

ADVENTURES of the WORLD'S GREAT DETECTIVES

By *George Barton*

The Clue of the Bamboo Canes

An Episode in the Life of General Trepoff, Chief of Police of St. Petersburg.

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THE winter palace at St. Petersburg is one of the largest buildings in the world. There was a time, it is averred, when the wonderful structure housed several thousand persons. Noblemen, attendants, servants and employees of all kinds came and went in swarms. The discipline was lax. Scores of soldiers, detectives, policemen and secret service officials were employed to guard the person of the czar, but their very numbers helped to make them a menace rather than a protection.

In October, 1879, a carpenter, carrying his box of tools on his shoulder, appeared at one of the basement doors of the palace and said that he had been sent to assist in making some repairs to the drying rooms of the czar's winter residence. He was admitted without question and within an hour was at work with other mechanics in the lower part of the great building.

The foreman of that section came lounging along. He noticed a new face among the men. He stopped and said:

"What is your name?"

"Sergiy Batyschkoff."

"Who sent you here?"

"My employer," giving the name of a well-known cabinet maker.

The foreman shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"That is irregular. I am tired of having men put on me in this way."

The new carpenter held out his hands pleadingly.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I need the work badly—please overlook the irregularity this time."

"Very well," was the gruff response, "but this will be the last."

So his name was entered with the other mechanics, and that act had far-reaching consequences.

On the 5th of February, 1880, the czar had arranged a splendid dinner in honor of the Prince of Bulgaria. It was a state affair and all of the details were planned on a scale of grandeur commensurate with the greatness of the Russian empire. Five minutes before the royal guests had assembled in the state dining room there was a dynamite explosion in the imperial palace. The mine had been set in the basement and the explosion pierced the two-story floor and made a gap ten feet long and six feet wide in the dining hall in which the table had already been laid for the dinner. The explosion killed five men of the police guard and injured thirty-five others.

The greatest consternation prevailed. The czar, of course, realized that the nihilists had been at work, but he was terrified to think that they had gained entrance into the palace and that the explosion which had just taken place was intended to encompass his death as well as that of the members of the royal family.

The conspiracy in this case seemed to be widespread and far-reaching. Almost on the eve of the explosion in the winter palace a woman visited General Trepoff, chief of the St. Petersburg police. She said her name was Vera Zasulich, and that she had called for the purpose of demanding satisfaction of General Trepoff for his tyranny in ordering a political prisoner, named Bogoloubov, to be flogged for a slight breach of prison discipline. It seems that for years she had been nursing a grievance against the chief of police. She believed that she was to be the instrument by which Trepoff was to be removed from his position. Her life, it is asserted, was an apprenticeship for one thing—the killing of the czar's chief of police. At the age of seventeen she had been arrested and kept in prison for two years because she had received letters from a revolutionist. After that she passed an examination as a school teacher and was working at book binding. At the end of 1875 she returned to St. Petersburg. Her experience had prepared her for the deed. On the morning in question she presented him with a paper, and while he was reading it fired her revolver and then escaped.

It was soon after this that the czar called upon Trepoff, promoted him to the position of councillor of state and then charged him with the commission of capturing and punishing the man or men who were guilty of the outrage in the winter palace.

Trepoff was a man of remarkable capacity. He was burly in form but singularly nimble in thought. He had the cunning of the fox with the patience and persistence of a well-trained hunting dog. A number of men were arrested on suspicion. That was necessary. It seems to be the practice of the police in some time in connection with every crime that is committed. Afterwards, if the person can prove his innocence, all is well, but in the meantime there is a feeling that the police have been alert and have done everything in their power to capture the criminal. But in this instance those who were acquainted with the redoubtable Trepoff knew that he was not satisfied. A dozen or more men, who were placed in confinement immediately after the explosion, might or might not be guilty, but Trepoff knew in his own mind that he

had not captured any of the principals.

The months lengthened into a year, and still he had not run across the person who was guilty of this great outrage. But the case was never out of his mind day or night, and scarcely a week passed by that he did not invent some new scheme for bringing the guilty man to justice. From time to time persons were arrested for minor political offences, and in these instances he closely scrutinized the evidence in order to form some connecting link with the affair of the explosion at the winter palace.

One morning one of the secret agents informed him that a number of men had been seen in the vicinity of the winter palace carrying bamboo canes. That, in itself, did not seem like a very extraordinary proceeding, but the fact that a number of persons carried the same sort of walking stick made it sufficiently interesting to be worthy of report to the chief of police. The response of Trepoff to this bit of news was characteristic:

"Arrest every man of them and bring them before me."

His instructions were carried out to the letter. Some fourteen men were rounded up and brought to the central police headquarters for examination. They were examined, but nothing of any importance was found on their persons. Then the canes were taken and carefully scrutinized. This search brought rich results. Every one of the sticks proved to be hollow and each one contained a sheet of tissue paper on which was printed a call for a meeting of revolutionists. It was the biggest haul that Trepoff had made in many months. The evidence proved that the men were enemies of the government. It did more than that—it paved the way to another discovery which bore directly on the mysterious explosion of February 5, 1880.

