

The Castle of Lies

BY ARTHUR HENRY VASEY
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CHAPTER XXXVI.—Continued.

"But their release will be the most effective way of spreading the news."
"On the contrary, they cannot make it known without exposing themselves. If they do that, Ferdinand will see to it that their respective sovereigns quietly but effectually remove them. Each of them is so well known that they may be arrested at any time. Ferdinand shrewdly makes them hostages, as it were. The three certainly will exert their great influence to check the rebellion they themselves have fostered. As for Gornji and Gortachakoff, before they are released from the hospital the crisis will have passed."

"And are we left to account for the deaths of Starva and Bratman as best we may?" I questioned anxiously.
"If you remember, I told you that at Lucerne that I am an old newspaper man. It is impossible to hide the fact that an attack has been made on Prince Ferdinand here to-night. But an attack by his own countrymen that has proved a disastrous failure is quite a different thing from a deliberate gathering here of representatives of each of the Balkan States. Ferdinand has taken my advice to post in hot haste to Sofia. I shall see to it that this night's work does not get into the papers until 24 hours have passed. By that time he will have shown himself safe and sound in Sofia. The episode of the death-mask will have proved a complete fiasco. My story will make Prince Ferdinand a hero triumphant over his foes and not a weak king who was lured here unwittingly by his mistress to his doom."

"There still remains Jacques."
"Oh, Jacques," said Locke, with contempt. "He was only a tool of Starva's and a stupid tool at that. It was he who was to lower the flag at half-mast, it seems—to give the signal to the conspirators who were watching in the village. But when he rushed to the chamber window to lower the flag he found both rope and fastenings wrenched away. He supposed that the gale had done this, but seeing the flag at half-mast, the rope being caught in the pulley, he said nothing about the matter to Starva. I suspect that you were responsible for the lowering of the flag, and not the gale."

"I needed the rope," I said, shortly, too impatient to make further explanation. "And now for my last question: What the devil did you mean when you said that you had promoted me? And why this haste that I leave Alterhoffen?"
"Are you so anxious then that it be known that you have been impersonating the British ambassador?"
"Scarcely," I said, uneasily.
"And, my dear fellow, Kuhn and the rest think that it was Sir Mortimer who came to the rescue of Prince Ferdinand, and not Mr. Ernest Haddon, an American tourist."
"But why do you allow them to think this?"

"Haddon, at times you are singularly dense. If these men believe that the British ambassador has been killed by one of their number while defending Ferdinand, do you not see that this will keep them even more silent regarding their share in this night's tragedy? For if England's ambassador were really murdered, you may be sure that she would not rest until she had brought the assassins to justice."
"You are right, Locke; I must leave Alterhoffen at once."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Second Dispatch.
I was about to go to Helena in the music room to bid her good-by, when Capt. Forbes returned from his errand.
"Well, that's settled," he cried, joining us. "And do you agree with Locke and myself that it is wise that you should leave Alterhoffen before daybreak?"
"Perfectly."
He heard my decision with evident relief.
"You will accept my apology for mistreating you, Haddon, and I hope we shall be friends," said he offering me his hand with a winning smile. "But you must confess you gave me ample grounds for being a little wary of you. Before long we shall meet, and I shall hope to hear your reasons for going into this extraordinary adventure. In the meanwhile, may I trouble you for the dispatch I gave to you in the hotel at Vitznau, or did it fall into Starva's hand that night?"
"To prevent that I dropped it from the window into a disused fountain in the garden below."

"Where I found it," interrupted Locke. "Here it is, and please observe that the seals are unbroken."
"Frankly," Forbes, I said, "I thought you rather an idiot to give me an important dispatch that night. You must have seen that I was more or less in Starva's power, and that he was likely to gain possession of the papers."
"Had that dispatch fallen into his hands," replied Forbes, "it is quite possible that Ferdinand would have been saved his half hour. Do you remember I told you, my pseudo-ambassador (and you acted the part remarkably well, let me tell you), that I carried two dispatches for Sir Mortimer, and that I gave you the one of lesser importance?"
"Yes. And the second dispatch? Was it stolen from you by Starva when he trapped you in the tower?"
Forbes nodded. "I took the liberty of taking it from him just now."
"And may a humble American consent ask," drawled Locke, "how to

night's episode would have been averted had the dispatch you gave Haddon fallen into Starva's hands, instead of into the fountain?"
"My chief at Downing street would retire me, and with no pension, if he knew that I was going to divulge state secrets. However, I am going to tell you."

