

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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CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

"In sheer desperation I went to the ministry of the interior and sought an interview with the baron, who, when I told him of the disaster, appeared greatly concerned, and went at once to the police department to make inquiry. Next day, however, he came to me with the news that the charge against my mother had been proved by a statement of the woman Shiproff herself, and that she had already started on her long journey to Siberia—she had been exiled to one of those dreaded Arctic settlements beyond Yakutsk, a place where it is almost eternal winter, and where the conditions of life are such that half the convicts are insane. The baron, however, declared that, as my father's friend, it was his duty to act as guardian to me, and that as my father had been English I ought to be put in an English school. Therefore, with his self-assumed title of uncle, he took me to Chichester. For years I remained there, until one day he came suddenly and fetched me away, taking me over to Helsingfors—for the czar had now appointed him governor-general to Finland. There, for the first time, he introduced me to his son Michael, a pimply-faced lieutenant of cavalry, and said in a most decisive manner that I must marry him. I naturally refused to marry a man of whom I knew so little, whereupon, finding me obstinate, he quickly altered his tactics and became kindness itself, saying that as I was young he would allow me a year in which to make up my mind.

"A week later, while living in the palace at Helsingfors, I overheard a conversation between the governor-general and his son, which revealed to me a staggering truth that I had never suspected. It was Oberg himself who had denounced my mother to the minister of the interior, and had made those cruel, baseless charges against her! Then I discerned the reason. She being exiled, her fortune, as well as that of my father, came to me. The reason they were scheming for Michael to marry me was in order to obtain control of my money, and then, after the necessary legal formalities, I should, on a trumped-up charge of conspiracy, share the same fate as my mother had done."

"The infernal scoundrel!" I ejaculated, when I read her words while from Jack, who had been looking over my shoulder, escaped a fierce and forcible yow of vengeance.

"The baron took me with him to Petersburg when he went on official business, and we remained there nearly a month," the narrative went on. "While there I received a secret message from 'The Red Priest,' the unseen and unknown power of nihilism, who has for so many years baffled the police. I went to see him, and he revealed to me how Oberg had contrived to have my mother banished upon a false charge. He warned me against the man who had pretended to be my father's friend, and also told me that he had known my father intimately, and that if I got into any further difficulty I was to communicate with him and he would assist me. Oberg took me back to Helsingfors a few months later, and in summer we went to England. He was a marvelously clever diplomatist. His tactics he could change at will. When I was at school he was rough and brutal in his manner towards me, as he was to all; but now he seemed to be endeavoring to inspire my confidence by treating me with kindly regard and pleasant affability.

"In London, at Claridge's, we met my old schoolfellow Muriel and her father—a friend of Oberg's—and in response to their invitation went for a cruise on their yacht, the Iris, from Southampton. Our party was a very pleasant one, and included Woodroffe and Chater, while our cruise across the Bay of Biscay and along the Portuguese coast proved most delightful. One night, while we were lying outside Lisbon, Woodroffe and Chater, together with Ollato, went ashore, and when they returned in the early hours of the morning they awoke me by crossing the deck above my head. Then I heard someone outside my cabin door working as though with a screwdriver, unscrewing a screw from the woodwork. This aroused my interest, and next day I made a minute examination of the paneling, where, in one part, I found two small brass screws that had evidently been recently removed. Therefore I succeeded in get-

ting hold of a screwdriver from the carpenter's shop, and next night, when everyone was asleep, I crept out and unscrewed the panel, when to my surprise I saw that the secret cavity behind was filled with beautiful jewelry, diamond collars, tiaras, necklets, fine pearls, emeralds and turquoises, all thrown in indiscriminately.

"I replaced the panel and kept careful watch. At Marseilles, where we called, more jewelry and a heavy bagful of plate was brought aboard and stacked behind another panel. Then I knew that the men were thieves.

"Well, one hot summer's night we were lying off Naples, and as it was a grand festa ashore and there was to be a gala performance at the theater, Leithcourt took a box and the whole party were rowed ashore. The crew were also given shore-leave for the evening, but as the great heat had upset me I declined to accompany the theater party and remained on board with one sailor named Wilson to constitute the watch. We had anchored about half a mile from land, and earlier in the evening the baron had gone ashore to send telegrams to Russia and had not returned.

"About ten o'clock I went below to try and sleep, but I had a slight attack of fever, and was unable. Therefore I redressed and sat with the light still out, gazing across the starlit bay. Presently from my port-hole I saw a shoreboat approaching, and recognized in it the baron with a well-dressed stranger. They both came on board, and the boatman, having been paid, pulled back to the shore. Then the baron and his friend—a dark, middle-aged, full-bearded man, evidently a person of refinement—went below to the saloon, and after a few moments called to the man Wilson who was on watch, and gave him a glass of whisky and water, which he took up on deck to drink at his leisure.

