A House of Mystery

OR, THE GIRL IN BLUE

CHAPTER XXVIII.—(Cont'd)

"To talk like that is useless," she responded. "Remember that he knows something."

"Something, yes. But what?"

"He knows more than we think."

"Where is he now?"

"Nobody can discover. I saw him once, but he has disappeared. They say he's a wandering lunatic. He left Denbury suddenly after showing signs of madness, and although that terror of a woman, his wife, strove to trace him, she was unsuccessful. His insanity, coupled with the fact that financial ruin overtook him suddenly apparently preyed upon her mind. She fell ill, and according to a letter I received from Gedge a few days ago, she died suddenly of an aneurism, and was buried last Thursday at Budleigh Salterton. The announcement of her death was in yesterday's papers."

I listened to those words open-mouthed. My wife was dead! Then I was free!

With my strained ear close to the thin wood of the door I stood breathless, fearing that they might distinguish the rapid beating of my heart.

"Your ingenuity has always been extraordinary, madame," he said, reflectively, "but in this last affair you have not shown your usual tact."

"In what manner?"

"His Highness places confidence in you, yet you sit idly here, and profess yourself unable to assist him."

"A warrant is out against you; nevertheless, you still consider the Prince your friend. That is curious!" she remarked, with a touch of sarcasm.

"Most certainly. It was Oustromoff's doings. His Highness is powerless to control the Ministry of Police."

"And you believe that you will be safe in England?" she inquired dubiously.

"I believe so, providing that I exercise care," he responded. After to-night it is best that we should remain strangers — you understan'?"

"Of course."

"And Mrs. Anson and her charge? Are they at a safe distance?"

"Yes. When I met Heaton he inquired after them. He particularly wished to discover them, and of course I assisted him."

They both laughed in chorus.

But her words in themselves were sufficient proof that she feared the result of our re-union. They impressed upon me the truth of my suspicion, namely, that Mabel held the key to the enigma.

"What does he know?" asked the man, evidently referring to me.

"He is aware of the spot where the affair took place," she answered.

"What?" gasped her companion in alarm. "That can't be. He was stone blind, you said!"

"Certainly he was. But by some means—how, I can't say—he ascertained at least one fact."

"Did he make any remark to you?"

"Of course he did. He gave me to understand that he was acquainted with the details of the whole affair."

A long silence fell between them. The mention of Mrs. Anson and her charge held me breathless. The "charge" referred to was evidently Mabel. I only hoped that from this conversation I might obtain some clue to the whereabouts of my darling.

"I wonder how much Heaton really does know?" observed her visitor reflectively at last.

"To much, I fear," she answered. No doubt she recollected how I had expressed my determination to go to Scotland Yard.

Again there was a prolonged pause.

"Roesch has arrived in London. I must see him," exclaimed the man.

"In London? I thought he was still at his post in the Ministry at Sofia," she said in a tone of surprise.

"He was fortunate enough to obtain early intimation of Oustromoff's intentions, and after warning me, escaped the same evening. He took steamer, I heard, from Trieste to London."

"Why associate yourself further with that man?" she urged. "Surely it will only add to the danger."

"What concerns myself likewise concerns him," he answered rather ambiguously.

"You have apparently of late become closer friends. For what reason?"

"You will see later."

"With some distinctly evil purpose, I have no doubt," she observed, "but remember that I have no further interest in any of your future schemes."

He grunted dubiously.

"Now that you think our fortunes have changed you contemplate deserting us, eh?" he snapped. "A single word to the Prince and you would conclude your career rather abruptly, I'm thinking."

"Is that intended as a threat?" she inquired in a calm voice.

"Take it as such if you wish," the man responded angrily. "Through your confounded bungling you've brought exposure upon us. We have only you to thank for it. You know me quite well enough to be aware that when I make threats they are never idle ones."

"And you are sufficiently well acquainted with me to know that I never run unnecessary risks."

"I know you to be a devilishly clever woman," he said. "But in your dealings with that man Heaton you showed weakness—a coward's weakness. All that he knows is through your own folly. You attempted to mislead him by your actions and letters, but he has, it seems, been a little too shrewd for you."

