

DARKEST RUSSIA

BY H. GRATTAN DONNELLY.

Copyright, 1906, by Street & Smith. All rights reserved.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

"Then lead me your greatcoat. I shall be less liable to be questioned by any of the gendarmes when they recognize an officer's coat. Then rest here, and I swear to you that in less than forty minutes I shall return here with Olga."

Alexis thought a moment. Then, taking up his coat, he handed it to Ivan, who, quickly assuming the garment, said: "Rest here, and trust me. I will keep my word. Should any one enter in my absence, say you are my friend and await me."

Then as he was going he suddenly stopped.

Taking his overcoat, he said: "You are tired from your journey and exhausted, no doubt, by your experience to-night. Rest here, and throw this over you. You will wait my return?"

"I will await your return." He glanced up the steps as Ivan departed, saw the door close and heard a key turn in the outer lock; then rapidly departing footsteps till they were lost in the distance, and then there was profound silence.

Ivan had started on his mission, and Alexis was alone.

CHAPTER X.

Caught in the Trap.

It was only after he had sat a minute or two, amid silence so profound that he could have heard his heart beat, that Alexis Nazimoff began to reason with himself. "What if this were a trap?"

The idea no sooner occurred than it was dismissed. No one had induced him to visit the place. His coming had been entirely of his own volition, and could not have been anticipated.

Besides, there could be no possible mistake about Ivan's amazement when he had revealed his name, and there was something in the manner of the man, despite his excitement, that forbade the idea of treachery.

Then he thought of Lida.

She here—with her evident refinement and highly wrought nature—here, in this dark, gloomy, forbidding place—in the cellar-like apartment of a house in the lower quarter of the town. What did it mean? And she was still here!

Alexis looked around, this time with more eager interest.

There was apparently no door except the one at the top of the steps. It puzzled him. Had Lida gone in the interim between the time when his man had seen her enter and his own arrival? Then he remembered that Ivan had not, after all, admitted that his sister was in the place.

"Well," was his silent conclusion, "there is nothing for it but to wait his return. I must be patient."

When a man gets into a frame of mind when he says he must be patient, the most natural thing in the world to enable him to endure patience with a comparatively cheerful equanimity is a cigar. To his annoyance he found that his cigar case was in his greatcoat pocket.

Suddenly his eyes rested on Ivan's coat. In Russia all men are smokers, and Alexis felt the chances of finding a cigar were strongly in his favor. He lifted the cloak, and as he did so he uttered an exclamation of pleasure.

There was a cigar case sure enough.

Alexis withdrew it from the pocket, and as he sat down he tossed the coat back on the table. As he did



"SOMETHING FELL TO THE FLOOR"

so, from a small receptacle or pocket for matches on the side of the cigar case, something fell with a jingle to the floor.

Alexis picked it up.

A Red Rouble!

He lighted the cigar, and then, after a whiff or two, he gazed curiously at the coin.

A Red Rouble—painted—dyed? Alexis turned it over in his hand. "Singular thing," he thought, "to have a silver piece so stained. What did it mean? What could be the object?"

He had been sitting there examining the coin for perhaps a minute when the silence was broken. He could hardly tell how or by what. But so slight as to be barely heard, but unmistakably a sound.

Alexis rose to his feet. An undefined feeling of danger of some sort, he knew not what, took possession of him.

He listened, with every nerve strained to its utmost. There was silence again. He tried to shake off the unpleasant impression of some

unseen danger and thought that his imagination had deceived him.

Hark! There was the sound again. That was no rat. The sound came from within the apparently solid walls. Noiselessly as he could he went on tiptoe and placed his ear to the wall, and then waited with bated breath.

What was that? "Good God!" he exclaimed, in a whisper to himself, as a murmur of voices reached his ear. "There are people within this wall!"

Even as he made the discovery a sound came from the opposite side. He was there in an instant, his ear again pressed to the wall.

The same murmur reached him. "By heaven, the place is alive with people," he exclaimed. "What does it mean?"

