

THE COPPER HOUSE

A Detective Story

BY JULIUS REIS

AUTHOR OF "NO 13 TORONTO"

"Fourteen!" echoed her son, "and I remember it all vividly; the wild faces, the whips cracking, the shooting—I remember it all."

"We were driven to prison like animals to the slaughter," she continued, "and we expected nothing else but death, for we were guilty of taking part in the December risings in Moscow. Then the examinations began; we were called in one by one. A fortnight later, a miracle happened! We were set at liberty, with no verdict, no conditions, no supervision. We returned to our comrades, and a terrible and inconceivable experience awaited us: they cast us out, accusing us of having purchased our freedom by treachery. We denied it indignantly. They reckoned up the names of all who had been shot, all who had been sent to Siberia—we were the only ones who had been set free. It was useless to protest, to ask for explanations, we were caught in a net, and they shrank from us as though we were pariahs.

We were even subjected to attacks from bombs, and it was due to one of these that Andrei lost his sight. That ended it. We were obliged to leave Russia, to escape from the vengeance of our former comrades. For private reasons, into which I need not enter now, I obtained a legal separation from Marcus Tassler;—perhaps I unconsciously saw through him already—Sergius remained with me, and as exiles we sought sanctuary in Sweden. I haven't mentioned my brother's marriage; during a visit to Sweden in 1898, he had met and married Helena Flycht, a young half-Finnish, half-Swedish girl, who followed him to Russia. She died when Sonia was born, and the child was brought up by her mother's parents in Finland. Well, when Andrei, Sergius and I settled in Sweden, my brother sent for Sonia, and we were quite a little family party again. But the circle was soon broken. As Sergius grew up, the 'liberty-fever' developed in him, and he returned to Russia under an assumed name to take part in the work; for several years we heard no more of him.

"For a very good reason," interposed Sergius: "I was in prison the greater part of the time!"

"Then the World War began," Lona Ivanovna went on; "my brother made one attempt to offer his services to the revolutionaries. They answered us: 'Unless you can prove that you did not betray us in 1905, we will have nothing to do with you we have forgotten nothing!' Prove it! How could we hope to do so now, if we had not succeeded at the time? We felt that we were excommunicated forever. Then Tassler reappeared. I had not heard a word of him for nine years, but now, in the spring of 1915, he came back. He undertook to prove our innocence of the accusation of treachery, upon one condition, that we in our turn, should help him. Bit by bit, he told us of a man called Gabriel Ortiz, who was planning a gigantic attempt to organize the Russian efforts for freedom. It sounded genuine, we should, at all events, be once more working for the cause of liberty, and that decided us. In the summer of 1915, we settled down here at the Copper House . . . Andrei, Sonia and I."

"Did Marcus Tassler really initiate you into Ortiz' plan?" asked Wallion, thoughtfully.

"Yes, into part of it, at any rate; that is to say, Baron Fayerling did. Part of the busi-

ness was carried on here; smuggling arms, dispatching propagandist literature, and so forth. But we soon noticed that our part in it was a very small one; we were simply used as decoys, and all they wanted was Andrei's name on the contract and on their papers. Just at first we were satisfied, but we soon began to feel suspicious; it was too late for us to withdraw, and we found that we were practically prisoners here. We had no means of discovering what was really going on, but we had no intention of allowing ourselves to be involved in some fresh deed of treachery. It was then that we began to realize that Marcus Tassler was a dangerous character. We decided to obtain our own proofs, and we planned everything with the greatest precaution. In the spring of 1916, Andrei left the Copper House secretly, and traveled to Russia with a passport which I had managed to procure, and together with two revolutionaries who had still continued our friends. Meanwhile, Sonia and I gave out that my brother was lying ill in the Copper House, and no one suspected that he was far away! Besides, the baron and Tassler left us more and more to ourselves; it was enough for their purposes to have us here as figureheads. You can understand how anxious I was, when you think that Andrei was blind, and what a journey he had undertaken, and for what an object. I had a presentiment—but perhaps you don't believe in presentiments?"

"Yes," answered Wallion, "I certainly believe in them; a presentiment is often a subconscious conclusion, and may have a definite value."

"In January of this year, I received indirect information that my brother was dead. He had died quite suddenly of heart disease, unknown and alone in an infirmary at Moscow. Those were sad days for Sonia and me."

