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THE REFUGEES

By A. CONAN DOYLE,
Author of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes"

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(Continued.)

CHAPTER II.

It was the morning after the guardsman had returned to his duties. Eight o'clock had struck on the great clock of Versailles, and it was almost time for the monarch to rise. Servants, with clothes thrown over their arms, bustled down the passage which led to the ante-chamber. The young officer, who had been looking wistfully out of the window at some courtiers who were laughing and chatting on the terrace, turned sharply upon his heel and strode over to the white and gold door of the royal bedroom.

He had hardly taken his stand before the handle was very gently turned from within, the door revolved noiselessly upon its hinges and a man slid silently through the aperture, closing it again behind him.

"Hush!" said he, with his finger to his thin, precise lips, while his whole clean shaven face and high arched brows were an entreaty and a warning. "The king still sleeps."

The words were whispered from one to another among the group who had assembled outside the door. The speaker, who was M. Bontems, head valet of the guard and led him into the window alcove from which he had lately come.

"Good morning, Captain de Catinat. Who commands at the main guard?"

"Major de Brissac."

"And you will be here?"

"For four hours I attend the king."

"Very good. He gave me some instruction for the officer of the guard. He bade me to say that M. de Vivonne was not to be admitted to the grand lever. You are to tell him so."

"I shall do so."

"Then, should a note come from her—you understand me, the new one?"

"Mme. de Maintenon?"

"Precisely. But it is more discreet not to mention names. Should she send a note, you will take it and deliver it quietly when the king gives you an opportunity."

"It shall be done."

"But if the other should come, as is possible enough—the other, you understand me, the former?"

"Mme. de Montespan?"

"Ah, that soldierly tongue of yours, captain! Should she come, I say, you will gently bar her way, with courteous words, you understand, but on no account is she to be permitted to enter the royal room."

"Very good, Bontems."

"And now we have but three minutes." He strode through the rapidly increasing group of people in the corridor with an air of proud humility, as befitting a man who, if he was a valet, was at least the king of valets by being the valet of the king. Close by the door stood a line of footmen resplendent in their powdered wigs, red plush coats and silver shoulder knots. He turned the handle once more and slipped into the darkened room.

It was a large, square apartment, with two high windows upon the further side, curtained across with priceless velvet hangings. In one corner a narrow couch with a rug thrown across it showed where the faithful Bontems had spent the night.

In the very center of the chamber there stood a large four post bed, with curtains of Gobelin tapestry looped back from the pillow. A square of polished rails surrounded it, leaving a space some five feet in width all round between the inclosure and the bedside.

As Bontems passed noiselessly across the room, his feet sinking into the mosslike carpet, there was the heavy, close smell of sleep in the air, and he could hear the long, thin breathing of the sleeper. He passed through the opening in the rails and stood, watch in hand, waiting for the exact instant when the iron routine of the court demanded that the monarch should be roused. Beneath him, from under the costly green coverlet of oriental silk, half buried in the fluffy valenciennes lace which edged the pillow, there protruded a round black bristle of close cropped hair, with the profile of a curling nose and petulant lip outlined against the white background. The valet snapped his watch and bent over the sleeper.

"I have the honor to inform your majesty that it is half past eight," said he. "Ah!" The king slowly opened his large dark brown eyes, made the sign of the cross and kissed a little dark reliquary which he drew from under his nightdress. Then he sat up in bed.

"Did you give my orders to the officer of the guard, Bontems?" he asked.

"Yes, sire."

"Who is on duty?"

"Major de Brissac at the main guard and Captain de Catinat in the corridor."

"De Catinat! Ah, the young man who stopped my horse at Fontainebleau. I remember him. You may give the signal, Bontems."

The chief valet walked swiftly across to the door and threw it open. In rushed the officer of the ovens and the four red coated, white wigged footmen, ready handed, silent footed, each intent upon his own duties. The one seized upon Bontems' rug and couch and in an instant had whipped them off into an ante-chamber, another had carried away the silver taper stand, while a third drew back the great cur-

tains of stamped velvet and let a noon of light into the apartment.

They were hardly gone before a more august group entered the bedchamber. Two walked together in front, the one a youth little over twenty years of age, middle sized, inclining to stoutness, with a slow, pompous bearing, a well turned leg and a face which was comely enough in a masklike fashion, but which was devoid of any shadow of expression except perhaps of an occasional lurking gleam of mischievous humor. His companion was a man of forty, swarthy, dignified and solemn.

As the pair faced the king there was sufficient resemblance between the three faces to show that they were of one blood and to enable a stranger to guess that the older was monsieur, the younger brother of the king, while the other was Louis the Dauphin, his only legitimate child.