"This dispatch you have returned to me, I happen to know, authorized Sir Mortimer Brett to meet in conference the men who so very nearly snuffed out Ferdinand's life an hour ago. I am referring now to the dispatch which I gave you at Vitznau, Haddon. He was to assure these representatives of the various states that England realized that a harmonious confederation could alone permanently ally the present discontent in the Peninsula. Had Starva seen this dispatch it is not likely that he would have had recourse to violence."

"Do you mean to tell me," exclaimed Locke, incredulously, "that your ministers of the foreign office cherish so Utopian a scheme? Are the various kings to abdicate because England nods?"
"I am telling you nothing of the sort," chuckled Forbes. "You Americans are infants when it comes to the intricacies of diplomacy. Secret agents and spies at Sofia had warned the government of the intended uprising. It was necessary that England should know more of the conspirators. Therefore, Sir Mortimer was instructed to profess a sympathy for



"Our Happiness," She Said, Shyly, "We Share with Others."

the cause which, of course, was not sincere. This dispatch Sir Mortimer or myself were to allow to be stolen if necessary. Its contents were explained to me before I left London, that I might repeat verbally the message, should the dispatch not reach him."

"Since you have already betrayed your government's confidence," said Locke, jocularly, "tell us the purport of the second dispatch."
"I will read it to you since the seals are broken," agreed Forbes after a moment's hesitation.
"To His Excellency, etc.—Sir: The same messenger who gives you this dispatch will deliver you another which authorizes you to treat with the committee of the various states of the Balkans, who have for their aim a confederation of these states. You will use the aforementioned dispatch at your discretion. It is needless to say that neither this ministry nor the other powers can for an instant sanction a scheme so impossible. But it has come to our knowledge that a dangerous conspiracy exists to overthrow the rulers of the various states. To check this conspiracy, it may be well for you to temporize. If you think it expedient, permit the dispatch mentioned to fall into the hands of this committee. Capt. Forbes will follow the same course if necessary. He has full instructions to exercise his discretion in this matter."

"It is not without surprise that the ministry has learned of your promise to Ferdinand regarding England's support of his project, namely, the threatened invasion of Macedonia. Fortunately, the ministry is convinced that some such move as you sanction is expedient to free Macedonia from the atrocities of Turkish misrule that have shocked Europe so long. His majesty's ministry therefore is inclined to overlook in this instance any undue bias you have shown in espousing Macedonia's cause."

"If you are convinced that the financier of New York city whom you have named is sincere in his offer to give Prince Ferdinand financial support, you are authorized to tell him that his majesty's ministers are heartily in favor of Prince Ferdinand's invasion, and will exert every influence to insure him unrestricted action. Moreover, the foreign office is in full accord with your views as to the sum of money indispensable to Ferdinand's project."

"But while his majesty's government agrees with you that lofty principles actuate Bulgaria, it realizes with yourself that lofty principles are not sufficient to insure the success of Ferdinand's cause."
"In conclusion, we hasten to assure you of our fullest sympathy in your endeavor to help an oppressed people gain their liberty; and that it is not without satisfaction we find ourselves emboldened to further your personal wishes and ambitions in this matter. Nor need you have anxiety that your own interests will run counter to those of England. We view with concern the precarious state of your health; but we trust that it will not prove an obstacle to your contemplated meeting of the financier in conference at Alterhoffen at the chateau of Prince Ferdinand's secret agent. With renewed expressions of our complete confidence in you,
"Believe me, sir, etc."

"Haddon," said Locke, not a little crestfallen, "I was ruefully wide of the mark in my conjectures concerning Sir Mortimer's relations with the Countess Sarahoff. I told you that morning at Lucerne that I was behind the scenes. I confess myself the veriest amateur."

Never has writing thrilled me as did that dispatch. A great light was dawning on me. I clutched the paper. I held it with a trembling hand.
"Forbes," I cried, hoarsely, "once you out of the dispatch Locke just returned to you. But now I ask you to give me for half an hour the dispatch you have just read. It means everything to Sir Mortimer's sister. Man, there has been more devilry in this Castle of Lies than that you are aware of. The honor of Sir Mortimer himself is at stake. This dispatch will help to save it. Give me the paper that I may show it to Miss Brett."

"I have been too much astonished at the events of the past 24 hours to wonder at your request. Take your dispatch, but you will return it intact."

"You need have no fear as to that. But I have still another request;

"The ingenious Madame de Varner!"
Helena did not speak; her agitation was too great for words. She watched me, at once bewildered and eager, while I read the contents of both packets carefully once more. When I had read them, I sorted them no less carefully. For ten minutes there was silence between us.
"Helena," I said with a deep sigh, when I had finished my task, "once to-night I said this was a Castle of Lies, but I did not realize until now how surely I spoke the truth. These letters are forgeries."