She stopped, for her voice was quivering suspiciously, and sat gazing before her, with her grimest and most unapproachable expression; but Sonia understood, and nestled up more closely to her.

"The night is darkest before the dawn," began the old lady again. "Sergius sent us a letter, bidding us be of good courage; he had arrived too late to see his uncle alive, but had taken possession of his papers, and seen to the funeral. He wrote that he had made important discoveries."

"Let me go on from there," said Sergius, turning towards the journalist. "I was staying in Moscow under the name of Dr. Zero. The March revolution has changed everything, and my revolutionary friends were triumphant. I suspected that their rejoicings were rather premature, for I saw beneath the surface very definite symptoms of reactionary currents; I found proofs of the existence of a conspiracy, and Prince Tarraschin's death set me wondering. Finally, after a series of researches, I heard of Tarraschin's memorandum, its contents, and the struggle that was being secretly carried on for its possession; in the long run, I also discovered its whereabouts; then I acted." He thought for a little while.

"You must remember that my motive all along has been the vindication of my own and my family's honor, also that I knew nothing of Ortiz, or of what was going on here; and lastly, that I dared not approach the new Russian government under my own name, as Kerensky had been one of those who had driven out Andrei and his belongings, brand-

ed as traitors. At this you must bear in mind.

"Well, I took Tarraschin's memorandum, not from his rightful owners, but from thieves. Of course, I know now, that it was from one of Ortiz' spies that I took it. But what was I to do with it? I had found my relatives' new address amongst my uncle's papers, and I determined to travel home and ask by mother's advice. On the way back I fell in with B.22 and was very nearly caught in a trap."

"I suppose your plan was to come here, and by the aid of the document, open negotiations with Kerensky?" asked Wallion.

"Yes, it was the only way I could think of to regain the esteem of the revolutionaries."

"Doesn't it look a little bit like—bribery?"

Sergius Tassler was silent, and the journalist changed his tactics.

"Ah, well, of course you were justified in taking such a step. We know what happened afterwards, so . . ."

"Let me say one thing," said Sergius. "It is not fair to call it a bribe. I am prepared to surrender the paper unconditionally, but, by giving it up at the right moment, I want to add weight to the proofs I obtained in Moscow; I allude to the proofs of our innocence of the accusation brought against us in 1905."

"Really! You found them, then?"

"Yes, after the Revolution the police-archives became at last accessible, and there I found the name of the traitor; then everything became clear to me; my own father had played the part of Judas!"

"Marcus Tassler?"

"Yes, he was an infamous spy, and only allowed himself to be arrested for the sake of appearances, to escape any reprisals. He was, I suppose, driven by his uneasy conscience to bring about our liberation. But through him, hundreds of brave young students had gone to their death, or to Siberia; and that was my father's mine."

"That's enough, my boy, don't let us talk of the man any more. You can understand now, Mr. Wallion, how, after Sergius' return yesterday, Tassler's double-dealing became perfectly clear to me. In 1905 he had made us accomplices in an act of treachery; what was his intention now? Why were we in the Copper House? It was evidently not enough for him that he had us outlawed twelve years ago; once again he must drag us down to destruction! Ever since the March Revolution, this year, I guessed that something was wrong, for Ortiz' activities did not diminish, although Russia was now freed. It was, therefore, not revolution, but something else that he was working for. The history of Tarraschin's memorandum revealed the truth in a flash. From the moment that Sergius told me about it, I became the enemy of Ortiz, and above all, of Tassler who had dared to lie to me."

"Tell me," said the journalist, "what exactly happened yesterday when your son arrived?"

"It all passed like a hurried dream. Suddenly, without any warning, he was here, with Rastakov at his heels. I had barely a second to decide what to do, and I did it. I sent him up with Sonia to Andrei's room, to disguise himself as my brother, whom Rastakov was quite prepared to see in the course of his investigations; I remained in the hall, and when I heard Rastakov coming, I fired a shot, to mystify him, and gain time; a shot always entails explanation and discussion, doesn't it?"

"So that's the true story of Bernard Jenin's disappearance?" said Wallion, amused.

"Yes, Bernard Jenin will never be found now!" Wallion got up, walked up and down for a minute, and stopped before Sergius, sitting

manufactured goods. Passing beyond the realms of diplomacy, Rusk finally won his battle despite the antagonisms of the short-sleeve diplomacy. A number of Rusk's predictions for the future of the farm industry have been borne out, one exception being his statement, "I do not expect to see anything revolutionary like the control of rainfall or the development of its twin absurdity, the flying machine."

