liked De Garro, although a sight of his long, melancholy face often threw me into a fit of the blues. I always thought and said that he was entitled to sympathy rather than contempt, but many of the young fellows of the day did not share in that opinion and to them it was as good as a play to bait the Count until he lost his temper. One evening I sat in the restaurant reading a newspaper and the Count, who had been drinking, was in a pleasant mood and quite talkative. He opened the conversation by asking if I had ever been in Paris. I told him I had not. I strip his language of the French idioms and phrases and broken English, with which it was interlarded and give it in English.

"Oh!" said he, "that is a place worth visiting. I lived there four years. I had plenty of money. My father's estates had not been confiscated then and I went everywhere—such parties, such balls, and, ah! such lovely ladies! I was every night at the opera and the theatre and the Jardin Mabille. And then the exquisite little suppers that came after. Ah! my faith, but they were grand, and the champagne flowed like water and the cigars, the most beautiful Havanas. Monsieur H., suppose you go to Paris you see things."

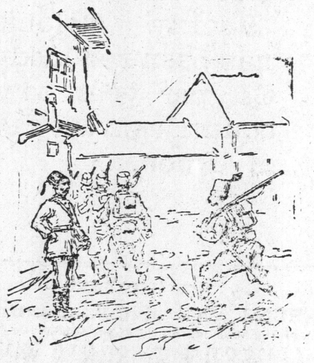
"Why did you not stay there, Count?" I asked.

"Stay there! What, live in the same atmosphere with that pig, that assassin Napoleon? Never! never! He is a murderer—he killed my best friend. Attend to me while I tell you all. I went from Brittany to Paris. I was a student. I went to study medicine. In the same lodgings was a young woman—an art student—a handsome lady, bright, cheerful, good. We met at the table one day. I loved her when first I saw her and she loved me. We got well acquainted, and we were so happy we could have died for each other. I intended to marry her—God knows I did!—when I got of age, and had my parents' consent. So we—well we trusted one another—you understand the rest. We were never happy apart. We went everywhere together. Ah! my dear, sweet Estelle! Some day I will kill the man who killed you. Well, the President of France—that miscreant, Louis Napoleon—seized the government and made himself Emperor. This was in 1851—nine years ago. I objected. Although an aristocrat I was a Republican too. I hated pomp and style. Barricades were thrown up and I served behind one. The troops came with cannon and swept away the barricades as if they were of paper. Estelle was with me. There were many other women with their husbands and lovers. I begged her to stay away, but she would not. Wherever her Julien went she would go. I could not help it. Ah! God! if I could recall that day I would make her stay away. Well, we fought together. Estelle loaded my musket and I fired it. Presently there was a rush of cavalry. We tried to stop it. No use, they poured over our breastworks and bayonetted or trod us under their horses' feet. Just as I fell I saw a cuirassier with raised sword strike poor Estelle on the head. I could not see what followed, but when I came to I saw my darling lying not far away, her lovely face smeared with blood that flowed from a ghastly wound on her head. I crawled to her. I raised her head in my arms. She was quite dead. I lay there a long time. Weak and wounded as I was I supported that dear head until some men came to gather up the dead and wounded. They tore Estelle from me and threw her loved form into a cart with other dead bodies. I saw her no more. I was sent to an hospital where I slowly recovered. I was told afterwards that the dead were interred in a common pit and destroyed with quicklime. Fancy that fate for the dear Estelle, my love, my darling—to be eaten up with lime! When I was well a decree of banishment was read to me and hundreds of others and we were sent to California. From there I came here. I live with only one purpose—to return to France some day and strike down Louis Napoleon. When Estelle shall have been avenged I will die happy, for I feel, I know I shall see her again in the other world."

As the Count ceased to talk the fire died out of his eyes, his face resumed its customary lugubrious expression and the entrance of a customer who wanted a meal interrupted a conversation which was never resumed.



The Tower of Skulls.



Running leaps through the mire.

Dr. Leslie discovers the brazier.

WHEN BABY CRIES.

