

THE COPPER HOUSE

A Detective Story

BY JULIUS REGIS

AUTHOR OF "NO 13 TORONTO"

"Is your plan so difficult to fathom? You forget that I have read Tarraschin's memorandum, that I know what has become of your millions, and that I am well aware of the snare of specious promises in which you have entangled your dupes. You are not so strong as you imagine; you have worked to overthrow one party, and to support the other, so that you might use the gratitude of the successful one as a steppingstone to power. But the Russian revolution in March was none of your doing; you made a start in the opposite direction, and threw in your lot with the reactionaries, whose prospects seemed the more favorable. You made a mistake there: Kerensky still sits firmly in the saddle, and Prince Tarraschin's promises will never be fulfilled, for however strong your followers may be, they will never restore the tsar to power."

He spoke slowly and impressively, and his words were now addressed to the silent group by the door, rather than to their leader. He noticed a strange expression in Rastakov's black eyes.

Perhaps Ortiz saw it too, for he exclaimed furiously:

"Silence! You lie!"

"Shall I give you a summary of Tarraschin's written promises?" returned Wallion, calmly, and, as Ortiz did not answer, he continued:

"To be called 'Emperor of the Anazons' was, after all, a barren honor; but as governor-general of Siberia, you would rule over one of the largest countries in the world. Can you deny that Prince Tarraschin promised that post to you, on behalf of his party?"

A murmur went round the room, and Rastakov's face wore a threatening look, as he took in the full meaning of Wallion's information. Ortiz fathomed his enemy's intention, and grew pale; it almost seemed that his iron will was shaken, but he controlled himself with a tremendous effort, and said:

"You have read it yourself, and hold the proof of it in your hand. I have never hesitated, and I do not hesitate now; but if you imagine that my fate depends on a paper, you deceive yourself. I have many strings to my bow. Governor-general of Siberia—let that pass, as you have said it, but it would only be a beginning; the whirlpool is deep, I can subdue it." He raised his voice, and turned to the silent audience round the door.

"Have I not proved to you that I keep my promises? Has your future ever looked so bright as it does now? I tell you, I can give you all that your wildest dreams can picture. Power or riches, you have only to choose; I have them both at my command."

He chose his words cleverly, on the spur of the moment, and Wallion realized that it was not only his millions that had attracted scores of adherents to his cause. His personal strength fascinated them, and his convincing arguments overruled their judgment. But the journalist had no intention of allowing him time to vindicate himself. He gathered that Max Raebel had by this time succeeded in conveying some sort of brief, but evidently re-inspiring information to Leonard Grath, Sonia and Lona Ivanova in turn, for their faces had brightened with an expression of eager anticipation. A moment later, seeing that Ortiz' attention was temporarily diverted, the Austrian looked significantly from Wallion to the two lamps. The journalist understood his

meaning, and nodded; it was nearly time!

"Do not promise more than you can perform, Ortiz!" he exclaimed. "What about those earlier promises of yours? Did you not assure Rastakov and his people that the bolsheviks are your friends? You, the organizer of the reactionary party in Russia!—for shame, what duplicity! What about these last bolshevik uprisings in Petrograd? Were they your work?"

The vehemence of Wallion's attack struck Ortiz dumb.

"I... I am not obliged to answer," he said after a pause; "you are not my judge!"

"But you would like to be mine, wouldn't you? Perhaps you would rather I burned the document?"

The paper hovered nearer the little blue flame, and Ortiz exclaimed:

"Name your own price!"

It was a sign of weakening; he was ready to buy what he could not take by force.

Wallion laughed, feigning surprise:

"Is this little flame so valuable? You would see it extinguished at any price?"

"I will give you \$10,000,000 if you will blow it out," said the adventurer. "And your liberty..."

"A fantastic offer!" said Wallion, his eyes glittering. "Does the future governor of Siberia propose it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I decline it. You are a beaten man, Ortiz. Kerensky's government has suppressed the bolshevik rising; in Petrograd, and remains in power till further notice. A reactionary rising would be even less successful..."

Hardly had the journalist completed his sentence, when a dramatic interruption occurred.

Rastakov sprang forward. All the savagery in his primitive nature had risen to the surface, his face was convulsed and his voice like the snarl of some wild beast:

"Is it true that the bolsheviks are beaten?" he cried.

