

The Secret Dispatch

By JAMES GRANT

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

He feared to look much, or often, toward the distant wood of the Honey Tree lest watchful eyes might be upon him to gather hints therefrom; still more did he fear to visit Natalie again, lest, by doing so, he might lead to the discovery and arrest of all. So the days and nights of dread, of longing and suspense, passed slowly after each other now.

The barriers of rank and wealth had all been removed now and Natalie was reduced to a level lower even than her lover's; yet he cursed the mad schemes that had brought about such a revolution and tossed feverishly and sleeplessly on his bed when he thought of Natalie Mierowita—his own loving and beloved Natalie—so delicate and so tender, with her white soft skin and silky hair, her earnest and beautiful eyes, lurking among stern and outlawed soldiers in yonder lamp cavern of the rocks, upon her bed of leaves and moss. The whole affair reminded him of some of the old Scottish raids, or Jacobite plots, of years long passed away; and it was fated to resemble the former more strongly in some of its features, as the dark sequel will show.

The guards and sentinels at Schlossburg were doubled; the patrols were incessant by land, while on the lake the gunboats of Admiral Mackenzie cruised near the walls; the cannons were loaded; the watchwords changed sometimes twice within four-and-twenty hours; and the general state of preparation for a sudden attack was unremitting. But time passed on quietly until the night of the 15th of September, when the crowning catastrophe came.

CHAPTER XVII.

The past day had been unusually gloomy for the season. The sun had set in fiery clouds beyond the spires of St. Petersburg. The night was without a moon and a strong east wind rolled the waters of the Ladoga in billows of ink blue against the massive walls of the fortress in foam and fury on one side; while on the other the waters of the Neva, swollen by recent rains, gurgled and chafed round the moldy and moss-grown piers of the drawbridge.

Since morning roll-call, Jagouski, the knouted, beaten and ill-used Cosack, had been missing; he had quitted the fortress on some trivial pretense and had not since returned; patrols had seen nothing of him. Then Colonel Bernikoff was more than ever on the alert; but Balgonie, who now deemed anything better than the torture of suspense, had gone weary and feverishly to bed, to court for a time the happiness of oblivion, after having spent nearly the entire day upon the lake with an armed boat's crew, patrolling by water.

From sleep, however, a sudden sound aroused him; he looked at his watch, and saw that the hands indicated 12 o'clock, midnight. In another moment the sound came again—the drums were beating to arms! He heard the clamor of hoarse Muscovite voices in court and corridor; the clanging of the castle bell; and he saw the gleam of torches reddening the old black walls and towers, and faring on the grated windows as they were borne to and fro.

His heart was beating with wild anxiety as he threw on his staff uniform, belted his sabre about him, placed his pistols in his girdle, and hurried forth to meet—it might be cross blades—with the only friends he had in Russia!

As he crossed the castle yard by torchlight, he could perceive that the Cosacks were falling into their ranks with muffled hoots and a cheer; and that the gunners were standing by their cannon with port fires lighted; the latter casting a pale, ghastly, and unearthly glare upon the yawning embrasures, the walls of the fortress and on their own stolid visages, which were pale and cadaverous, as those of people usually who are hastily summoned from sleep in the night.

The portullia was up; and Balgonie could see its row of lower bars, like a line of black fangs in an open jaw, between him and the outline of the lighted archway.

"What is the matter, Colonel Bernikoff?" he asked; "what is the cause of all this alarm?"

"Matter enough! We have had an alarm—the place seems to be invested by troops—infantry of the line—the head of a column—look for yourself, Balgonie!" exclaimed Bernikoff.

To omit the Christian name of a person addressed, and that of his father, also, is a direct insult in Russia; but Balgonie heeded it not then. He hurried to the curtain wall which faced the land side, the outer gate, and drawbridge, and then, by the light of a torch, he could see that which certainly seemed to be the head of a column—a front rank of nearly fifty men, clad in the hideous uniform then worn by the Russian army. Their coats were green, lined and faced with red, very tight in the body, with preposterously long skirts, tight breeches and boots to the knees, with cocked hats, having long fannel flaps to cover the ears in winter.

By the light of the same torch Balgonie could see the bayonets fixed; and that two officers, with their sabres drawn, and a drummer, were in front of their little line. Having possession of the parole and countersign, which, no doubt, was betrayed to them by the absent Jagouski, the whole party had contrived to delude the sub-lieutenant in charge of the outer guard, and were now past the first barrier, and had actually taken possession of the drawbridge, which they had levered across the Neva. The gate and guns of the second barrier were yet to be forced or passed; and thus these midnight visitors were in a species of trap.