When a baby cries almost continually it is a certain sign that there is something the matter with its stomach or bowels, and the mother should at once give it a dose of Baby's Own Tablets, which sweeten the sour little stomach, promote digestion and gently relax the bowels. Mrs. Fred McIntosh, Wabigoon, Ont., who has had experience, writes: "When my little boy was two mouths old he began to cry and kept it up almost continually day and night for several weeks. I gave him medicine, but it did not seem to ease him a bit. I had not at this time used Baby's Own Tablets, but the poor little fellow was suffering so much that I sent for a box. He obtained ease almost from the first dose, and in a few days was quite well. Since then he has grown splendidly, and is a bright, laughing, good-natured baby. I hold the Tablets in the highest regard and cheerfully recommend them to all mothers."

This is the verdict of all mothers who have used the Tablets. They are good for children of all ages and always cure all their minor ailments. Sold by medicine dealers or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing The Dr. Williams'

Patients at Asylum.—The returns showing the number of patients in the public hospital for the insane at New Weshminster during the month of November is as follows: In hospital November 1st, 266 males, 79 females; received during the month, 4 males, 2 females; discharged from probation, 8 males, 1 female; discharged, 2 males; permitted leave on probation, 2 males, 1 female; died, 2 males; in the hospital November 30th, 264 males, 80 females; on probation, 10 males, 8 females; total number under treatment, 274 males, 88

AN ILL-FATED FAMILY.

How the Jamieson's Passed Away.

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By D. W. H.

"Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey."
—The Bard.

Early in the summer of 1860 the keel of a sidewheel steamer of light draught was laid at the Songish Indian village in Victoria harbor. The vessel was designed expressly for navigating the waters between Victoria, Harrison river and Hope. The greatest care was bestowed upon her construction and one of the most experienced shipbuilders on the Pacific coast came from San Francisco to superintend the work. As the vessel was fashioned into shape day by day her elegant lines won general admiration. She was meant to have speed and with this object in view engines and boiler of special design and great capacity and strength were ordered from Glasgow before the keel was laid here. It was intended that the vessel should be ready for service by the fall of 1860, but there were several mishaps which prevented the first or trial trip being made until a year later. When the hull was nearly completed the timbers on which it rested gave way one day and crushed three men—one died; the other two lived. One of the latter, Richard Brodrick, was permanently lamed and carried the marks of the accident to his grave. The hull having been raised and reset the work was pushed to completion. When the time came for launching the vessel she was christened the Cariboo; but instead of gliding off she stuck on the ways and had to be jacked foot by foot to the water. Her engines and boiler, which should have reached here in the summer of 1860, did not arrive until the spring of the following year. The owner of the Cariboo was Capt. Archibald Jamieson, an experienced navigator, who had gone early to Oregon, where he commanded steamers that plied on Columbia river. Archibald was a brother of Capt. Smith B. Jamieson, who commanded the Fraser river steamer Yale when that vessel's boiler exploded on the 14th of April, 1861, or three and a-half months before the Cariboo was ready for service. On the ship that brought the Cariboo's machinery from Glasgow was a younger brother—James Jamieson—the baby of the family, as he was called. He was a tall, stalwart young Scotchman of about 24 years, had learned the trade of engine-building at the works where the Cariboo's machinery and boiler were made, and being also a marine engineer it was proposed to give him full charge of the machinery after a few trips had been made. An engineer named William Allen, who had been a long time out of steady employ, was temporarily appointed as chief engineer with James Jamieson as assistant. About the middle of July the Cariboo made her first or trial trip and developed great power and speed. She was then despatched to Harrison river via Fraser river, returning with a raft of white pine, consigned to A. D. Macdonald of Macdonald's Bank in Victoria, who owned the saw mills at Douglas Landing. The Cariboo's performances gave satisfaction and her owner, who was also commander, was much pleased with the craft.

