

THE COPPER HOUSE

A Detective Story

BY JULIUS REGIS

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CHAPTER XIII

Lona Ivanovna Asks a Second Question and Gets an Unexpected Reply.

As soon as Leo had read Wallion's message, a feeling of great relief came over him. For the first time he dared to confess to himself that he had been on the point of giving up hope altogether. The realization of Baron Fayerling's true character had brought home to him his own utter helplessness. No one knew better than he that the isolated position of the Copper House gave, for the time being, a tremendous advantage to the dangerous gang; the baron's high-handed proceedings had also made him fear that the journalist—his only friend at this crisis—had already been secretly done away with. But the little slip of paper, so unexpectedly flung through his window, came like a sunbeam into a darkened room; Wallion was evidently still free, and at work. How, under present conditions, he had managed to evade the enemy, was more than Leo could imagine, but the mere knowledge of the fact exhilarated him like a glass of champagne; he drew a deep breath, and his mind, which had seemed frozen, began to work once more. The situation was, after all, full of possibilities as long as Wallion was anywhere in the neighborhood. The wish to do something himself returned to Leo with double force, and one idea after another chased through his active brain; he had a dangerous craving to lend a hand, to surprise his friend by some clever move, some stroke of genius that might even settle the whole affair for good.

He thrust the note into his waistcoat pocket, left his room, and ran whistling downstairs. In the hall he found Lona Ivanovna, very quiet and with a look of painfully concentrated thought on her thin face. He noticed at once that the guard by the door had disappeared, and that a new kind of silence reigned over the house; a silence that kept one's ears and nerves perpetually on the stretch. The doors, whose doors stood open on every side of the hall, gave one the impression of having only just been vacated, and that at any minute something might happen in them.

A flash of lightning flickered from the heavy bank of clouds outside, like the expiring ray of a searchlight, and was followed by a low growl of very distant thunder.

Lona Ivanovna turned, as she heard the young man's step on the stairs.

"They have gone," said she, "and they have not found him yet."

Leo glowed with satisfaction for the first time the pugnacious old lady addressed him in the friendly tone hitherto reserved for her brother and Sonia. He was quite pleased to hear that Bernard Jenin had not been found, but that was not the most important thing from his point of view.

"Has the baron gone away?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes, he went just now, with that miserable creature Tassler. But it's too soon to rejoice, my boy, Rastakov is left behind, and we are prisoners," she added in a dry sarcastic tone, as if she found this fact rather amusing.

"Prisoners!" echoed Leo, "how can that be? You must be joking. There is no prison here."

"Dear me, how shall I make you understand!" she muttered, scratching her forehead with her crochethook; "have

you ever been in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul?"

"No, never!" cried Leo, considerably taken aback.

"So I should think. But I have! It was in the days when I used to throw bombs," she said confidentially; "well, it would have been easier to escape from Peter and Paul than to get out of the Copper House now. Of course, I was young then...."

Leo stared at her, opened his mouth and—remained silent. He went over to the glass door, threw it open, and hurried out on to the terrace.

"Where are you off to?" demanded Rastakov, appearing in front of him, with his right hand in his pocket.

"Whatever business is it of yours!" retorted Leo furiously.

"How dare you speak to me like that! I go where I choose."

Rastakov sneered provokingly.

"Yes, after 11 or 12 o'clock tonight, maybe; but until then you have got to keep quiet, or you may find yourself taken elsewhere first thing in the morning. Go indoors, and get your friends to amuse you; we have a small job on out here, and don't want to be interfered with; so that's all there is to it."

Leo took a couple of steps towards him, but the man quietly drew a huge revolver from his pocket; his face was grim and watchful.

"I mean it!" he said; "go indoors."

Leo looked all round him; he could not repress a shudder as he counted nine or ten armed men posted in front of the house, and he guessed that if he would be equally well guarded on the remaining sides; Lona Ivanovna was right; they were prisoners.

