

The CZAR'S SPY The Mystery of a Silent Love By Chevalier WILLIAM LE QUEUX AUTHOR OF 'THE CLOSED BOOK,' ETC. ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. D. RHODES

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The yacht Lola narrowly escapes wreck in Leghorn harbor. Gordon Gregg, locum tenens for the British consul, is called upon by Herby, the Lola's owner, and since aboard with him and his friend, Hylan Coates. Aboard the yacht he accidentally sees a room full of arms and ammunition and a torn photograph of a young girl. That night the consul's safe is robbed and the Lola puts suddenly to sea. The police find that Herby is a fraud and the Lola's name a false one. Gregg visits Capt. Jack Durnford of the marine aboard his vessel, and is surprised to learn that Durnford knows all will not reveal the mystery of the Lola. "It concerns a woman." In Leghorn Gregg is trapped nearly to his death by a former servant, Olinto, who repents in time to save him, but not to give a reason for his treachery. Visiting in Dumfries Gregg meets Muriel Leithcourt, who is strangely affected at the mention of the Lola. Herby appears. Muriel introduces Herby as Martin Woodroffe, her father's friend. Gregg finds that she is engaged to Woodroffe. Leithcourt's actions and connection with Woodroffe are mysterious. Gregg sees a copy of the torn photograph on the Lola and finds that the young girl is Muriel's friend, Woodroffe's daughter. Gregg discovers the body of a murdered woman in Rannoch wood.

CHAPTER V—Continued.

And Muriel, a pretty figure in a low-cut gown of turquoise chiffon, standing behind her father, smiled secretly at me. I smiled at her in return, but it was a strange smile, I fear, for with the knowledge of that additional mystery within me—the mystery of the woman lying unconscious or perhaps dead, up in the wood—held me stupefied.

I had suspected Leithcourt because of his constant trysts at that spot, but I had at least proved that my suspicions were entirely without foundation. He could not have gone home and dressed in the time, for I had taken the nearest route to the castle while the fugitive would be compelled to make a wide detour.

I only remained a few minutes, then went forth into the darkness again, utterly undecided how to act. My first impulse was to return to the woman's aid, for she might not be dead after all.

And yet when I recollected that horse cry that rang out in the darkness, I knew too well that she had been struck fatally. It was this latter conviction that prevented me from turning back to the wood. You will perhaps blame me, but the fact is I feared that if I went there suspicion might fall upon me, now that the real culprit had so ingeniously escaped.

Whether or not I acted rightly in remaining away from the place, I leave it to you to judge in the light of the amazing truth which afterwards transpired. I decided to walk straight back to my uncle's, and dinner was over before I had had my tub and dressed. Next day the body would surely be found; then the whole countryside would be filled with horror and surprise. Was it possible that Leithcourt, that calm, well-groomed, distinguished looking man, held any knowledge of the ghastly truth? No. His manner as he stood in the hall chatting gaily with me was surely not that of a man with a guilty secret. I became firmly convinced that although the tragedy affected him very closely, and that it had occurred at the spot which he had each day visited for some mysterious purpose, yet up to the present he was in ignorance of what had transpired.

But who was the woman? Was she young or old? A thousand times I regretted bitterly that I had no matches with me so that I might examine her features. Was the victim that sweet-faced young girl whose photograph had been so ruthlessly cast from its frame and destroyed? The theory was a weird one, but was it the truth? I retired to my room that night full of fevered apprehension. Had I acted rightly in not returning to that lonely spot on the brow of the hill? Had I done as a man should do in keeping the tragic secret to myself?

At six I shaved, descended, and went out with the dogs for a short walk; but on returning I heard of nothing unusual, and was compelled to remain inactive until near midday. I was crossing the stable yard where I had gone to order the carriage for my aunt, when an English groom, suddenly emerging from the harness room, touched his cap, saying: "Have you 'eard, sir, of the awful affair up yonder?"

"Of what?" I asked quickly. "Well, sir, there seems to have been a murder last night up in Rannoch wood," said the man quickly. "Holden, the gardener, has just come back from that village and says that Mr. Leith-

"Because if it were known that I have identified him all chance of getting at the truth will at once vanish," I answered. "I have come here to tell you in strictest confidence who the poor fellow really is."

"Then you know something of the affair?" he said, with a strong Highland accent. "I know nothing," I declared. "Nothing except his name."

"H'm. And you say he's a foreigner—an Italian—eh?" "He was in my service in Leghorn for several years, and on leaving me he came to London and obtained an engagement as waiter in a restaurant. His father lived in Leghorn; he was doorkeeper at the prefecture."