As a boy Rusk drove a stage coach in Ohio and was once challenged at a fair to a wrestling match by a canal towpath muleteer. Rusk broke three of the mule driver's ribs in the match. The muleteer was James

quiet and aloof, in his apparent blindness.

"And what about Tarraschin's memorandum?" he asked.

"It is hidden in a place where Rastakov would never dream of looking for it," answered Sergius; "in fact it is actually in my hand at the present moment; look here, I will show it you."

All eyes were turned, as by common consent, on Sergius' right hand, in which he was holding his stick. With a quick wrench, he unscrewed the ivory handle, and they saw that the stick was hollow, without looking into it, he handed it to the journalist.

"Will you be so kind?" said Leo; "the most important document in Europe will be found inside, rolled up like a cigaret! Don't stand on ceremony, please."

The journalist stretched out his hand, then drew it suddenly back; a curious expression came into his eyes, and he thrust his hands into his pockets.

"You are joking, surely, sir?"

"I? Certainly not. What do you mean?"

"There is nothing in the stick!"

Sergius Tassler grew pale, and stared, as though petrified, into the hollow tube. Lona Ivanovna bent forward, and as the stick fell with a thud on the floor, she said:

"Are you perfectly sure you put the paper in there yesterday?"

"Yes," he replied with a sufficed air; "I can't understand. . . . Sonia saw it. . . ."

The young girl sprang forward like a little fury:

"I saw you put the paper in the stick! Nobody else saw it, nobody knows about it. Where is the document?" Her tone was almost an accusation, but Sergius made no reply. His mother continued her work with undisturbed equanimity, only remarking:

"You see, Mr. Wallion, that Tarraschin's memorandum is still capable of providing us with a sensation!"

"So it seems. I am sorry, for I should have liked to have your only weapon in my hands."

"Our only weapon!" she echoed.

"Yes, without it, one doesn't know what may happen."

"Could Rastakov have taken it?" suggested Leo.

"Impossible," returned Sergius. "He hasn't even set eyes upon the stick, and the baron openly that their search had been unsuccessful; it is a complete mystery to me. . . ."

"Did you keep watch last night?" asked Wallion?"

"Yes, all night, in turns."

And you noticed nothing unusual?"

"Nothing whatsoever."

"Had you disturbed the contents of the stick since yesterday?"

"No, and I have never let it out of my sight."

The journalist examined it cursorily, screwed on the handle, and restored it to its owner.

"Well, there you are!" said he. "You may console yourself with the reflection that Ortiz would certainly never have suspected the existence of such a highly original hiding place."

"Console myself! Do you attach so little importance to the disappearance of the paper?" exclaimed the mortified and astonished Sergius.

"No, not that, but I have an idea that it has not gone beyond recall. The person who took it. . . ."

"But who can it be?" Who? "That remains to be seen. May I be allowed to examine Andre Bernin's bedroom with you?"

"Most willingly."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Not the Last Chance. From Passing Show.

"Constantly catch that man. He tried to kiss me."

"Don't worry, miss. With your beauty you will soon get another."

A. Garfield, congress rusk in to meet gain in congress and later in the White House.

Just Another One. From Tit-Bits.

John (speaking on the phone): Is that you, sweetheart? Phyllis: Yes; who's talking?

BERLIN — (AP)—By attending the recent celebration of the 10th anniversary of the republic, Prince Friederich von Daldeck and Pyromont showed that not all members of the old nobility harbor desires for return of the empire. His act caused much comment.

TODAY

BY ARTHUR BRISBANE

Miss Fannie Hurst, creator of the "Breakfast Once in a While With Your Husband" club, says woman's liberty is in danger.

Man-made fashions from Paris threaten her slowly conquered right to bob her hair, drop her corsets, say "legs" instead of "limbs" and show a good deal of both to an admiring public.

"Bodily emancipation co-ordinates well with mental emancipation," says the talented young person.

All true, but reasonably short-skirted limits would not be unwise. A grandmother, for instance, might cut her skirt no lower than the knees, and young girls should remember that there is more charm in the mysterious unseen than in a butcher shop.

