

Items of Greater or Lesser Importance Over the State.

Nebraska City has made its annual tax levy 8 per cent lower than last year.

United Brethren at Shelby have laid the corner stone for their new church.

The farmers' elevator at York has proved to be a highly successful investment.

Big political guns, it is said, have not drawn well at Nebraska Chautauquas this year.

Barnston, Gage county, is now without a saloon, whereas old boomers are in a sullen state.

Ainsworth had a hail storm that made smithereens of twenty-seven lights in the school house.

Out in Denel county they are getting forty bushels of wheat to the acre and corn appears the best ever.

Elmer Duncan, a young man about twenty-three years of age, was arrested at Beatrice charged with bootlegging.

Many eastern people are this year visiting relatives and friends in Nebraska and are delighted with the state.

A half-section of land two and a half miles west of Hemingford was sold for \$25 per acre. This same sold for \$5 per acre four years ago.

At Fremont preparation is being made for the opening of the new \$60,000 Young Men's Christian association building during the week ending September 14.

As evidence that Dodge county land is not declining in value witness the sale last week of a 400-acre tract in Pleasant Valley township at the rate of \$110 per acre is chronicled.

John Frerichs, of Gage county, a prominent German farmer, was kicked in the stomach by a horse and seriously injured. While his condition is serious, it is thought he will recover.

Elmer, aged 18, and Charles, aged 20, sons of David James, were drowned in the river six miles below Nebraska City. The family resides at Minorsville. They had gone in swimming.

Miss Mary Booking was killed at Lorton by a Missouri Pacific train as she was making a crossing. The road had allowed the weeds to grow so high that approach of the trains could not be seen.

Old friends and neighbors of the Pioneers and Old Settlers' association of Burt county have been invited to attend the sixth annual reunion and picnic, which is to be held in Tekamah, August 22.

Division of Knox county is being agitated again, the plan being to divide the county east and west, and a petition asking for a vote on it this fall will soon be presented to the county board for consideration.

Jay Webster, age eighteen, a son of Al Webster, a farmer living about fifteen miles north of Tekamah along the river, was drowned in the Missouri. He was a good swimmer, but never rose after he jumped into the river.

August 25 and 26 the Northwestern Nebraska Dental society will meet in Hastings for its semi-annual meeting. This society is one of the strongest in the state, comprising about twelve counties and the cities of Grand Island and Kearney.

Many Beatrice people read with regret regarding the removal of Union Pacific headquarters from Beatrice to Marysville, Kas. The company employs about 150 men in Beatrice and the Commercial club will do all in its power to prevent such a change.

Practically every section of land in Sioux county is now filed and has a bona fide resident on it. Before the Kinkaid law was passed this land was all the range of a few cattle companies. The entrymen are raising splendid crops of all kinds on the land, which has similar soil to eastern Nebraska, and relinquishments are hard to buy at any price.

Ingersoll Bros., who are sinking a deep well for Gilbert E. Hanks on his farm south of Nebraska City, are down to a depth of 1,000 feet and have struck several traces of oil and they have encountered a number of layers of shale, which is encountered above oil fields. Their well is dry and expect to go the depth of 2,000 feet. Mr. Hanks is not bringing for oil, but is after a big flow of artesian water to supply his home and farm.

The Omaha Corn exposition has arranged to hold an agricultural congress during the exposition this winter. Plans are made for a number of noted speakers. Among them will be: William J. Bryan, Zeforino Domiguez of Pueblo, Mex.; Judge H. E. Deemer of Red Oak, Ia., judge of the supreme court of Iowa; Governor Cummins of Iowa, Editor Henry Wallace, Governors Buchtel of Colorado, Hoch of Kansas and Sheldon of Nebraska.

Spill, a Beatrice pacing horse, purchased some time ago by C. H. Dixon, has been doing some fine work since being taken east. The other day he was third in the 2:08 pace at Kalama-zoo, Mich., the time of the heats being 2:02, 2:06, 2:03 1/4, 2:06.

The record price for land values in Cuming county was reached a few days ago in the sale of a quarter section in Beemer township owned by T. C. Kirk to Benjamin Martin of Illinois at a price of \$22,000 for the quarter, or \$146.67 per acre. This is the highest price ever obtained in Cuming county for ordinary agricultural land.

THE SECRETS OF MONTE CARLO

BEING REMINISCENCES OF EXCITING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF MONSIEUR ANTOINE MARTIN, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE SURVEILLANCE DEPARTMENT—CHRONICLED BY THE CHEVALIER WILLIAM LE QUEUX.