"Yes; did you not know it?" answered Wallion.

"No! I thought, Ortiz, you have played us false! Remember what you promised!"

Ortiz struck him full in the face.

"How dare you, Rastakov!" he exclaimed harshly. "I have not paid you to insult me."

The blow left a red mark on Rastakov's white face. He staggered back, his hands clutching the air; his eyes looked like those of a blind man.

"Traitor!" he yelled. Slipping his right hand into his pocket, he raised it high over his head, grasping a round, black object, which he was about to fling at Ortiz, when the baron, throwing his whole weight upon him, wrenched the deadly thing away, and dashed it through the nearest window, far out into the park.

The whole house was shaken by a terrific explosion, a column of earth and flame rose high into the air, for a minute, and the atmospheric pressure drove in the windowpanes with a clatter of breaking glass.

Before the last splinters had fallen on the carpet, Ortiz drew a revolver from his pocket, and, apparently without even taking aim, shot Rastakov through the head. The unfortunate Russian fell where he stood, and did not move again.

Rastakov was balked of his prey, and had paid for his mistake with his life.

That our mineral resources are waning assets. Theoretically that is true but there are numerous examples in the history of mining to show that mineral deposits originally considered of small magnitude have been worked for many centuries.

"As to our resources in diamonds, coal, platinum, asbestos, chrome and manganese, to mention but a few, a similar experience can confidently be predicted."

"There is little reason to doubt that another \$1,000,000,000 worth of gold will be won from our present gold deposits."

"Regarding our diamond deposits

The sudden tragedy paralyzed them all. Ortiz stared down at the dead body.

"One more!" he muttered; "one more!"

At that minute the journalist made an alarming discovery; the draught from the broken window had blown out the little flame in the cigar-lighter. There was not an instant to lose!

"Now, Raebel!" he cried, and crouched down as quick as lightning. The Austrian thrust his hand among the rugs on Sergius Tassler's armchair, and pulled out a bright steel "Browning," which he aimed at the lamps. Two shots rang out, and the lamps fell crashing to the floor.

The room was plunged in darkness.

CHAPTER XX

In Which Wallion Shows That a Great Deal Can Be Done in Ten Minutes

It seemed as though a black velvet pall had been dropped over them. The sudden transition from brilliant light to impenetrable darkness, was almost physically painful, and 10 or 15 seconds passed before anyone attempted to stir; each man was listening with bated breath for his enemy's movements. A flash pierced the darkness; Ortiz had fired at the journalist, or rather, at the spot where he had last seen him standing. An infernal hubbub broke out: someone turned on an electric torch, which was immediately shattered by a shot; a dozen rifles rang out simultaneously, furniture fell to the ground, and panes of glass jingled.

"Get lights!" cried Ortiz; "let no one escape; stand by the windows and doors!"

The journalist had carefully placed Tarraschin's memorandum in his pocketbook, and was now ready to avail himself of the opportunity; he moved noiselessly forward, and suddenly threw himself into the tumult round the door. Striking out to right and left, his broad shoulders soon cleared him a passage. A last shot was fired almost under his chin, and he found himself out in the hall—free!

There was no time to lose. The hall was dark, but the tramp of feet warned him that at least half a score of men were making their way through the half-open door; that exit was blocked too; to reach the upper floor by the staircase was his only chance. He hastened in that direction, blessing the thick carpet, which deadened his footsteps, and took the 24 stairs in four bounds. As he gained the top-most stair, he dropped down on the landing like a cat, and held his breath; he had heard someone breathing close by. But in a moment he uttered a sigh of relief, as a familiar voice said softly:

"It is I, Max Raebel. I know your step again, Wallion; this way!"

He discerned a shadowy form, and a hand grasped his. "I think we may congratulate ourselves that we have won the first round," added the Austrian.

"What about the others?"

"Oh, I told Sergius Tassler and Grath to see to the ladies. I advised them to offer no resistance, but if possible to take refuge in the gardener's cottage. Ortiz will concentrate his attention on us."

"It looks like it," Wallion agreed.

