

Clancy and the EBONY MUSIC BOX.

By George Barton.

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Clancy, who was to be in Fall River before 7 o'clock tomorrow night.

The young man accustomed to sudden calls saluted and said:

"All right, sir; I'll go home, pack my grip and meet you in an hour."

Being expeditious, they made their connections and were in Fall River an hour before the appointed time.

"We are here to identify and shadow a man and a woman. The man is short and thick set, with a smooth face and a swarthy complexion.

"That's a bully description!" exclaimed Clancy, enthusiastically getting the better of his respectful demeanor.

While they were talking a stranger came along the pier, warbling a French song. The watchers were all attention.

"It's our man all right," he said. "He's traveling under the name of a Spanish nobleman. We mustn't lose sight of him."

"You'll know before we reach New York. In the meantime, don't be surprised at my actions. And for the love of heaven, watch this count; see the effect of what I do or say to him."

"I suppose," ventured Clancy, with what was intended for withering sarcasm, "that it wouldn't be a bad idea to get acquainted with him."

"You must get acquainted with him!" came like a shout.

The two men procured a stateroom, merely as a matter of form, because neither had any intention of sleeping that night.

"Ah, my music box. I adore music, and so I carry this little instrument with me everywhere."

Clancy, with glittering eyes, replied: "I'm with you there, count; I love music too. Give us a tune."

"I have not the key," he said, shrugging his shoulder. Then as an after thought, "the instrument is out of order, and I must not touch it until it is fully repaired."

Presently Clancy contrived to introduce Barnes. The count, who was loquacious, was delighted to meet such an amiable person.

"The minute the Count lays down his music box, grab it and put it in our room."

The opportunity came almost immediately. They were at the cigar stand. The Count lay down his box in order to pay for a box of cigarettes.

"Gentlemen, I have an engagement for a dinner party. I am already late; but my man will open these boxes and you can look over the books and talk to me about them in the morning—unless you care to await my return tonight which will be in about two hours."

"Could anything be more polite or obliging? The police thought not. The man, however, was not so pleasant as his manners led him to appear.

"My dear Edouard," you are the most thoughtful of men!"

"Ah! you are teasing me!" cried the count, shaking his feminine fingers at the woman. "You ladies, you ladies, you are all alike. Flattering like light clouds, next our gaze and heaven. I quote from memory, but my poet expresses the thought somewhere."

Having delivered himself of these emotional sentiments the count sank into the seat opposite his wife and gazed at her with dreamy eyes.

arms folded, blinking and chucking in the most disconcerting way. All of his features lent themselves in a startling manner to this resemblance to the most cunning and sagacious of animals.

"There was nothing personal to me," replied Barnes, looking at the other out of half closed eyes.

"Tell us one of them," said Harvey.

"Perhaps," continued Barnes, "as the other had not spoken, the most interesting of these was the adventure of the distinguished foreigner and the consignment of Italian books."

"That sounds interesting," cried Clancy. "Give us that."

"Well," began Barnes, putting away at a perfecto, "one day the society of Madrid was increased by the arrival of a stranger, a foreigner of distinguished appearance.

"It was all right," smiled Barnes, "for a while, and then, as sometimes happens in Spain, it turned out to be all wrong. There was an agitation going on in the provinces outside of Madrid.

"How about the vessel that brought these boxes?" asked Harvey.

"That was another remarkable thing," he said. "When they went to find the master of the vessel early the next morning the craft had disappeared—disappeared as completely as if it had dropped to the bottom of the sea.

"What became of the servant who was left in the house?" asked Harvey.

"He is still in prison, and will probably remain there for a long while, although no one—not even the Spanish police—believe him guilty of anything unlawful.

"Let Barnes read his description," interrupted Harvey. "That may give us some idea of the man."

"The chief reached for his circular—and it was gone. He bent over and looked on the floor, but there was no trace of it. All were puzzled at the queer disappearance of the bit of paper.

"That's certainly strange," exclaimed Clancy.