While the Cariboo was taking in cargo and booking passengers for her second voyage, in company with three or four other young fellows, I chanced into a restaurant which stood on the corner of Trounce avenue and Government street, where Cullin's cigar store is now. The waiter who took our orders was well known to me. His name was Paul De Garro, and despite his menial employment here he belonged to the nobility of France. His fellow-countrymen always told me that he was a count who had been exiled from France ever since Louis Napoleon III. when that monarch seized the throne and proclaimed himself Emperor. History records that barricades were erected in the streets of Paris by the populace, who were mowed down by the new Emperor's cannon until 50,000 lives had been lost and the empire firmly established on the blood thus shed. Paul De Garro was among those who opposed the new regime and in consequence he was exiled with many others to California in 1851. He came to Victoria in 1856 to visit the Catholic bishop Demers. The bishop had acquired a printing press with a small quantity of French type and with the assistance of a tramp printer, who was brought over from Puget Sound to set the type, two numbers of a weekly newspaper were got out in the French language. The title was almost as long as one's arm, for it was called La Courrier de la Nouvelle Caledonie. Among the archives of the Catholic diocese there may be preserved a few copies of this the first newspaper published on the British Pacific Coast. Personally, I never saw a copy. It is worthy of remark here that when, two years later, Mr. De Cosmos gave birth to the British Colonist he printed the first and many succeeding numbers of his paper on the type and the antiquated hand-press that had been employed in the production of De Garro's Courrier. The count was a very lugubrious-looking person at the time of which I write. He could not accept his changed fortunes with easy grace or good temper. As a waiter he was not a success, because he was condescending and patronizing and intensely irritable. If a guest objected to a dish with which he had been served the Count would flare up and pick a quarrel with the objector. After a volley of "sacres" he would retire to the kitchen to sulk and the proprietor, who was also the cook, would come into the restaurant and apologize for the impatience of the waiter-count who could not forget that he had once lived in a palace and had himself been waited upon by "vassals and slaves." A peace having been patched up, the Count would pocket his pride and resume his duties until another complaint aroused his ire and started the ball again rolling in the wrong direction. To address him as "garcon" was a deadly insult and he would never answer to any call that did not begin with "Monsieur" or "Count."

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"Oh!" said he, "that is a place worth visiting. I lived there four years. I had plenty of money. My father's estates had not been confiscated then and I went everywhere—such parties, such balls, and, ah! such lovely ladies! I was every night at the opera and the theatre and the Jardin Mabille. And then the exquisite little suppers that came after. Ah! my faith, but they were grand, and the champagne flowed like water and the cigars, the most beautiful Havanas. Monsieur H., suppose you go to Paris you see things."

"Why did you not stay there, Count?" I asked.

"Stay there! What, live in the same atmosphere with that pig, that assassin Napoleon? Never! never! He is a murderer—he killed my best friend. Attend to me while I tell you all. I went from Brittany to Paris. I was a student. I went to study medicine. In the same lodgings was a young woman—an art student—a handsome lady, bright, cheerful, good. We met at the table one day. I loved her when first I saw her and she loved me. We got well acquainted, and we were so happy we could have died for each other. I intended to marry her—God knows I did!—when I got of age, and had my parents' consent. So we—well we trusted one another—you understand the rest. We were never happy apart. We went everywhere together. Ah! my dear, sweet Estelle! Some day I will kill the man who killed you. Well, the President of France—that miscreant, Louis Napoleon—seized the government and made himself Emperor. This was in 1851—nine years ago. I objected. Although an aristocrat I was a Republican too. I hated pomp and style. Barricades were thrown up and I served behind one. The troops came with cannon and swept away the barricades as if they were of paper. Estelle was with me. There were many other women with their husbands and lovers. I begged her to stay away, but she would not. Wherever her Julien went she would go. I could not help it. Ah! God! if I could recall that day I would make her stay away. Well, we fought together. Estelle loaded my musket and I fired it. Presently there was a rush of cavalry. We tried to stop it. No use, they poured over our breastworks and bayonetted or trod us under their horses' feet. Just as I fell I saw a cuirassier with raised sword strike poor Estelle on the head. I could not see what followed, but when I came to I saw my darling lying not far away, her lovely face smeared with blood that flowed from a ghastly wound on her head. I crawled to her. I raised her head in my arms. She was quite dead. I lay there a long time. Weak and wounded as I was I supported that dear head until some men came to gather up the dead and wounded. They tore Estelle from me and threw her loved form into a cart with other dead bodies. I saw her no more. I was sent to an hospital where I slowly recovered. I was told afterwards that the dead were interred in a common pit and destroyed with quicklime. Fancy that fate for the dear Estelle, my love, my darling—to be eaten up with lime! When I was well a decree of banishment was read to me and hundreds of others and we were sent to California. From there I came here. I live with only one purpose—to return to France some day and strike down Louis Napoleon. When Estelle shall have been avenged I will die happy, for I feel, I know I shall see her again in the other world."

As the Count ceased to talk the fire died out of his eyes, his face resumed its customary lugubrious expression and the entrance of a customer who wanted a meal interrupted a conversation which was never resumed.

