The CZAR'S SPY

The Mystery of a Silent Love

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SYNOPSIS.

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Gordon Gregg, dining aboard with Hornby, Scotland Lola's owner, accidentally sees a torn photograph of a young girl. That night the consulate safe is robbed. The police find that Hornby is a fraud and the Lola's name a false one. In London Gregg is trapped nearly to his death by a former servant, Olinto. Visiting in Dumfries Gregg meets Muriel Leithcourt. Hornby appears and Muriel introduces him as Martin Woodroffe, her father's friend. Gregg sees a copy of the torn photograph on the Lola and finds that the young girl is Muriel's friend, Woodroffe disappears. Gregg discovers the body of a murdered woman in Rannoch wood. The body disappears and in its place is found the body of Olinto. Muriel and Gregg search Rannoch wood together, and find the body of Armida, Olinto's wife. When the police go to the wood the body has disappeared. In London Gregg meets Olinto, alive and well. Gregg traces the young girl of the torn photograph, and finds that she is Elma Heath, niece of Baron Oberg, who has taken her to Abo, Finland, and that she holds a secret affecting Woodroffe. On his return to Rannoch Gregg finds the Leithcourts fled from Hylton Chater, who had called there. He goes to Abo, and after a tilt with the police chief, is conducted to Kajana, where he finds Elma imprisoned. A surgical operation has made her deaf and dumb. He escapes with her. Pursuers overtaking them, Elma escapes into the forest and Gregg is taken to Abo.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"The prisoner, your excellency, desired to be brought here to you before being taken to Helsingfors. He said you would be aware of the facts."

"And so I am," remarked Boranski, with a smile. "There is no conspiracy. You must at once release this gentleman and the other two prisoners."

"But, excellency, the governor general has issued orders for the prisoner's arrest and deportation to Helsingfors."

"That may be. But I am chief of police in Abo, and I release him."

The officer looked at me in such blank astonishment that I could not resist smiling.

"I am well aware of the reason of this Englishman's visit to the North," added Boranski. "More need not be said. Has the lady been arrested?"

"No, your excellency. Every effort is being made to find her. Colonel Smirnoff has already been relieved of his post as governor of Kajana, and many of the guards are under arrest for complicity in the plot to allow the woman to escape."

"Ah, yes. I see from the dispatches that a reward is offered for her recapture."

"The governor general is determined that she shall not escape," remarked the other.

"She is probably hidden in the forest, somewhere or other."

"Of course. They are making a thorough search over every verst of it. If she is there, she will most certainly be found."

"No doubt," remarked Boranski, leaning back in his padded chair and looking at me meaningly across the littered table. "And now I wish to speak to this Englishman privately, so please leave us. Also inform the other two prisoners that they are at liberty."

"But your excellency does this upon his own responsibility," he said anxiously. "Remember that I brought them to you under arrest."

"And I release them entirely at my own discretion," he said. "As chief of police of this province, I am permitted to use my jurisdiction, and I exercise it in this matter. You are at liberty to report that at Helsingfors, if you so desire, but I should suggest that you say nothing unless absolutely obliged—you understand!"

The manner in which Boranski spoke apparently decided my captor, for after a moment's hesitation he said, saluting:

"If that is really your wish, then I will obey." And he left.

"Excellency!" exclaimed the chief of police, rising quickly and walking towards me as soon as the door was closed and we were alone, "you have had a very narrow escape—very. I did my best to assist you. I succeeded in bribing the water guards at Kajana in order that you might secure the lady's release. But it seems that just at the very moment when you were about to get away one of the guards turned informer and roused the governor of the castle, with the result that you all three nearly lost your lives. The whole matter has been reported to me officially, and," he added with a grim smile, "my men are now searching everywhere for you."

"But why is Baron Oberg so extremely anxious to recapture Miss Heath?" I asked earnestly.

"I have no idea," was his reply. "The secret orders from Helsingfors to me are to arrest her at all hazards—alive or dead."