"But why was he here in Scotland?" "How can I tell?" "You know something of the affair. I mean that you suspect somebody, or you would have no objection to giving evidence at the inquiry."

"I have no suspicions. To me the affair is just as much of an enigma as to you." I hastened at once to explain. "My only fear is that if the assassin knew that I had identified him he would take care not to betray himself."

"You therefore think he will betray himself?" "I hope so."

"By the fact that the man was attacked with an Italian stiletto, it would seem that his assailant was a fellow-countryman," suggested the detective. "The evidence certainly points to that," I replied.

"Someone who waited for him on the edge of that wood and stepped out and killed him—that's evident," he said, "and my belief is that it was an Italian. There were two foreigners who slept at a common lodging house two nights ago and went on tramp towards Glasgow. We have telegraphed after them and hope we shall find them. Scotsmen or Englishmen never use a knife of that pattern."

"I know not whom to suspect," I declared. "It is a mystery why the man who was once my faithful servant—

"Really, Mr. Gregg, I can't quite make you out, I confess. You seem to be apprehensive of your own safety. Why?" "One never knows whom one offends when living in Italy," I laughed, as lightly as I could, endeavoring to allay his suspicion. "He may have fallen beneath the assassin's knife by giving a small and possibly innocent offense to somebody. Italian methods are not English, you know."

"By Jove, sir, and I'm jolly glad they're not!" he said. "I shouldn't think a police officer's life is a very safe one among all those secret murder societies I've read about."

"Ah! what you read about them is often very much exaggerated," I assured him. "It is the vendetta which is such a stain upon the character of the modern Italian; and depend upon it, this affair in Rannoch wood is the outcome of some revenge or other—probably over a love affair."

"But you will assist us, sir?" he urged. "You know the Italian language, which will be of great advantage; besides, the victim was your servant."

"Be discreet," I said. "And in return I will do my very utmost to assist you in hunting down the assassin."

And thus we made our attempt. Half an hour after I was driving in the dogcart through the pouring rain up the hill out of gray old Dumfries to my uncle's house.

As I descended from the cart and gave it over to a groom, old Davis, the butler, came forward, saying in a low voice: "There's Miss Leithcourt waiting to see you, Mr. Gordon. She's in the morning room, and been there an hour. She asked me not to tell anyone else she's here, sir."

I walked across the big hall and along the corridor to the room the old man had indicated. And as I opened the door and Muriel Leithcourt in plain black rose to meet me, I plainly saw from her white, haggard countenance that something had happened—that she had been forced by circumstances to come to me in strictest confidence.

Was she, I wondered, about to reveal to me the truth?

CHAPTER VI.

The Gathering of the Clouds. "Mr. Gregg," exclaimed the girl with agitation, as she put forth her black-gloved hand, "I—I suppose you know—you've heard all about the discovery today at the wood? I need not tell you anything about it."

"Yes, Miss Leithcourt, I only wish you would tell me about it," I said gravely, inviting her to a chair and seating myself. "Who is the man?" "Ah! that we don't know," she replied, pale-faced and anxious. "I wanted to see you alone—that's the reason I am here. They must not know at home that I've been over here."

"And what's that?" I asked eagerly. "Why, about three yards from the pool of blood where the unfortunate foreigner was found is another small pool of blood where the grass and ferns around are all crushed down as though there had been a struggle there."

"There may have been a struggle at that spot, and the man may have staggered some distance before he fell dead."

"Not if he had been struck in the heart, as they say. He would fall, would he not?" she suggested. "No. The police seem very dense, and this plain fact has not yet occurred to them. Their theory is the same as what you suggest, but my own is something quite different, Mr. Gregg. I believe that a second person also fell a victim," she added in a low, distinct tone.

I gazed at her open-mouthed. Did she, I wondered, know the actual truth? Was she aware that the woman who had fallen there had disappeared? "A second person!" I echoed, as though in surprise. "Then do you believe that a double murder was committed?"

"I draw my conclusion from the fact that the young man, on being struck in the heart, could not have gone such a distance as that which separates the one mark from the other."

"But he might have been slightly wounded—on the hand, or in the face—at first, and then at the spot where he was found struck fatally," I suggested.