"Impossible," she murmured, wringing her hands in anguish. "I know my brother's writing too well."
"Follow me carefully, and you will see that I speak the truth. I do not question your brother's handwriting. But listen first of all to this dispatch which was taken from Capt. Forbes when he was trapped in the tower. Tell me if any of the expressions in it are familiar to you."
"Yes, yes," she cried eagerly, when I had finished. "Lofty principles actuate Bulgaria, but lofty principles are not sufficient to insure success." "You need have no anxiety that your own interests will run counter to those of England," the references to the loan, to my brother's indiscretion, to his ambitions—all these appear in my brother's notes in connection with the letters of the committee of freedom."

"Now read these letters—the contents of the second packet. They were written to your brother by Prince Ferdinand himself, and deal with the loan to be floated by the banker to finance Ferdinand's invasion of Macedonia. The notes and comments of your brother have reference not to these typewritten letters, which were never written by any committee of freedom, which were never received by Sir Mortimer, but to the cunning fabrications of that woman—but to these letters of Ferdinand. Look, you can see the pins pierced each of Ferdinand's letters. As I place your brother's notes on the respective letters to which they have reference, the pins mark it precisely. You may still cherish proudly the motto of your house: 'Honor, my Sword!'"

"Ernest, if this be true—"
"It is true," I said firmly, and I drew her to me. "I must leave Alterhoffen to-night, Helena. It must not be known that I have been mistaken for your brother. I am going to find Madame de Varner. When I return to you I shall bring with me her written confession. And when I return, sweetheart? You Brett's, you have told me, are a proud race. Disgrace you would bear alone. But your happiness?"
"Our happiness," she said shyly, "we share with others."
(The End.)

Tidings of Great Joy.
She stood at the open window looking out on the mountains in the far distance. They were phantoms of despair beckoning to her in the moonlight. They had brought suffering to her as well as to myself; for had I not gone to Lucerne, and told her the story of my cowardice, perhaps she would have been spared the knowledge of her brother's disgrace.
"Dear," I said gently, "do you remember the little besoma that shone long after the lights on Pilatus and

Was Love's Labor Lost

Woman's First Act of Philanthropy Decidedly a Failure.

A lady who was recently appointed a visitor to a hospital for children, fearing that poor children failed to receive the same attention bestowed on those of richer parents, paid her first visit to the institution, intending to effect a change. In a ward she found a tiny boy quite alone. He informed her that there was another boy in the wards, but that he was being examined before a clinic. The lady looked around her for evidences of neglect on the part of the attendants. A suit of clothes lay huddled on a chair. Folding them in an orderly manner, she said:
"Surely, my dear, these trousers are too long for you by several inches."
"Yes," replied the boy.
"A sin and a shame," cried she, and took a "companion" from her bag. She sat down and cut off the legs of the garment and hemmed the edges.

Rigi had flickered out? That little light put heart into me then. It tells you to hope now."
"There is no light on the mountains over there to-night."
"It may burn though you do not see it. The packet I took from the safe, have you destroyed it?"
"I was about to do so as you entered. Here it is."
"Capt. Forbes has just given me the second packet—the one that Madame de Varner took from me forcibly. It is possible that its contents concern your brother. May I open it?"
"Yes," she said listlessly.
I tore open the packet with deliberation, though heaven knows my fingers trembled. I spread the paper on the piano where I had shown Madame de Varner the death-mask the evening before. I read them one after the other. The proof was absolute. Sir Mortimer's honor could no longer be questioned. Fools we had been and blind.

"Helena," I said, mastering my emotion with an effort "it is as I thought; these papers throw a flood of light on the letters and notes of your brother that we have so harshly misunderstood."
She came swiftly to my side. "Harshly misunderstood!" she repeated with blanching lips.
I was scorching carefully the papers Helena had just given me, the letters supposed to have been written by the committee of freedom, and to which Sir Mortimer's comments were pinned. I laughed aloud when I saw that these letters, supposed to be the originals were typewritten, as were the copies.

Now I understood why Madame de Varner had refused to let me see what she called the original papers. It was not so much that she feared I should destroy them; she knew that the fact of their being typewritten would at once awaken my suspicion.
"Did it not occur to you as being rather suspicious that these letters were written on a typewriter?"
"At first it did," replied Helena, searching my face wonderingly.
"Did she quieted my doubts by explaining to me that the letters were typed to prevent the possibility of their being traced."

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MYTHS WOVEN ABOUT SIMPLE MEXICAN PEON

PEDRO ALVARADO NOT MINING CHIEFS HE HAS BEEN REPRESENTED TO BE.