"Which means that the baron would not regret if she were dead," I remarked, in response to which he nodded in the affirmative.

I told him of the faithful services of Felix, the Flamander, whereupon he said simply: "I told you that you might trust him implicitly."

"But now that you have shown yourself my friend," I said, "you will assist Miss Heath to escape this man, who desires to hold her prisoner in that awful place? They are driving her mad."

"I will do my best," he answered, but shaking his head dubiously. "But you must recollect that Baron Oberg is governor-general of Finland, with all the powers of the czar himself."

"And if Elma Heath again falls into his unscrupulous hands, she will die," I declared.

"Ah!" he sighed, looking me straight in the face, "I swear that what you say is only too true. She evidently holds some secret which he fears she will reveal. He wishes to rearrest her in order—well—" he added in a low tone, "in order to close her lips. It would not be the first time that persons have been silenced in secret at Kajana. Many fatal accidents take place in that fortress, you know."

CHAPTER XIII.

"The Strangler."

Where was Elma? What was the cause of her inexplicable disappearance into the gloomy forest while we had slept?

I returned to the hotel where I had stayed on my arrival, a comfortable place called the Phoenix, and lunched there alone. Both Felix, the Finn, and my host, the wood cutter, had received their douceurs and left, but to the last-named I had given instructions to return home at once and report by telegraph any news of my lost one.

A thousand conflicting thoughts arose within me as I sat in that crowded salle a manger filled with a gobbling crowd of the commercial men of Abo. I had, I recognized, now to deal with the most powerful man in that country, and I suffered a distinct disadvantage by being in ignorance of the reason he held that sweet English girl a prisoner. The tragedy of the dastardly manner in which she had been willfully maimed caused my blood to boil within me. I had never believed that in this civilized twentieth century such things could be.

Why she had disappeared without warning I was at loss to imagine, yet I could only surmise that her flight had been compulsory. Another very curious feature in the affair was the sudden manner in which Michael Boranski had exacted his power and influence in order to render me that service.

There was, I felt convinced, some hidden motive in all that sudden and marked friendliness. That he really hated the English I had seen plainly when we had first met, and I had only compelled him to serve me by presenting the order signed by the emperor, which made me his guest within the Russian dominions. Even that document did not account for the length he had gone to secure the release of the woman I now loved in secret.

I could not bring myself to leave Finland, and allow Elma to fall into the clutches of that high official who so persistently sought her end. No. I would go to him and face him. I was anxious to see what manner of man was "The Strangler of Finland." That same evening I left Abo, and traveled by rail to Helsingfors.

At noon I descended from a droskey before a long, gray, massive building, over the big doorway of which was a large escutcheon bearing the Russian arms emblazoned in gold, and on entering where a sentry stood on either side, a colossal concierge in livery of bright blue and gold came forward to meet me.

Following his directions, I crossed a great, bare courtyard, and, ascending a wide stone staircase, was confronted by a servant, who took my card to Colonel Luganski, who he informed me was the baron's private secretary.

After ten minutes or so the man returned, saying:

"The colonel will see you if you will please step this way," and conducted me into the richly furnished private apartments of the palace, across a great hall filled with fine paintings, and then up a long, thickly carpeted passage to a small, elegant room, where a tall, baldheaded man in military uniform stood awaiting me.

"Your name is M'sieur Gregg," he exclaimed in very good French, "and I understand you desire audience of his excellency, the governor general. I regret, however, that he never gives audience to strangers."

"The matter upon which I desire to see his excellency is of a purely private and confidential nature," I said, for, used as I was to the ways of foreign officialdom, I spoke with the same firm courtesy as himself.

"If I write the nature of my business and inclose it in an envelope, will you then take it to him?" I suggested.

He hesitated for a short time, twisting his mustache, and then replied with great reluctance:

"Well, if you are so determined, you may write your business upon your card."

I therefore took out one, and on the back in French:

"To give information regarding Miss Elma Heath."

Ringing a bell, he handed it to the footman who appeared. The response came in a few minutes.