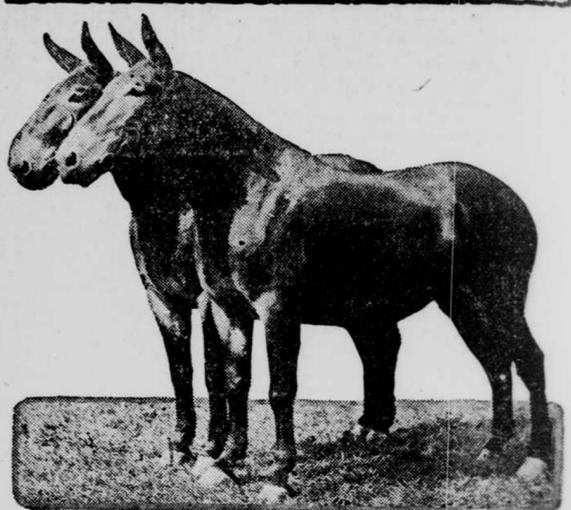
She shook her head dubiously, but made no reply to my argument. Her confidence in her own surmises made it quite apparent that by some unknown means she was aware of the second victim. Indeed, a few moments later she said to me: "It is for this reason, Mr. Gregg, that I have sought you in confidence. No body must know that I have come here to you, or they would suspect; and if suspicion fell upon me it would bring upon me a fate worse than death. Remember, therefore, that my future is entirely in your hands."

"I don't quite understand," I said, rising and standing before her in the fading twilight, while the rain drove upon the old diamond window panes. "But I can only assure you that whatever confidence you repose in me, I shall never abuse, Miss Leithcourt."

"I know, I know!" she said quickly. "I trust you in this matter implicitly. I have come to you for many reasons, chief of them being that if a second victim has fallen beneath the hand of the assassin, it is, I know, a woman."

"A woman! Whom?" "At present I cannot tell you. I must first establish the facts. If this woman were really stricken down, then her body lies concealed somewhere in the vicinity. We must find it and bring home the crime to the guilty one."

USE KINDNESS IN DEALING WITH MULES



Docile and Tractable Work Animals.

(By W. F. PURDUE.) It is a common error that all mules are vicious. To "kick like a mule" is a proverbial and misleading saying. Mules are not worse than horses in this respect. While it should be denied that mules are naturally vicious, it is undoubtedly true that some are made so by ill-treatment and abuse. The same is true of horses. In general, the mule is quiet and patient in temperament, and when properly instructed during its youth, is just as sturdy and reliable as a horse. It is much easier to take a mule colt in hand at an early age and train it properly than it is to take an older animal that has been misused and overcome any habits or tricks arising from years of poor management. Kindness is the best policy in dealing with mules as well as with other domestic animals. Mules that are accorded decent, humane treatment when young nearly always make docile and tractable work animals, and are always ready to respond to good, commonsense treatment. The mule that is roughly abused becomes ugly in the same way as the horse develops viciousness when he is continually mistreated. The mule foal's education should begin early. The young animal should be accustomed to the halter and taught to lead before being weaned, and thereafter it should be handled regularly until time to break it to harness. Gentle methods are desirable in the later operation. If the young animal develops normally, it is capable at two years of age of doing considerable farm work, and in any case it is advisable to give some light work. It is not well, however, to put mules at hard work much before four years of age. The mule's keep is reckoned at a third less than that of a horse. For the indications of disposition of old mules look at the head and eyes, say those who have handled these animals for many years. Avoid mules with abnormally long heads, as well as those with hollow faces. The eyes of the gentle mule are soft and mild and set well apart. A sign of docility in a young mule is indicated by constant motion of the ears; one ear pointing forward, the other backward is also regarded favorably. But beware of the mule that habitually lays the ears back upon the neck, say the authorities. It is claimed by some that the little mule is more apt to be ill-tempered and vicious, and that the larger the animal the better the disposition.

PUSH THE PIGS TO MAKE BEST RETURNS

Corn, Alfalfa and Clover Pasture Will Lay on Fat—Provide Suitable Shade. After the pigs come feed the sow all she can eat of nutritious rations. A fair amount of corn will not hurt her then. To keep the youngsters free from lice, dip them just before they are weaned. Then dip them again late in the fall. Corn, alfalfa and clover pasture will lay fat on pigs about as fast as anything else that grows. The hot sun will drive the fat out of a pig about as fast as you can lay it on. It pays to provide plenty of shade. The best shade is a shed on an elevation over which the wind can sweep without obstruction. Dusty holes in fence corners or in stifling underbrush are not desirable. If your pigs are running on clover pasture and you are feeding grain give it to them at night. A light feed of grain may be given pigs three times a day, but twice is better, provided they have plenty of good pasture. Plenty of clean water should be provided every day at noon time and again in the evening for the hogs. Only the best bred pigs which are pushed from the start to the finish make the most money. Don't forget that pigs never sweat, and therefore they must be supplied with plenty of water in which they can cool themselves during the warm summer months.