The wall could Balgonie recognize in the two officers Basil Mierowitz, wearing the familiar uniform of the Regiment of Grenadiers; and Unshoff, in the gay trappings of the Grenadiers of Volkolost, and now, for the second time, their drummer beat a common for a party, but so far there was no response.

Balgonie hastened after Bernikoff and the other officers. They had now ascended

to the chamber of the unfortunate Ivan, from whose presence they had somewhat roughly expelled the chaplain, Father Chrysostom. On entering, he found that the royal recluse had sprung from bed—inspired by natural alarm, on finding his chamber suddenly entered at midnight, and full of armed men; but Ivan manifested no indignation—he was too gentle, too subdued, and completely broken in spirit for that.

His singularly beautiful face was very pale; there was a strange calmness in his manner; and whatever he thought or anticipated, there was more of calm inquiry than of fear in his tone and in the expression of his fine, soft eyes. Over his night dress he had thrown a robe de chambre of fine scarlet cloth edged with white ermine; and in his attire, with his long hair and delicate features, so chastened in expression by long solitude and complete seclusion from the outer world, he seemed more like a tall handsome woman than a young man of three-and-twenty years.

"What is this you tell me, Colonel Bernikoff," he was asking, as Balgonie entered; "my unhappy life threatened, say you?"

"Even so," said Bernikoff hoarsely, while averting his stealthy eyes from the young man's open and earnest face; "even so, Ivan Antonovitch; but your death will not be of our seeking."

"Whose, then?"

"Your friends."

"And wherefor?"

"There are those without the gates who seek you, and you must not fall alive into their hands," said Captain Vlasief sternly, as he felt the point of his sabre with a finger.

"Alas! I do not understand who can come to seek me!" replied the poor prince, shuddering now, while an expression of horror began to spread over his fine face—a horror gathered from the fierce and relentless aspect he read in the visages of those around him—and he withdrew a pace or so toward his bed, saying in a trembling voice:

"Ah, do not leave me, good Colonel Bernikoff, or at least give me a sword—a sword—"

"Fool—child—dolt! thou with a sword, and for what purpose?" thundered Bernikoff, as he sought to lash himself into the requisite pitch of fury; "for what purpose, I say?"

"That I may defend myself!"

"This needless," said Tschekin, with a cold smile; "we shall take care of you."

"Oh, Carl Ivanovitch Balgonie, my friend, my good friend; you I can trust—you I can command—come hither, and remain by my side," said the prince, in an imploring accent, as a solemn foreboding came upon him when he saw the sabers stealthily drawn from their scabbards on every side; and even the terrible Nicholas Paulovitch drawing near, dagger in hand, with his long lock of hair, his scowling front, and a cruel expression, the very lust of blood in his deep-set, stony eyes. "Carl, Carl," cried Ivan; "your hand!"

"Captain Balgonie—he here!" roared Bernikoff, with one of his terrible maledictions.

"Oh, excellency!" implored Balgonie, scarcely knowing what he should ask or urge.

"Begone, sir, to the barrier gate, and keep the guard there to their duty—begone, sir, I command you, on your allegiance to the Empress!"

To refuse or linger were alike impossible, though a wild cry of entreaty escaped the lips of the young prince, who sprang forward, but was thrust roughly back toward his couch by many hands and many leveled weapons.

The sword of Damocles, which had hung over his unhappy head so long, was about to descend at last!

Balgonie, his heart swollen almost to bursting with shame, rage and grief, rushed down the stair of the keep; but at the foot, and just as he passed where the old chaplain Chrysostom was saying devoutly on his knees the prayers for the dying, he heard a shrill and protracted cry of agony ring through the vaulted tower—a cry that made his blood run cold!

Humanity, generosity, and all his own good impulses would have drawn him back to the side, and, if possible, to the aid of Ivan; but the force of discipline, and a knowledge of his own utter powerlessness, made him pause, for he was but one man—a foreigner, too—opposed to a whole garrison of ferocious and unscrupulous soldiers.

When, from the inner barrier gate, he looked up to the window of Ivan's room, he saw that the lights had been extinguished and all was darkness now.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When Bernikoff appeared with his group of officers, Charlie Balgonie perceived that there were spots of blood upon his long, white leather gaiters; that his sabre blade was broken off within six inches of the hilt, and that a terrible expression of ferocity clouded his features and those of all around him.

At that moment the drummer of the summoners beat a call for the third time, and Bernikoff, advancing to the wicket, in the palisades of the second inner gate, opened it, and, with a great sternness of manner, demanded what they required.