"His excellency will give audience to the English m'sieu."

The apartment of the governor general was splendidly decorated, and in the center of the parquet floor, with his back to the light, was the thin, wiry figure of an elderly man in a funereal frock coat, in the lapel of which showed the red and yellow ribbon of the Order of St. Anne. His hands were behind his back, and he stood purposely in such a position that when I entered I could not at first see his face against the strong, gray light behind.

But when the footman had bowed and retired and we were alone, he turned slightly, and I then saw that his bony face, with high cheek bones, slight gray side whiskers, hard mouth and black eyes set closely together, was of one who could act without any compunction and without regret. Truly one would not be surprised at any cruel, dastardly action of a man with such a face—the face of an oppressor.

"Well?" he snapped in French in a high-pitched voice. "You want to see me concerning that mad English girl? What picturesque lies do you intend to tell me concerning her?"

"I have no intention of telling any untruths concerning her," was my quick response, as I faced him unflinchingly. "She has told me sufficient to—"

His eyes met mine, and I saw by his drawn face and narrow brows that my words were causing him the utmost consternation. My object was to make him believe that I knew more than I really did—to hold him in fear, in fact.

"Perhaps the man whom some know as Hornby, or Woodroffe, could tell an interesting story," I went on. "He will, no doubt, when he meets Elma Heath, and finds the terrible affliction of which she has been the victim."

His thin, bony countenance was bloodless, his mouth twitched and his gray brows contracted quickly.

"I haven't the least idea what you mean, my dear sir," he stammered. "All that you say is entirely enigmatical to me. What have I to do with this mad Englishwoman's affairs?"

"Only that you knew her. Remember, baron, that your secret is mine," I said in a clear voice full of meaning.

"Very well. You know better than myself," he laughed. "The offense for which she was condemned to confine-

He Turned Slightly. I Then Saw His Bony Face.

ment in a fortress was the attempted assassination of Madame Vakuroff, wife of the general commanding the Uleaborg military division."

"Assassination!" I said. "Have you actually sent her to prison as a murderess?"

"I have not. The criminal court of Abo did so," he said dryly. "The offense has since been proved to have been the outcome of a political conspiracy, and the minister of the interior in Petersburg last week signed an order for the prisoner's transportation to the island of Saghalien."

"Ah!" I remarked with set teeth. "Because you fear lest she shall write down your secret."

"You are insulting! You evidently do not know what you are saying," he exclaimed resentfully.

"I know what I am saying quite well. You have requested her removal to Saghalien in order that the truth shall never be known. But, Baron Oberg," I added with mock politeness, "you may do as you will, you may send Elma Heath to her grave, you may hold me prisoner if you dare, but there are still witnesses of your crime that will rise against you."

In an instant he went ghastly pale, and I knew that my shot had struck its mark. The man before me was guilty of some crime, but what it was only Elma herself could tell.

"I merely wish to impress upon you the fact that I have not the slightest interest whatsoever in the person in question," he said coldly. "You seem to have formed some romantic attachment towards this young woman who attempted to poison Madame Vakuroff, and to have succeeded in rescuing her from Kajana. You afterwards disregard the fact that you are liable to a long term of imprisonment yourself, and actually have the audacity to seek audience of me and make all sorts of hints and suggestions that I have held the woman a prisoner for my own ends!"

"Not only do I repeat that, Baron Oberg," I said quickly. "But I also allege that it was at your instigation that in Siena the operation was performed upon the unfortunate girl which deprived her of speech and hearing."

He laughed again, but uneasily, a forced laugh, and leaned against the edge of the big writing table near the window.

"Well, what next?" he inquired, pretending to be interested in my allegations. "What do you want of me?"

"I desire you to give Mademoiselle Heath her complete freedom," I said.

"But her future is not in my hands. The minister in Petersburg has decreed her removal to Saghalien as a person dangerous to the state."

"You have posed in England as the uncle of Elma Heath, and yet you here hold her a prisoner. For what reason?" I demanded.