(Copyright, 1908, by W. G. Chapman.) [Copyright in Great Britain and the United States, by Wm. Le Queux.]



AS I GOT LEVEL WITH HER, I RAISED MY HAT AND CLAIMED ACQUAINTANCE.

THE CASCADE OF GOLD

I was sitting one bright afternoon on the terrace outside the Cafe de Paris, Monte Carlo, idling over a cigarette and a magazine. It is my favorite resort at about four o'clock, for while skimming the Figaro I can, if I choose, watch each person who ascends or descends the Casino steps, while very often the cosmopolitan chatter at the tables in my vicinity is of unusual interest to me.

On such occasions I present, outwardly, the appearance of a well-to-do Parisian, and, although the professional gamblers and the staff are well aware who and what I am, the hundreds of thousands of strangers moving through the principality have no idea of my true position.

As I sat in a lazy attitude, my thoughts far from my surroundings, some words uttered in a man's voice caught my ear, and brought me back to a consciousness of where I was.

The words were unexpected, and spoken in a curious, squeaking voice, the owner of which I knew, without turning to look at him. He was an old man named Pasquale, an inveterate player, who had been known in the rooms for many years. He lived in Nice, and regularly, twice or thrice a week, the whole year round, he came over and played throughout the afternoon, always with great care and precision. One of his eccentricities was that, when in the rooms, he carried in his hand a huge, bag-like purse, worked in colored beads of the style of a century ago; and legend had it that he believed this bag brought him good fortune, he having used it on one celebrated occasion when, nearly 20 years before, he had made an unusually large coup.

I have seen him lose ten, and even fifteen thousand francs in an hour with perfect sangfroid, and I have, on the other hand, watched him win similar amounts, and then walk back down

the steps to the station without even affording himself the luxury of a demitasse or a back. He hated what we always term "the small change crowd," namely, the people who, after collecting a few odd five-franc pieces, come to Monte Carlo expecting to gain a fortune, and he never failed to vent his sarcasm upon them.

The words he had uttered were, however, puzzling. I kept my ears open in the hope of something further, but the old fellow maintained a discreet silence. His companion laughed, and when I gave a furtive glance in their direction I saw that the man sitting opposite him was an ugly hunchback.

"Would a very large capital be required?" the hunchback inquired, in a tone of affected carelessness.

"I don't think so. Fifty thousand francs, the sum you mention, would be quite sufficient," the old man responded. "But, of course, there's a risk—a terrible risk. A single blunder would be disastrous."

Later that day, owing to instructions I gave the doorkeeper, I discovered that the hunchback's name was Paul Remenyi, of Vienna, and that he was staying at the Grand hotel. My suspicions being aroused, I accidentally lounged into the hairdresser's in the Rue de la Scala, next morning, and while waiting discovered the hunchback there. He spoke enthusiastically of the beauties of the principality, the attractions of the play, the excellence of the music, and, as far as I could judge, was a highly educated and refined man. No, he had not lost yesterday. He had won two zeros at roulette, staking a louis each time.

On the night of the Battle of Con-fetti at Nice, having another matter in hand, I found it necessary to go to the redoute or balsaque, on the Jetee promenade, that pier-like structure which is the most prominent feature of the esplanade. I chose a pier-

rot's dress of the carnival colors, mauve and vert d'eau and entered the theater about 11 o'clock, just as dancing was in full swing. Only those who have spent a carnival at Nice and attended the balls know the wildness of the dancing and the mad frolic there.

Masked, like all the others, I made my way with difficulty through the throng in search of the man upon whom I had for several days been keeping observation, a young Russian who was wanted by the Moscow police, but of whose identity I was not sufficiently certain. But, though I searched through room after room, I could not find him, and concluded that he had been prevented from coming.

For fully half an hour I wandered about, dancing now and then with unknown partners, until suddenly, in the fine Moorish room used ordinarily as a reading room, I saw a dwarfed figure in a dress representing the English Punch. He was seated in a corner with a lady dressed as a clown in black satin, studded with silver moons, whom, from the lower part of her face and the plump whiteness of her dimpled hands, I judged to be young and attractive.

He spoke, and in an instant I recognized the voice of the hunchback Remenyi. Just then a lady, passing me, laughed merrily in my face, and, eager for any excuse to remain in that room, I invited her to dance with me.

"M'sieur is very kind," answered a well-modulated voice in French, which, however, was not quite perfect in its accent. "But for the moment I prefer to remain here. It is too hot and crowded in the theater."

I noticed she was looking across at the lady in the clown's dress.

"A pretty dress that, is it not?" I remarked.

