ESPIONAGE.

Maxime Viquetre can nothing to distinguish himself, and the new espionage bill he deduced would give him the requisite opportunity.

His one desire was to serve his country by the discovery of some ingenious plan to rob France of the secretaries in her military defenses, and his appointment as detective was not a week old when he saw his chance and abandoned him for half a day.

The subject was in appearance Viquetre's ideal rebuilt spy. Of middle height, with bent back and jerky, irregular suit, he bore gray eyes that flashes of intelligence from the cover of thick lashes and shaggy brows. His long, unctrimmed white hair ran and fell with the old man's erratic movements or played with the tresses when its owner stood for awhile, suggesting an innocence that did not for one moment mislead Viquetre.

Had he not perceived a paper in one hand and a pencil in the other? And, although the old man did not make a mark or jot a note while he strolled with apparent aimlessness about Fort d'Ivry, yet did not Viquetre see the pencil fly over the paper before he had left the redoubt half a mile behind?

And the old man had struck a bee line for the Ceinture railway and entered a train at La Maison Blanc, Viquetre followed closely by Viquetre, who, his comparative youth notwithstanding, had all his work to catch the same train and enter an adjoining carriage.

And then happened Viquetre's first professional surprise. Although at every station he had alighted and closely scanned all who were leaving the compartments in his vicinity, yet when the train had completed the circle and stopped at the junction no old man with bent back and shaggy white locks could be found.

A week later Viquetre was on the Ceinture platform of the St. Lazare station, when he espied his runaway suspect entering a first class carriage. Viquetre, not to be done a second time, followed him as the train started and quietly sat down by the door. His chagrin was already assuaged on the opposite seat as the farther end of the carriage, a clean sheet of paper spread open in one hand, a pencil in the other. He made no sign of observing Viquetre's entry.

"He is wrapped in his thoughts," mentally exclaimed the detective. "I wish I had a mirror that would reflect them."

As if in answer to his desire, his companion spoke.

"Yes; Fort d'Ivry will do, after all."

Viquetre started. For a moment he thought the remark was addressed to him, but a glance at the old man seated in the corner, bowed in reflection, proved that he was unwittingly giving voice to his thoughts.

The train passed at Les Batignolles, Viquetre, to give his companion confidence, feigned sleep. The train pursued its journey; the old man his reflections.

"Yes; Fort d'Ivry shall be the scene. The exterior I can picture with ease."

"You reconnoitered it long enough the other day," Viquetre interrupted mentally.

"But how to gain the necessary detail of the interior!"

"Go on," thought Viquetre. "I pay you reveal your scheme for stealing a plan of the interior of the fort. It will be a considerate of you and so convenient to me."

The train brought up at Courcelles and aroused sway again.

"I must get permission to go inside, I suppose," continued the old man, still muttering.

"If you can," mentally responded Viquetre.

"The males could not give it, I suppose, or I know I could persuade him. Why will the government put such barriers in the way of knowledge? A novelist of repute should be allowed to room at will. His profession demands it. All in attention is necessary to his work, and he should have every facility for accumulating it without risk or trouble. If I attempted to gain even a most superficial acquaintance with the internal construction of Fort d'Ivry, I should be arrested on suspicion of being a spy."

Viquetre opened his eyes and stared wonderingly at the old man in the corner. Had he, after all, made a huge mistake? Was this shabby veteran a novelist of repute merely anxious to lay the scene of a bonds novel of Fort d'Ivry?

But almost immediately Viquetre's cunning—which he had adopted with his profession—came to his aid.

"He is not ignorant of my presence, or he assumes to be," he thought quickly. He even suspects my business and is doing his utmost to throw me off the scent. Bien! Let him try! He has not a dog with a very keen scent for his professional sign."

"Ah, well," muttered the old man resignedly. "I suppose I shall have to present myself at the Ministere de la Guerre and persuade them to give me a pass to the fort. It's a lot of trouble that might never to be imposed upon a busy novelist, and I shall make it my business to tell them so."

Viquetre checked suddenly. The train stopped at Porte-Maillot as the old man ceased speaking, and he rose to leave the compartment.

Viquetre hesitated. He could not arrest his companion then without grave risk of failing to prove his charge. He decided to follow him, and as he rose to do so his eye caught a paper on the opposite seat of the carriage where his fellow traveler had been sitting.

He made a dash for it, and as he alighted unfolded it and recognized it at once as La Revue Illustree des Belles Lettres. There was a life size portrait on the front page.

"Mon Dieu!" he exclaimed as he stood on the platform staring at it. "It is a Diseuse of the old man! He is a novelist, after all. He is M. Honore de Jacquin."

And he read the name under the picture that was headed "Our Greatest Living Novelist."

"What an ass I am!" exclaimed Viquetre, with charming candor.

A month later this report was freely circulated and credited:

"There now remains no doubt that the man calling himself Honore de Jacquin, who received permission to inspect Fort d'Ivry and other redoubts, was an impostor and a spy, and that the plans he managed to abstract are now at the mercy of another country's diplomacy. The rogue bore such a close resemblance in dress and person to our great novelist that the war minister may be forgiven his mistake, but surely our detectives should have scented something amiss! Can they explain?"