"She is held prisoner by the state—for conspiracy against Russian rule—not by herself personally."

"Who enticed her here? Why, you, yourself. Who conspired to throw the guilt of this attempted murder of the general's wife upon her? You—you, the man whom they call 'The Strangler of Finland!' But I will avenge the cruel and abominable affliction you have placed upon her. Her secret—your secret, Baron Oberg—shall be published to the world. You are her enemy—and therefore mine!"

"Very well," he growled between his teeth, advancing towards me threateningly, his fists clenched in his rage. "Recollect, m'sieur, that you have insulted me. Recollect that I am governor general of Finland."

"If you were czar himself, I should not hesitate to denounce you as the tyrant and mutilator of a poor, defenseless woman."

"And to whom, pray, will you tell this romantic story of yours?" he laughed hoarsely. "To your prison walls below the lake of Kajana? Yes, M'sieur Gregg, you will go there, and once within the fortress you shall never again see the light of day. You threaten me—the governor general of Finland!" he laughed in a strange, high-pitched key as he threw himself into a chair and scribbled something rapidly upon paper, appending his signature in his small, crabbed handwriting.

"I do not threaten," I said in open defiance, "I shall act."

"And so shall I," he said with an evil grin upon his bony face as he blotted what he had written and took it up, adding: "In the darkness and silence of your living tomb you can tell whatever strange stories you like concerning me. They are used to idiots where you are going," he added grimly.

"Oh! And where am I going?"

"Back to Kajana. This order consigns you to confinement there as a dangerous political conspirator, as one who has threatened me—it consigns you to the cells below the lake—for life!"

I laughed aloud, and my hand sought my wallet, wherein was that all-powerful document—the order of the emperor which gave me, as an imperial guest, immunity from arrest. I would produce it as my trump card.

Next second, however, I held my breath, and I think I must have turned pale. My pocket was empty! My wallet had been stolen! Entirely and helplessly I had fallen into the hands of the tyrant of the czar.

We faced each other, and I looked straight into his gray, bony face, and answered in a tone of defiance:

"Ah! you surely do not think that I, after ten years' service in the British diplomatic service, would dare to come to Finland upon this quest—would dare to face the rotten and corrupt officialdom which Russia has placed within this country—without first taking some adequate precaution? No, baron. Therefore I defy you, and I leave Helsingfors tonight."

"You will not. You are under arrest."

I laughed heartily and snapped my fingers, saying: "Before you give me over to your police, first telegraph to your minister of finance, Monsieur de Witte, and inquire of him who and what I am."

"I don't understand you."

"You have merely to send my name and description to the minister and ask for a reply," I said. "He will give you instructions—or, if you so desire, ask his majesty yourself."

"And why, pray, does his majesty concern himself about you?" he asked, at once puzzled.

"You will learn later, after I am confined in Kajana and your secret is known in Petersburg."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," I said, "I mean that I have taken all the necessary steps to be forearmed against you. The day I am incarcerated by your order the whole truth will be known. I shall not be the sufferer—but you will."

My words, purposely enigmatical, misled him. He saw the drift of my argument, and being of course unaware of how much I knew, he was still in fear of me. My only uncertainty was of the actual fate of poor Elma. My wallet had been stolen—with a purpose, without a doubt—for the thief had deprived me of that most important of all documents, the open sesame to every closed door, the ukase of the czar.

"You defy me!" he said hoarsely, turning back to the window with the written order for my imprisonment as a political atilt in his hand. "But we shall see."

"You rule Finland," I said in a hard tone, "but you have no power over Gordon Gregg."

"I have power, and intend to exert it."

"For your own ruin," I remarked with a self-confident smile. "The czar may be your patron, and you his favorite, but his majesty has no tolerance of officials who are guilty of what you are guilty of. You talk of arresting me!" I added with a smile, "Why, you ought rather to go on your knees and beg my silence."

He went white with rage at my cutting sarcasm. He literally boiled over, for he saw that I was quite cool and had no fear of him or of the terrible punishment to which he intended to consign me. Besides which, he was filled with wonder regarding the exact amount of information which Elma had imparted to me.