One of the prisoners, being put to torture, revealed the names of several of his associates.

One of these was a certain Victor Chalturin. He was the son of a peasant, a very energetic agitator and an experienced organizer of associations of malcontents. The police visited his rooms and made a thorough search of the premises. A number of books and pamphlets found on the shelves and in closets indicated that he was a man with nihilistic tendencies. That, in itself, while interesting, was not very important. The searchers continued at work and finally came to a cabinet with locked doors. It was broken open and in a secret drawer they found a blue print of the plans of the winter palace. It was worn and frayed at the edges as though it had been carried in someone's pocket for a long while. Most significant of all, the lines indicating the great dining hall were marked with a cross. These facts were promptly communicated to Trepoff, and he sent out a description of Chalturin to every police official in the Russian empire.

While awaiting reports from his subordinates the energetic chief of police made another discovery. It was a slip of paper which was found in the basement of the imperial palace. On it was written these words:

"Do not delay any longer. Now is the time to act."

Some bits of paper corresponding with the material on which this was inscribed, were found in Chalturin's room. The case against him appeared to be complete. It was in March, 1882,—over two years after the explosion occurred—that the chief culprit was taken into custody. He was given a speedy trial and on the 22d of March of that year was executed, and it was then, and then only, that he was recognized as the man who had introduced himself as a carpenter in the winter palace.

The testimony which was brought out at the trial of Chalturin gave the authorities some idea of the marvelous ingenuity and wonderful perseverance of the nihilists. Just prior to the explosion in the winter palace they had organized their forces under the title of "The Will of the People" and at once began to issue proclamations and pamphlets in order to swell their numbers and strengthen their cause. In January, 1880, their secret printing presses were discovered and seized by the police, and numerous arrests were made. In spite of this, they managed to issue, on the 26th of January, a program in which they declared that unless the government granted constitutional rights the czar must die. The result of this was fresh arrests, banishments to Siberia for some and death on the scaffold for others.

It was at this stage of the game that the nihilists planned their most daring program. It was to blow up the emperor in his own palace. Its execution, as has already been stated, was undertaken by Chalturin, who was young and fervent and filled with an exaggerated sense of his own wrongs and the wrongs of his people. He was a clever cabinet maker and this enabled him, under the assumed name of Batyschkoff, to obtain a situation as a carpenter in the imperial palace. He ascertained that the emperor's dining room was above the cellar in which the carpenters were at work, although between it and the cellar there was a guard room used by the sentinels of the palace. Chalturin lived in the palace for nearly four months, and every night he used a package of dynamite for his pillow. A gendarme had been installed in the carpenter's cellar shortly after he began to work there, and this made the introduction of the dynamite exceedingly difficult, and in-



THE CARPENTER HELD OUT HIS HANDS PLEADINGLY.

"But what sort of men were they?"

"Just every-day, ordinary kind of men. The sort that would not be noticed in a crowd. For instance, the fact that a baker handed a couple of rolls to Chalturin would excite no comment, and yet those innocent bits of bread might have contained one-tenth of all the dynamite smuggled in the palace. Some of it was hidden in carpenter's tools, some in the lining of workmen's caps. But why go further? The men who plan great things must possess great ingenuity as well as great courage."

But to get back to the narrative.

Chalturin said that while he was in the basement of the palace he suffered frightfully from headaches, which were caused by the poisonous exhalations of the nitroglycerine on which he rested every night. When the first of February arrived, fifty kilograms of dynamite had been introduced, and the counterfeit carpenter was now in

CONTRASTS IN THE HOME

Reading of the Homes of Antiquity Should Make Us Complacent Over Our Own Homes.

(Copyrighted by J. S. Kirtley.)

"Hello, Central, give me heaven!"

That is what the young man said when he installed the new telephone in the study and wanted to test it. At once he connected him with his home and he found the instrument working to his intense satisfaction. And he had been married several years, at that.

The general level of the American home is pretty high, if we may judge by the external signs of comfort—the average quality of the houses, foods that come from all over the world, good clothes, schools for children, with text books furnished free, in many places, large and attractive parks for recreation, or, better still, open country. And, if we judge by the sentiments of orators and writers, especially the apostrophes of the poets, we may be led to imagine that Eden is blooming and even booming here in our country, the lost Paradise regained.

We certainly have a right to be somewhat complacent over our homes when we read about the homes of antiquity. When Mrs. Wiggs was asked if she did not feel her privations, she gave a good long list of her blessings and asked in reply, "Ain't you proud you ain't got a hare lip?" We may be proud we are not a part of an old Roman home, for instance. To use a Hibernicism, it would not be a "home at all. The Latins had a word for family and one for house, but none for that something which a family in a house constitutes, which we call home. The family, with or without children, plus the house form something called home, a thing more easily spoken of than described. Well, the Romans had no word for that, because they had no need for such a word. And whenever we catch any one trying to reestablish such a domestic anachronism and monstrosity in our land and time, it is taken in hand either by the white caps or the blue coats, or the petticoats, themselves.