A grating sound, different from any he had yet heard, reached him.

He felt that something, he knew not what, was about to take place—that the danger, if danger it was, was at hand. The place, its appearance, the mysterious noises—all boded deadly peril of some kind.

He was in a den of criminals.

"Trapped!" he thought, "caught by heaven, like a rat in a trap!"

Alexis Nazimoff was a brave man—none braver. But the bravest man may be unnerved by the presence of an unseen danger—of a danger that is felt, not confronted. He was accustomed to think quickly, and to act impulsively. Hastily thrusting the cigar case into the open front of his coat, he quickly but softly moved to where Ivan's coat was lying on the table.

To take the coat and move to the long bench that stood alongside the wall was the work of a couple of seconds, and in as many more he had lain down, pulled Ivan's coat over him, and was apparently asleep!

But he had so arranged the coat that while it covered his head he could see anything that transpired on the opposite side of the room—the side on which he had heard the sound for the second time.

Softly and silently as a shadow the solid wall seemed to move!

Every panel was a revolving door which turned noiselessly on its axis, and from every door entered as silently as a specter an occupant of the mysterious recesses beyond. A rush of air and the movement of softly treading feet convinced Alexis that exactly the same movement was being executed simultaneously behind his back.

Such was the fact. Then to the amazement of Alexis he realized that the apartment of which he had been the sole occupant a moment before was now tenanted by a score of people.

He lay perfectly still—astounded, spellbound.

Suddenly the silence was broken. "All is well," said Oraminsky. "Whoever it was, there could have been no danger, since we did not hear the signal."

"Nor the signal to come out," some one said, in a growling voice; "it is the first time we broke the rules."

"I have suspended the rules," said Oraminsky, with grim irony, "without breaking them." Just what he meant nobody seemed to understand.

Oraminsky, resuming his authoritative tone, put an end to the silence by directing the people to resume their work. "Now that Ivan has gone we can run off the remaining copies of his proclamation. Kirshkin, start the press!"

The man thus addressed went to the wall, and touched a concealed spring, a section of the solid structure revolved and a clumsy hand-press of an old type was run on noiseless rollers into the room.

"Go ahead with that bomb," directed Oraminsky, addressing two of the men. "You, Orloff," to another—"go ahead with the wires. You, Palet, see to the tunnel—quick, to work, all of you. There is no time to lose. Let us work to-night! Our task will be complete, and then, one touch to the wire and Russia will be free from the tyrant."

Alexis never moved. He understood it all now.

The press began running, and as the first impression of the work was taken off Oraminsky held up his hand—the signal for silence.

"Here, brothers, listen to this," he said, as he took up the paper, and, speaking in low tones, read as follows:

"Alexander the Tyrant Is Dead!

"Rise Russia!

"Death to the Oppressors!

"To Arms, Free Russians, to Arms!

"Long Live the People!"

"We will have a thousand copies of that posted throughout St. Petersburg," said Oraminsky, "and then—the Revolution! That would stir the sluggish blood of the moderates—even of such a kindergarten revolutionist as Ivan Barosky."

"Read it to Ivan," said Kirshkin.

"Ivan is gone," said two or three.

"Not so," was the reply of the printer, Kirshkin, as he caught sight of the recumbent figure. "There lies Ivan fast asleep!" and he pointed as he spoke.

"Fool!" muttered Oraminsky, "he has no right to sleep at such a time as this. Wake him up, Hery!"

Alexis drew a deep breath.

The moment had come.

It was a question now of life or death.

Hery—a woman of the people, dark and sullen—sprang to his side,

"Wake up, Ivan Barosky! wake up! We have just finished a letter of invitation."

"To the funeral of the czar," said Kirshkin, whereupon there was a laugh.

"And printed in red, too—red will be the fashionable color in St. Petersburg," said another.

"Because the czar will wear it and set the fashion for all."

"Come, come," said Hery, "wake up!" and as she spoke she grasped the coat and pulled it from the recumbent form.

