

'Parbleu! there are two of you; what mors do you want?'
 The men nod grimly.
 'One word more, general—the pay?'
 'Twenty gold Napoleons to each if you succeed. Failure may mean your death, for I chance to know something about this man. He is a hard fighter when aroused,' giving the form of poor Captain Tom a touch with his boot.
 'Consider it done,' says Francois, 'and I only wish the time was at hand now.'
 'Patience, man. Revenge is all the sweeter for being delayed. Here comes the fair Linda. All is arranged,' he said to her; 'my men are transferred to your service. Order them as you will. As for myself, with Antoine I will accompany you to your hiding place, and there look over the latest maps. Then we can signal the news from the old quay. The police may see the rocket ascend, but when they rush to the scene the place will be deserted.'
 'That is satisfactory, general. I see you are determined we shall be friends for the benefit of the flag under which we fight,' taking out a minute German banner and kissing it.
 'We will forget everything save that we belong to the Fatherland, and are sworn to the service of our king, Wilhelm. I have something to show you, sent by Bismarck himself. Come.'
 She turns and gives Mickey one look.
 'Remember!'
 Then she moves away.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAPTAIN TOM ON DECK.

WHEN Linda is gone the tomb seems to have lapsed back to its original darkness, for her presence has brightened it. The heaps of skulls, the cryptogram formed of human bones upon the walls, whose meaning few can decipher—those things stand out with hideous distinctness under the blaze of the lamp which has been fastened to a bracket in the wall.
 Captain Tom is satisfied. He has been amply repaid for what he has endured, and although his eyes have seen little, his ears have been open.
 In one thing he is disappointed: he has not yet been able to fathom the secret of Linda's abode and Myra. He remembers the latter exclaiming, 'I am blind!' and yet her eyes have at another time dazzled him with their brilliancy—strange eyes, indeed, they must be to change their nature at the will of their owner.
 This is a personal matter; it will do to ponder over at some future time, but just at present other things demand attention.
 His own situation is precarious, since his

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guards have received instructions to make away with him as soon as possible; but Captain Tom worries little on that account.
 Cautiously he opens his eyes and surveys the scene. The two guards are whispering together near the pile of skulls, while Mickey watches them suspiciously.
 The American moves his foot a trifle and taps the Irishman's toes. In an instant the latter bends over him.
 'They mean to murder me. Take care of one when the time comes, and leave the other to me,' whispers Tom.
 Already the guards have seen Mickey's move. 'Get up there. We understand—you would go through his garments? That shall be our pleasure after'—and a suggestive nod completes the sentence, spoken in French.
 Mickey obeys orders without a word, but he is on his guard, and when these fiends of the tomb attempt to carry out their plan of murder they will be apt to believe they have run up against an Irish buzz saw.
 The general's orders were explicit. He desires that as little delay as possible may occur, and hence it is expected that in a short time Francois and his companion will get to work.
 Inch by inch Captain Tom is pushing his arm down. The movement is so slow that it does not attract attention, but all the while it draws nearer his pocket where lies the faithful weapon which in more than one desperate encounter has never failed him.
 Once he gets that in the firm grasp of his hand, and he dares defy double the number of foes that now confront him.
 All he asks is a fair show. A brave man needs no more to prove his courage.
 By this time Francois and his colleague have determined to earn the forty Napoleons without any further delay. They exchange a glance that means volumes.
 Jacques places himself between the Irish man and Captain Tom, but as soon as Mickey sees that the decisive moment is at hand he jumps at the burly spy with the fury of a stag hound.
 It is a circus to watch Mickey fight. He uses every muscle in his body, and although he has an antagonist much larger than himself, his agility amazes the enemy, who finds it hard to understand whether Mickey means to stand upon his head or climb on his back.
 At any rate, Jacques is wholly taken up here, and cannot offer any assistance should his companion require it.
 On his part Francois has leaped toward the prostrate form of the American, and as he thus advances he gives vent to the cry: 'He recovers! he would escape! Death to the American spy!'
 Francois' alarm is all moonshine, of course, for as yet Captain Tom has not moved at all, but it serves the purpose of the man from Abasco, who desires to make it appear that he is about to leap upon a desperate enemy endeavouring to escape, and not a helpless man lying there senseless and still.
 There is enough French blood in him to give the desire for dramatic show.
 When he utters his cry of alarm he is not a dozen feet from the prostrate American, and advancing at such a pace that the latter will have no more than sufficient time to sit up ere his enemy is upon him.
 The man is in deadly earnest, for he has drawn a cruel-looking knife shaped much like a Malay crescent, and with this he doubtless intends to earn the Napoleons that are dancing before his eyes in such mad glee.
 At this critical instant from out the gloom beyond the range of the lamp-light a figure flashes. It crosses the intervening space with the speed of a spirit of the air.
 Francois sees and he recoils.
 'Myra!' falls from his lips.
 'Coward! poltroon! you are only brave enough to stab a helpless man. Stand back! you shall not lay a finger on him!'
 Captain Tom is sitting up now, but no one pays any heed to him.
 Francois glares at the girl, who, like a spirit of light, has intervened between himself and his intended prey.
 Once he has professed to love this girl, but subsequent events have caused him to change his mind, and he hates her most cordially. We have already seen how, in the blackness of his fury, he attempted to set the mob on her, under the pretence that she was what he really turned out to be—a German spy, and how a bomb from the Krupp gun at Chatillon was the only thing that saved him from the fury of the enraged populace.
 Now he looks as though he could tear her to pieces. She stands between his vengeance and Captain Tom, as if her small figure could defend the American.
 'Out of the way, viper!' hisses the man.
 He brushes past her. She clings to his arm with loud cries of alarm.
 'Captain Tom, awaken! arouse yourself! The saints preserve you, or all is lost! Awaken!'
 Her voice resounds through that weird place where the bones of the victims of the Revolution lie.
 Francois, so enraged that he knows not and cares not what he does, gives his arm a

