## The Secret Dispatch

By JAMES GRANT

CHAPTER XIII.

With evident suspicion and mistrust. Bernikoff viewed the growing intimacy between his prisoner Ivan and the Scottish captain; and though he neither recdicted it, he made many mental notes thereof.

Ivan to the fullest extent, he knew too felt that he had his own share of secret sorrow and anxiety, and might yet have greater to endure. The girl he loved was and cousin were prisoners, and perhaps and with the terrors of despotism hanging over them all.

the wild forests, perhaps, where wolves and outlaws lurked, what perils and privations might she not be suffering! Natalie, so delicate, so pure, so gently nurtured, and so highly bred.

Balgonie was aware, also, that intithe deep interest he had in their fate. was fraught with personal peril to himself in such a land of tyranny as Russia. Full of such thoughts as these one forewhich faced the drawbridge communicating with the land. The guard was in parting from Bernikoff, with whom he evidently receiving money-an unusual circumstance, as that distinguished field | cealment. officer generally lavished more kicks and cuffs than thanks or coins.

On beholding this man, as he bowed town beyond, Balgonie experienced a ing for those he had no wish to find. species of nervous shock. He could not stature and powerful in muscular develdangling behind his right ear, was Nichswindling mendicant of the barrier at the Neva.

"This man here in Schlusselburg," alarm; "here in earnest conversation with to pervade the air again!"

A few minutes afterward a Cossack in the forest. named Jagouski, who had been severely ful of tobacco, came forward with tot- quired." tering steps, and looking painfully thin Excellency the Governor wished to speak | burg. with him in his quarters, whither Balgonie at once repaired.

in boats about the fortress. What think forth at intervals. you of that?"

"Suspicious characters, excellency-

"In the town one dropped this coin-a silver rouble of the prisoner Ivan-Ivan the Unknown Person. To possess one, unless as I do this, for proof of treason, is to court death or Siberia."

"And from whom had you this?" "A spy," replied the colonel curtly. "The man who has just left you?" "The same."

"Nicholas Paulovitch," continued Bal gonie, with increasing astonishment at the other's coolness; "the assassin of the corporal—the wretch of whom I told you when I first arrived here!"

"All that may or may not be," replied Bernikoff, with a stern air, almost amounting to rudeness; "when I require this fellow no more, you may impale him, if you please; but molest him not at present."

in any way concerns me," gaid Balgonie, haughtily.

"It does concern you thus far. I shall anticipate any attempt that may be made by those lurkers, whoever they may be. his voice, "the tenor of the dispatch you brought me."

"Perfectly," replied Charlie, in a somewhat faint voice, as he knew not how terrible or repugnant might be the duty assigned him by this military despot.

town to-night, with a patrol of twenty men, armed with sabers and carbines. Surround and search the main street, and compel all therein who seem suspicious, to produce their papers; and, if and Lake Ladoga, jutting into the latter they are without such, bring them to me, on its rock, its towers wearing a somber and I shall question them in a fashion brown tint even in the noonday sunshine, of my own."

me?" said Balgonie, after an unpleasant on the summit of the keep, where Iyan

"Yes! the bridge will be lowered for you after sunset. Whoever these lurkers are, they have been seen and overheard; and this coin is proof sufficient to warrant the transportation of a whole province. Be they who they may, by ev-ery dome in sacred Mother Moscow, they shall find me ready for them!"

Balgonie had no resource but to obey in silence; and an angry sigh escaped him as he stuck his loaded pistols in right glad to see you." his girdle when the sun sank behind the green painted roofs of the wooden town watched."

and the evening gun boomed from the

Defiling in the twilight through the streets of Schlusselburg, he marched straight to where he knew that the prinommended that it should cease or inter- cipal tea house was situated; and while his heart sank within him in fear of whom he might arrest-perhaps Natalie Though Balgonie sympathized with himself-he at once surrounded the building to prevent all egress, and to the well the danger of doing more; and he evident alarm and perturbation of all

who were within. When the crooked sabers of the dismounted Cossacks were seen flashing in already a political fugitive; her father the porch, and when Balgonie entered with his sword drawn, passing along the In chains; her brother and his kinsman, narrow way between the numerous ta-Usakoff, already viewed as criminals; bles, at which the groups were seated, amid an oppressive odor of strong tea, coarse tobacco and Russian leather Natalie a fugitive-and where? In from boots, caps and girdles-many a peasant in his canvas coat, and many a stout merchant in his fur cloak felt his heart quail with apprehension, he knew not of what; and every saucer-the tea is not drunk from cups-was set down untasted, while one or two men nearly macy with the family of Microwitz, and choked themselves with their lumps of sugar, for usually it is not put into the tea, but is retained in the mouth of the drinker, so that, in a spirit of economy, the poor Muscovite may indulge in two, noon, he was leaning on a cannon in one perhaps three, cups of his favorite beverof those deep embrasures of the fortress age, and use thereto but one piece of