The Cariboo gold fields at this time had begun to attract public attention, and thousands from all parts of the world prepared to go thither. Victorians shared in the interest felt and among many others Count De Garro was seized with a desire to try his luck. Accordingly he resigned his position in the restaurant and engaged passage in the Cariboo for Harrison Landing The steamer was announced to sail at midnight on the 1st of August. I was at the wharf at the hour set for sailing. I saw De Garro pass on board. He was accompanied by a huge black retriever, which was his constant companion. I wished the Count good luck as we shook hands in a farewell that was doomed to be our last on earth. Although steam was up at midnight the Captain had not put in an appearance. Long afterwards I learned that he had a presentiment of evil and wished to remain in port till the next day. From the wharf I walked to my room in Curtis' cottage, which then stood on Birdcage Walk near Belleville street. I retired to bed, but for the life of me I could not sleep. A little clock on the mantel struck one and then half-past one o'clock and still I tossed from side to side. Sleep, although wooed with ardor, would not come to me. I was possessed with a strange feeling that an indefinable horrible something was about to occur. Every little while I could hear the Cariboo blowing off what seemed to be "dry" steam in long-drawn volumes and disrupting the night air with the shrill notes of her whistle for miles around which must have disturbed others beside myself. At last I heard the "cher-cher-cher" of the paddles and knew that the Cariboo was off. I listened to the beat of the wheels for a few minutes; they grew fainter and fainter as the boat seemed to approach the entrance of the harbor. "Now," I thought, "I shall get some sleep," and I turned over on my side to again woo the drowsy god when —— "Heaven and earth, what's that?" I exclaimed, as a rending, tearing, splitting sound fell upon my ears. The "cher-cher-cher" ceased instantly and the house shook as from the convulsive throb of an earthquake. The little timepiece on the mantel which had just chimed two trembled, reeled and stopped as if affrighted by the shock. In an instant I comprehended what had happened. The Cariboo had blown up! I was into my clothes and out in the open air in less time than I have taken to write these few lines. The first streaks of day had begun to illumine the eastern sky and as I sped across the old James Bay bridge towards the waterfront I could hear the little bell on the Hudson Bay company's wharf ringing the alarm as if a fire were raging in the town. In a few minutes I reached the hook and ladder house, which then stood on the site of the present Board of Trade building. I determined to arouse the inhabitants by ringing the bell of the hook and ladders: but Miss Reid, daughter of Capt. Reid, a noted and worthy pioneer of H.B. Co. fame, was there before me. She had come from her father's house near by and gained the rope first. The bell sounded the alarm which told those who, not having been aroused by the shock of the explosion, that a calamity had occurred and there was urgent need for help. Mr. E. Levy, who was then an efficient constable, assisted in ringing the alarm bell.

From the fire-hall I went to the wharf and with a little Scotchman named Wallace, who was a sort of factotum in John Gordon McKay's bar on the corner of Bastion square and Commercial street, impressed a boat which we found tied to one of the piles and rowed out to the harbor-mouth. The dim light of approaching day enabled us to discern the late beautiful craft lying a helpless, mishapen mass and drifting with the tide just off the present site of Rithet's wharf. A few lanterns were moving fitfully among the ruins. The upper deck had fallen in and the lower deck had been blown to pieces, but fortunately the bottom was unimpaired, and as the wreck did not sink it was towed into a little cove and anchored there for safe keeping. In the water at the side of the steamer we found the dead body of Jas. Jamieson, the second engineer. I examined the corpse closely and discovered that while one eye had been blown entirely out the remaining eye was intact and staring with an expression of horror and alarm, showing that just as death claimed its victim he was aware of the grim messenger's presence but too late to avert his fate. Capt. Jamieson had disappeared, nor was any trace of him found for many days when the sea gave up his mutilated form. Henry Gray, a young Oregonian, was the Fraser river pilot of the Cariboo. He had just left the Captain at the wheel and gone into a room adjoining the wheel-house to trim the binnacle lamp when the boiler burst. Gray fell with the ruins of the upper deck into the hold and escaped with a few bruises, but the Captain, standing not three feet away was taken. A passenger stood at the side of the boiler conversing with the second engineer. When the steam and smoke had cleared the passenger found himself near the spot where he stood when the explosion occurred while the engineer had been killed. How true is the Scriptural saying, "One shall be taken and the other left." The bodies of the chief engineer and mate were found among the freight. They must have died instantly. Pieces of the boiler, the iron of which was of unusual thickness, were picked up on the boat and a few fragments were found on the shore. What remained of the shell of the boiler was deposited on the beach near the tragic scene. I saw it lying there thirty-five years after the calamity. It was covered with barnacles and may be still there.