At a distance, only very tall mountains are visible. At a distance, in space or time, only the biggest men are visible.

The distinguished Russian painter, Roerich, recently returned from his travels in Mongolia, Tibet and China, says the Asiatics, as a rule, know only four American names of men.

They are: Hoover, representing government; Borah, representing relations with foreign countries; Rockefeller, representing wealth, and Ford, representing power.

"They do not think of Henry Ford as a man," says Mr. Roerich. "To them he represents motive power, and we will ask you: 'Can Ford climb that mountain?'"

Mr. Roerich says the Chinese call Americans Chicabs, which means "the protector."

"The heart of China," says Mr. Roerich, "is open to America."

Women are more important than men, as the artist is more important than his picture. Women create the race and the big news for the world today is this:

You can cure a baby of thumb-sucking, with a mirror.

Call a child from play, twice a day, make it look in a mirror for 10 minutes, each time, with its thumb held in its mouth, and it will soon stop the habit. So says Dr. S. J. Lewis of Detroit. The child's psychology will do more than old-fashioned assafoetida rubbed on the thumb, or modern celluloid balls fitted over the thumb, too big for the mouth.

Thumb sucking causes malformation of the teeth, gums and jaws.

The "comforter," used by ignorant mothers as a substitute for the thumb, is harmful also, exhausting the salivary glands. It is no easy task to raise a baby, or five or six of them.

The British Broadcasting corporation in a worthy high brow endeavor, included tragic poetry in its program. Mrs. Evelyn Mary Davis, in a Kent village heard a sad poem—said to be by the Irish poet James Stephens, and immediately committed suicide.

Her husband says "it was some miserable poetry that killed her. An ancient painter produced a picture of fruit, so perfect, that birds tried to eat it. He was proud."

A tragic poet might consider a suicide after hearing his sad verse a tribute to his genius.

But the practical British say, "if you must broadcast poetry, select poems that will make people laugh, or at least make them happy."

G. B. Shaw asks, "Why not turn off the loud speaker?"

William Feather, who deals in "Business Philosophy," says "nobility makes good socially until he learns to look interested when he is bored."

According to eminent authority, the reverse is the case, at least in England. Says Mrs. V. A. who often goes abroad, "an Englishman in British society, thinks little of an American, if the American shows interest in what the Englishman says. Look horribly bored, making no attempt of anything said, showing absolutely no interest, and the Englishman will think you must be somebody important." Take your choice.

Prohibition and its enforcement may soon enter upon a new phase.

It seems probable that buying liquor will be made a crime, according to Senator Sheppard's plan. Congress, if it dared, would refuse to take prohibition so seriously, enjoining alcoholic habits of the respectable classes. But the board of temperance of the Methodist church, which usually gets what it wants, demands that the Sheppard bill be made law.

When this happens, the voice of respectability bragging about its reliable bootlegger will be heard in the land less frequently.

London vandals have tarred and feathered Epstein's statue of the bird woman, Rima, erected in Hyde park.

To tar and feather Rima is a waste of time with the other Epstein statue of day and night, exposed in plain view.

In any case, public indignation should be directed, not at the artist or his works, but at those guilty of displaying them in public.

Automobile Feet. From The Pathfinder.

When new habits or fashions are adopted, new physical troubles usually make their appearance in due time. We have long suspected that so much riding in automobiles and the great decrease in the practice of walking would be reflected sooner or later in physical infirmities. Chiropractors in convention at Buffalo tell us such is already the case. In convincing figures they say that cases of arch trouble in the feet have increased 75 per cent since the auto came into general use. And their advice a walk after every ride, 10 minutes walking for every hour spent in riding.

The advice will be followed by very few, but the facts in the case should not be forgotten. Shoemakers are not the only ones suffering from the peculiarity of the auto. The muscles we do not use become weak, sub-normal and unreliable, and those of the feet have a lot of responsibility resting on them.

The True Reason. From Arkansas Gazette.

What keeps down the average man's desire to imitate Tarzan's summer costume is certain knowledge that he'd look more like some member of Tarzan's adopted tribe.

Q. What was the Washington Benevolent Society? M. B. A. The Washington Benevolent Society was a fraternal organization for the benefit of the members of the Revolutionary War. There were branches in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.