For his intrusion Balgonie apologized; the set of lowering the bridge to permit this, though a very unusual proceeding a man to pass out. This person was just in a country so despotic, failed to reassure the tea drinkers, who were all hushhad been for some time in close and earn- ed in silence and expectation; and a girl est conversation, and from whom he was who had been singing for their amusement crouched down in a corner for con-

Balgonie counted the number of persons, and noted the exact hour by his watch; he then proceeded, with a heart humbly, cap in hand, cross the bridge full of anxiety and dread, to examine and disappear among the houses of the each person in succession, in reality look

All who possessed the requisite papers doubt that this fellow, so gigantic in showed them; others proved, all in succession, to be soldiers and drivers, sail opment, in the coarse coat and leathern ors and serfs; thus, after a time, a load girdle, with the long lock of grizzled hair seemed to be lifted from the mind of the young officer. As he turned to leave olas Paulovitch, the murderer of Po- the apartment without a prisoner, the datchkine, the gypsy woodman, and the Cossack Jagouski rather roughly dragged the singing girl from the nook where she had sought concealment, and then Balgonie recognized the fine dark face. thought Balgonie, with indignation and the black eyes and the large glittering earrings of Olga Paulowna, the gypsy Bernikoff. The spirit of mischief seems girl whom he had befriended at Louga -she who saved him from a terrible fate

"Let the girl go free, Jagouski," said knouted by Bernikoff for pilfering a pipe Balgonie; "I shall answer for her if re-

Olga drew a paper from her bosom and feeble from recent suffering, and and showed that it was her passport with the crouching bearing of the Mus- from the commandant of Krejko, permitcovite toward a superior, said that his ting her to travel to and from Schlussel-

Jagouski saluted and withdrew a few paces; and now, as if the cloud of doubt "Carl Ivanovitch," said Bernikoff, and dread Balgonie's arrival had cast who certainly had rather a perturbed air, over all was dispersed, again the noisy "some suspicious characters are in our hum of voices pervaded the long room vicinity, and have actually been hovering of the tea house, and laughter even broke

"Olga," said Balgonie, "you here-so far from home?"

"Yes, Hospodeen, for my home is anywhere, or wherever night finds me; but have news for you."

"News--nnd for me?" "Yes," said she, sinking her voice to whisper; "I have news of Natalie Microwna. She is here. In the neigh-

borhood of Schlusselburg." Charlie felt his heart die within him at this intelligence, for such a vicinity

was full of peril. "Be to-morrow at noon on the road that leads to Tosna, and you shall learn

CHAPTER XIV.

The noon of the following day saw Charlie Balgonie-after an anxious and almost sleepless night-proceeding on foot along the road that leads southward "I do not see, excellency, that all this to Tosna, a little town which stands on a stream of the same name, a tributary of the Neva, but some ten miles distant

from Schlusselburg. Before him rose the tall fir trees of the forest where he was to meet Olga-You must remember," he added, lowering the "wood of the honey tree," as it was named. There, as Balgonie approached. all was still save the voice of the woodcock, and the hum of insects; he lingered for a few minutes on the outskirts, just where the highway to Tosna dipped down into the deep and gloomy dingle of "Well, you shall pass forth into the intertwisted branches, which formed a

species of leafy tunnel overhead, To the northward he could see the place he had left, the gloomy Castle of Schlusselburg, moated round by the Neva as if no light could brighten them; and "And I am to take twenty men with the white flag of Russia was fluttering was pining away the years of youth in

silence and seclusion. Balgonie heard a voice waking the echoes of the dingle; three notes were struck on a tambourine, as a signal to him, and Olga approached singing.

"I have kept my appointment, Olga." "And I mine," she replied gayly, while tripping toward him in a playful manner; "now follow me, Hospodeen, and I shall take you to those who will be

"First let us be sure that we are un-

"Right," said she; and stooping in her carnestness, her keen, dark and glittering eyes swept the whole landscape that lay between the wood and Schlusselburg, and glanced keenly beyond the stems of the trees into the dingles and vista; but, save the birds on the branches and the gnats revolving in the sunshine, no living thing was visible,

"Follow me, Hospodeen," said the gypsy; "we have not far to go."