"See here," exclaimed Harvey to the customs officer, "wasn't there any sequel to your story? It seemed so romantic."

"I can't say there was any sequel," remarked Barnes, with his eyes glued on the count, but there is a little episode that is collateral to it, and it might be called the story of the Woman in Red."

"Well, about the time the distinguished foreigner was organizing his classes in Italian and preparing for his consignment of books a very talented and, I might add, a very dangerous woman appeared in the disaffected section of the country and instituted a propaganda of revolution among the people.

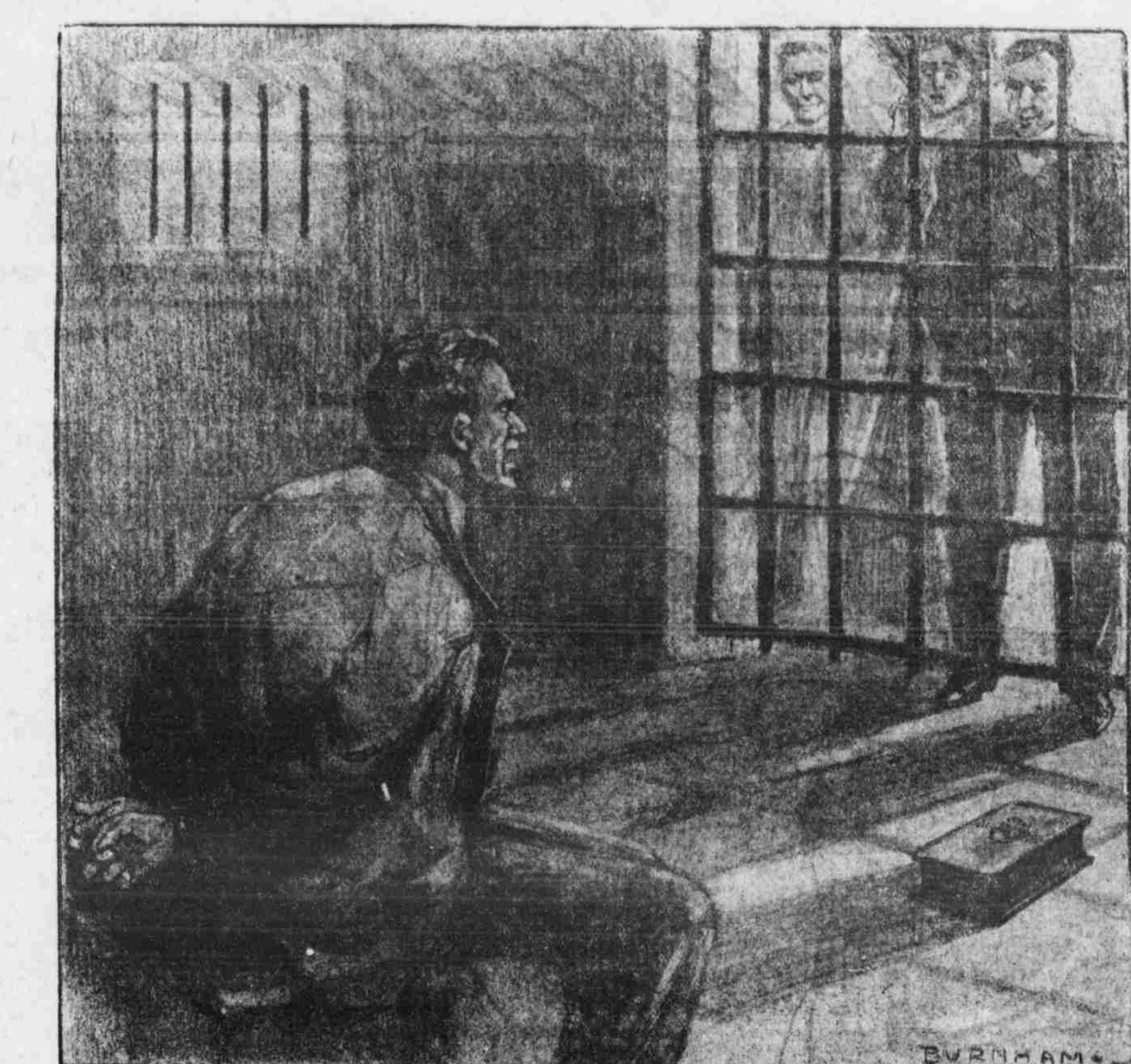
"I've heard of such things," said the count, nodding his head knowingly.

