JENNIE BAXTER: JOURNALIST

BY ROBERT BARR.

VIII.—The Robbery in the Sleeping Car.

And thus it was that Jennie Baxter found herself in due time in the great capital of the north, with a room in the Hotel de l'Europe overlooking the Nevski Prospect. In ordinary circumstances she would have enjoyed a visit to St. Petersburg, but she was afraid to venture out, being under the apprehension that at any moment she might meet Lord Donal Stirling face to face and that he would recognize her. Therefore she remained discreetly in her room, watching the strange street scenes from her window. She found herself scrutinizing every one who had the appearance of being an Englishman, and she had to confess to little qualm of disappointment when the person in question turned out not to be Lord Donal; in fact, during her short stay at St. Petersburg she saw nothing of the young man.

Jennie went, on the evening of her arrival, to the offices of the sleeping car company, so as to secure a place in one of the carriages that left at 6 o'clock on the evening of the 21st. Her initial difficulty met her when she learned there were several sleeping cars on that train, and she was puzzled to know which to select. She stood there, hesitating, with the plans of the carriages before her.

"I should like to be in a carriage containing some English people," said the girl, not knowing what excuse to give for her hesitation.

"Then let me recommend this car, for one berth has been taken by the British embassy—room C, near the center, marked with a cross."

"Ah, well, I will take this compartment next to it—room D, isn't it?" said Jennie.

"Oh, I am sorry to say that also has been taken! Those are the two compartments which are bespoken. I will see under what name it has been booked. Probably its occupant is English also. But I can give you room B on the other side of the one reserved by the embassy. It is a two berth room, Nos. 5 and 6."

"That will do quite as well," said Jennie.

"It is not recorded here by whom room D was booked. As a usual thing," he continued, lowering his voice almost to a whisper and looking furtively over his shoulder, "when no name is marked down that means the Russian police. So, you see, by taking the third room you will not only be under the shadow of the British embassy, but also under

"Room C is the one that has been reserved for you."

the protection of Russia. Do you wish one berth only or the whole room? It is a two berth compartment."

"I desire the whole room, if you please."

She paid the price and departed, wondering if the other room had really been taken by the police and whether the authorities were so anxious for the safety of the special messenger that they considered it necessary to protect him to the frontier. If, in addition to the natural precautions of the messenger, there was added the watchfulness of one or two suspicious Russian policemen, then would her mission become indeed impossible. On the other hand, the ill paid policemen might be amenable to the influence of money, and as she was well supplied with the coin of the realm their presence might be a help rather than a hindrance. All in all, she had little liking for the task she had undertaken, and the more she thought of it the less it commended itself to her. Nevertheless, having pledged her word to the editor, if failure came it would be through no fault of hers.

Jennie went early to the station on the night of the 21st and entered the sleeping car as soon as she was allowed to do so. The conductor seemed somewhat flustered at her anxiety to get to her room, and he examined her ticket with great care. Then, telling her to follow him, he took her to room B, in which were situated berths 5 and 6, upper and lower. The berths were not made up, and the room showed one seat, made to accommodate two persons. The conductor went out on the platform again, and Jennie, finding herself alone in the carriage, walked up and down the narrow passageway at the side to get a better idea of her surroundings.

Room C, next to her own, was the one taken by the British embassy. Room D, still farther on, was the one that appeared to have been retained by the police. She stood for a few moments by the broad plate glass window that lined the passage and looked out at the crowded platform. For a time she watched the conductor, who seemed to be gazing anxiously toward the direction from which passengers streamed, as if looking for some one in particular. Presently a big man, a huge overcoat belted round him, with a stern bearded face—looking, the girl thought, typically Russian—strode up to the conductor and spoke earnestly with him. Then the two turned to the steps of the car, and Jennie fled to her narrow little room, closing the door all but about an inch. An instant later the two men came in, speaking together in French. The larger had a gruff voice and spoke the language in a way that showed it was not native to him.

"When did you learn that he had changed his room?" asked the man with the gruff voice.

"Only this afternoon," replied the conductor.

"Did you bore holes between that and the adjoining compartment?"

"Yes, your excellency; but Azof did not tell me whether you wanted the holes at the top or the bottom."

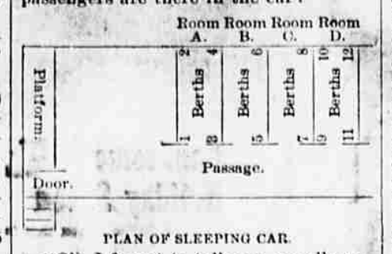
"At the bottom, of course," replied the Russian. "Any fool might have known that. The gas must rise, not fall; then when he feels its effect and tumbles down he will be in a denser layer of it, whereas if we put it in at the top and he fell down he would come into pure air and so might make his escape. You did not bore the hole over the top berth, I hope!"

"Yes, excellency; but I bored one at the bottom also."