"The release of His Imperial Majesty Ivan IV.," replied Basil Mierowitz, in a firm voice, while courteously saluting Bernikoff in recognition of his superior rank.

"If I refuse—"

"You do so at your own peril," replied Basil, as sternly and as proudly as if, instead of a few discontented deserters and enthusiasts, the whole armies of Russia were at his back.

"You cannot be mad enough, Basil Mierowitz, to think of assault?"

"That may or not be, excellency, according to circumstances," was the reply.

"What tidings are those under your orders?"

"A guard of honor for the Emperor, if you peacefully comply—the first portion of an invading force if you refuse," replied Mierowitz; but a sinister gleam

of triumph flashed in the malicious eyes of Bernikoff, who gathered more of his real weakness from this evasive reply than the rash young noble intended.

"Listen, Colonel Bernikoff," he continued, while drawing from his breast a long paper of official aspect, to which several green and scarlet seals were attached. "Her Majesty Catherine II., having come to the conclusion of resigning the imperial crown and of replacing it on the head of the Emperor Ivan, whom she now feels herself compelled to acknowledge as her lawful sovereign, and who she has deposed in infancy by her predecessors, the Empress Elizabeth, and the Emperor Peter III.; therefore she hereby commands you, Colonel Bernikoff, Governor of her Castle of Schlossburg, to set the prince at liberty, with all speed and honor."

For a document and summons of this artful and remarkable nature, Bernikoff was altogether unprepared. For a moment he grew deadly pale, but for a moment only, and glanced at the startled faces of those around him. Had he been too precipitate in bloodshed?

"Where is Her Majesty just now?" he asked.

"In the palace of the Czars, at Novgorod."

"Was Novgorod so empty of all the great nobles and officers of Russia that a document of such a nature was intrusted to a mere lieutenant of infantry—a deserter from Livonia?" said Bernikoff, with a sudden rage. "This imposture—a forgery; there is but one monarch on earth, the Empress Catherine; and you, Mierowitz, and all who league with you, are but base dogs and traitors!"

"Forward!" cried Basil, brandishing his sabre; "storm the gate—bayonet all who oppose us!"

"Long live Ivan Antonovitch—long live the Emperor!" exclaimed his soldiers, rushing forward. But the wicket in the palisades was at once closed, and secured against them by an enormous confused beam of wood; and though a confused volley of musketry was exchanged between them and the main guard, no one was struck, save Bernikoff, who staggered back into the arms of Vlasief, having been bayoneted in the breast by the deserter Jagouski, who drove his weapon between the palisades, nearly finishing what Basil had begun by the blow of a musket, but which crashed the colonel's hat and nearly fractured his skull.

"Ah! dogs and Asiatics, you have struck me!" shouted Bernikoff, whose voice was hoarse with rage and pain.

"Dost know the penalty of wounding an officer—of striking a soldier who wears a decoration?"

"Accursed Tartar, I neither know nor care. I revenge my brother's death at Zorndorf, my own wounds, and the murder of Peter III!" replied the exulting Cosack, with a bitter laugh.

"May my right hand wither, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, when most I need them both, if I have not a terrible vengeance for all this work!" cried Bernikoff. "Vlasief, Tschekin, show them their prince!"

While the undaunted Basil and his friend Usakoff, with their soldiers, proceeded to wheel round a cannon of the outworks, a thirty-two pounder, for the purpose of blowing upon the wicket inner barrier; and while Balgonie, a silent but excited and sick-hearted spectator of the whole affair, lingered close by, heedless whether the round-shot and grape, with which they were charging the gun, came his way or not—a window in the first story of the keep was dashed open, and while every torch and every eye were uplifted to the place, a terrible spectacle, which hushed all into momentary silence, was exhibited.

It was the dead body of the young and handsome Ivan, suspended by the neck, at the end of a rope, stripped even of his night dress, cold and white as the marble of Paros, and gashed with ten gaping wounds.

(To be continued.)

DELAYED BY COLD WEATHER.

Time-Tables Broken by Thick Oil, Poor Coal, Frozen Water, Etc.

Reasons are numerous for trains being behind in exceedingly cold weather, but railroad men are always extremely careful not to acknowledge that trains are behind, except in individual instances.

Passenger trains are as often delayed by freights, it is said, as by anything else. Freights have a hard row to hoe in cold weather. They stop so often that they cannot keep warm. The oil in the boxes of the journals freezes or becomes hard after the train has stood for a few minutes, and it is impossible to start up. Perhaps the train gets half-way into a switch or out of it and cannot move another inch. Then a passenger comes along and cannot get by. This hardening of the oil in the axles is the worst trouble. The train must run ten or fifteen miles before friction warms it to easy running.