"Arrest me if you like. Denounce me by means of any lie that arises to your lips, but remember that the truth is known beyond the confines of the Russian empire, and for that reason traces will be sought of me and full explanation demanded. I have taken precaution, Xavier Oberg," I added, "therefore do your worst. I repeat again that I defy you!"

He paced the big room, his thin, clawlike hands still clenched, his yellow teeth grinding, his dark, deep-set eyes fixed straight before him. If he had dared he would have struck me down at his feet. But he did not dare. I saw too plainly that even though my wallet was gone I still held the trump card—that he feared me.

I had led him to believe that I knew everything, and that his future was in my hands, while he, on his part, was anxious to hold me prisoner, and yet dared not do so.

The baron had halted, and was looking through one of the great windows down upon the courtyard below, where sentries were pacing. The palace was for him a gilded prison, for he dared not go out for a drive in one or other of the parks or for a row on the water across to Hogholmen or Dagero, being compelled to remain there for months without showing himself publicly. People in Abo had told me that when he did go out into the streets of Helsingfors it was at night, and he usually disguised himself in the uniform of a private soldier of the guard, thus escaping recognition by those who, driven to desperation by injustice, sought his life.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

NO REAL CAUSE FOR "BLUES"

Happiness and Unhappiness Always Irrational and Springs From Trivial Things.

Happiness and unhappiness are irrational. They are outside of theorizing or philosophy. A trivial incident sends our spirits up or down. "Thinking backward" is how the Germans describe melancholia. The loneliness that is experienced in crowded places, and the yearning for days gone by or for far-off scenes creep unannounced into the heart.

Real troubles do not kill the joy of living. Catastrophe and hardship challenge the soul to combat, and there is a grim pleasure in meeting and grappling with adversity. The slumping of precious illusions, the chilling fogs of misunderstanding, jealousy, envy and self-pity pile up at times to obscure the vision. Illusions which are our playthings and our reasons to be alive no longer gleam and glisten. Drab reality supplants the radiant ideal.

Every person has believed in his innermost mind that he had a monopoly of sorrow and tribulation. "No one so oppressed as I walks this earth," complains the unsophisticated wayfarer. Fatalists there be who argue that no one is happier than anyone else and that he who goes down to the depths of woe is merely paying for his ascents to the pinnacles of bliss.—Detroit News.

Use Dormitory as Church.

Rev. B. G. O'Rourke, chaplain to the British forces who was captured with the British ambulance column during the retreat from Mons, in a letter to his brother at Nottingham, states that he is in camp at Magdeburg, occupying a room with British, French, Belgian and Russian officers.

A dormitory has been fitted up as a church, which is a great novelty. At one end is the French Roman Catholic altar, at the other end is the British altar, on the third side is the Russian, and the fourth side is piled with beds. British, French and Russians use the church at different hours.

"We had a meeting yesterday," he adds, "to decide the fate of our communion vessels and brass cross, which will have a historic value. Some were for presenting them to St. Paul's or some garrison church, but in the end they were presented to me for use in whatever church I serve."

Birds, Cats and Dogs in War.

Bird and animal lovers have made an investigation of the effect upon both domestic and wild creatures of gunfire, especially heavy cannonading, says the Cologne correspondent of the Associated Press. They find that for two and sometimes three days the birds are terribly excited and fly back and forth in bewilderment, and that cats and dogs hide in the darkest places they can find. At the end of that time, however, their excitement subsides and they become absolutely impervious to the noise.

Robbery That Hurt.

When a thief drove out of the town of Silverfield, Nev., with a team of horses belonging to Curley Jones, a mine owner, he took with him the only conveyance in the town. As a result, Jones was compelled to walk 25 miles over mountain and desert to notify the sheriff.

THE KITCHEN CABINET

For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most; and, when the difficulties have once been overcome, these are the books which have struck deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections.

GOOD DISHES WORTH TRYING.