"This seemed to be one of the occasions," continued Barnes, watching Velasquez narrowly. "The woman went by the name of Louise de Mally, although no one believed that this was her real name. She affected an eccentricity in dress which attracted universal attention, wearing a blood-red dress and a straw hat, with a red rose on each side. In her arms she invariably carried a big, overfed Maltese cat."

The count blinked at this, as if the recital affected his eyesight.

"In the beginning," said Barnes, "she delivered lectures to her followers, in which she did not hesitate to suggest assassination as a remedy for political inequalities. Indeed, it was said that she had from her very youth devoted herself to the cause of anarchy and that only lack of opportunity had prevented her from putting her doctrines into practical effect.

"No," rejoined Barnes, delighted at this interruption, "I recall it quite well, it was in the same circular."



"FOR GOD'S SAKE DON'T ILL BE KILLED!" SHRIEKED THE WRETCH — ANOTHER BUZZING SOUND CAME FROM THE BOX AND THEN IT BROKE OUT WITH THE FAMILIAR STRAINS OF "EVERYBODY WORKS BUT FATHER!"

him, and was even in the house he had leased for his stay in Madrid, but never came face to face with the man himself."

"And your distinguished foreigner, your professor of Italian?" he queried tauntingly. "Was he a—"

"Yes," interrupted Barnes, "was a revolutionist or the backer of a filibustering expedition, or an anarchist, or whatever title you choose to give him. I call him my man of mystery."

"Didn't the government have a description of him?" asked Harvey.

"Oh, yes," replied Barnes. "They issued a circular offering a reward for his apprehension. I have one here now," and reaching into his inside pocket, he pulled out a long red sheet of paper printed in Spanish with heavy black type.

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"Ah," said the count, with a flourish of the hand, "the gentleman means well, but he is mistaken."

"What do you know about it, count?" asked the chief, with brutal abruptness; "were you there?"

For a moment it looked as if the count, generally so self-contained, was about to be overwhelmed with confusion. But he quickly recovered himself.

"I—read about it in the French papers at the time," he said, with that famous smile which always displayed those remarkable teeth.

Barnes and Clancy made some excuse for leaving the room for a moment. As they moved Harvey innocently noticed the missing circular sticking out of the count's pocket.

"Count!" he exclaimed, "here's the circular we thought was lost."

"Of course you're a friend of mine; are you not?"

"Certainly," was the puzzled response. "Well, then, destroy that circular."

"Because it will only implicate some poor fellow."

"Oh, nothing," replied Clancy. "I was simply walking around the boat for want of something better to do."

"Oh, you were, were you?" was the sneering comment.

"Yes," repeated the other, determined to keep his tongue and aching to set his hands on the circular.

"Count Velasquez and I," said Harvey, with an attempt at dignity, "were having a private discussion."

"Oh!" exclaimed Clancy. "I beg your pardon. I wasn't intruding. I'll leave you."

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "here's the circular Barnes lost in the cabin. I see you've found it. How lucky. If you'll give it to me I'll see that he gets it."

He extended his arm in the direction of the circular. Harvey drew back and held the precious bit of paper toward the floor.

"You're impertinent," he said hoarsely. "Why don't you mind your own business?"

"My dear sir," said Clancy, determined not to lose any advantage. "I don't see any occasion for anger. You have in your possession a bit of property belonging to my friend Barnes. I presumed that you had found it. I didn't suppose it had come into your possession in any other way. In any event I ask you to let me return it to Barnes. You refuse?"

seat, held the awful circular between the clenched fingers of his right hand. Clancy stood over him in a threatening attitude like an avenging angel, while Barnes came along the corridor toward the cabin with the rapidity of fate.