"You must be mad!" he exclaimed; "we are not in Russia. I have only to report this to the police, and you would all be arrested."

"Do so, by all means," replied the other scornfully; "perhaps you would like me to send the message for you!"

"I shall—I shall...."

Leo checked himself, and turned back into the house. He was angry with himself, with Rastakov, with the whole world; he was aware that he played a sorry figure, and the knowledge did not improve his temper. However, the recollection of Wallion's message was some consolation, and by the time he saw Lona Ivanovna again in the hall, he was able to speak to her almost cheerfully.

"I must borrow one of those bombs of yours; I have had a dispute with Rastakov, and couldn't find any argument strong enough to convince him."

She stopped working, laid her bony hand on his arm, and said, with a weary little laugh: "My boy, it is many years since I imagined that I could set the world to rights with a handful of dynamite in a sardine tin; gunpowder, or words, it all comes to the same in the long run."

They entered the drawing-room as she was speaking, and the blind man's feeble voice chimed in: "Yes, you are right, it doesn't matter: it all ends in noise. Though a bomb is more straightforward, it seems to me," he added thoughtfully, and as if to himself.

This appeared to be a topic they had often discussed before, and Lona Ivanovna immediately joined issue with her brother.

to the truth, when we were striving so desperately to bring about Russia's freedom. Russia is free now, but it is not our bombs that have brought it about."

"Possibly," answered Andrei Bernin, his voice sounding somewhat stronger; "but it is not finished yet. Who knows whether in this very house...."

His sister made a sudden movement, and he was silent.

After a pause he asked: "Is the young man here?"

"Yes, he is here. Rastakov has just told him that he cannot leave the house.... Would you like to speak to him?"

"I should like to do so," said Andrei Bernin; "let me give you a piece of advice, Mr. Grath: leave this place as soon as you can."

"How can I do that? You heard...."

"Yes, yes, but give them your word that you will say nothing, and they will let you go. It will be better for you."

"He is right," said Lona Ivanovna, softly; "I will tell you the truth: we who are obliged to stop here are expecting nothing less than a catastrophe. I know you want to help us, but what can you do by yourself? You can leave us with a clear conscience."

"But you? What will you do?"

"We? Oh, it will soon be over, we must just have patience."

Before Leo could reply, Sonia sprang up, her eyes wide open, her hands clutching at her throat.

"Patience! I hate that word," she exclaimed, "I will not be patient, I want to see those wretches beaten, who are using Russia's misery as a stepping-stone for their own fortunes. It is cowardly to be patient, and I won't...."

Her voice broke, and she turned and went quickly out of the room. Her passionate words left the others silent; they scarcely ventured to look at one another, but at last Leo said:

"She is right. What you said was kindly meant and I am grateful, but let me tell you in my turn that I have no intention of leaving here. I am not a pessimist, and I am intensely anxious to see what will happen, especially as the matter concerns my own house."

He waited an instant for their reply, but none was forthcoming. Andrei Bernin sank back among his cushions, and his sister remained standing by the window. Leo bowed, and went out to see what had become of Sonia; she had not gone further than the stairs, where he found her leaning against the banister. She turned her face to him with a dazed expression, and, in her black dress, she looked so small and frail, that the young man seized her little sunburnt hands impulsively, and said:

"Try to be patient a little longer, won't you? Perhaps help is nearer than you think."

"It will have to come pretty quickly, then," she answered in a low voice; "all the same, I am not afraid."

Leo did not know what to say next. A vague masculine sympathy prompted him to try and console her, but he knew instinctively that she would take it amiss. She drew her hands away, and said gravely:

"There is no need for you to trouble yourself about us; we have been uninvited guests in your house, but it won't last much longer; in a short time we shall have gone for good."

"Yes, but look here!" he cried out impetuously, "that is just what I don't want, I ask nothing better than to know more of you, to be one of your best friends; you persist in keeping me at a distance!"