Maxime Viquetre wisely did not make the attempt.—Good Company.

FAMOUS SINGLE PEARLS.

The Shah of Persia Has One Delicate Gem Worth Over Half a Million.

It is not generally appreciated that there are enormous fortunes in single pearls, and that a few individuals and great potentates have jewels of this sort which are literally worth a king's ransom. In all the world there is no more famous pearl than the Tavernier, now in the possession of the shah of Persia. This remarkable gem came to this eastern king by descent and is a genuinely remarkable curiosity. It derives its name from having been sold by the traveler Tavernier 200 years ago to the then king of Persia. The price then was $500,000. It is now worth more than $600,000.

Another eastern king, the imam of Muscat, has in his collection a pearl worth $125,000, weighing 185 grains. Through it the sovereign can be seen. Princess Vasospoff's famous gem is wonderfully beautiful. Valued at $100,000, it was first heard of in 1692, when Georgiana of Calais sold it to Philip IV of Spain. Eighty thousand dollars is the figure that is unquestionably the pope's pearl would bring. One of Leo's predecessors became possessed of it in a manner which has not been told, and it has descended in regular course to the present incumbent of St. Peter's throne.

This, so far as is known, exhausts the list of truly celebrated pearls. There are many remarkable pearl necklaces whose value is extraordinary. These necklaces are made up gradually, pearl after pearl being added to the set, and leading jewelers are constantly on the lookout to possess gems of like purity to extend the chain. On the whole, pink pearls are not especially valuable, black ones bringing far higher prices, and pearls that are white being sought next after them. Queen Victoria of England has a necklace of pin pearls that is worth $80,000, and the dowager empress of Germany one made of 22 pearls which would bring easily $150,000.

The Rothschild women have, however, gems of this sort that far exceed in value those of royalty. Baroness Gustave de Rothschild possesses one made up of five rows of pearls, the whole chain being valued at $200,000. Baroness Adolphe de Rothschild owns a circlet that in all probability would fetch even at a forced sale $250,000.

Even more brilliant, because it has seven rows, is the necklace of the dowager empress of Russia. The gems, however, are not quite as fine as those in the Rothschild collection. The chief jewel of this royal lady is the most famous in the world from a gem point of view. Hardly second to it is that of the empress of Austria, whose black pearls are noted throughout Europe for their extreme beauty and purity.

What has become of the white pearls of the Empress Eugenie, sold at the close of the Franco-Prussian war, has never been made known. The value of these was about $60,000, and they were gathered together in a very beautiful necklace that frequently graced the neck of that unfortunate queen.—New York World.

The Chinese.

The merchant class of China is composed of polite, patient, extremely shrewd, well dressed pattern shopkeepers. The laborer class is graceful, polite and amiable, but the peasantry remind one of the country folk of Europe, excepting Russia.

As compared with Japan, one features of every view is strikingly in favor of China. The dress and behavior of the Chinese will not offend Europeans. The women are modest and dress in a baggy garment which completely covers them.

In spite of their modesty Chinese girls do flirt and in proper European fashion. At church they make eyes at the young men and on the way to school.

The most beautiful women of China are of Soo-Chow. They are, as a rule, prettier than the women of Japan.

The Chinese thresh rice by taking a hanaful and beating a log with it to scatter the kernels on the ground. The farmers break up the soil and punch holes in it for seeds with a stick.

Women who are married wear their back hair in a coil held in place by a hairpin or bar of gilt metal or imitation jade stone. The young girls wear the coil at one side of the head and stick a white flower in.—Exchange.

The Thorough Woman.

Thoroughness would be a good watchwork for the advancing women—I say advancing with emphasis, for really the advanced women are not on hand in any considerable number.

To a large extent those who are to be of value when they arrive are holding back for good equipment.

They know that men require proper mental habilement for the war of life, and the first rate women who expect to cope—side light—with first rate men in the struggle of the world realize that they must be prepared to hold for repute. And thoroughness is a mighty fine battlax.

Putting on a little veneer and pretending to know never deceives connoisseurs, and rarely any one else, save for a very short time. Life, like love, is a leveler, and if we live among folks they soon find out just how much we don't know, and the weak spots in our armor become the bullseyes for their shafts.

I tell you the trumpet blast of progress isn't "all cry and no wool!"—Polly Fry in New York Recorder.

The Point of Touch.

Mrs. McGrumbers—And what did the doctor say?

The Invalid—He didn't say anything. He just touched me.

Mrs. McGrumbers—Your pulse?

The Invalid—No; my pocketbook.—Syracuse Post.

Stevenson's Pity for Beggars.

Stevenson's pity was a very marked quality, and it extended to beggars, which is, I think, to go too far. His optimism, however, suffered a rude shock in South Audley street one summer afternoon. We met a stalwart beggar, whom I refused to aid. Louis, however, wavered and finally handed him sixpence. The man pocketed the coin, forbore to thank his benefactor, but fixed his eye on me askance and in loud voice, "And what is the other little gentleman going to give me?" "Is fatuous," said Louis as we strode coldly on, "I shall be the other little gentleman."—"Personal Memories of Stevenson," by Edmund Gosse, in Century.