"Oh, very well! We can easily stop the one at the top. Have you fastened the window? For the first thing these English do is to open a window."

"The window is securely fastened, your excellency, unless he breaks the glass."

"Oh, he will not think of doing that until it is too late! The English are a law abiding people. How many other passengers are there in the car?"



PLAN OF SLEEPING CAR.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you, excellency, that room B has been taken by an English lady, who is there now!"

"Ten thousand devils!" cried the Russian in a hoarse whisper. "Why did you not say that before?"

The voices now fell to so low a murmur that Jennie could not distinguish the words. A moment later there was a rap at her door, and she had presence of mind enough to get in the farther corner and say in a sleepy voice:

"Come in!"

The conductor opened the door.

"Votre billet, s'il vous plait, madame."

"Can't you speak English?" asked Jennie.

The conductor merely repeated his question, and as Jennie was shaking her head the big Russian looked over the conductor's shoulder and said in passable English:

"He is asking for your ticket, madame. Do you not speak French?"

In answer to the direct question Jennie, fumbling in her purse for her tickets, replied:

"I speak English, and I have already shown him my ticket."

She handed her broad sheet sleeping car ticket to the Russian, who had pushed the conductor aside and now stood within the compartment.

"There has been a mistake," he said. "Room C is the one that has been reserved for you."

"I am sure there isn't any mistake," said Jennie. "I booked berths 5 and 6. See, there are the numbers"—pointing to the metallic plates by the door—"and here are the same numbers on the ticket."

The Russian shook his head.

"The mistake has been made at the office of the sleeping car company. I am a director of the company."

"Oh, are you?" asked Jennie innocently. "Is room C as comfortable as this one?"

"It is a duplicate of this one, madame, and is more comfortable because it is nearer the center of the car."

"Well, there is no mistake about my reserving the two berths, is there?"

"Oh, no, madame! The room is entirely at your disposal."

"Oh, well, then, in that case," said Jennie, "I have no objection to making a change."

She knew that she would be compelled to change, no matter what her ticket recorded, so she thought it best to play the simple maiden abroad and make as little fuss as possible about the transfer. She had to rearrange the car in her mind. She was now in room C, which had been first reserved by the British embassy. It was evident that at the last moment the messenger had decided to take room A, a four berth room at the end of the car. The police then would occupy room B, which she had first engaged, and from the bit of conversation she had overheard Jennie was convinced that they intended to kill or render insensible the messenger who bore the important letter. The police were not to protect, but to attack. The amazing complication in the plot concentrated all the girl's sympathies on the unfortunate man who was messenger between two great personages, even though he traveled apparently under the protection of the British embassy at St. Petersburg. The fact, to put it baldly, that she had intended to rob him herself if opportunity occurred rose before her like an accusing ghost. "I shall never undertake anything like this again," she cried to herself, "never, never!" And now she resolved to make reparation to the man she had intended to injure. She would watch for him until he came down the passage and then warn him by relating what she had heard. She had taken off her hat when she entered the room. Now she put it on hurriedly, thrusting a long pin through it. As she stood up there was a jolt of the train that caused her to sit down again somewhat hurriedly. Passing her window she saw the lights of the station. The train was in motion. "Thank heaven!" she cried fervently. "He is too late! Those plotting villains will have all their trouble for nothing."

She glanced upward toward the ceiling and noticed a hole about an inch in diameter bored on the thin wooden partition between her compartment and the next. Turning to the wall behind her, she saw that another hole had been bored in a similar position through to room B. The car had been pretty thoroughly prepared for the work in hand, and Jennie laughed softly to herself as she pictured the discomfiture of the conspirators. The train was now rushing through the suburbs of St. Petersburg, and Jennie was startled by hearing another voice say in French:

"Conductor, I have room A. Which end of the car is that?"

"This way, excellency," said the conductor. Every one seemed to be "excellency" with him.

A moment later Jennie, who had again risen to her feet, horrified to know that after all the messenger had come, heard the door of his room click. She stood there for a few moments tense with excitement, then bethought herself of the hole between her present compartment and the one she had recently left. She sprang up on the seat and, placing her eye with some caution at the hole, peered through. First she thought the compartment was empty. Then she noticed there had been placed at the end by the window a huge cylinder that reached nearly to the ceiling of the room. The lamp above was burning brightly, and she could see every detail of the compartment except toward the floor. As she gazed a man's back slowly rose. He appeared to have been kneeling on the floor, and he held in his hand the loop of a rubber tube. Peering downward, she saw that it was connected with the cylinder and that it was undoubtedly pouring whatever gas the cylinder contained through the hole into room A. For a moment she had difficulty in repressing a shriek, but realizing how perfectly helpless she was, even if she gave the alarm, she repressed all exclamation. She saw that the man who was regulating the escape of gas was not the one who had spoken to the conductor. Then, fearing that he might turn his head and see her eye at the small aperture, she reached up and covered her lamp, leaving her own room in complete darkness. The double covering, which closed over the semiglobular lamp like an eyelid, kept every ray of light from penetrating into the compartment.