"The unusual character of my fellow-guests on board that craft was such that my suspicion was constantly on the alert, therefore curiosity tempted me to creep along and peep in at the crack of the door standing ajar. A closer view revealed the fact that the stranger was a high Russian official at the government palace at Helsingfors, the Privy Councillor and Senator Paul Polovostoff. They were smoking together, and were discussing in Russian the means by which he, Polovostoff, had arranged to obtain plans of some new British fortifications at Gibraltar. From what he said, it seemed that some Russian woman, married to an Englishman, a captain in the garrison, had been impressed into the secret service against her will, but that she had, in order to save herself, promised to chain the photographs and plans that were required. I heard the Englishman's name, and I resolved to take some steps to inform him in secret of the intentions of the Russian agent.

"Presently the two men took fresh cigars, ascended on deck, and cast themselves in the long cane chairs amidships. Still all curiosity to hear further details on the ingenious piece of espionage against my own nation, I took off my shoes and crept up to a spot where I could crouch concealed and overhear their conversation, for the Italian night was calm and still. They talked mainly about affairs in Finland, and with some of Oberg's expressions of opinion Polovostoff ventured to differ. Suddenly, while the privy councillor lay back in his chair pulling thoughtfully at his cigar, there was a bright, blood-red flash, a dull report, and a man's short, agonized cry. Startled, I leaned around the corner of the deckhouse, when, to my abject horror, I saw under the electric rays the czar's privy councillor lying sideways in his chair with part of his face blown away. Then the hideous truth in an instant became apparent. The cigar which Oberg had pressed upon him down in the saloon had exploded, and the small missile concealed inside the diabolical contrivance had passed upwards into his brain. For a moment I stood utterly stupefied, yet as I looked I saw the baron, in a paroxysm of rage, shake his fist in the dead man's face and cry with a fearful imprecation: 'You hound! You have plotted to replace me in the czar's favor. You intended to become governor-general of Finland. You knew certain facts which you intended to put before his majesty, knowing that the revelations would result in my disgrace and

downfall. But, you infernal cur, you did not know that those who attempt to thwart Xavier Oberg either die by accident or go for life to Kajana or the mines!' And he spurned the body with his foot and laughed to himself as he gloated over his dastardly crime.

"I watched his rage, unable to utter a single word. I saw him, after he had searched the dead man's pockets, raise the inert body with its awful featureless face and drag it to the bulwarks. Then I rushed forward and faced him.

"In an instant he sprang at me, and I screamed. But no aid came. The man Wilson was sleeping soundly in the bows, for the whisky he had given him had been doctored," went on the narrative. "Upon his face was a fierce, murderous look such as I had never seen before. 'You!' he screamed, his dark eyes starting from their sockets as he realized that I had been a witness of his cowardly crime. 'You have spied upon me, girl!' he hissed, 'and you shall die also!' I sank upon my knees imploring him to spare me, but he only laughed at my entreaty. 'See!' he cried, 'as you saw how he enjoyed his cigar, you may as well see this!' And with an effort he raised the dead body in his arms, poised it for a moment on the vessel's side, and then, with a hoarse laugh of triumph, heaved it into the sea. There was a splash, and then we were alone. 'And you!' he cried in a fierce voice—'you who have spied upon me—you will follow! The water there will close your chatter mouth!' I shrieked, begged, and implored, but his trembling hands were upon my throat. First he dragged me to my feet, then he threw me upon my knees, and at last, with that grim brutality which characterizes him, he directed me to go and get a mop and bucket from the forecastle and remove the dark red stains from the chair and deck. This he actually forced me to do, gloating over my horror as I removed for him the traces of his cowardly crime. Then, with his hand upon my shoulder, he said: 'Girl! Recollect that you keep to-night's work secret. If not, you shall

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"The port of Leghorn was our first place of call, and for some reason we ran purposely upon a sandbank and were towed off by Italian torpedo boats. Next evening you came on board and dined, Muriel and myself having strict orders not to show ourselves. We, however, watched you, and I saw you pick up my photograph which I had that day torn up. Then immediately after you had left Woodroffe, Chater and Mackintosh went ashore and were away a couple of hours in the middle of the night. Just before they returned the baron rapped at the door of my cabin saying that he must go ashore, and telling me to dress and accompany him. He would never allow me the luxury of a maid, fearing, I suppose, that she might learn too much. In obedience I rose and dressed, and when I went forth he told me to get my traveling cloak and dressing bag, adding that he was compelled to go north, as to continue the cruise would occupy too much time. He was due back at his official duties, he said. As soon as I had finished packing, the three men returned to the vessel, all of them looking dark-faced and disappointed. Woodroffe whispered some words to the baron, after which I went to Muriel's cabin and wished her good-by, and we went ashore, taking the train first to Colle Salvetti, thence to Pisa, and afterwards to the beautiful old city of Siena, which I had so longed to see. One of my teeth gave me pain, and the baron, after a couple of days at the Hotel de Sienne, took me to a queer-looking little old Italian—a dentist who, he said, enjoyed an excellent reputation. I was quick to notice that the two men had met before, and as I sat in the chair and gas was given to me I saw them exchange meaning glances. In a few moments I became insensible, but when I awoke an hour later I was astounded to feel a curious soreness in my ears. My tongue, too, seemed paralyzed, and in a few moments the awful truth dawned upon me. I had been rendered deaf and dumb!