Behind the king's son and the king's brother there entered a little group of notables and of officials whom duty had called to this daily ceremony. There were the grand master of the robes, the first lord of the bedchamber, the Duc du Maine, a pale youth clad in black velvet, limping heavily with his left leg, and his little brother, the young Comte de Toulouse, both of them the illegitimate sons of Mme. de Montespan and the king. Such were the partakers in the family entry, the highest honor which the court of France could aspire to.

Bontems had poured on the king's hands a few drops of spirits of wine, catching them again in a silver dish; and the first lord of the bedchamber had presented the bowl of holy water, with which he made the sign of the cross, muttering to himself the short office of the Holy Ghost. Then, with a nod to his brother and a short word of greeting to the Dauphin and to the Duc du Maine, he swung his legs over the side of the bed and sat, in his long, silken nightdress, his little white feet dangling from beneath it, a pious position for any man to assume were it not that he had so heartily a sense of his own dignity that he could not realize that under any circumstances it might be compromised in the eyes of others. So he sat, the master of France and yet the slave to every puff of wind, for a wandering draft had set him shivering and shaking. M. de St. Quentin, the noble barber, flung a purple dressing gown over the royal shoulders and placed a long, many curled court wig upon his head, while Bontems drew on his red stockings and laid before him his slippers of embroidered velvet. The monarch thrust his feet into them, tied his dressing gown and passed out to the fireplace, where he settled himself down in his easy chair, holding out his thin, delicate hands toward the blazing logs, while the others stood round in a semicircle, waiting for the grand lever which was to follow.

M. de St. Quentin, is this not our shaving morning?" said the king.

"Yes, sire; all is ready."

"Then why not proceed? It is three minutes after the accustomed time. To work, sir; and you, Bontems, give word for the grand lever."

It was obvious that the king was not in a very good humor that morning. He darted little quick questioning glances at his brother and at his sons, but whatever complaint or sarcasm may have troubled upon his lips was effectively stifled by De St. Quentin's ministrations. With the nonchalance born of long custom, the official crewed the royal chin with soap, drew the razor swiftly round it and sponged over the surface with spirits of wine. A nobleman then helped to draw on the king's black velvet haut-de-chausses, a second assisted in arranging them, while a third drew the nightgown over the shoulders and handed the royal shirt, which had been warming before the fire. His diamond buckled shoes, his garters and his scarlet inner vest were successively fastened by noble courtiers, each keenly jealous of his own privilege, and over the vest was placed the blue ribbon with the cross of the Holy Ghost in diamonds, and that of St. Louis tied with red. The black undercoat was drawn on, the cravat of rich lace adjusted, the loose overcoat secured, two handkerchiefs of costly point carried forward upon an enameled saucer and thrust by separate officials into each side pocket, the silver and ebony cane laid to hand, and the monarch was ready for the labors of the day.

During the half hour or so which had been occupied in this manner there had been a constant opening and closing of the chamber door, and a muttering of names from the captain of the guard to the attendant in charge, and from the attendant in charge to the first gentleman of the chamber, ending always in the admission of some new visitor. Here, close by the king, was the harsh but energetic Louvois, all powerful now since the death of his rival Colbert, discussing a question of military organization with two officers, one a tall and stately soldier, the other a strange lithe figure, undersized and misshapen, but bearing the insignia of a marshal of France, and owning a name which was of evil omen over the Dutch frontier, for Luxembourg was looked upon already as the successor of Conde, even as his companion Vauban was of Turenne. Beside them a small white haired clerical

The Knock-out Blow.

The blow which knocked out Corbett was a revelation to the prize fighters. From the earliest days of the ring the knock-out blow was aimed for the jaw, the temple or the jugular vein. Stomach punches were thrown in to worry and weary the fighter, but if a scientific man had told one of the old fighters that the most vulnerable spot was the region of the stomach, he'd have laughed at him for an ignoramus. Dr. Pierce is bringing to the public a parallel fact; that the stomach is the most vulnerable organ out of the prize ring as well as in it. We protect our heads, throats, feet and lungs, but the stomach is utterly indifferent to, and disdains to defend the solar plexus and knock us out. Make your stomach sound and strong by the use of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and you protect yourself in your most vulnerable spot. "Golden Medical Discovery" cures "weak stomach," indigestion, or dyspepsia, torpid liver, bad, thin and impure blood and other diseases of the organs of digestion and nutrition.

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with a kindly face, Pere la Chaise, confessor to the king, was whispering his views upon Jansenism to the portly Bossuet, the eloquent bishop of Meaux. Close to the door Racine, with his handsome face wreathed in smiles, was chatting with the poet Boileau and the architect Mansard, the three laughing and jesting with the freedom which was natural to the favorite servants of the king.