"You mustn't say that!" whispered Sonia, blushing deeply; "You understand something of what we are suffering: a man's life is at stake, and we are bound to keep silence for his sake...."

"Do you mean Sergius?"

their matutinal slumbers with lusty vocalizations. The birds were so noisy, particularly on cloudy days, the citizens claimed, that they should be declared nuisances and done away with.

The mayor stated he had never heard of an ordinance for quieting roosters and consulted the city attorney. Russell decided there was nothing to be done about the fowls outside of using them for Sunday dinners or following the ancient maxim of "early to bed and early to rise."

"Yes," she answered softly. "He is hidden here, in spite of all their searching; he is my cousin."

This piece of news struck the young man like a flash of lightning.

"Your cousin! Bernard Jenin your cousin! That explains it. Then he must be...."

"Lona Ivanovna's son," Sonia completed the sentence. Leo's hands trembled with excitement. He felt that Wallion ought to know this at once, and he looked round the hall, almost as though he expected the journalist to be somewhere in it.

"Come!" he exclaimed, "come! You ought to have told me that before. We must go straight to him."

"To whom?"

"Maurice Wallion."

The girl gave a little cry. "Is he here?"

"I don't know. But we must find out where he is."

Leo had no plan, no idea of what he was going to do. It did not occur to him that by acting too precipitately he might spoil everything, he was only conscious of a frantic desire to do something before it was too late, and he rushed off, dragging the girl after him.

They ran like two children through the silent house, and Leo began to call Wallion loudly by name.

"No, no," the girl hushed him; "don't call, they may hear us."

"We must find him! If Bernard Jenin can hide himself, Wallion can do the same."

"No," said she, "your friend couldn't hide himself here, in the way that Sergius has done."

Leo felt that she was speaking the truth. She knew then, where Jenin was hidden.

"Then it's impossible," he faltered dejectedly; "Wallion can't be here after all."

"No, he certainly isn't inside the Copper House."

Leo began to wonder whether the journalist had abandoned them to their fate, and his eyes grew dim, but he shook off the feeling of hopelessness which was stealing over him, and said quickly:

"He must be somewhere close by."

A few minutes later, they went boldly out by the kitchen door, and took the path to the garden, their intention being to walk right round the house, in defiance of their jailers.

Rastakov was fortunately not to be seen, but four or five of the sentries shouted to them from a distance.

The girl, who was the more level-headed of the two, picked a rose, and arranged it deliberately in the lapel of her coat.

"Look as unconcerned as you can," she whispered. "They oughtn't to mind our taking a breath of fresh air; when they calm down, we will confuse our round...."

But at this moment an unforeseen obstacle blocked their way. Rosenthal came striding towards them from the garden—stage, and as soon as he was within speaking distance, he called out in a threatening voice:

"Hallo, my young cockerel, what are you doing out here?" Leo grew white with rage, and replied furiously: "Mind what you're saying!" Rosenthal closed with him, and gave him a formidable blow with his fist, on the point of the chin. Leo staggered back, but noticed with surprise that the blow was not so severe in reality as in appearance. And, next minute, he could hardly believe his own ears, when Rosenthal said, almost in a whisper:

"Hit me back, make the hell of a row, it's for your own advantage!"

WHAT YOU THINK AS DEATH NEARS

AKRON—What does a man, who falls four stories to land on the pavement below to almost sure death, think in falling?

Not very much, is the answer of Thomas Davidson, window washer who recently went through the experience. There is no immediate flash of your past life's history, as has been reported.

"The air got awfully hot," Davidson says. "The first thought I had was, 'I'm gone!' And I realized too that I was still conscious. Twenty feet from the bottom everything went dark and I did not feel the shock of striking the pavement. It was just like dreaming of falling."

For several days after Davidson's fall it was feared he would die, but he survived.