When it is hard to think of anything to have for luncheon or supper, try

Salmon Cakes.—Take a can of salmon and mix with one beaten egg, add a cupful of bread crumbs and a tablespoonful of softened butter. Season with salt and pepper, form into small cakes and fry in hot fat. Serve garnished with slivers of sour pickle.

Tipperary Salad.—Mix two tablespoonfuls of finely chopped parsley with one and a half cupful of well-seasoned mashed potato that has been left from dinner, add a teaspoonful of onion juice and a half tablespoonful of vinegar. Chill thoroughly, shape in small balls and serve on lettuce leaves with French dressing.

Peach Pudding.—Line a deep bowl with thin strips of sponge cake or with ladyfingers. Pour into the bowl a thin cornstarch pudding, flavored with almond. When the cornstarch has settled lay on top halves of canned peaches. Fill the bowl with more cornstarch pudding, garnish the top with sliced peaches and sprinkle with cocoanut.

Salad Dressing for Fruit.—Beat well the yolks of two eggs, add one-half cupful of maple sirup and the juice of a lemon, with a dash of salt. Cook over hot water until smooth and thick, beating with an egg whisk or Dover beater constantly.

Hamburger Steak.—When getting this meat at the market ask for half hamburger and half pork, mix well, season with salt, pepper, onion juice, ground cloves and nutmeg. Make into balls and cook in a well-greased frying pan until well browned. In another pan put a piece of suet, a tablespoonful or two, and add sliced onions; when well yellowed, add green apples, cut in slices, leaving on the peeling; add a little water and when nearly soft a small amount of sugar. Simmer until smooth and well cooked. Serve around the platter of meat cakes. When one has a limited amount of meat, a good serving of onions and apples helps to piece it out satisfactorily.

"It is a good thing to be rich," said Euripides, "and a good thing to be strong, but it is a better thing to be beloved of many friends."

Tell me how you spend your spare time and I will tell you what you are, says another wise man.

SEASONABLE RECIPES.

Those who are fond of green peppers enjoy them shredded in potato salad, with cabbage salad and in fact almost any combination of vegetable is improved by the addition of a portion of green pepper.

Stuffed Green Peppers.—Cut a slice from the stem or pointed end of the peppers, whichever will furnish thereby the best receptacle for filling. Pour boiling water, well salted, over the peppers and let stand to cook three minutes. Remove and set in a serving dish suitable for the oven. Have ready for six peppers, a cupful and a half of white sauce, half a cupful of rice well cooked, three mild onions, boiled tender. Cut the onions in bits and mix with a third of the white sauce. Fill the peppers with alternate layers of creamed onions and the rice. Cover with buttered crumbs and bake until the crumbs are well browned. Turn the rest of the white sauce around the peppers and serve at once.

Ginger Ale Salad.—Soften a fourth of a package of gelatin in a fourth of a cupful of cold water, and set to dissolve over hot water, add a grating of lemon rind, and a cupful and three-fourths of ginger ale. Turn into small molds and chill. Serve very cold on heart leaves of lettuce with either French or mayonnaise dressing, to a cupful of which three tablespoonfuls or more of cocktail sauce is added.

Fruit Pudding.—Sift a cup of flour with a teaspoonful of baking powder and half a teaspoonful of salt; add a half cupful of milk and put a tablespoonful of this mixture into a buttered cup, then add a few fresh strawberries, raspberries or any fruit at hand; put another tablespoonful of the dough on top and place in boiling water to cook, well covered, for 20 minutes

Nellie Maxwell

Bathless Middle Ages.

Greece had baths for every citizen; so had Rome, but the Goths broke her aqueducts and the fanatics closed the public baths (being dirty themselves) and Rome fell and the Dark Ages set in. "A thousand years without a bath," as Michelet epitomized them.

Worth While Quotation.

To work, to help, and to be helped, to learn sympathy through suffering, to learn faith by perplexity, to reach truth through wonder—behold!—this is what it is to live.—Phillips Brooks.