When Food Sours

Lots of folks who think they have "indigestion" have only an acid condition which could be corrected in five or ten minutes. An effective anti-acid like Phillips Milk of Magnesia soon restores digestion to normal.

Phillips does away with all that sourness and gas right after meals. It prevents the distress so apt to occur two hours after eating. What a pleasant preparation to take! And how good it is for the system! Unlike a burning dose of soda—which is but temporary relief at best—Phillips Milk of Magnesia neutralizes many times its volume in acid.

Next time a hearty meal, or too rich a diet has brought on the least discomfort, try—

PHILLIPS Milk of Magnesia



Kill Rats Without Poison

A New Exterminator that Won't Kill Livestock, Poultry, Dogs, Cats, or even Baby Chickens

K-P can be used about the home, barn or poultry yard with absolute safety as it contains no deadly poison. K-R-O is made of Squill, as recommended by U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, under the Conable 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 exterminator. All druggists, 75c. Large size (four times as much) \$2.00. Direct if dealer cannot supply you. K-R-O Co., Springfield, O.

K-R-O KILLS-RATS-ONLY

Snake Skins in Demand for Various Purposes

A recent trade report noted the fact that 25,000 python skins were exported from the Dutch East Indies in the past twelve months. These skins were of the reticulated python or rice snake, a big but comparatively harmless serpent with a most beautifully mottled skin. Some ten or twelve years ago dealers in Europe discovered that python skin made a leather specially suitable for lady's handbags; a little later came the craze for snake-skin slippers. Today Borneo, Sumatra, and the whole Malay archipelago are being scoured for pythons. The hunt for snake skins has now extended to Brazil, where the huge water boa, the anaconda, is found. This is the greatest serpent in existence, many specimens reaching a length of 60 feet. In Manila you will often see small pythons tied to poles hawked through the streets alive. People buy them to rid their houses of rats and similar vermin.

Just So "Disappointed in love, she says next time she will marry for money."

"Even that has been known to yield poor dividends."

Excuses aren't worth while. Your friends don't care and your wife won't believe you.

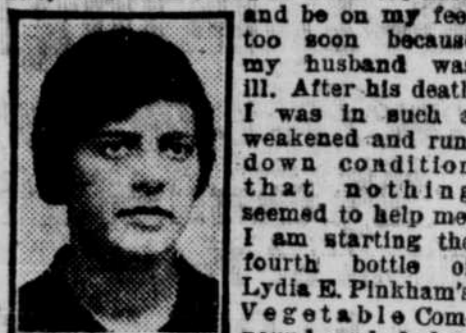
If a man feels superior to the public, he either tries to instruct it or exploit it.

Little boys who throw stones grow up and become critics.

HAD TO WORK TOO HARD

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Gave Her Strength

Mt. Carmel, Pa.—"After my second baby was born I had to work too hard and be on my feet too soon because my husband was ill. After his death I was in such a weakened and run-down condition that nothing seemed to help me. I am starting the fourth bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and feel a great deal better. I am much stronger and don't get so tired out when I wash or work hard. I do housekeeping and dressmaking and I highly recommend the Vegetable Compound as a tonic. I am willing to answer any letters I receive asking about it."—Mrs. Gertrude Reynolds, 414 S. Market, Mt. Carmel, Pa.



Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is a tonic and strength-giver. It is made of the most potent and healthful ingredients. It is a natural and safe remedy for all ailments of the female system. It is a true and reliable tonic for the weak and run-down. It is a true and reliable tonic for the weak and run-down.

First Farm Secretary.

From Farm and Fireside. Jeremiah M. Rusk, who was the first Secretary of Agriculture to fill a complete term, established the cabinet post under the heaviest fire, according to a story of the first official in Farm and Fireside. Rusk received his appointment in 1889 as the result of pressure by farm interests in congress, but no duties were prescribed for him. As a result he was obliged to be both architect and builder.

"The metropolitan press had much mirth over the establishment of a 'pumpkin seed department' by the government," says the article, and

"Uncle Reuben in the President's Cabinet" was the favorite vaudeville skit of 40 years ago. The hilarity was great and the supporters few when Jerry Rusk became the first agricultural advisor to the president of the United States.

The new secretary found that his department was the first branch of the government designed to increase the national wealth. The plans that he laid have not been changed materially to this day.

Rusk waged a single handed battle with Great Britain over the quarantine against American cattle, which was the outcome of a difference over the American tariff on