EXTRAVAGANT TALES ARE WITHOUT TRUTH

Believes Himself to Be Worth Millions, But in Reality Has Hard Work to Make Competitively Small Sum—Systematically Plundered by Those in His Employment—Is Famed Throughout Region for Generosity, But Shirks Publicity.
Mexico City.—Pedro Alvarado, about whom fiction and fancy have woven tales of fabulous wealth and countless treasures, is a Mexican peon. Willingly he has submitted to the flattery and adulation which his fellow townsmen have lavished upon him on account of his ownership of a bonanza silver mine, albeit in the profits of that mine he has had but a meagre share.
All the extravagant tales of Pedro Alvarado's wealth, of his ability to pay the Mexican national debt, and of his efforts to commission several regiments of Mexicans to subdue the Yaquis, are pure myths.
He believes himself to-day the wealthiest man of the universe, and no one has ever dared to dispossess him of the delusion he cherishes, that his mine is the greatest thing of its kind in the world. But notwithstanding he is reputed to be worth \$150,000,000, he has had the greatest trouble within the last three months to raise \$300,000. The fact that he only has been able to accomplish this at a sacrifice of practically all he possessed has still failed to bring him to a proper estimate of his fortune.

Lack of Management.
As one approaches Parral on the branch of the Mexican Central railroad from Jimenez, tales of Alvarado's greatness are heard on all sides, if the average Mexican peon is doing the talking. If, on the other hand, one strikes the experienced American who has been living in the vicinity for a year or two, he will confidentially tell one, "on the side," that the Mexicans are simply reporting what they have heard. If one fraternizes with the peons, for any length of time one will find that their ideas of Alvarado's wealth are derived largely from the rich ore which their relatives employed at the mine abstract surreptitiously from time to time.

Visit to Alvarado.
After becoming acquainted with the important developments at Parral, if one has the necessary influence and pull with somebody who is on friendly terms with Alvarado, an invitation to visit his property is soon forthcoming. While his ideas of hospitality differ in many respects from those to which we are accustomed in the United States, still, when showing his guests his property, he seems to forget his alleged greatness and becomes quite chummy with those he is entertaining.
The invitation to the writer of this article to go into the Familla mine called for a prompt attendance at the mouth of the shaft at 8 o'clock in the morning. The mine being situated on the very top of one of the highest peaks in the district, and the road leading to it being very difficult, the visitor was half an hour late.

Sitting on Ore Pile.
Alvarado was found sitting on the apex of one of his richest ore piles. Without even so much as rising he extended his hand smilingly as the interpreter performed the introduction.
After a time Alvarado suggested a halt in the exploration, and seating himself passed around cigarettes and began to talk about his output and other items connected with the operation of the mine. The exaggeration he made use of was staggering. He thought nothing of saying that before long his mine would employ 100,000 men, and backed this up with the assertion that he would hoist 10,000 tons of ore every day, once he got the mine working as he planned to have it.
This sort of talk easily suggested the origin of many of the stories of wealth that one hears in Mexico and elsewhere concerning this interesting personage.

Exploring the Mine.
Strange as it may seem, Alvarado is almost totally in ignorance of what is being done from day to day at his property. Those in charge of the development, who seem to be mostly relatives, are satisfied to give him a percentage of the daily receipts, pocketing a good deal of the balance and spending the rest upon silly operations that fail to make any appreciable improvement of the mine.

EVER FEED HORSES MOLASSES?

Experiments in New York Have Resulted in Remarkable Success.

Feed your horse on old fashioned black New Orleans molasses. This is no joke. No animal has a sweeter tooth than the horse. And this characteristic of equus has not been sufficiently encouraged. There is nothing new in the proposition, but the common run of people never heard of it and will scarcely believe it. Look at those magnificent Percherons drawing great loads in our streets. See those giant Normandies, weighing 2,000 pounds each. Feast your eyes on those starchy Clydesdales, those dapple grays, able to pull a few tons without flinching. All fed on molasses.
A firm in Brooklyn has been experimenting with molasses as a food for horses and tries to keep the results secret, writes Victor Smith in the New York Press. From an inside source I learn this: Two of the horses in the stable were given up as worthless. They got so thin and weak that they could not do a day's work, and were about to be retired on pensions at 11

years, when the molasses was made along. The horses were off their feed, probably sick at the stomach. They refused oats, hay, corn, clover and shorts. He looked them over and said he should like to try an altogether new regimen. "Go ahead," said the superintendent of the stables, in which there are over 200 magnificent animals, worth from \$700 to \$1,000 each. In two months one of the horses, a physical wreck, gained 400 pounds, and his other, a physical wreck, 356. Their coats were as satin. They were restored to duty and are still holding their own on molasses.