"Ah!" with a scream of astonished rage as she discovered the stranger, Hery pointed one finger at Alexis—"a spy!"

Quickly springing to his feet Alexis drew his sword.

"Down with him!" "Kill him!"

"His life!" were some of the exclamations which fell on the ears of Alexis, as pale and resolute, with no evidence of fear in the steady eye, he gazed at the faces of the now blood-thirsty crew before him.

"Well, dogs of the gutter," at length he said, as for a moment they stood at bay, held back by his undaunted front, "what seek you? My life? Take it when you can!"

And now with knives drawn, with such weapons as came to hand—a hammer, chisels, an ax—they began



to close in upon him with murder in their eyes.

But none, not even Oraminsky himself, felt like leading the assault, and being the first to feel the thrust of the naked blade which Alexis held with the grip of iron and the masterful ease of the perfect swordsman.

"But a scratch and we have him," said Oraminsky. "Rush on him in a body!"

But nobody rushed. Nobody was itching for a scratch.

Kirshkin at the first moment had left his press, and as Alexis drew his sword he had crept up the room behind the others and on all fours had gone under the stairs and around to the rear of the dauntless swordsman, who, with certain death staring him in the face, kept a bold front to his would-be murderers.

Oraminsky had seen Kirshkin's motion and had at once divined his intention. He made a threatening movement forward with a bar of iron as a weapon. Alexis made a pass as he came within reaching distance, but the weapon never reached Oraminsky, for at that moment Kirshkin, with a suppressed yell of triumph, sprang upon the back of the young soldier. There was an instant rush, and a moment later, bound and helpless, Alexis Nazimoff was at the mercy of Oraminsky and his companions.

As Alexis was borne back by the weight of numbers, and in spite of his gallant struggle against such overpowering odds, there fell from his pocket a bundle of letters, and these it was but an instant's work for Oraminsky to grasp. He fairly shouted, despite his habitual caution, as he read the superscription.

(To be continued.)

A Youngster With Ideas.

Myron, the singer, has a little daughter named Marie, a pretty, curly haired child with plenty of spirit. For the last six or seven weeks she has studied her catechism diligently, and on a recent Sunday was confirmed. Just as she was about to start for the church a friend wanted to know if her father had been asked to sing during the ceremony. A dismayed expression swept across the child's face. "I shan't ask him," she said, "and I hope nobody else does. We'll all be badly enough frightened by the bishop, without having papa around to scare everybody with his roaring."

Some one told the same youngster that if she wasn't clean of heart the bishop would pour a barrel of oil over her. As she was to wear a pretty dress and was not a little proud of the fact, she said, "I hope nobody tells that to mamma. I'll have to wear an old dress if they do."

Better Record Book.

The clerk in charge of a fairry class, held by the county council at Preston, England, gave a stalwart blacksmith a notebook and pencil.

"Wot's this 'ere book for?" asked the man.

"To take notes," replied the clerk. "Notes? Wot sort of notes?"

"Why, anything the lecturer says that you think important and want to remember you make a note of it."

The Lancashireman looked scornful.

"Oh!" said he. "Anything I want to remember I must make a note of in this 'ere book, must I? Then wot do you think my blooming yed's for?"

—Cornhill Magazine.

NEWS IN NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA IN BRIEF.

Shelton has organized a commercial club.

Walter Smith, a stranger, died at Grand Island as a result of a collision of vehicles.

Eustis will hold a school election July 20 to vote \$6,000 bonds to build a brick school house.

Two special government agents were in Fremont looking for a pair of suspects who are said to be passing \$10 counterfeit bills.

The toy pistol was responsible for no less than a dozen accidents in Beatrice on the Fourth, although none of them are of a serious nature.

Articles of incorporation have been filed with the secretary of state by the National Stone company of Cass county. The company has a capital stock of \$50,000.

Baffled in her attempts to get work and discouraged by illness, Marie Johnson of Lincoln turned on the gas in her room in the Rawlings residence at 1241 L street and was found dead.