"The baron pretended to be greatly concerned about me," it went on, "but I quickly realized that it had been the victim of a foul and dastardly plot, and that he had conceived it, fearing lest I might speak the truth concerning the Privy Councillor Polovostoff, for of exposure he lived in constant fear. To encompass my end would be against his own interests, as he would lose his fortune, so he had silenced me lest I should reveal the terrible truth concerning both him and his associates. He was not rich, and I have reason to believe that from time to time he gave information as to persons who possessed valuable jewels, and thus shared in the plunder obtained by those on the yacht.

"From Italy we traveled on to Berlin, thence to Petersburg, and back to dreary Helsingfors, journeying as quickly as we could, yet never allowing me opportunity of being with strangers. Both my ears and tongue were very painful, but I said nothing. He was surely a fiend in a black coat, and my only thought now was how to escape him. From the moment when that so-called dentist had ruined my hearing and deprived me of power of speech, he kept me aloof from everyone. The fear that I should reveal everything had apparently grown to haunt him, and he had conceived that terrible mode of silencing my lips. But the true depth of his villainy was not yet apparent until I was back in Finland.

"On the night of our arrival he called in his son, who had traveled with us from Petersburg, and in writing again demanded that I should marry him. I wrote my reply—a firm refusal. He struck the table angrily with his first and wrote saying that I should either marry his son or die. Then next day, while walking alone out beyond the town of Helsingfors, as I often used to do, I was arrested upon the false charge of an attempt upon the life of Madame Vukroff and transported, without trial, to the terrible fortress of Kajana, some of the horrors of which you have yourself experienced. The charge against me was necessary before I could be incarcerated there, but once within, it was the scheme of the governor-general to obtain my consent to the marriage by threats and by the constant terrors of the place. He even went so far as to obtain a ministerial order for my banishment to Saghahien and

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BUILD ROADS IN MOUNTAINS

California Highway Commissioner Points Way for Opening of Arable Lands—Convicts to Be Used.

"If you will give us the convicts to build roads through the mountains there are 7,500,000 acres of arable land on the eastern plateau of the Sierras that can be opened for settlement," said Charles F. Stern, highway commissioner of California, in supporting the bill which passed the California legislature to permit prisoners to be employed in road building.

California prisoners have not been employed in this work other than in a small way around the prison, but the need of opening the mountain districts has started road building by the prisoners.

The act just passed is modeled after Colorado legislation, under which excellent results have been obtained. The highway department is authorized to make requisition upon the prison department for the number of convicts required, and is to organize and maintain the camps as well as supervise the road work. The prison department, however, retains control over the discipline of the prisoners, and, although the national committee on prisons and prison labor believes better results can be had under the West Virginia system, where the prison department maintains the camps, both the convicts and the state of California will assuredly benefit under the new legislation.

The men are to be worked under the honor system, and the prison department is empowered to grant additional good time allowance to convicts employed in this work, conditioned upon their loyal, obedient and efficient cooperation with the state.

To bring about the earlier completion of the state highways which will make the isolated regions accessible, the bill went into effect ninety days after the adjournment of the legislature.

Reporting the successful passage of the act to the national committee on prisons and prison labor, Mr. Stern writes: "We expect to use from 1,000 to 1,500 convicts on our mountain roads, and a year hence will



Good Road Through Mountain Pass.

doubtless have very interesting facts to relate."

California is the last of the western states to employ her convicts in this way, and it is hoped the new legislation is a step toward the reconstruction of her whole prison system along the lines advanced by those who have the welfare of the convict at heart.

Bottomless Illinois Roads.
While the American submarine that can cross the ocean and come back on one helping of fuel is a great machine, the perfected submarine will be able to travel on the bottomless "roads" in southern Illinois after a rain.

Influence of Automobiles.
In spite of much lingering prejudice against automobiles their influence in improving roads is everywhere in evidence in a way which cannot be denied.

Help Strawberry Plants.
If strawberry runners are not rooting well throw a little dirt over ends of the runners or places at which plantlets have started.

Supplement the Pastures.
Loss, expense and risk hasten in the wake of withered pastures, unless supplemental feeds are promptly supplied.

The Greatest Tax.
It costs the American farmer more to feed his insect foes than it does to educate his children.