Investment Trust "Mysteries"

From New York Times. Complications of the new stocks and bonds placed last month on the market by investment trusts give a still more extraordinary color to the picture which they present. August is not a month in which issue of new securities is usually active; it is vacation-time for the markets as for the general public. But company securities put out last month to raise new capital amounted, by The Financial Chronicle's summary of Saturday to \$751,000,000, or four times as much as in August of 1928, and the difference is almost wholly accounted for by investment trusts. Their application for new capital reached \$485,735,000, whereas the records indicate that it could not have exceeded \$25,000,000 in August of any previous year and averaged about \$160,000,000 in the earlier months of 1929.

Thus far in the year their total issue of new stocks and bonds has been \$1,556,635,000, as against \$488,350,000 put out by all other classes of corporations combined. During the last four or five years the capital offerings by public utilities have reached a magnitude that was described, even on the markets, as sensational; they have surpassed all other offerings this year. But the offerings by the investment trusts have been even larger. Except for the government's war-time bond issues, there has probably never been so great an increase within so short a time in any one type of securities.

Comparisons of this sort raise two questions: How will this huge mass of capital be employed when it has been acquired in so short a time and what was the source from which it was so suddenly obtained? The first question still remains a problem, even where precise statistics Wall Street is in doubt. The Midland Bank of London makes the comment, in its monthly review, that subscription to other new securities by investment trusts themselves must account for much of the disposition of their capital, and that the process involves something like duplication in estimates of total new capital issues for all accounts. The source of the subscriptions to this year's enormous issues of investment trust securities is itself perplexing. These new stocks and bonds would not be absorbed on a great scale, like railway, industrial and public utility issues, into the portfolio of fiduciary institutions, and it is difficult to imagine the financial public, even in its present highly receptive mood, actually taking up \$1,500,000,000 of such new securities in eight months.

There naturally remains the possibility that the greater part of this huge amount has not been "distributed" but is being carried through loans, by original promoters or intermediaries. Yet this supposition would introduce another complicating influence into the already confused credit market. Whether the increase of \$497,825,000 in brokers' loans during August, as reported by the Stock Exchange, was to any large extent attributable to the investment trust security issues, may be debatable. If it were true, it would emphasize the extent to which the stock market, directly and indirectly, is absorbing credit. The episode has added to the numerous obscurities of the existing economic situation.

ORATORY AS SUCH HAS NO STANDING IN FASCIST ITALY

CAPRI, ITALY—Fascism has done at least one great thing for Italy—it has practically cut out after dinner oratory.

This was bluntly apparent to everyone who attended a national touring convention here, designed to "boost" central and southern Italy, and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, as excursion centers. The meetings were presided over by Filippo Pennavaria, under-secretary for railroads, and the way he brought the would-be speakers to the point was a caution.

One by one the representatives of the various regions began to descend upon the natural beauties of the sites they proposed to exploit. "Bang" went the gavel.

"We all know about the beauties of Amalfi, and a lot about its history!" His Excellency Pennavaria would bark. "What we do want to know is what you've done about roads, better sanitary conditions, and regulation of hotel prices. If you have anything to say on those subjects we'll listen; otherwise not!"

"Please remember, gentlemen, that we are under Fascism, which believes in nothing but results."

Q. How many prisoners are there at Leavenworth? N. E. What on July 21, there were 3,777. What with arrivals, discharges and paroles, the number is ever-changing.

Child Tobacco Growing

Protested by W. C. T. U. MADISON, WIS.—Members of the Women's Christian Temperance union will ask the Wisconsin state organization to disapprove of children raising tobacco. The state union meets in October.

Children who plant tobacco and tend it while it is growing will think nothing of smoking it, not realizing the ill effects it has upon their systems," remarked Mrs. Flora C. Hopkins, president of the Dane county branch.

Los Angeles Boy Needed Help

Los Angeles, is a "regular fellow," active in sports, and at the top in his classes at school. To look at him now, you'd think he never had a day's sickness but his mother says: "When Leroy was just a little fellow, we found his stomach and bowels were weak. He kept suffering from constipation. Nothing he ate agreed with him. He was fretful, feverish and puny."