An extensive list of books has been purchased for the school library at Scott's Bluff. Half of the funds were raised by the school and the other half given by C. A. Morrill of the First National bank.

Work has commenced on the new power and pump house of the Shelton water works, and now, barring the slow arrival of material, the work of laying the mains will be pushed as fast as possible.

Day Lewis, a young man who recently came to Gering from New York, was accidentally shot by a companion named Frank Fisher, the ball from a 44-caliber revolver passing through his leg, but not striking the bone.

V. W. Graves, secretary of the Lehigh school board, has completed the school census and reports that he found 163 pupils of school age in the district. This is a decrease of four from the census of 1903.

Frank Miller, a young man 18 or 20 years of age, the son of Peter Miller, living four miles northeast of Table Rock, was shot through the right hand while engaged in cleaning an old rusty revolver that he "didn't know was loaded."

The following is the Cass county mortgage record for the month of June: Thirteen farm mortgages filed, amounting to the sum of \$24,315; twenty-two released, \$34,616. Eight mortgages on city property filed, \$3,597; nine released, \$5,969.

Warden Beemer is mourning the loss of Convict Jesse Sillick, sent up from Omaha to serve a year's term for stealing. Sillick has been a trusty and was employed as a waiter. He had but a few days to serve and was given considerable liberty.

At a meeting of business men of Neligh it was decided to hold a carnival on September 7, 8 and 9, with a decided change of program and better than former years. Mayor M. B. Huffurdee was selected as chairman, with power to appoint committees.

The bank at Edison was broken into. The burglars succeeded in gaining entrance to the vault, but were frightened away before they could blow the safe. There is no clue except that one of the men cut himself in the broken window glass and left considerable blood upon the window casing and bank furniture.

Ludwig Rarie, a well-to-do German farmer of Butler county, left for Germany and expects to be gone about two years. His object for making the trip at this time is to consult some of the eminent physicians of the old country for a trouble which threatens to cause total deafness. He has been unable to get relief in this country.

York county has doubled its assessable valuation according to the abstract filed in the office of the secretary of the state board of equalization. The total assessable valuation is \$20,200,371, as compared with \$2,683,386.96 in 1903. The greatest increase is in real estate, all of which, to the extent of 359,577 acres, is reported as improved.

William Brown and John Yates, the two colored men from Lincoln who robbed the old soldier, Tidball, who is an inmate of the Milford soldiers' home, on the Fourth of July, were taken before Judge Leavens and bound over to the district court in the sum of \$500 each. The sum stolen was small, but it was a plain case of highway robbery.

St. Louis dispatch: In the American Boy program rendered in Festival hall, Grover C. Aker, "the boy orator" of Blair, Neb., delivered the most brilliant oration. His subject was "The Coming Men," which he handled magnificently. He was interrupted several times by deafening applause. Hugo Sue Juni, a Japanese boy, won second place, his oration being filled with patriotism, love for Japan and love for America.

Pius Poeffel, one of the old settlers of Columbus, died at St. Mary's hospital that city. One week ago he fell from a scaffold on which he was working and sustained internal injuries which resulted in his death. He was 70 years old.

The assessed valuation of Scott's Bluff county is \$755,895, an increase over last year of about \$50,000. The statement recently made in the state press that the western counties had been in the habit of turning in large assessments because they want to show up good is a mistaken idea.

DENNISON MUST GO TO IOWA.

District Judges Deny Writ of Habeas Corpus.

OMAHA—By the opinion of the district court, handed down by Judges Day, Redick and Troup, no habeas corpus writ will be allowed for the purpose of preventing the extradition of Tom Dennison to stand trial for complicity in the Pollack diamond robbery.

A large crowd was in the court room to hear the opinion rendered. The decision of the court was announced by Judge Day, who merely called the case and stated that inasmuch as the parties were all present in court the decision would be handed down. He then proceeded to read a written opinion of some length. As soon as he concluded, Judge Troup read a supplemental opinion and Judge Redick still another, all agreeing as to the findings, and expressing in a measure the individual views of the judges.