"Yes," she replied. "And, if I mistake not, its wearer is even prettier."

"You know her?" I inquired, eagerly.

"Yes, if she's the lady I mean. Her name is Madame de Gourieff, and she comes from Petersburg."

"And you, madame, are Russian also—eh?" I inquired.

"What makes you think that?" she asked, with a low laugh.

"Only a Russian can pronounce the word 'Petersburg' as you have just pronounced it," I answered.

At that instant I noticed that, at her throat, beneath her domino of mauve satin, she wore a brooch with a tiny watch enameled in blue and set with diamonds. It was a beautiful, little ornament, and I marked its appearance well.

Some days later, however, I met the hunchback in the roulette room. He was accompanied by a young, dark-eyed, pale-faced lady, whom I judged to be about the same stature as his companion at the ball; but I could not tell with any degree of accuracy, because I had only seen her seated. She was not more than 25, and her face was pretty, with a grave, intense expression, which added to its attractiveness. Her dress of dark grey stuff was not exactly of that elegance usually seen at Monte Carlo, yet it fitted well, and suited her admirably.

As I stood watching, the pretty young woman took off one of her gloves the more easily to handle her louis, thereby revealing to me a white hand with dimpled knuckles, the same I had noticed at the ball. By this one fact alone I was convinced that she was Madame de Gourieff, and a few moments later my interest in her was increased by a dumb motion which she made to a tall, florid-faced, fair-haired man, who was sitting at the opposite side of the table. It was as if she desired him to remain patient. In return, he smiled cynically, as if tired of waiting, and, resting both his elbows upon the green cloth, consulted the register-card before him. Suddenly he rose, and, as he passed her closely without stopping to speak, she whispered to him:

"You're a fool. Be patient. You know what a single blunder would mean!"

"I'm sick of the whole thing," he replied, half turning towards her.

All except Pasquale left the Casino soon afterwards; but, as the old gamester knew me so well, I hesitated to speak to him, yet, fearing lest by so doing it might prevent the truth becoming known, that there was some mysterious system about to be worked against the bank I felt assured, but of what nature I could only discover by vigilant observation.

Several days went by and I saw them not. One morning I noticed Remenyi lounging in one of the wicker chairs in the entrance of the Grand hotel, smoking and reading a paper, but he did not enter the rooms. The fair-haired man apparently lived in Nice, and in order to find out what I could, I went over there one morning.

Suddenly, an object caught my eye as it passed, flashing for an instant in the sunlight. I turned and glanced a second time at it to make certain. Yes, it was the little jeweled watch which the fair masker had worn at the ball on the Jetee. It now hung openly on the smart, white serge coat of its owner, a well-dressed, young, and rather handsome woman, who was walking alone in the direction of the Quai Massena. She had passed ere I had time to glance at her, therefore I could only catch sight of her profile. But in an instant I made a resolve, and turning, followed her. That she knew more of the mysterious Nina de Gourieff than she had told me was evident, and I intended to make a strenuous endeavor to discover all I could.

As I got level with her I raised my hat and claimed acquaintance. At first she was inclined to repudiate having met me, but when I explained by what means I had discovered her identity she laughed heartily, and we began to chat as we walked along together. With infinite care I led up the conversation to the woman de Gourieff, but in an instant her mouth closed, and she glanced at me with a quick look of suspicion. In the course of our careless gossip she, however, let drop the fact that she intended going over to Monte Carlo that afternoon; therefore, resolving to meet her again there, as if by accident, I wished her an revoir, opposite the Hotel des Anglais, and we parted.

About three o'clock that same afternoon I was in the bureau of the administration when my fair acquaintance entered, and, to obtain her card of admission, presented her passport, bound up in one of those neat little gilt-edged books which the better-class Russians carry. Unobserved, I glanced at it as it lay in her hand, and saw upon the gray paper, headed with the Russian arms, a vise, which caused me a start of surprise. Her name, it stated, was Vera Severine, and when a quarter of an hour later, I encountered her in the rooms and addressed her by the name she looked at me quickly, with mingled annoyance and surprise.

"Madame has no necessity to disguise her identity from me," I exclaimed meaningly, in a low voice. "I am chief of the surveillance here. My name is Martin—Antoine Martin."

She laughed rather nervously, and admitted that she had heard of me.

"I noticed the vise on madame's passport," I exclaimed. "It bears the special stamp of the ministry, which shows madame to be an agent of secret police. In such circumstances there is assuredly no need for secrets between us. If I can aid you, command me. As you know, I am in weekly communication with your central bureau in St. Petersburg. I presume that the person who interests you is this Madame de Gourieff—eh?"