There is great difficulty in getting up steam in cold weather. Everything is cold about the engine. Conditions are not normal and the machine—for an engine is as much a machine as any other—will not work well. Often it is impossible to get up steam. Sometimes the pipe freezes between the engine and the tender, preventing water from running from the supply tank into the boiler. This, however, is not common. Even the railroads have trouble with their coal. If the fireman chances to shovel in poor coal on a very cold day it will not make a hot fire.

Officials are not anxious to make time in cold weather. They know that more breaks and defects in rolling stock will come to light with the first hard freezing of the winter than in all the rest of the year, and they know that more accidents are likely to occur during cold weather than at any other time. A wheel or a weak rail that has stood the test of all the rest of the year may break during the first cold snap and cost a hundred lives.

Even passengers delay trains in cold weather, though they do not know it. They take a long time to put on their wraps and they walk slower in getting into the cars. Each little station requires a longer stop to do the same amount of business than on other days.—Milwaukee Free Press.

LIVE YE OLDEN TIME.

FASHIONS OF GRANDMOTHER'S DAY REVIVED.

Effect of Quiet Cut and Make-Up of Dresses is Heightened by Flowered, Dotted and Striped Fabrics Now Obtainable—Gotham Notes.

New York correspondence:



BUYERS of stylish spring fabrics are learning that all of the old-fashioned flavor to be given to up-to-date summer dresses is not to lie in the making. Manufacturers of materials have realized the general tendency to hint of the old in the new, and consequently have aimed in the figuring of new goods to suggest quaintness. This tendency has not been limited to a few makers, but is general and is reflected in about all the newer goods. Especially is it marked in flowered materials, which partake unmistakably of the character of grandmother's day. Dotted stuffs echo with



MODERATE SUGGESTIONS OF YE OLDEN TIME.

but little less distinctness the same by gone periods, and in less degree the same point is noticeable in striped goods, especially in those that show faint flowered or scrolling besides the stripes. Such stuffs are going to prove a great help to dressmakers, who now that old fashions have been drawn upon so freely, are rather hard put to it to keep up an output of novelties. But with the suggestion of half a century ago conveyed in the fabric to be worked upon, no serious amount of scheming need be done for the rest.

The foregoing hints of what will be the most marked feature of summer dress goods, but there is besides another general characteristic. That is softness of weave and pliability. This will pervade solid color goods and practically all of the other weaves that do not have old-time markings, but the texture will not stand forth as will the figuring. Openness of weave will be a feature, too, this



TRIMMINGS MEANT TO IMPRESS.

being noticeable in both old and new goods, some established materials appearing in weaves far nearer the nature of transparencies than they have been previously. Voiles may be named as an illustrative goods. Voiles are to be very stylish, and quantities of them are to be sold, because there is so wide a range of sorts the voile goods will be prepared for entirely different uses. The semi-transparent ones may be highly embellished and worn as the most dressy item of the wardrobe, or the more solid weaves

may be fashioned simply and put to rough-and-ready uses. And in either case excellent returns for the investment is a reasonable prospect. This serviceability of voile in practically all the many forms is a feature that lacks up its stylishness finely and that accounts in considerable degree for the remarkable liking for the goods.

The manner of making gowns from the transparent and semi-transparent stuffs is to be such that their flimsiness is not to be fairly hammered into the observer at every look. There is not to be any recurrence of the see-through effects of a few summers ago. Ribbons of contrasting color will not show through to hint of inner embellishment that would be better left without any such disclosure. There will be silk, lawn or linen lining or foundation for the flimsy fabrics, but the rule is positive that the two layers should match exactly in color. Harmony of coloring throughout the costume is to be one of the most pronounced fancies of the summer, and the dash of color from beneath the outer goods will be tabooed.

When quaintness is not suggested in the dress goods, then the dressmaker must supply it. Indeed, many customers will demand it both in the material and in the manner of making. But the matter of securing it in the making should not worry those who do not insist on having it in some way that no other woman has it. Practically all that is characteristic of stylish dressing just now has been brought out from the past, with more or less of modification, so there is a wide choice. To-day's pictures give attractive models, each of them brand new, yet none making any such depart-

ure from what has been seen of late as to alarm the conservative. For the gown of the initial, dull blue canvass is suggested, with shirrings, tuckings and applique figures of the material. For the first gown of the next picture, natural color pongee and brown satin bands. Next, see brown voile and embroidery of a darker brown, and to the right of this is a design for gray venetian clay lace dyed to match and gray silk ornaments. In the next picture, in like order, see a biscuit broadcloth, the skirt stenciled, the coat embroidered in cord of the color of the goods. A gown of blue taffeta, with unusual cording in the same shade, and with Russian lace trimmings in stylish arrangement, is to the right of this, and last is a figured blue voile finished with lavish embroidery, the richness of the latter brought into contrast by the strictly tailored coat. Such contrast, the colors of the two portions being in strict harmony, is permissible

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but of the color contrasts so abundant for many seasons, the summer will see but very little.