The hall beneath them was filled with light. Fresh lamps had been brought in and lighted, but a strange condition of uncertainty seemed to prevail, and two or three voices were clamoring for Rastakov. Baron Payerling hurried forward, and the six marines marched across the hall towards the stars, with Ortiz behind them. At sight of him, the threatening murmurs died away, and with a few decided orders the baron quelled the disturbance.

"The harmony seems slightly defective!" whispered the

we are assured of sufficient resources to maintain the present output for very many years to come, while as to the future of coal mining there are even more optimistic estimates.

"Whether the production of fuel oil from coal proves to be a commercial success or not, we may, with confidence, look to a considerable expansion in the coal mining industry."

"During the last 50 years," he added, "scarcely a decade has passed without some new and valuable discoveries being made, and there is no reason to believe that further disc-

Austrian, "but it will soon be too hot for us here; which way shall we go?"

"To the winding staircase on the back-landing," replied Wallion promptly. They crossed the passage, and he opened the door leading to the backstairs, but immediately retreated, and bolted it hastily; he had almost run into the arms of three of the forest guards, who were evidently on the lookout for him, and now began to batter on the door.

"The dence!" he murmured; "this is what one may call quick work! Back again!"

They ran back to the main staircase, which was now their only chance, if they were not to be caught on that floor.

"Are you armed?" asked Raebel.

"No, are you?"

"Yes, I have Sergius Tassler's revolver, but only four cartridges left."

Ortiz' bodyguard had nearly reached the top, when the two detectives appeared on the landing. A shout greeted them, but before anyone could shoot, the fugitives had gained the second floor, where Raebel turned and fired a shot down the stairs.

"That'll just give them something to think about," he explained; "I am generous, as long as I have anything to give away."

"That leaves you with only three shots, doesn't it?" said Wallion. "Wait, that is not enough; I must get hold of something for myself also."

They heard someone running up, and the journalist stood a little to one side. One of the marines, more quick-footed than the rest, appeared at the top of the stairs. Wallion sprang silently upon him, seized him by the back of the neck, swung him round, wrested the carbine from the hands of the surprised and bewildered man, and with a violent push, sent him reeling backwards down the stairs. The living projectile evidently landed in the very midst of his advancing comrades, and a chorus of shouts and execrations followed. Wallion examined the carbine, which was loaded with five rounds of ammunition.

"Come along," said he, "we can't stop here."

They mounted the third flight, which was narrower, and led straight to the attics, and they looked round them in the darkness. Every corner was filled with dusty boxes, worn-out furniture, and a medley on nondescript objects; on the far side, they made out a ladder, set up against the ceiling, beneath a bolted trapdoor. Wallion struck a match and looked at his watch: it was half past nine. Their pursuers came on noisily, though rather out of breath. Raebel seized an old high-backed oak armchair, swung it up over his head, and nudged it with a crash down the attic stairs. A shot answered the challenge, and a bullet whistled past the Austrian's right ear, as he stepped back swearing softly.

"There's no stopping them," he grumbled; "a machine gun is what we want!"

The journalist was already at the top of the ladder, and pushing up the creaking trapdoor. The Austrian followed him, and they both crawled out upon the sloping copper roof. The night air blew cool and refreshing on their heated faces, and Wallion let the heavy trapdoor fall back into its place.

"Shall we stop here?" asked Raebel eagerly. "We could give them a warm reception from this position."

Wallion considered.

"No," he said; "we have too little ammunition, and besides, there are several attic windows from which they might fire on us."

"But where in the world are we go?" exclaimed the flabbergasted Raebel. "It seems to me, we have come as far as we can without flying."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

coveries of ore deposits will cease abruptly, the more so as the union appears to be on the eve of an era of scientific prospecting."

New Orleans, La.—An auto driven by Paul Gauthier, 27 years old, plunged over an embankment down 20 feet into a drainage canal at New Orleans. As the car was slowly sinking into the mire at the bottom of the canal bed Gauthier managed to open the door and climb to safety, only to be arrested for reckless driving when he had regained the street.

WOULD MAKE FAIR

FREE TO THE PUBLIC Grand Island—(UP)—Providence that the county and business men appropriate about \$8,000, the fair sponsored by the central Nebraska agricultural association may be free next year, it was decided by the board of directors Wednesday.