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"What! Why?" he spluttered. "Simply because I—because I intend to hand it to him myself."

"Then," shouted Clancy, with triumph in his voice, "you'll have the opportunity at once, for Barnes is coming here now."

shouted Clancy, "and lost the circular in the bargain."

Barnes laughed softly and with real enjoyment. The assistant turned on him like a flash.

"That's not it," he spluttered; "the circular was a fake!"

"Just so," grinned the chief. "Where did you get it?" in subdued, earnest tones.

"Oh, I picked it up before we started for Fall River. It was a Spanish proclamation of some sort. But the color of the paper was just right, and it fitted in here as nice and easy as an old shoe."

Clancy didn't go to bed; he rested on a cushioned bench in the main saloon, in a corner that gave him a full view of the door of the count's cabin. Barnes, in his state room, with wide open eyes, clung closer than a brother to the little black music box, with its gilt crown on the lid.

"It was 7 o'clock in the morning when the Fall River boat docked in New York. The count and his wife were early risers and were getting ready to go down the gang-plank, he clutching the black box, she embracing her Maltese cat."

"We've got to act quickly and decisively," whispered Barnes to Clancy, as they followed at the foot of the stairs. The count stooped down to adjust his shoe lace, and a packet of letters dropped from his pocket to the ground. Barnes picked them up instantly, and, glancing hastily at the superscriptions, turned to the swarthy faced man.

"Mr. Jean Leskus, I'll trouble you to come with me."

The man paled at the mention of the name of the notorious European anarchist. "This is a joke," he said, feebly.

"It's deadly earnest," retorted the erstwhile count. "Then you shouldn't have letters addressed in that name," said the chief, handing him the papers.

The look on the man's face was that of a fox in a corner.

Clancy was on the other side of Leskus as they marched toward the nearest police station. The countess, with the Maltese cat in her arms, followed, weeping.

"As they neared the doorway of the house of detention the prisoner suddenly jerked away from his captors, and, reaching into his pocket, pulled out an ugly looking knife. Instantly Clancy put out his right foot, and the murderous one tripped and fell heavily on the sidewalk. It took but a second to disarm him, and then for security his wrists were slipped between a pair of shining handcuffs.

A few words of explanation to the sergeant in charge of the police station and the party was escorted into a small room at the end of a corridor.

"I'll make the final test here," whispered Barnes to Clancy, as they passed into an apartment. The countess placed on a wooden stool each and his feet fastened together. The ebony music box was laid carefully on the floor a few yards away. The room was freed of all but the anarchist, and the iron barred door closed with a bang.

"What's the meaning of this?" he shrieked.

"Nothing; only that you can go to sleep with your adored infernal machine," replied the chief.

"What are you going to do?" wailed the bound.

"I'm going to give you some of your own medicine," said Barnes, grimly.

"Let me out! Let me out! Won't you let me out?" begged the malefactor.

"I'm going to make the punishment fit the crime," was the calm reply.

"For God's sake don't!" he killed," shrieked the wretch.

His face worked convulsively; the cold sweat beaded his forehead. A whirling sound came from the little black box. The drawn one cried aloud in his agony, and drew himself up into a trembling ball of humanity, prepared for the frightful explosion. Another buzzing sound came from the box, and then it broke out with the familiar strains of

"Everybody works but father. While the wretch was still trembling from the reaction, Barnes brought in the real box that had been taken from him on the boat and carefully opened it for the benefit of the police. It was an infernal machine of the most approved type. The inside was packed with nitro-glycerine and finely pulverized burnt cork. A delicate clockwork arrangement was so adjusted as to set the thing off at a given signal.

"He's the fellow," said the chief, pointing to the culprit with his foot, "who threw the bomb in the royal procession in Madrid."

Some Illustrated Proverbs

