

The CZAR'S SPY The Mystery of a Silent Love by Chevalier WILLIAM LE QUEUX

ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. D. RHODES

EQUIPMENT BY THE SMART SET PUBLISHING CO

PROPOSIS.

Gordon Greig, dining aboard with Hornby... The emperor sent him to the...

CHAPTER XI.

The Castle of the Terror.

The big Flim rowed me down the swollen river... After nearly a mile, the stream again opened out into a broad lake...

My guide uttered some reassuring word in Finnish in a low half-whisper... "Your high nobility may disembark. There is at present no danger."

I rose, gripped a big rusty chain to steady myself, and climbed into the narrow doorway in the ponderous wall...

"The sister speaks Finnish?" I inquired in that language, knowing that in most convents throughout Europe French is known.

"Oui, monsieur. But are you not afraid to venture here? No strangers are permitted here, you know. If your presence was discovered you would not leave this place alive—so I warn you. By admitting you I am betraying my trust, and that I should not have done were it not compulsory."

"Compulsory? How?" "The order of the chief of police. Eves here, we cannot afford to offend him."

the beautiful original of that destroyed photograph on board the Lola. "But she has not always been so!" "No," I think not always," replied the sister quietly.

I looked straight into those sad, wide-open, yet unflinching brown eyes... "These white wrists held in steel, that pale face and blanched lips, the fearlessness of her movements, all told their own tragic tale. And yet that letter I had read, dictated in secret, most probably because her hands were not free, was certainly not the outpourings of a madwoman. She had spoken of death, it was true, yet it was not to be supposed that she was slowly being driven to suicide? She had kept her secret, and she wished the man Hornby—the man who was to marry Muriel Lethcote—to know.

"The room in which we stood was evidently an apartment set apart for her use, for beyond was the tiny bedroom; yet the small, high-up window was closely barred, and the cold bars of the prison was sufficient indeed to cause anyone confined there to prefer death to captivity.

Again I spoke to her slowly and kindly, but there was no response. That she was absolutely dumb was not apparent. Yet surely she had no search of her because the beauty of her portrait had magnified me, and I had now found her to be even more beautiful than her picture, yet, alas! suffering from an affliction that rendered her life a tragedy. The realization of the terrible truth staggered me. Such a perfect face as hers I had never before set eyes upon, so beautiful, so dear, and so evidently the countenance of one well-born, and yet so lifelessly sad, so full of blank, unutterable despair.

She placed her clasped hands to her mouth and made signs by shaking her head that she could neither understand nor respond. I took my wallet from my pocket and wrote upon a piece of paper in a large hand the words: "I come from Lydia Forester. My name is Gordon Greig."

When her eager gaze fell upon the words she became instantly filled with excitement, and nodded quickly. Then holding her steel-clasped wrists towards me she looked wistfully at me, as though imploring me to release her from the awful bondage in that silent tomb.

Though the woman who had led me there endeavored to prevent it, I handed her the pencil, and placed the paper on the table for her to write.



She Raised Her Clasped Hands to Me in Silence.

"No, I wish to see if she is really insane. You will at least allow me to write a few lines to her."

"And while we were in altercation, Kima, with the pencil in her fingers, tried to write, but by reason of her hands being bound so closely was unable. At length, however, after several attempts, she succeeded in printing in uneven capitals the response: "I know you. You were on the yacht. I thought they killed you."

"The thin-faced old woman saw her response, and that with a surely rational enough—and her brows contracted with displeasure. "Why are you here?" I wrote, not allowing the sister to get sight of my question.

In response, she wrote patiently and laboriously: "I am condemned for a crime I did not commit. Take me from here, or I shall kill myself."

"What is this place?" I demanded of the woman in the religious habit, when I recovered from the shock of the poor girl's terrible affliction.

"Colonel Smirnov. If he knew that I had admitted you, you would never have taken me here. This is the Schusselburg of Finland—the place of imprisonment for those who have conspired against the state."

"The prison of political conspirators, eh?" "Alas, m'sieur, yes! The place in which some of the poor creatures are tortured in order to obtain confessions and information with as much cruelty as in the black days of the inquisition."

I had long ago heard of the horrors of Schusselburg, indeed who has not heard of them who has traveled in Russia. The very mention of that mad-modern bastion on Lake Ladoga, where no prisoner has ever been known to come forth alive, is sufficient to cause any Russian to turn pale. And I was in the Schusselburg prison."