Briefly stated, the court held that the various points alleged in behalf of Dennison had not been sustained. That the statute of limitations had not run against the crime, owing to the fact that Dennison had been out of Iowa nearly all the time since the crime was committed; that the governor's extradition warrant was sufficient and in proper form; that the grand jury indictment of Dennison was properly authenticated and sufficient proof that a crime was charged; and finally, that Dennison had failed to establish that he was not in Iowa at the time charged, the court finding therefrom that he is a fugitive from justice.

THE NEBRASKA SOCIALISTS.

Complete Ticket Named and Placed Before the Voters.

OMAHA—The socialists in state convention here, placed the following ticket in the field:

Governor, B. H. Vall, Omaha; lieutenant governor, T. Carroll, Hastings; treasurer, C. W. Stearns, Humboldt; auditor, T. P. Lippencott, Blair; secretary of state, William Parcell, North Platte; attorney general, L. L. McIlvaine, Omaha; commissioner of public lands and buildings, A. D. Peugh, Grand Island; superintendent of public instruction, Mrs. Mary Pierce Rowe, Omaha.

Presidential Electors—L. Westgate, Lincoln, of the First congressional district; J. A. Jacobs, South Omaha, of the Second district; L. DeVore, Laurel, of the Third district; D. C. Omstott, Gering, of the Fifth district; Harry Lamplugh, North Platte, of the Sixth district. Delegate-at-Large—J. J. Harmon of Grand Island and L. V. Humphreys of Atkinson.

Woman Drowned in Creek.

HEBRON—Mrs. Dan Harp was drowned near here Sunday. Harp and wife, who live five miles south of town, were going home and attempted to cross Dry Creek, swollen by the recent rains. The team plunged into a deep hole and one horse was drowned. Mrs. Harp's baby was carried down the stream. Mr. Harp saved himself by hard work.

Minister Loses Leg.

COLUMBUS—Dr. G. A. Munroe, for several years pastor of the Congregational church of this city, submitted to an operation and had his left leg amputated above the knee. Mr. Munroe has suffered for some five years from tuberculosis of the knee joint.

Taking Up Land.

SOUTH OMAHA—A number of South Omaha people have taken up homesteads under the Kinkaid bill. The land taken is in Kimball county and about eight miles north of the county seat.

Christian Women Bury Erring Girl.

CHADRON—After holding the body in the Mead undertaking rooms for over a week trying in vain to reach an aged mother in Canada, Doris Davidson, the young woman from Casper and Douglas, Wyo., was buried under the auspices of the Woman Christian Temperance union. It will be remembered she committed suicide by taking laudanum in the Depot hotel at this city last week. Nothing could have been sadder than this funeral. Not one human being that had ever heard or seen her before, a stranger in a strange land, but there were prayers and songs and tears and flowers. Pictures were taken of her and the flower covered casket to send to the mother when she is found.

Arrested for Stealing a Horse.

COLUMBUS—Robert Furguson, the young man who was arrested at Stanton for stealing a horse belonging to W. J. Parks, a farmer near Creston, had his preliminary examination before Judge O'Brien in Columbus and was bound over to the district court. It is believed that Furguson is not well balanced mentally.

Farmers Will Organize.

GOEHNER—Farmers' meetings were held Tuesday at both this place and Beaver Crossing, both in Seward county, to discuss the formation of farmers elevator companies. H. H. Hanks of Nebraska City addressed the meeting here and \$1,300 was raised toward the project. The company will be a branch of the National farmers exchange. C. Vincent of Omaha, spoke at Beaver Crossing, and another meeting will be held to complete work begun.

NAME WAS INNOCENT

GUILLOTINE WAS INAPPROPRIATELY DESIGNATED.

Instrument of Torture During Grim Reign of Terror in France Claimed Innocent and Guilty Alike.