The gate receipts this year totaled \$8,705. This source of revenue would be lost if the fair is made free, although admissions to grand stands and concessions will remain. The directors voted to make admission to the fair grounds free if the county board appropriates \$2,000 for premiums, \$2,000 for permanent improvements and business men subscribe \$4,000.

RUSS AVIATORS WELL TREATED

North Platte Chamber of Commerce Denies Storie of Any Discourtesy

North Platte, Neb.—(UP)—Fred W. Yanders, president junior division North Platte Chamber of Commerce has issued a statement denying editorial comment of the Houston (Tex.) Chronicle and other newspapers to the effect that Russian aviators flying around the world in the airplane "Land of the Soviets," had been treated in an ill-mannered or spiteful way by North Platte citizens.

Yanders quoted cablegrams from President Ukanov, of the Moscow Soviet; S. A. Shestakov, chief pilot on the airship; L. G. Gershevich, interpreter for the party, and others to show that the Russians felt highly gratified at the warm reception they received here.

"For the benefit of our misinformed editors throughout the country," Yanders said, "when the plane landed here it was a complete surprise to North Platte citizens who had no inkling that they would be forced to descend on our field. Commander Shestakov had planned to spend the night in Omaha."

"We hastily gathered some of our leading citizens and hurried to the field. Our party furnished a police escort to guard the plane during the night and furnished transportation to the entire crew to the local hotel. Here they were met by the president of the Chamber of Commerce and other prominent citizens.

"After a special dinner the fliers asked that they be allowed to retire, since they were tired and contemplated arising early to resume their flight."

"All expenses including meals, hotel and transportation charges was paid for by the Chamber of Commerce."

In the cablegrams the Russians warmly thank North Platte citizens for their courtesy and hospitality during their stay here.

FIFTEEN STUDENTS AFTER

RHODES SCHOLARSHIP

Lincoln, Neb.—(UP)—Paul F. Good, secretary of the Nebraska committee on the Rhodes scholarship states that 15 instead of nine candidates will appear before the examining committee for hearing, several of the number having applied from institutions outside the state. Rules governing the contest permit the students name to be entered through an institution within the state in which he lives and is attending school, or through an institution in another state where he has attended for the last two years.

The candidates not previously listed publicly are: Philip H. Mergler of Hastings college; George R. West of Kearney State Teachers college; William M. Cord of University of Wisconsin; Harley G. Moorhead, Jr., Omaha, Oberlin college, Ohio; Herbert D. Dicksen, of Midland college and Irwin R. Schimmelpfening, Humphrey, United States Military academy, West Point. Card is an alumnus of the University of Nebraska and is doing graduate work at Wisconsin and Dicksen is student secretary for the United Lutheran church at the Nebraska institution.

G. A. R. GIVEN ROOMS

IN NEW CAPITOL

Lincoln, Neb.—(UP)—The Nebraska Grand Army of the Republic has been given the two top rooms in the capitol tower for use as office and club room and also for a trophy room. It was announced Thursday by State Commander Smith.

The trophy room, which will house the souvenirs of all the wars in which Nebraska men have participated, is underneath the dome of the tower and will be octagonal in shape. It will be on the 14th floor, and the entire floor below will be devoted to a club room for the veterans with office space also being provided. Four elevators, which are now being installed, will provide service to the new headquarters.

FINED FOR NOT KEEPING

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Ponca, Neb.—Oscar Aaberg was brought before County Judge F. D. Pales on a charge of failing to keep his three children in school as required by the Nebraska compulsory education law. This is the first prosecution in Dixon county brought under this provision. The defendant was fined \$22.

DISTRIBUTE FUNDS FROM

STATE GASOLINE TAX

Lincoln, Neb.—(UP)—Nebraska counties will receive \$195,259.93 as their share of the gasoline tax collected during November. It was announced Thursday by State Treasurer W. M. Stebbins.

The total collections were \$781,036.11 and the counties receive one fourth of this amount.

She Should Be From Answers.

"Whatever happened to that girl you didn't marry?"

"Oh, she's just as happy as ever."

SAYS NEBRASKA ON CASH BASIS

State Treasurer Reports

Cash in Various Funds and No Bonds Out

Lincoln, Neb.—(UP)—The sum of \$4,683,471.44, ample to pay every outstanding claim against any fund in the state, was in the state treasury at the close of business November 30, State Treasurer W. M. Stebbins reported Wednesday.