GOOD FERTILIZERS FOR STRAWBERRIES

Tankage, Peruvian Guano, Fine-ground Bone and Sulphate of Potash Are Favored. The following are recommended in the culture of this fruit. Tankage or Peruvian guano, 600 pounds per acre; fine-ground bone, 1,000 pounds; low-grade sulphate of potash, 600 pounds; nitrate of soda, 100 pounds. All these may be mixed, applied after plowing and before setting plants and thoroughly incorporated in the soil by harrowing. Dried blood, 200 pounds per acre; low-grade sulphate of potash, 600 pounds; tankage or Peruvian guano, 600 pounds; basic-slag meal, 1,000 pounds; nitrate of soda, 100 pounds. The slag is not mixed with the blood, tankage or guano, as it causes a loss of ammonia. It is better to apply the slag by itself but all the other materials may be mixed before application.

WATCH THE CABBAGE.

If the cabbages grow so fast that they are inclined to burst, tip the heads over far enough to sever a portion of the roots. Keep close watch of them, and if this does not check the trouble use them. A head that has burst soon becomes worthless.

HOGS RELISH GREEN FODDER.

The first green fodder will be relished by the hogs. But in the North there will not be much big enough this month unless the sun gets down to business.

Get After Wheat Weevil.

Did the weevil get into your wheat last year? If they did, treat the bin with bisulphide of carbon. Place three or four bottles and set in the upper part of the crib. Of course take out the corks. It does not smell good and will kill if inhaled, but it does us the weevil.

Water for Horses.

Take a barrel of water to the field every morning and noon for the horse. It's hard in a horse to work him five hours in the hot sun without water.

HEARD AT DELIVERY DESK

Librarian is Frequently the Recipient of Confidences That Are Distinctly of Private Nature. "My husband's been sick, and he ain't well enough yet to do more'n lie on the sofa and read," a brisk matron explained lately to the librarian of a small city. "He likes travel books best. He's finished up the north pole and the south pole; now I'd like to take him something about the discovery of the equator."

Pyramids: the description of a painting by "Remembrance" was, after a little thought, produced—although the artist was Rembrandt; a natural history book on "Knowing, Invertebrate and Cavernous Animals" was interpreted satisfactorily as one upon animals that are gnawing, invertebrate or carnivorous. Even the boy who demanded a thrilling tale entitled, "Fighting With the Hi-Hos" was not disappointed. He received "Riflemen of the Ohio."

With the frequenters of the children's room, who so often seek advice and assistance, the friendly librarian is frequently on confidential terms—so much so that unexpected domestic revelations are occasionally made. Joe, a constant borrower, inquired anxiously one Saturday: "Missus, how much will I have to pay if I keep my book until Monday?" "Your book is due today," he was told, "but you have an hour's time before the library closes. Why don't you go home and get it?" "Can't," said Joe. "Why can't you?" persisted the attendant.

WEST AFRICANS USE SOAP FREELY.

In all parts of West Africa there are evidences that for centuries before the native began to import or to buy European cotton goods from the European trader who came hither, they grew their own cotton and wove on hand looms their own cotton goods. They also manufactured soap, and have made free use of it in keeping both their clothes and bodies clean, as may be observed by those who travel through the country. Some wash their bodies, as a religious ceremony, two and three times a day. This is necessary, as the natives oil their skins as a protection against the painful effects of the sun. They also delight in their white, flowing gowns.

THAT'S DIFFERENT.

A man makes fun of the cigars his wife buys. Yet many a woman suffers in silence while a man smokes the cigars he bought himself.—Washington Star.

SORRY TO HAVE MISSED TRIP

Traveler's Regret Is That He Passed Up Opportunity to Cross the Sinai Desert. The difficulties of the Sinai desert seem to a correspondent to be somewhat exaggerated. Ten years ago, he writes, I visited Jerusalem, Jericho and the Dead sea on my bicycle, and on my return journey was tempted to make the trip from Jaffa to Alexandria by way of Gaza and the coast. As the result of local inquiries (and cycling is not unknown in Palestine, for I got the loan of a pump in Jerusalem) I ascertained that the journey would be only some 150 miles—"six days' camel journey"—and that water would be obtainable at two places. There is no "road," but my experience in Palestine did not make that any disadvantage, for I usually found that a camel track gave considerably better going than the sort of thing that passes as a made road in the wilderness of Judea. Six days by camel would have meant about four days on a cycle, but

Painting Points.

When preparing paint remember that better results are obtainable from several applications of thin paint than from heavier coats. Of course, it takes longer to do the work. Paint put on in thin coats and allowed to dry, lasts much longer and will not flake off as is often the case when heavier coats are applied. When very fine results are wanted rub down each coat after it has thoroughly dried.

Gigantic Hot Springs.

Some of the hot springs of New Zealand are actually small lakes, large enough to float a battleship.