Reduce Hog Cost.
Forage plants are the feed that cheapens the cost of hog raising. Look after your pastures and save money thereby.

One Farm Necessity.
A repair shop is quite as much a farm necessity as the more common equipment.

Spraying Controls Insects.
Chewing insects and the plant diseases are both controlled by summer spraying.

IN STERLING LIVES A GIRL

Who Suffered As Many Girls Do—Tells How She Found Relief.

Sterling, Conn.—"I am a girl of 22 years and I used to faint away every



month and was very weak. I was also bothered a lot with female weakness. I read your little book 'Wisdom for Women,' and I saw how others had been helped by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and decided to try it, and it has made me feel

like a new girl and I am now relieved of all these troubles. I hope all young girls will get relief as I have. I never felt better in my life."—Mrs. JOHN TETREBAULT, Box 116, Sterling, Conn.

Massena, N. Y.—"I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and I highly recommend it. If anyone wants to write to me I will gladly tell her about my case. I was certainly in a bad condition as my blood was all turning to water. I had pimples on my face and a bad color, and for five years I had been troubled with suppression. The doctors called it 'Anemia and Exhaustion,' and said I was all run down, but Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound brought me out all right."—Miss LAVISA MYRES, Box 74, Massena, N. Y.

Young Girls, Heed This Advice.
Girls who are troubled with painful or irregular periods, headache, dragging-down sensations, fainting spells or indigestion, should immediately seek restoration to health by taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

It is just as well if you prefer advice to violets. You will get more of it.

When all others fail to please Try Denison's Coffee.

A plumber, by the way, is a skilled mechanic, who sits on a soap box while his helper does the work.

Wash day is smile day if you use Red Cross Ball Blue, American made, therefore the best made. Adv.

Military training is compulsory on all male citizens between the ages of twelve and twenty-five in New Zealand.

Because.
Drawing Teacher—Rastus, your drawing of the mule is very good, but why didn't you finish it?
Rastus—'Cause, Miss Emily, you told us to leave out de tail.—Judge.

Where the Idea Originated.
Mrs. Newlywed—I saw a piece in the paper tonight that people would feel better to go without breakfast!
Mr. Newlywed—H'm! Wonder which of our cooks wrote that?—Puck.

Underground Fighting.
Mrs. Church—Wouldn't your husband like to go and fight in the trenches?
Mrs. Gotham—No; trying to get a seat in the subway is about all the underground fighting he wants.—New York Telegram.

What She Had She'd Hold.
It was the happiest moment of their lives. He had just proposed, and she had grab—er—accepted him.

Then he took a tiny leather case from his pocket and slipped a sparkling circlet on her finger, while she beamed with pride.
"I'm afraid it's rather loose, darling," he murmured. "Shall I take it back and have it made smaller?"
The damsel shook her head decidedly.

"No, Rupert," she said calmly. "An engagement ring is an engagement ring, even if I have to wear it around my neck."

A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCE
Medicine Not Needed in This Case.

It is hard to convince some people that coffee does them an injury! They lay their bad feelings to almost every cause but the true and unsuspected one.

But the doctor knows. His wide experience has proven to him that, to some systems, coffee is an insidious poison that undermines the health. Ask him if coffee is a cause of constipation, stomach and nervous troubles.

"I have been a coffee drinker all my life, and when taken sick two years ago with nervous prostration, the doctor said that my nervous system was broken down and that I would have to give up coffee.

"I got so weak and shaky I could not work, and reading an advertisement of Postum I asked my grocer if he had any of it. He said, 'Yes,' and that he used it in his family and it was all it claimed to be.

"So I quit coffee and commenced to use Postum steadily, and in about two weeks I could sleep better and get up in the morning feeling fresh. In about two months I began to gain flesh. I weighed only 146 pounds when I commenced on Postum and now I weigh 167 and feel better than I did at 20 years of age.

"I am working every day and sleep well at night. My two children were coffee drinkers, but they have not drank any since Postum came into the house, and are far more healthy than they were before." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum comes in two forms: Postum Cereal—the original form—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.
Instant Postum—a soluble powder—dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water, and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. 30c and 50c tins.
Both kinds are equally delicious and cost about the same per cup.
"There's a Reason" for Postum.
—Sold by Grocers

DISASTERS LAID TO WIRELESS

Possible Explanation of Events That Have Been More or Less of a Mystery.

A well-known scientist recently suggested that the mysterious explosion which destroyed the British battleship, the Bulwark, might have been due to the influence of wireless waves. The theory that wireless causes explosions was put forward some time ago by a French engineer. To prove his point, he called attention to the fact that the disaster to the British steamer, the Voltorno, which was burnt in the Atlantic, took place just on the junction point where the wireless waves from the Eiffel tower and Glace bay meet. The mysterious mine explosion at Gennevilliers also occurred on the Cliff-Gen-Paris wireless line.