I turned over the sheet of paper and wrote the question: "Did Baron Oberg send you here?" In response, she printed the words: "I believe so. I was arrested by Helmsing. Tell Lydia where I am."

"Do you know Muriel Lethcote?" I inquired by the same means, whereupon she replied that they were at school together.

"Who do you see me on board the Lola?" I wrote. "Yes, but I could not warn you, although I had overheard their intentions. They took me ashore when you were not present. For three days I found myself deaf and dumb—I was made so."

"A doctor, I suppose. People who said they were my friends put me under chloroform." I turned to the woman in the religious habit, and cried: "A shameful mutilation has been committed upon this poor defenseless girl, and I must make it my duty to discover and punish the perpetrators of it."

"Ah, m'sieur. Do not act rashly, I pray of you," the woman said seriously, placing her hand upon my arm. "Recollect you are in Finland—where the Baron Oberg is all-powerful."

"I do not fear the Baron Oberg," I exclaimed. "If necessary, I will appeal to the czar himself. Mademoiselle is kept here for the reason that she is in possession of some secret. She must be released—I will take the responsibility."

"But you must not try to release her from here. It would mean death to you both. The Castle of Kajana tells me no secrets of those who die within its walls, or of those cast leading into its waters and forgotten."

Again I turned to Elma, who stood in anxious wonder and subject of conversation, and had suddenly taken the old nun's hand and kissed it affectionately, perhaps in order to show me that she trusted her.

"Then upon the paper I wrote: "Is the Baron Oberg your uncle?" She shook her head in the negative, showing that the dreaded governor general of Finland had only acted a part towards her in which she had been completely deceived. "Who is Philip Hornby?" I inquired, writing rapidly.

"My friend—at least, I believe so." "Friend! And I had all along believed him to be an adventurer and an enemy!" "Why did you go to Leghorn?" I asked.

"For a secret purpose. There was a plot to kill our king, and the same thwart them." were the words she printed with much labor.

"Then I owe my life to you," I wrote. "And in return I will do my utmost to secure your release. If you do not fear to place yourself in my hands."

And to this she replied: "I shall be thankful, for I cannot bear this awful place longer. I believe that you will release the women here. They will torture me some day. Do your best to get me out of here and I will tell you everything. But," she wrote, "I fear you can never secure my release. I am confined here on a life sentence."

their power because she had no means of defense. The man is awaiting me in the boat outside. I intend to take her with me."

"But, m'sieur, why that is impossible!" cried the old woman in a hoarse voice. "If you were discovered by the guards who patrol the lake both night and day they would shoot you both."

"I will risk it," I said, and linking my arm in that of the woman whose lovely countenance had verily become the sun of my existence, I made a sign, inviting her to accompany me.

The sister barred the door, urging me to reconsider my decision, but I waved her aside.

"Elma recognized my intentions in a moment, and allowed herself to be conducted down the long intricate corridor, walking stealthily, and as we crept along on tiptoe I felt the girl's grip upon my arm, a grip that told me that she placed her faith in me as her deliverer.

Without a sound we crept forward until within a few yards from that unlooked-for entrance we awaited below, when, of a sudden, the uncertain light of the lantern fell upon something that shone and a deep voice cried out of the darkness in Russian: "Halt at once!"

And, startled, we found ourselves looking down the muzzle of a loaded carbine.

A huge sentinel stood with his back to the scene, his dark eyes shining beneath his peaked cap, as he held his weapon to his shoulder within six feet of us.

"Speak!" cried the fellow. "Who are you?" At a glance I took in the peril of the situation, and without a second's hesitation made a dive for the man beneath his weapon. He lowered it, but I started I heard that price were so high. Flour was reported at 112 per hundred it is \$4.25 here. In the west all the groceries can be purchased for nearly the same as in Minn. The only article that I found higher was kerosene at 35 cts per gallon.

When I saw the land I wondered why people do not live where they produce enough from the soil to make a comfortable living. We visited T. Sator, John Dahl, W. J. and R. D. Holt, Martin Halmen, Ole Halvorsen, Wm. Walker and Geo. Cobly, all from Bagley. We found well and prosperous farmers who wished to be recommended to all the Bagley friends. (Sgd.) A. MEYER.—Advertisement.

Undue Influence Suspected. "My boy Josh writes me that he's going to be a vice club," said Farmer Cottrell.