"When we started giving him California Fig Syrup his condition improved quickly. His constipation and biliousness stopped and he has had no more trouble of that kind. I have since used California Fig Syrup with him for colds and upset spells. He likes it because it tastes so good and I like it because it helps him so wonderfully!"

California Fig Syrup has been the trusted standby of mothers for over 30 years. Leading physicians recommend it. It is purely vegetable and works with Nature to regulate, tone and strengthen the stomach and bowels of children so they get full nourishment from their food and waste is eliminated in a normal way.

Four million bottles used a year shows how mothers depend on it. Always look for the word "California" on the carton to be sure of getting the genuine.

AS FIRST AID Use Hanford's Balsam of Myrrh

All doctors are authorized to refund your money for the first bottle if not satisfied.

Baby Dress Society Vogue

Dressing as babies and going to parties with scooters and toy motor cars has gripped the fancy of those who have been called derisively "Bright Young People" in England. The fashion has started another serious wagging of heads over the younger generation.

Kill Rats Without Poison

A New Extremator that Won't Kill Livestock, Poultry, Dogs, Cats, or even Baby Chicks

K-R-O can be used about the home, barn or poultry yard with absolute safety. It contains no deadly poison. K-R-O is made of Squill, as recommended by U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, under the Comstock process which insures maximum strength. Two cans killed 578 rats at Arkansas State Farm. Hundreds of other testimonials.

Sold on a Money-Back Guarantee. Insist upon K-R-O, the original Squill extermator. All druggists, 75c. Large size (four times as much) \$2.00. Direct if dealer cannot supply you. K-R-O Co., Springfield, O.

School Teachers' Salaries

Elementary school teachers in cities over 100,000 received \$837 more last year than did the teachers in cities in the 2,500-5,000 population group. According to the research division of the National Education association, the median salary for elementary teachers in large cities was \$2,049 last year, while in the small cities it was only \$1,212.

"We realize when a man has 'evolved' far beyond us—and between us there is a great gulf fixed."

ONE PRESCRIPTION MADE FAMILY DOCTOR FAMOUS

Seldom has any single act been of greater benefit to mankind than that of Dr. Caldwell in 1885, when he wrote the prescription which has carried his fame to the four corners of the earth.

Over and over, Dr. Caldwell wrote the prescription as he found men, women and children suffering from those common symptoms of constipation, such as coated tongue, bad breath, headaches, gas, nausea, biliousness, no energy, lack of appetite, and similar things.

Demand for this prescription grew so fast, because of the pleasant, quick way it relieved such symptoms of constipation, that by 1888 Dr. Caldwell was forced to have it put up ready for use. Today, Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, as it is called, is always ready at any drugstore.

Anti-Saloon League Home Receives Appropriation

WESTERVILLE, OHIO—(UP)—This village, headquarters of the Anti-Saloon league and known as the "dry capitol of the world," has appropriated \$500 to aid the village officials enforce the Eighteenth amendment for the ensuing year.

The action followed an application by Dr. Howard Hyde Russell, chairman of the Committee of One Hundred on Law Observance. Dr. Russell said the money would be utilized to make and invest-

Roosters Win in Court; May Continue to Crow

CLENS FALLS, N. Y.—(UP)—Roosters of this vicinity may crow as long, loudly and early as they please, according to a recent decision of J. Ward Russell, city attorney, who was called upon to settle the matter.

Numerous residents had complained to the mayor that ambitious chatters continually distur-

Plane Costs \$175

M'COOK, NEB.—(UP)—A home-made plane, costing only \$175 is expected to be ready for flight soon. C. R. McNeil, the builder, said. McNeil, who has completed a course in aviation, constructed the plane in his garage in Culbertson.

OH, WHAT DID HE SEE? SHANGHAI—(UP)—What I saw in the Dancing Halls, a recently published Chinese book, has been ordered suppressed in Greater Shanghai by edict of General Chang Chun, the mayor.