In the stormier days of Scotland, when faction fights were everyday occurrences, and clan fought against clan with bitter hate and animosity, an instrument, for some occult reason termed "The Maiden," was in frequent requisition. This, judging from its name, harmless and innocent implement, was, however, none other than the deadly guillotine, which during the gruesome French revolution immolated so many thousands of victims.

Amongst the last in Scotland of this cruel maiden's victims was an Earl of Argyle, who, it is said, pressed his lips on the block, remarking that it was "the sweetest maiden he had ever seen." But it was during that grim Reign of Terror when fair France was drenched with blood, and a very orgy of carnage raged supreme, that this lethal implement was in greatest request. Day after day, night after night, wagons and tumbrils, carts and trolleys, discharged their loads of bound captives, who, one after the other, either quietly mounted the steps of the guillotine, or were dragged up by the ruffianly attendants, who, to accelerate their pace would perhaps prick them with the point of their sword or lance; or, if fainting, women were carried up and thrown upon the block as they would treat a sack of flour. Some are shrieking in mortal terror; some, in bravado, defying their captors; some, the personification of impotent ferocity and envenomed savagery, gnash their teeth, and vent their rage against their captors in an incoherent storm of virulent hate. Now it is a Charlotte Corday, who as she thought, to save her country, had stabbed to the heart the hideous and loathsome Marat; now it is a Desmoullins or a Danton, who with infuriated exasperation had pitilessly hurled their lungs to that same fate, and whose name was a ghastly nightmare to the law-abiding; or now it is a Marie Antoinette, whose appearance on that gory platform is a signal for an outburst of frenzied rage from the bloodthirsty mob, who, howling in a paroxysm of rabid fury, and foaming with savage, rancorous venom, shriek out their execrations, and like wild demoniacs hurl their curses and their imprecations at her. And so the gruesome work goes on, each time the ponderous knife falls, another ghastly head rolling into the basket; some held up by the hair by the executioner to excite the jeers and the curses of the mad, sanguinary mob of demagogues whose turn will probably soon come to meet the same fate at the hands of their fellow-creatures; some kicked away into the cart beneath, into which the headless, reeking trunks are unceremoniously thrown; while a few perhaps are handed over to relatives, who, at the risk of being seized and executed, give them decent burial.—Montreal Herald.

THIS PUN IS A GOOD ONE.

Owen Wister Recites One Worth Remembering.

Owen Wister, the novelist, was talking about puns. "I detest puns," he said, "but Fanny Kemble, who was my grandmother, used to tell me made by a certain Baron Rothschild that was good of its kind. "The baron was dining out, and someone spoke of venison. "H! said the baron, nevair eats venison. I think it ish not sooot ash mutton." "Oh, absurd," someone exclaimed. "If mutton is better than venison, why isn't it more expensive?" "The baron laughed, overcome by the brilliancy of the pun that had just come to him. Then he said, and his dialect came in very handy: "The reason why venison ish more expensive than mutton ish that the peoples always prefer vat ish deer to vat is sheep."

What a City Boy Misses.

Poor little Boston kid!
Ever seen a muscadine
Scuppernon on hanging vine?
Bet you never did.
You city boys don't have much fun;
Never do the stunts we done
When I was a kid.
Ever heard a mock' bird sing?
Fished for tadpoles in a spring?
Bet you never did.
Ever go out killing snakes.
Over bows and through cane-brakes?
Bet you never did.
Ever seen watermelons grow.
Hundreds of 'em row by row?
Oh, you never did!

—Boston Transcript.

Great Britain's Railways.

A parliamentary paper just issued contains a summary of the railway returns of the United Kingdom for 1903, compared with the two preceding years. The total mileage in 1903 was 22,380 miles; in 1902, 22,152 miles; in 1901, 22,078 miles. The paid-up capital totaled roundly, \$6,220,000,000 in 1903, \$6,080,000,000 in 1902, and \$5,975,000,000 in 1901.

Tea Growing in Japan.

Tea was grown in Japan in 1902 on an area of 120,197 acres,