In administering the molasses—the blackest you can buy—first chop your hay into bits and to each peck add one pint of molasses. Mix thoroughly. The horse will do the rest. Use about the same quantity of syrup with oats, shorts, corn, etc. If you find that one horse may have a sweeter tooth than another, regulate the treat accordingly. So regulate it, in fact, that nothing will be left in the trough. You can buy good New Orleans (or Porto Rico) molasses for thirteen and one-half cents a gallon; by the hoghead or barrel for a little less. Try it on

your poor, old, broken down nag. He will live to bless you, and be putting you around the country or the town at 27.

London's Most Populous Parish.
The population of Islington appears at last to have reached high water mark, says the Pall Mall Gazette. A century ago a great part of the borough consisted of open country; but now all is thickly covered with houses, and as a result the population, at well over 300,000, is the largest of any district in the metropolis. When the development of the building estates was entered upon, the figures rose with astounding rapidity. In 1811 the percentage of increase was 29.7, in 1841 it stood at 49.4, and in 1881 it advanced to 70.7. A period of declining increases then set in, the figures at succeeding decennial periods being 63.1, 37.1, 32.3, and 12.8. In 1902 the population was 334,991, the percentage of the increase being only 4.9; while for the twelvemonth now reported upon the latter figure appears at 6.6. In other words, the population is all but stationary, and ere long an actual falling off may be looked for.



Loaded Ore Wagons Leaving Mine.

the daily fare of these human beasts or vices.
Alvarado is careful to see that his visitors do not miss any important item in his mine, and on this occasion it was all of four hours before he had shown everything he wished to exhibit. Then came an invitation to dinner, and the invitation having been accepted, the mine owner accompanied his guest to the surface and gave the necessary orders to his cook.

While Alvarado was waiting the call of the cook his visitor had an excellent opportunity to study his personality and his character. He is a little man, weighing about 120 pounds, quick, alert and extremely nervous. He has a well-shaped head with prominent forehead, topped by a short crop of black hair. He wears a stubby beard that shows the lack of care. His features are pleasant, barring an unusually pointed nose, and when he smiles he shows some very good teeth.

He Shirks Publicity.
Strange as it may seem, Alvarado personally shirks publicity. On no account would he allow a photograph of himself to be taken, although quite willing to have his entire mine and equipment photographed under any



Where the Richer Ores Are Sacked

He is 44 years old. He has a keen sense of humor, appreciates a joke, and is always ready both to give and take. His knowledge of things is limited to the confines of Chihuahua, his native state. He knows almost nothing of the world.
He is a devout Catholic, and in various little nooks in his mine chapels have been constructed, which he never passes without doffing his cap and making the sign of the cross.

A Generous Giver.
His charity abounds on all sides, and he constantly has men employed in excess of his needs simply to keep their families out of want. When he was asked why he still retained the antiquated burros and ore wagons to carry his ore to Parral instead of installing a tramway, he said: "What would all my men and 500 burros do if they had no ore to carry?" It is along this line or reasoning that Alvarado has built up a philosophy of his own, which, while it perhaps is comical, cannot help arouse certain admiration for his

character.
Up to five months ago Alvarado's mine was producing about 100 tons a day, of which about 50 tons were sent away for treatment and the balance left on the dumps. The American mining engineer is almost overcome when told that it takes 500 men to accomplish such a little work, but of course, he does not appreciate the extraordinary conditions that prevail at the Familla.

While no one at the mine knows definitely what the ore yields per ton, it is believed that the high grade will average from \$250 to \$500 per ton, and that the low-grade will run from \$10 to \$25 a ton. The values are all present in silver, with some occasional lead ore.
The mine at the time of the visit referred to was making about 500 gallons of water per minute, but the pumps were quite able to take care of this flow. Here again one is put in close touch with Alvarado's lack of business sense. Instead of draining the mine by a tunnel which he could easily run at the base of the mountain, where his mine is located, he goes to work and has all the water pumped to the top of the hill, from where it flows to the bottom again

through sluices built for the purpose. The surface equipment at the Familla is on a par with the best which can be seen at any large American mine. His repair shops are of the best and he has never been known to turn down any suggestions for improvements that have ever been made to him, unless the offers interfered with his principles. There is a leak somewhere, however, between the gross profits and the net income, which up to this time no one has ever been able to explain. It is this unknown drain that has practically ruined Alvarado to-day and that has made it necessary for him to pledge all he owns to raise a bare \$300,000.

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