It takes at least two persons to make a home, and in the Roman house there was only one, the man. The woman was not a person, in her own right, under the law. She could not intervene in the government of the family. If one of the children wanted to get married, her consent was not necessary. If her husband wanted to put her to death or leave her for a handsomer woman, he had a right to do so, without legal process or prejudice.

It could not be a real home when the children had no rights which the father and mother were bound to respect. A defective or girl baby was usually exposed or abandoned or killed. Sometimes, when the father was away, the mother, too tender-hearted to kill the child, would abandon it.

There is space left to speak of two facts about the American home. One is that it is safeguarded by just and generous laws. The reason for this is that the people themselves hold in their deepest consciousness and convictions the sentiments that are essential in the home; and the legislatures and courts have given them what they were taught by the home to give.

Another fact is that the American home has been the most powerful institution in generating tides of patriotism and education and in conserving the treasures of religion. It has felt the need of schools, and, under urgent home sentiments, the leaders have gone forth to found and fashion educational agencies to assist the home in its nurture of the young.

And two very hopeful signs encourage us. One is that the psychologist has invaded the home. He is studying the institution as a whole and in detail, especially mothers and boys. The great international home congress, just held in Brussels, helped the children's exhibit on home conditions, now being prepared by some men and women in New York, will help some. The other sign is that movements are starting in the home for self-inspection and self-reformation. It has got as far as the mother and we have mothers' clubs. Next we must have fathers' clubs for the study of the whole situation. We have boys' and girls' clubs, but no sons' and daughters' clubs as yet. These will come next.



SHE FIRED HER REVOLVER AND THEN ESCAPED.

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position to go ahead with his deadly work.

He hesitated at the last moment, but it was too late to retreat. He felt that in any event his own life was imperiled. If he accomplished the dastardly plot, he would be executed by the government; if he refused to do so, he was likely to be assassinated by his associates. While he was still in a state of uncertainty, he received a letter from the executive committee telling him to delay no longer, but to fire the dynamite.

In the excitement that ensued, Chalturin escaped and left St. Petersburg, but in the end, as already related, he was caught in the vast net spread by Trepoff and suffered death as the penalty of his great crime.

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"That's good news. I guess I'll live to be a hundred."

"You guess you will?"

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"For the benefit of a large number of those similarly situated I propose to answer this letter publicly, hoping that it may be the means of helping many who may be affected in this way."

"In the first place, the stomach must be made well before the nerves can be made strong. The nerves must be made strong before one can sleep well. No one is capable of doing his best in any way troubled with insomnia or any form of nervousness. The greatest general has been men of iron nerve and indomitable will. They have had perfect digestion, being able to eat well, and digest all they ate."

"It is said that Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo because of a fit of indigestion. Grant's enormous reserve power was due to a well stomach. Abraham Lincoln said he did not know that he had a stomach. Grover Cleveland, it is said, could work 18 hours a day, eat a hearty meal at 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, go to bed and sleep soundly until 9 o'clock and get up refreshed, ready for a new day's work."

"Pres. Taft is another type of healthy manhood. Who thinks for one moment that he would be the President of the United States today had he been a dyspeptic or affected with some nervous ailment? I claim that the failures of all the failures in professional and business life are due to weak and deranged stomach."

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"No one cares to hear a dyspeptic preacher. No matter how eloquent he is, he is bound to reflect his bilious and jaundiced condition. He will unconsciously inculcate his hearers with melancholy feelings."

"No one would think of entrusting an important legal case into the hands of a dyspeptic lawyer, any more than he would care to entrust his own life, or that of a dear one, in the hands of a physician who is nervous, irritable or a dyspeptic. Men must have good digestion, strong nerves and vital manhood in order to render a clean, clear-cut decision either in medicine, law or business."

"I believe that more than half of the divorces can be traced to ill health. I want every dyspeptic to try my stomach treatment, for it corrects the various forms of indigestion and nervousness. It makes one's stomach almost as good as new. Its marvelous power for digesting food and getting the best out of it makes for good rich, red blood. This, in turn, strengthens the nerves, builds up the general system, and will surely prolong life and make it a pleasure to live and do the things allotted to us."

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Bess—There's one pleasure denied the rich.

Tess—What's that?

Bess—They can't go bargain hunting.

A Rate maker.

"You say you charge extra for summer boarders who are trying to reduce their weight?"

"Yes," replied Farmer Corntosel.

"I have to. They always develop the biggest appetites."

When we look back now upon some of the things we used to worry about, we wonder what the lunacy commissions were doing all that time!

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