They descended into the dark dingle. or hollow, and then quitted the highway; Olga gathering up her skirts that she might tread with greater facility among the thick gorse and long rank grass. She explained to Balgonie that, as there was no path to guide them, her chief clews were a set of notches, cut to all appearances carelessly, as if with a woodman's ax, on the bark of the great pine trees.

These marks seem fresh, and recently cut—who made them?" asked Balgonie. "The Hospodeen, Basil Microwitz,"

she whispered. "Poor Basil!" responded Charlie, in a

After toiling through the dense forest for more than half an hour, they arrived at the foot of a gray granite cliff, the face of which was screened, or nearly covered, by masses of depending ivy. creepers and green lichens, forming a background which, at a little distance, blended with the greenery of the woods.

"We have arrived," said she, turning. with a flush on her dark face which made it radiantly beautiful. She struck three strokes on her tambourine and hook its bells.

Charlie thought of her kinsman, Nicholas Paulovitch, and instinctively grasped one of the pistols at his girdle, on seeing the dark and bearded face of a man appear among the ivy leaves some twenty feet above him. A rope ladder was lowered, and whatever doubts or misgivings were in his mind, he felt himself constrained now to go through the adventure

He clambered up, and on the great creen of ivy being lifted aside, found himself face to face with his old friend Basil Microwitz, the subaltern of his company, who, grasping both his hands with kindly warmth of manner, led him into a cavern or grotto, one of a series of many, into which the granite rocks had there been hollowed by some long past convulsion of nature. Another hand was instantly laid on his, a smaller and softer one-and two beautiful dark eyes were bending tenderly on his face.

"Natalie!" be exclaimed, in a tremuous voice, and would have pressed her o his breast, but for the presence of Basil and several other men.

Amid the twilight of the cavern, he could perceive its rough natural walls and arch, with bazy but sunny rays that streamed faintly in the background, athwart the obscurity, as if the vault communicated with other galleries in the rock, through which the upper light of day stole in by the crannies and chasms. He was also enabled to see that, with Natalie, her brother Basil, and her cousin Usakoff, who had been a lieutenant in the Valikolutz Grenadiers, there were about twenty men in the place, all clad in sheepskin coats, the invariable dress of the Russian peasant, and nearly all had red serge breeches, rough boots and girdles of rope or untanned leather.

Though attired like woodmen or laboring serfs, all these men had unmistakably the bearing of well-trained soldiers; all were strong, active, and resolute in aspect; and Balgonie had no doubt that they were those natives of the Ukarine, the deserters from the Livonian frontier, of whom Bernikoff had spoken; for against the walls of the cavern were ranged a number of muskets and bayonets, with sets of accouterments, sabers and pistols. There, too, stood a regimental drum, decorated with the imperial arms, and the forbidden name of the Emperor Ivan! Every moment seemed to increase the perils that surrounded the luckless Balgonie, for now he was

in the very den of the conspirators. "Oh! Basil-Usakoff-my friends, if live," said Balgonie, in a voice that was broken by emotion, "for what rash and dreadful purpose do I find you and these unfortunate fellows here?"

"You and all Russia, too, shall learn ere long," replied Microwitz calmly and sternly; yet with a grave and noble air, more. Till then, adieu; and God be with with which his coarse canvas coat assorted oddly.

"And poor Natalie!" exclaimed Balgonie, in a tone of grief and reproach; "have you no love for her?"

"Until Natalie informed me, I knew not, my friend, Carl Ivanovitch, that you were the bearer of that secret dispatch, which might have cost you limb or life, when it was too late to arrest those I

had set upon your track." "Well, certainly, I was not much indebted to the good offices of your rogue.

Podatchkine." "The corporal's orders were simply to abstract the document and bring it to me; not to slay its bearer, unless such a catastrophe became unavoidable."

"He fell into his own snare-a dark and deadly one." "Happily you escaped it, and I have

saved two hundred silver roubles for the service of the emperor." "Who do you mean?" asked Balgonie,

"Ivan-the prisoner of Schlusselburg!" exclaimed Usakoff, with cuthusiasm.

"Alas!" added Balgonie, "you court

out your own destruction." "Think not so; but join us, and share our perils and our glory," replied the

"I am bound by allegiance to the em-"You are but a tool in her hands, Carl

Balgonie."