Burns' Vision.

"It was in Perth," writes Dean Ramsay, the novelist, "that, passing over a grassy scene, I was accosted by a hardened sewerage with his famous cry of 'Hielan' and Glasgow Hielan'-ash!' 'I'll tak one,' quoth I, 'if you'll tell me whose statue that is.' 'Ye daftie Burns,' replied he on the nail. 'Thank you!' said I, taking the paper. 'And what did he do to deserve the statue?' My member scratched his head. Perceiving his embarrassment, a party of his friends down the street called out in stentorian chorus, 'Aye, tak' Hielan' Burns!' But what did he do to deserve the statue?' I thundered back. They hung their heads. At last my member answered himself. His face brightened. 'Well,' said I again, 'what did he do to deserve this statue?' 'He lost!' answered the intelligent little man."

A BAD MEMORY.

I have a shocking memory. I believe I was "born so," anyhow I suffered a good deal at school in the process of learning the dates of our sovereigns since the conquest. Even now I have to think deeply before I can remember my own date. As to my wife's birthday—well, I don't pretend to guess that within six months.

My friends have often advised me to study an artificial memory system. I did try one, or rather tried to try it. I bought a handbook, and by way of making a good start forgot to pay for it. Then I forgot to read it, and when my wife jogged my memory I couldn't for the life of me remember where I had left the beastly thing. So that system was a failure, and I never had the heart to try another.

Of course it is quite useless to trust me with letters for the post. I have patiently carried important missives in my pocket for weeks together and have heartily abused for my pains. As a rule, no one dreams of asking me to do a shopping commission, but one day, my better half being tied up with a specimen aunt, I was sent into our town to get a stock of household necessaries. I was provided with three similar lists in case I lost or mislaid one, and flattered myself that I should come out of the ordeal with flying colors.

Just as I was starting my wife sent out a final message by the aunt, and as I was too busy to pull out all the lists and make them notes of it I tied a knot in my handkerchief and forgot all about it.

I got through my list of purchases bravely, and I congratulated myself on the successful deed. Did I remember what it meant? Not a bit. I took the tickets home. At first I was rather amused; then I grew angry and vowed I would teach each that I wouldn't go home without executing that mysterious commission.

I returned to the Grange, where my horse was put up, and sauntered a pipe to stretch my wits. It was no use, so I walked out and stared into all the shop windows. It battled the "thing" might meet my eye and enlighten my understanding. That plan failed.

I returned to the Grange and thought over the letters of the alphabet, memory at last to the conclusion that the article begins with M. That was the nearest I could get to it.

Then Jones came into the smoking room.

"Jones," I said, "you know what an awful memory I have. Well, my wife asked me to get her something, and I can't remember what it was, but I believe it begins with M. I wish you'd suggest something."

"Money," said Jones promptly.

"No, it wasn't that today, for a wonder."

Then Jones waxed facetious and wrote me out a list of M's—machine guns, mosquito netting, mandolins, sentimental ass, mechanical monkeys and so on. I left him shrieking over his own idiotic foolishness.

"It wasn't a conjuring-trick, was it?" he inquired as I rose to go.

"No," said I, "nor a mothballs mag-pie."

He had rhed me rather; but, after all, he had given me a hint. I was pretty sure of the M, and by consulting a price list I might arrive at a solution of my enigma.

I was prepared to swear that the "something" was neither machine, nor mosquito, nor mandolins, nor muffins (including all sorts of pastry), nor melons, or typical or green stuff, so that my inquiries seemed limited to grocories, hardware and butcher's meat.

I wasn't quite certain about the last item, as I went to our shop and feebly asked the butcher if he thought I wanted any meat. I expect he thought I was certainly in need of drink, but he urbanely informed me that I had not sent me a note that morning. So I thanked him and retired hastily.

Then I pounced in ironmonger's establishment and studied it in vain. There was nothing at all feasible under "M." As a last resource, I returned to the grocer's, where I had already made extension purchases, and asked to see his price list.

Even then I couldn't spot the thing, but on the off chance of making a lucky shot I purchased hastily in succession, mustard, matches, macaroni, pickled nasturtiums and cheese mill. Then I remarked my better till I felt quite stupid and finally gave it up as a bad job. I drove home in disgust with enough parcels of food to extend a polar expedition.

"Hello," I said the moment I got indoors, "my aunt sent a message just as I was starting."

"You, and didn't you!"

"Stop a moment! Didn't it begin with 'M'?"

"More or less."

"Yes! I knew it did. But I'm very sorry, dear, I couldn't remember what it was. I sat in the Grange nearly two hours trying to think of it."

"Then out of the house you go this instant! I particularly told you not to go near the place, as they'd had a case of measles there."

I will come back home in a moment, that was just parting injunction. She turned me out into the garden—I felt too crushed to remonstrate—leaned on my spading in the filthy smoke of a bonfire till the thought I was sufficiently disciplined. I was allowed to kiss the children for a week.

Catch me going on any more errands!—New Haven.

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Ladies' Jersey underwear, good weight and finish, at .25

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