desperate swing. Unable to maintain her hold, Myra is thrown to the rocky floor.
 The brute has conquered the weak girl, but his triumph is short lived. One more step forward, flushed with his recent exertion, and he comes face to face with—a man.
 Captain Tom, as he sees Myra swung around so roughly and cast to the floor, feels every muscle and nerve in his whole

athletic frame swell with renewed animation, eager to avenge the injury.
 As though made of steel springs he bounds to his feet. To the astounded Francois he seems just eight feet in height. The coward shakes as though he has the sque. It is one thing to slay Captain Tom in his sleep and quite another to meet him face to face with that black look upon his face.
 He walks directly up to Francois, his eye glaring in its intensity, boring into the other's very brain. True, the German spy holds a terrible weapon in his hand, but his arm must have forgotten its cunning—at any rate he does not make the slightest movement toward using the weapon upon his enemy.
 Captain Tom's bearing awes his craven soul; he acts like a man agonised.
 His master deliberately plucks the knife from that murderous hand, and tosses it over among the grinding skulls, where it falls with a ghastly clatter.
 In so doing the American has one glimpse of Myra rising to her feet and grasping a cobweb of a kerchief to her cheek. It is only a scratch, to be sure, but her precious blood has been shed by this miscreant.
 The thought adds to Captain Tom's fury. His hand seizes Francois by the throat with a grip that threatens to crush the bones.
 He shakes him as a terrier might a rat, and each time the terrified wretch's teeth strike together like Spanish castanets.
 Between the shakes the American athlete growls out words something like these:
 'Strike a lady, you miserable whelp! Try to turn the Amazons of the faubourg upon her, will you? I would shake the last breath from your carcass only that I have a better fate in store for you. Do you hear, you coward? I am going to hand you over to Trochu, who has longed to make an example of every known German spy in Paris. He will soon have you fit food for the fishes of the Seine. That shall be your doom, you insular of women, you valiant jackal, bold enough to put a knife in the back of a sloping man. Why don't you shriek a ood for mercy? Are your lips palsied, or do you scorn to ask a favour of me?'
 He gives his victim one last shake, and then looks into the man's face, to discover that it is growing black under his terrible grip. This causes Captain Tom to remember that all of his power has been thrown into this effort, since the indignation aroused by the cowardly act of Francois has nerved his arm.
 He tosses the wretched man aside as one might a cast-off glove, and then turns around, to discover that Myra has vanished again, while the Irishman is dancing a hornpipe or a jig near the body of his fallen foe.
 Mickey has almost killed the fellow, but when his antagonist humbly deists, seeing the wretch helpless at his feet, the man has an opportunity to recover his breath.
 As he desires to make prisoners of them both, Captain Tom draws some stout cord from his pocket and fastens their arms.
 The men have become sullen. It is possible that the treatment to which they were subjected had something to do with the matter. At any rate, they look ugly, as though realising what their doom will undoubtedly be.
 The American pities them not; they knew the rickie they were taking when they accepted the hazardous duty of serving as spies upon the movements of the Parisians, and now that fate has come upon them, the best they can do is to meet it with as much fortitude as they possess.
 Captain Tom does not care to remain longer in the dismal catacombs. If one of these prisoners can be influenced to confess everything in order to save his life, which is very likely, Governor Trochu and his generals are likely to hear some very interesting facts concerning the effort of the shrewd German engineers to bore under the hills a passage that shall connect their camp with the underground city of the dead.
 Even as it is though has been learned of the plan to defend it, although it has already become patent to the Americans that the doom of fair Paris is near at hand, since the anachronistic toils of the besieging armies have been so constructed that they are now able to throw shells into the city on one side of the Seine, and must speedily convert it into the most gigantic ruin of the century, unless the obstinate spirit of the half starved inhabitants is crushed, and a white flag sent out asking for terms from the Prussian field marshal or the king's son, Frederick.
 Mickey McCray, under orders from the other, speedily arranges the two prisoners. They are fastened together, for Francois has recovered now, with not one word to say. Then the Irishman drives them before him like a yoke of oxen.
 It suits his humour to amuse himself from time to time at the expense of the wretches, and even Captain Tom has to smile at some of the witty fellow's sallies.
 They leave the Tombeau de Revolution, and by a passage reach other similar

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