"You have guessed aright," she admitted, as we strolled down the rooms together. "She is a revolutionist—president of the Zurich council of 'Twenty.'"

"The president!" I exclaimed. "Then she's a Nihilist. And your orders?"

"To watch her closely. Aided by my husband, I have been keeping observation upon her for these last three months. She has no money, and has come to Monte Carlo to replenish her funds."

"And this Austrian, Remenyi, what of him?"

"She has only lately made his acquaintance. From what I have observed, there is some compact between them. She is to meet him here this afternoon."

Scarcely had this handsome woman, whose passport gave her immunity from arrest throughout the czar's empire, uttered these words when we saw the pair approaching, and moved away to escape observation.

They walked on to the right-hand treize-et-quarante table, where Pasquale was already seated, and stood for some time intently watching the game. Madame Severine left me to wander about alone, having agreed that we would both keep the pair under observation. I saw her later on seated at the old Italian's side, playing quite as eagerly as any other gambler. But her manner was perfect.

A seat at last becoming vacant, next to Cruzel, the tailleur, the ugly little Austrian in an instant "marked" it by flinging down a louis. Then, leisurely seating himself, with his companion standing behind his chair, he commenced playing with precision and care.

Suddenly, just as two blustering men—one of whom was the fair-haired player, who had previously expressed impatience—demanded gold in exchange for notes, Madame de Gourieff drew from her pocket a paper containing about a thousand francs in gold, and, in her haste to stake a louis upon the table, the paper broke, and the gold fell to the floor in a perfect cascade, the louis rolling away beneath the feet of the players, under the chairs and under the table. This created hopeless confusion, for nearly everybody rose in order that the attendants might collect the fallen money, while madame, red and confused, uttered a thousand pardons.

The hunchback uttered a word of apology to Cruzel that his fair companion should have caused any such interruption in the game; but soon afterwards all settled again, and there sounded the well-known invitation—

"Messieurs, faites vos jeux."

Nina de Gourieff, with a gambler's fear lest her gold, once fallen, should bring her ill-luck, took some notes from her pocket and placed 12, the maximum, on the noire, while, strangely enough, the deformed man acted in a similar manner.

"Rien ne va plus!" cried the tailleur, and he dealt the cards swiftly in two ranges.

"Deux, six, rouge perd et couleur gagne!" Cruzel exclaimed loudly a moment later, raking in the stakes upon the red.

Both the man and the woman had won the maximum, and were paid with the swiftness and precision which characterizes the fulfillment of the obligations of the bank.

Again came the invitation to play, and both staked upon the black, while Pasquale, noticing his friend's good fortune, also threw 12,000 francs upon the couleur.

"Quatre, cinq, rouge perd et couleur gagne!" was Cruzel's announcement a few seconds later, the excitement at the table becoming intense when it was noticed that all three had won the maximum.

Cruzel was playing swiftly, when Madame Severine approached me hastily, saying—

"There is some mystery here. Have those cards counted?"

Again the game was made, and a third time the trio won; then, as the chief bent over to Cruzel, Madame de Gourieff rose quickly, gathered up her winnings, and left.

The cards were at once counted, and it was discovered that there were 30 cards in addition to those supplied to the table that morning!

According to Madame Severine's statement it appeared that the conspiracy had been very carefully worked out, and that Nina de Gourieff and her two confederates, having created a confusion, Remenyi had at that instant slipped unnoticed into Cruzel's hand a pack of prepared cards. Then, when all became again tranquil, the players had placed down the maximum, confident of success.

The hunchback was arrested down in the Condamine half an hour later, and both were, in due course, tried before the Tribunal at Monaco, sentences of two years' imprisonment being passed upon them. Against Pasquale nothing conclusive could be proved; while Nina de Gourieff, ingenious always, succeeded in getting clear away with her winnings, together with the two loud-voiced men who had demanded change for a thousand francs at the instant she had allowed her gold to tumble from her hand.

Six months afterwards, however, I received a letter from Madame Severine, dated from St. Petersburg, stating that the woman who had so cleverly planned the fraud had been arrested in a suburb of Moscow, and had been banished to Nerchinsk, in Siberia, as a dangerous Nihilist.

Prior to this incident the cards used at trente-et-quarante could be purchased at the stationer's in the Galerie Charles III., but ever since the greatest care has been exercised in order to render similar fraud impossible.

Many have been the attempts made from time to time upon the bank, but certainly none was more daring than that signalled by Nina de Gourieff's cascade of gold.