In the general fund was a balance of \$775,567.43, the receipts during November being \$285,686.62 and the payments, \$638,703.03. The capitol building fund had a balance of \$305,738.13.

During the month, \$1,013,865.25 was paid out from the gasoline tax fund, \$789,647.05 was collected, and December 1, there was a balance of \$1,995,908.75.

"In 1875 there was outstanding against Nebraska about \$500,000 in bonds. The last of these were paid and cancelled in 1900," Stebbins said. "For 30 years there has not been a bond against our state. We are strictly on a cash basis, paying cash as we go."

BATTLES WITH SCARLET FEVER

Hartington, Neb., School Children Innoculated to Halt Disease Spread

Hartington, Neb.—(Special)—Owing to the presence of a number of scarlet fever cases in this city and surrounding community, the school board of the Hartington public schools has discussed measures to combat the disease.

Acting upon the suggestion of physicians the board issued an edict requiring all children in school to be inoculated, at least one injection of serum being given at the expense of the school district. The physicians claimed that the one inoculation would make the child immune for six months. If the parents cared to make the child immune to the disease for life they could have the two remaining injections administered.

This week Dr. J. M. Johnson gave the first injection of serum to all pupils and teachers in both the public and parochial schools.

OMAHA RACE BETTING

PLACES ORDERED CLOSED

Omaha, Neb.—Chief of Police J. J. Pisanowski late today issued an ultimatum to local horse race betting emporiums to close up or suffer the indignity of having uniformed policemen stationed at their doors to prevent gambling.

"I am going to have all race track gambling stopped," said Pisanowski, "even if I have to place a uniformed policeman in each place suspected of operating against the law."

His edict followed a raid by police morals officers of two places where bets were laid for foreign race tracks. His resolution to have all emporiums closed is in line with the order of Attorney General Sorenson's edict to that effect more than a month ago.

CHILDREN'S CRUSADE IN

ALL EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

Omaha, Neb.—Plans for the conduct of a children's crusade in every Episcopal church throughout the northwest, embracing eight states, were perfected here at the annual meeting of the provincial executive council.

The crusade, to be held simultaneously in every Episcopal church in the northwest province, will be staged in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Iowa. Definite dates for the event have not been set. Dr. Phillips Osgood of Minneapolis is in charge of plans.

GRAIN SHIPPING BODY

ORGANIZED AT NACORA

Homer, Neb.—(Special)—A grain shipping association has been organized at Nacora. The following officers were elected: William Heene, president; L. J. Martin, vice president; Hugo Zastrow, secretary-treasurer; Victor Blume, manager. The board of directors consisted of the officers and Ray Graves, William Wingett, of Thurston county, explained a similar organization operating at Walthill, Neb.

KNOX COUNTY PIONEER

WOMAN AT REST

Bloomfield, Neb.—(Special)—The funeral of Mrs. Dorothy C. Smyth was held, Wednesday, from the East Side Lutheran church. Mrs. Smyth, who was 74 years old, was one of the pioneers of this community. She is survived by seven children.

COLERIDGE NEB. COUPLE

MARRIED 50 YEARS

Coleridge, Neb.—(Special)—Mr. and Mrs. Peter Adams celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at their home Thanksgiving day. They have resided in the Coleridge vicinity for the last 27 years. Both are 75 years old.

NEED COLD WEATHER TO

PRESERVE BEET CROP

McCook, Neb.—(UP)—If frost should leave the ground within the next few weeks, approximately 80 per cent of the beet crop in this section of Nebraska and Colorado will be lost, the McCook division of the Burlington railroad estimates.

Beet harvesters have twice been driven out of the fields by inclement weather. They are now plowing the frosted beets out of the ground and, unless frost leaves them before they can be shipped to refineries, the greater portion of the crop will be saved.

South Africa Still Has

Vast Mineral Resources

Johannesburg, South Africa—South Africa has hardly touched its own deposits, except gold and diamonds; the time has come for it to consider more actively the steps to be taken to insure its future development declared Dr. Hans Pirow in the course of his presidential address to the Chemical, Metallurgical and Mining society in Johannesburg. "In the face of past and present achievements in the mineral industry," he said, "it is often asserted