"Perhaps so; but one with a sharp edge, I hope," replied Balgonie, who felt only genuine sorrow; and a silence of nearly a minute ensued.

(To be continued.)

A Good Index.

Listen to what your friends say of others if you would know what they say of you.-Chicago Daily News.



Her Sweeping.

"I suppose your new servant girl is like the average new broom," said Miss McCall.

"Yes." replied Mrs. Hiram Offen, "She really sweeps clean, eh?"

sweep the dirty places."-Philadelphia iron.



Doctor-Why, you said in your note that you had the croup and I come

here to find you have the rheumatism. Patient-Well, doc, there wasn't a soul in the house who could spell rheu-

What We May Expect.

Another great opera had arrived from Europe and was being produced in New York.

"I shall assign twenty men to write it up," said the great editor.

"Twenty?" echoed the assistant. "Yes. Nineteen to describe the people in the boxes and one to describe the play."

Settling It Amicably.

Mrs. Strongmind (police magisty te a few years hence)-And so you have been having trouble with your wife?

Mr. Meek-Yes, your honoress, she has just driven me out of the house "Very likely. At any rate, she doesn't This big bump was made with a flat

Mrs. Strongmind-I see. Well, wat until it heals, and then, perhaps, if you go back she'll forgive you .- New Yorl Weekly.

A Dangerous Statement.

Newitt-He's anxious to be considered a man of some social distinction Bunker-He's taking a queer way

Newitt-Why.

Bunker-He says golf is "mere tom myrot."—Philadelphia Press.

Alimony.

"If any man realizes that his wife is worth her weight in gold Gaymar does."

"Why, I understand they were divorced.'

"Exactly, and it cost him just about that much to get rid of her."-Phila delphia Press.

Merely a Suggestion.

Borem (11 p. m.)-Yes, I'm a perfect martyr to insomnia. I've tried every thing I ever heard of, but I simply can't get to sleep at night.

Miss Cutting (suppressing a yawn) -Did you ever try talking to yourseli after going to bed?

AWFUL LANGUAGE.



Mr. Smith (to Rastus, whose mule refuses to move)-Rastus, what do

Rastus-I reckon under de circumstances, boss, what I calls dat mule wouldn' be fit to print.

Of Course.

The kindergarten teacher had been giving her class a little talk about the

"And now," she asked in concluding, 'can any one tell me why we can't see the moon when there is a storm?" It had rained the preceding night.

Young Eddy had a reply. "Why, 'cause," said he, "if the moon came out indeed I may yet dare to call you so, and the rain would put out his light."-Detroit Free Press.

Taking No Chances.

"My intended husband is a finan-

"How do you know?"

"He didn't buy the engagement ring until I had accepted him."

Of More Importance. Meekerton-I wonder who really is the greatest person living to-day? Mrs. Meekerton-Well, I know who

the greatest person living in this house

is, all right. Wonder Why? A maid she is, but if cailed old, She declares it is a libel; Yet, strange to say, she hid away

The dear old family bible.

Means to an End.

"Mad? I should say so! I expected a cup of hot coffee to warm me up and when I got it it was stone cold."

"Then it seemed to produce the de sired effect, after all. It made you hot."-Philadelphia Press,

His Sole Avocation.

"So your Uncle Totterly lived to the great age of 109 years! How do you account for his longevity?"

"I attribute it to the fact that he was never known to do much of any thing else."—Smart Set.

Hanging On.

"Did you know that leeches are still used in the practice of medicine?"

"No, but I know that some collection agencies still employ them."—Cincin nati Times-Star.

Some Good in It.

"Did dat last job o' yours do any good?" asked the first burglar.

"Well, it'll improve my education, 1 guess. The man of the house was & book agent and before I got away he made me buy a cyclopedia."-Philadelphia Press.

Wouldn't Do as Well. Regular Guest-Have you any clams?

Walter-No; we haven't had a clans in the house for a week. Regular Guest-Oh, well, bring me some clam chowder.-Exchange.

Would Not Hurt Them. Stranger-Gracious! What rude con

Native-This is the elevated road you know.

Stranger-Well, it wouldn't hurt the conductors to be a little more elevated -Chicago News.

An Awful Shock. Pruneleigh-Our landlady is laid up

with nervous prostration. Porkand-What caused it?

Pruneleigh-A new boarder came yesterday and insisted on paying s week in advance.

Straps. Sharpe-How are all those citizens

who stood up for the trolley out here! Whealton-Why, most of them stant up in the cars now.