Fashion Notes.

Belts and stocks to match are now the fad.

Vellings may be fine or coarse, plain or fancy.

Ostrich plumes and pompons are in high favor.

White coats are very popular for evening wear.

Science AND Invention

The ostrich is being acclimatized in Southern Europe by M. Octave Justice, whose 80 specimens from South Africa are thriving on a farm near Nice.

Oysters are examined by X-rays for pearls by Raphael Dubois, a French investigator. The oysters are not injured, and those containing pearls too small to be of value are returned alive for further growth.

Mons. Charles Fabry of the French Academy of Sciences announces that careful measurements of the light of the star Vega, one of the brightest in the heavens, when it is seen near the zenith in calm weather, show that it is equal to that of a standard candle burning at a distance of 2,550 feet from the eye.

Evidence that animals can count has been collected by Signor Mancini. Horses in the collieries at Halmait have a regular number of daily trips, and invariably seek their stables after the thirtieth. A dog remembered the twenty-sixth buried bone a short time after digging up twenty-five. Birds count their eggs; magpies count only to four. The latter is true also of monkeys.

A novel microscope for viewing melted or intensely hot substances has been described in the Vienna Academy of Sciences by Prof. C. Doelter. An electric oven two inches high is mounted on the object stand, and yields temperatures up to 1200 deg. C. In use the lens is separated from the heated object by about one inch. Even at the highest temperatures of the substance under examination, however, both microscope and objective are kept quite cool by a special arrangement of asbestos plates and a spiral tube carrying ice-cold water.

If a vibrating tuning-fork is placed in a flame the sound is markedly reinforced. Starting with this fact, the Rev. T. C. Porter, of England, has devised a new form of phonograph, in which a flame takes the place of the trumpet ordinarily used. The sounds thus reinforced are easily heard throughout a large room. The explanation of the action of the flame is that the sound-waves falling upon it change its combustion from a continuous to an intermittent form, and the burning gas being thus thrown into a series of waves which are more powerful than the original sound-waves, reinforce them and thus magnify the sound.

The Royal Society in London was recently entertained with an account, by R. I. Pocock, of a spider of the Desidae family, living in Australia, which makes its habitation along the seashore, in the crevices of the rocks, between high and low water marks. This location is selected, no doubt, because it abounds with the food that these spiders prefer. But when the tide is in, their homes are covered with water. Instead of deserting them, however, the spiders solve the difficulty by means of closely woven sheets of silk, which they stretch over the entrances, and within which they imprison sufficient air to keep them alive during the time that they remain submerged.

Women Who Betrayed Men.

In nearly every instance of treachery and corruption resulting in a public scandal during the last fifty years woman has played a prominent and ignominious part. The real instigator of the crime, she goes unpunished, bringing to those connected with her ignominy, disgrace, exile and sometimes death.

One of the most notorious of these women who for a time pulled the strings of history was the Baroness de Kaulla, a German by birth, who caused the downfall of old General de Cissey, the Minister of War in Paris during the presidency of Marshal MacMahon.

The general, infatuated with the baroness, was in the habit of luncheon with her at her house close to the Elysee every Thursday, after the meeting of the cabinet council.

While they were at lunch her servants were taking shorthand notes of the ministerial papers in the general's portfolio, which were then forwarded in cipher to Bismarck in Berlin, who thus knew every Friday morning all that had passed in the French cabinet council on Thursday.

This went on for two years, and might never have been discovered if the baroness had not made the mistake of being too grasping. She succeeded in obtaining from the general, who could refuse her nothing, valuable (iron contracts for some of her friends; his led to searching inquiries on the part of disappointed candidates, and the whole business came out.—Pearson's Weekly.

Settling Lawsuits in India.

They have a way of settling lawsuits in India that it would be well to copy here, according to the Springfield Republican. When a dispute arises over the ownership of land two holes are dug near together and the opposing lawyers nicely planted up to their waists. The first one to become bitten by a bug or becomes so exhausted that he has to be exhumed loses the case for his client. This does away with unnecessary talking, and adds an interesting element of chance to the game.

Fertilisers for Oats.

One hundred and sixty pounds an acre of nitrate of soda and muriate of potash, equal parts, materially increases the yield of oats in some Kentucky fields.