"Why, I didn't know Josh could sing," exclaimed his wife. "That's why I'm kind of pleased. If Josh can break into a vice club, it shows he's wonderful popular or a terrible lighter."

Polly's Pun. "Patty—Jack has an awful hand grasp. When he proposed he squeezed my hand so hard it fairly ached."

Polly—Perhaps he meant it for an engagement ring.

A Perfect Good Dog. "Look here, Snidders," said Walter, "this dog you sold me is no fighter. He's regular mauler of a mollycoddle. You told me he'd lick anything on sight."

"So be will," said Snidders. "He's vurry, vurry affectionate."—Judge.

WITH BARNES FULL OF STOCK

Didn't Look Much Like Hard Times in Western Canada.

A. Meyer, who left one of the best Counties in Minnesota, probably because he got a good price for his excellent farm, and left for the Canadian West, writes to his local paper, the Bagley Independent. His story is well worth repeating. He says:

"To say I was greatly surprised when I reached Saskatchewan and Alberta would be expressing it mildly. In a country where so much suffering was reported, I found everyone in good circumstances, and especially all our friends who have left Clearwater and Folk centers. They all in good homes and those who were reported to have sold their stock through lack of feed, I found with their barns full of stock, and it did not look very much like hard times. They have 200 to 300 acres in the sections of the finest land that can be found.

Those that left here two or three years ago have from 100 to 400 acres in crop this year.

Prospects for a bumper crop are splendid. It is a little cold now, but nothing is frosted, either in gardens or fields. Land can be bought quite reasonably here from those who volunteered their services in the European war. Here are certainly the best opportunities for securing a good home with a farm and independence for life in a short time. Before I started I heard that prices were so high. Flour was reported at 112 per hundred it is \$4.25 here. In the west all the groceries can be purchased for nearly the same as in Minn. The only article that I found higher was kerosene at 35 cts per gallon.

When I saw the land I wondered why people do not live where they produce enough from the soil to make a comfortable living. We visited T. Sator, John Dahl, W. J. and R. D. Holt, Martin Halmen, Ole Halvorsen, Wm. Walker and Geo. Cobly, all from Bagley. We found well and prosperous farmers who wished to be recommended to all the Bagley friends. (Sgd.) A. MEYER.—Advertisement.

Undue Influence Suspected. "My boy Josh writes me that he's going to be a vice club," said Farmer Cottrell.

"Why, I didn't know Josh could sing," exclaimed his wife. "That's why I'm kind of pleased. If Josh can break into a vice club, it shows he's wonderful popular or a terrible lighter."

Polly's Pun. "Patty—Jack has an awful hand grasp. When he proposed he squeezed my hand so hard it fairly ached."

Polly—Perhaps he meant it for an engagement ring.

A Perfect Good Dog. "Look here, Snidders," said Walter, "this dog you sold me is no fighter. He's regular mauler of a mollycoddle. You told me he'd lick anything on sight."

"So be will," said Snidders. "He's vurry, vurry affectionate."—Judge.

A Suave Sinner. "He was such an oil, smooth-tongued cuss that he completely took me in, awfully me. He said that he was in. "Showing that the way of the transgressor is sometimes soft, eh?"

Always an Opening. "Hello, brother, what are you doing?" "Learnin' to be a criminal. It's the only way I know of to get a job these days."—Lido.

Commercialized. Mrs. Crawford—Are your husband's objections to female suffrage practical? Mrs. Crabshaw—Perfectly practical, my dear. He said that he would be enough political offices to go around.—Judge.

Big Saving. "Two hundred dollars for a fur coat, my dear. I don't think we can afford that." "Certainly we can afford it. Didn't I get you four two-dollar shirts for 63 cents each?"

Too True. Little Sophie—Father, what is executive ability? Professor Breadhead—The faculty of earning your bread by the work of other people.—Christian Register.

The Right Adjective. "I dined yesterday with a raving beauty." "You mean a raving beauty, don't you?" "I paid the bill. I ought to know what kind of beauty she was."

Too Late. "You never asked me whether I wanted any hair tonic," said the bald-headed man. "That's the fellow who cut your hair ten years ago ought to have asked you that."

Early Remedied. Bank Clerk—I am sorry, madam, but you have overdrawn your account. "Fair Patron—is that so? Then I'll just write you a check for the difference."

Hard Luck, Indeed. "What a fellow to do, I'd like to know!" complained John. "The kids that mamma don't object to me playing with all have mammas that won't let them play with me."