I searched among the ruins for Count De Garro, but he was nowhere to be found, although the mattress on which he slept, saturated with blood, was shown me. The steward said that Garro took his big dog into the room with him. As we conversed the dog made his appearance, having been picked up while swimming in the water into which he must have been blown by the force of the explosion. The animal bounded at once to the spot where his master had last slept and stretching himself on the mattress snapped at all who approached. He refused food and friendly overtures, even from me with whom he was well acquainted, but just lay there growling and moaning. He was lariated at last and dragged ashore. For many days he haunted the wharves and the restaurant where the Count was latterly employed, and finally he disappeared and was never seen again. The Count's mangled body was brought ashore one day and deposited in an unknown grave in the old cemetery. Six persons lost their lives by this disaster.

The coroner's inquiry clearly established that the cause of the explosion was too little water in the boiler. When the steam was blown off in vast volumes the boiler was emptied and when the water was turned in it fell on red hot plates with the natural result.

The Jamieson family were a fated one. There were originally six sons, five of whom came to the Pacific Coast. One of the brothers was lost in the falls of Willamette river in 1857. Smith B. was lost by the explosion of the Yale in 1861. Archibald and James were killed on the Cariboo, and a fifth brother lost his life by the explosion of the steamer Gazelle in Oregon. The sixth, in 1861, was a clergyman in Scotland and was alive when I last heard. Thus perished five out of six of as "braw laddies" as ever left a Scottish home to seek their fortunes abroad—so young when they were called away, as Dickens wrote when Thackeray died, that the mother who blessed them in their first sleep blessed them in their last.

Yesterday afternoon I visited the old cemetery on Quadra street and strolled for a few minutes among the graves of those that lie buried there—

"Each in his narrow cell forever laid
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

Many of the headstones marked the resting places of men and women whom I had known in the past, whose hands I had often clasped in friendship's close touch, whose voices it was ever a delight to hear, and who have gone now to solve that problem which, sooner or later, all must solve—the great mystery of the Hereafter. My mind was filled with solemn thoughts as I mused upon the changes that have taken place since the first grave was dug, and I could not help saying aloud to myself, "May we not hope that the most destitute in spiritual knowledge while upon earth has reached a higher plane in spiritual life?" I stooped to copy an inscription from a graven headstone when a blithesome schoolboy, bag on back, burst through the gate and whistling as he ran, "There'll be a hot time in the old town to-night," passed quickly out of sight. The rain was falling fast and a chill breeze swept across the cemetery as I completed my task and prepared to leave. This is what I copied:

In Memory of
SMITH BAIRD JAMIESON,
Who lost his life by the explosion of the Steamer YALE on Fraser River, 14th April, 1861.
ALSO
ARCHIBALD JAMIESON,
and
JAMES BAIRD JAMIESON,
Who are interred here, and who lost their lives by the explosion of the Steamer CARIBOO in Victoria Harbor, 2nd August, 1861
—
Three Brothers,
Sons of the late
ROBERT JAMIESON,
Brodick, Isle of Arran, Scotland.

The Cariboo passed into the hands of the late Capt. Frain by whom she was renamed the Fly. The marine department objected to the change, but permitted her to be called by the double name, Cariboo-Fly. Capt. Frain owned the steamer Emily Harris and employed both vessels in freighting coal from Nanaimo to Victoria. One day in 1874 the Emily Harris was reported missing. She had left Nanaimo with a full cargo three days before, had passed Salt Spring Island the same day and was never afterwards reported. It was believed that she was blown up; but Frain was an experienced engineer and as well as a skilful navigator, and an impression gained credence that he was murdered by his Indian crew and the steamer robbed and sunk by them. The mystery has never been explained nor can I recall whether the remains of the Harris were ever discovered. The Cariboo-Fly ran for a long time on the Coast as a cannery tender; but where she is now I cannot say. I think, however, that she is out of service and it is more than likely that her machinery now drives some more modern and fortunate craft.