As Jennie turned to her espionage again she heard a blow given to the door in room A that made it clatter. Then there was a sound of a heavy fall on the floor. The door of room B was flung open, the head of the first Russian was thrust in, and he spoke in his own language a single gruff word. His assistant then turned the cock and shut off the gas from the cylinder. The door of room B was instantly shut again, and Jennie heard the rattle of the keys as room A was being unlocked.

Jennie jumped down from her perch, threw off her hat, and with as little noise as she could slid her door back an inch or two. The conductor had unlocked the door of room A, the tall Russian standing beside him saying in a whisper:

"Never mind the man! He'll come to the moment you open the door and window. Get the box! Hold your nose with your fingers and keep your mouth shut. There it is—that black box in the corner."

(To be continued next Friday.)

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The majority of persons upon reaching middle age and past find their blood becomes weak and thin, and diseases that were easily controlled in earlier life begin to affect the constitution.

Those predisposed to Scrofula, Cancer, Rheumatism, Gout and other hereditary troubles may escape till then, but as they age the blood, so long tainted and weakened by accumulated waste matters, is no longer able to properly nourish the body, and it becomes an easy mark for disease. At this critical period of life the blood must be re-enforced before it can perform its legitimate functions and rid the system of these poisons, and nothing so surely and effectually does this as S. S. S.

S. S. S. strengthens and enriches the blood, improves the appetite, and builds up the general constitution. It is not only the best blood purifier, but the best tonic for old people. It warms the blood, tones up the nerves, removes all taint from the blood, and prevents the development of disease.

S. S. S. is the only purely vegetable blood medicine known. Not one particle of mercury, potash or other mineral poison can be found in it, and it may be taken for any length of time without harm.

S. S. S. is the only remedy that reaches deep-seated blood troubles like Scrofula, Cancer, Rheumatism, Eczema, Tetter, etc. It purifies and restores the blood to a healthy, normal condition, and makes it impossible for any poisonous waste materials to accumulate.

If you have an old running sore or an obstinate ulcer that refuses to heal, or are troubled with boils and carbuncles, try S. S. S. It never fails to make a quick and permanent cure of these pests. If your system is run down and you feel the need of a tonic, S. S. S. will strengthen and help you as it has many others to a happy, healthy old age.

S. S. S. cured Mr. H. Borden of Saumsville, Va., of a case of Eczema of thirty-five years' standing, after the best physicians in the surrounding country had failed. This was seven years ago, and there has been no return of the disease.

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don't waste a minute but go to your druggist and get a box of Krause's Headache Capsules. They will prevent pain, even though your skull were cracked. They are harmless, too. Read the guarantee. Price 25c. Sold by Geo. B. Christoph.

to make you satisfied there is nothing serious the matter with you. Get Green's Prize Almanac. Kiesau Drug Co.

Lichty's Celery Nerve Compound

for all nevous diseases, neuralgia, rheumatism, nervous debility, paralysis, biliousness, dyspepsia, costiveness, piles, liver complaint, kidney troubles and female complaints. It goes to the seat of the disease and cures thoroughly and speedily. Sold by Geo. B. Christoph.

When you feel that life is hardly worth the candle take a dose of Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets. They will cleanse your stomach, tone up your liver and regulate your bowels making you feel like a new man. For sale by the Kiesau Drug Co.

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When things are "the best" they become "the best selling." Abraham Hare a leading druggist, of Belleville, O., writes: "Electric Bitters are the best selling bitters I have handled in 20 years. You know why? Most diseases begin in disorders of stomach, liver kidneys, bowels, blood and nerves. Electric Bitters tone up the stomach, regulates liver, kidney and bowels, purifies the blood strengthens the nerves, hence cures multitudes of maladies. It builds up the entire system. Puts new life and vigor into any weak, sickly, rundown man or woman. Price 50 cents. Sold by Kiesau Drug Co.

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Many people who use quinine for the cure of colds say that the effect of this drug is more disagreeable than the disease. Krause's Cold Cure is prepared in a convenient capsule form, and will cure the most deeply seated cold in 24 hours without any interruption to business. They are pleasant to take and give you a clear, fresh sensation while operating Price 25c. Sold by Geo. B. Christoph.

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Drying preparations simply develop dry catarrh; they dry up the secretions, which adhere to the membrane and decompose, causing a far more serious trouble than the ordinary form of catarrh. Avoid all drying inhalants, fumes, smokes and snuffs and use that which cleanses, soothes and heals. Ely's Cream Balm is such a remedy and will cure catarrh or cold in the head easily and pleasantly. A trial size will be mailed for 10 cents. All druggists sell the 50c. size. Ely Brothers, 56 Warren St., N.Y.

The Balm cures without pain, does not irritate or cause sneezing. It spreads itself over an irritated and angry surface, relieving immediately the painful inflammation.

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