"He becomes harder and harder to amuse," said Racine. "I am to be at Mme. de Maintenon's room at 3 to see whether a page or two of the Phedre may not work a change. Madame is a wonderful woman. She has brains, she has heart, she has tact—she is admirable."

"And yet she has one gift too many—age."

"Pooh! What matter her years when she can carry them like thirty? What an eye, what an arm! And, besides, my friends, he is not himself a boy any longer."

"Very true, but a young man consults his eye and an older man his ear. Over forty, it is the clever tongue which wins; under it, the pretty face."

"Ah, you rascal! Then you have made up your mind that five and forty years with tact will hold the field against nine and thirty with beauty. Well, when your lady has won she will doubtless remember who were the first to pay court to her."

"But I think you are wrong, Racine."

"Well, what then?"

"Then it may be a little serious for you."

"And why?"

"The Marquise de Montespan has a memory."

"Her influence may soon be nothing more. Maintenon is the cleverest woman in France."

"Pshaw, Racine, you know our dear master well, or you should, for you seem to have been at his elbow since the days of the Fronde. Is he a man, think you, to be amused forever by sermons? No, no; it will be the Montespan or, if not she, some younger beauty."

"My dear Boileau, I say again that her aim is setting. Have you not heard the news? Her brother, M. de Vivonne, has been refused the entree."

"From whom had you it?"

"From De Catinat, the captain of the guard. He had his orders to bar the way to him."

"Ha, then the king does indeed mean mischief. That is why his brow is so cloudy this morning then. By my faith, if the marquise has the spirit with which folk credit her, he may find

that it was easier to win her than to slight her."

"Aye, the Mortemarts are no easy race to handle."

"Well, heaven send him a safe way out of it! But who is this gentleman? His face is somewhat grimmer than those to which the court is accustomed. Ha, the king catches sight of him, and Louvois beckons to him to advance."

The stranger who had attracted Racine's attention was a tall, thin man, with a high aquiline nose, stern, fierce gray eyes, peeping out from under tufted brows, and a countenance so lined and marked by age, care and stress of weather that it stood out amid the prim courtier faces which surrounded it as an old hawk might in a cage of birds of gay plumage.

Louis possessed in a high degree the royal faculty of recognition. "It is years since I have seen him, but I remember his face well," said he, turning to his minister. "It is the Comte de Frontenac, is it not?"

"Yes, sire," answered Louvois. "It is indeed Louis de Buade, comte de Frontenac, and formerly governor of Canada."

"We are glad to see you once more at our levee," said the monarch as the old nobleman stooped his head and kissed the white hand which was extended to him. "I hope that the cold of Canada has not chilled the warmth of your loyalty."

"Only death itself, sire, would be cold enough for that."

"Then I trust that it may remain to us for many long years. We would thank you for the care and pains which you have spent upon our province, and if we have recalled you it is chiefly that we would fain hear from your own lips how all things go there. And, first, as the affairs of God take precedence of those of France, how about the missions?"

"They prosper, sire. There are Iroquois at the Sault and the mountain, Hurons at Lorette and Algonquins along the whole river cotes from Tadoussac in the east to Sault la Marie, and even the great plains of the Dakotas, who have all taken the cross as their token. Marquette has passed down the river of the west to preach among the Illinois, and Jesuits have carried the gospel even to the warriors of the Long House in their wigwags at Onondaga."

"I may add, your majesty," said Pere la Chaise, "that in leaving the truth there they have too often left their lives with it."

"Yes, sire, it is very true," cried De Frontenac cordially. "Your majesty

kissed the white hand."

has many brave men within his domains, but none braver than these. They have come back up the Richelieu river from the Iroquois villages with their nails gone, their fingers torn out, a cinde where their eye should be and the scars of the pine splinters as thick upon their bodies as the fleurs-de-lis on yonder curtain."

(To be continued.)

INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY

On and after Sunday, Oct. 14th, 1906 trains will run daily (Sundays excepted), as follows:

TRAINS WILL LEAVE FREDERICTON.

No. 308 Mixed for Campbellton, Moncton, Chatham and Loggieville. 8.40

No. 317 Suburban for Marysville. 6.18

No. 321 Suburban for Marysville. 11.18

No. 301 Express for Montreal, Chatham, Loggieville. 17.00

No. 327 Suburban for Marysville. 18.40

No. 329 Suburban for Marysville. 21.00

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON.

No. 318 Suburban from Marysville. 8.10

No. 302 Express from Montreal, Quebec, Chatham and Loggieville. 18.05

No. 326 Suburban from Marysville. 18.30

No. 304 Mixed from Chatham Junction, Chatham and Loggieville. 18.30

No. 328 Suburban from Marysville. 19.15

All trains are run by Atlantic Standard time. Twenty-four hour notation. 24.00 o'clock is midnight.

Moncton, N. B., Oct. 12th, 1906.