"And if he does know the truth—even, indeed, if he dared to inform the police—what direct evidence can he give, pray?" she queried. "He was blind, and therefore saw nothing. He is now mad, and nobody will believe him."

"Even though he may be an idiot his mouth is better closed," her companion growled.

His words startled me. This unseen man's intention was apparently to make a further attempt upon my life. But I chuckled within myself. Forewarned is forearmed.

Just at that moment I heard the waiter tap at the door, and opening it, announce the arrival of another visitor—a Mr. Roesch.

"Why, I wonder, has he sought you here?" exclaimed the man when the waiter had gone. "He must have some important news!"

Next moment the door was again thrown open, and the new arrival entered.

All three spoke quickly together in a foreign tongue. The man Roesch then made a brief statement which apparently held his two companions for some moments speechless in alarm. Then again they all commenced talking in low confidential tones in that strange language—Slav I believe it was.

Whatever it might have been, and although I understood no word of it, it brought back vividly to my memory the indelible recollection of the night of the tragedy at The Boltons.

I listened attentively. Yes, there was no mistake—those tones were familiar. That trio of voices were the same that with my sharpened ears I had overheard conversing in the inner room immediately before the commission of the crime.

I have said that my nerves were shattered. All the past was a torturing memory to me, but the quintessence of that torture was my failure to discover my love. I believed that she alone could supply the solution of the enigma, and what truth there was in that suspicion you shall duly see.

The three voices continued to speak in that foreign tongue for perhaps half an hour, during which period I was unable to form any idea of the trend of the newcomer's announcement.

Then I heard the visitors taking their leave, apparently with many of those gesticulated reassurances of respect which mark the shallow foreigner. I extinguished my light and opened my door cautiously. As they passed on their way down the corridor I succeeded in obtaining a very good view of the interesting pair. They were talking together, and I distinguished the man who had first called upon Edna by his deep voice. He was a short, thick-set, black-bearded man of forty, well dressed in black, with a heavy gold albert across his ample vest. His companion, whose name was apparently Roesch, was considerable older, about fifty-five or so, of spare build, erect, thin-faced, with long grey whiskers descending from either cheek and shaven chin. He wore a frock-coat and silk hat, and was of a type altogether superior to his companion.

The woman Grainger's coffee was brought to her as usual in the morning, but about ten o'clock she rang again, and when the chambermaid responded, said—

"Here are two letters. Post them for me in the box in the bureau, and tell them to send my bill at once. I leave at ten forty-five."

"Yes'm." And the girl departed to post the letters.

To whom, I wondered, were those letters addressed? Within my mind I strove to devise some plan whereby I could obtain a glance at the addresses. The box, however, was only at the foot of the stairs, therefore ere I could resolve upon any plan the girl had dropped them into it, and I heard her linen flounces beating along the corridor again. Those letters were in the post, and beyond my reach.

She had written those two missives during the night, and after the departure of her visitors. They had, no doubt, some connection with the matter which the trio had so earnestly discussed in that tantalizing foreign tongue.

In hesitancy I remained some little time, then a sudden thought occurred to me. I addressed an envelope to the hall-porter of my club, enclosing a blank sheet of paper, and then descending, posted it. The box was placed outside the bureau, and the instant I had dropped the letter in I turned, as though in anger with myself, and, entering the bureau, said to the clerk—

"I've unfortunately posted a letter without a stamp. Have you the key of the box?"

"The box belongs to the Post Office, sir," he answered. "But we have a key to it."

"Then I should esteem it a favor if you would recover my letter for me. It is most important that the addressee should not be charged for its postage. I regret that my absent-mindedness should give you this trouble."

The clerk took the key from a drawer at the end of the bureau, and opening the box, took out the half-dozen or so letters which it contained, and spread them upon the desk. Among them were two square, pale-blue envelopes. As I took my own letter and affixed a stamp I glanced eagerly at the addresses of both.

One bore the superscription: "Mr. P. Gechkuloff, 98 King Henry's Road, Hampstead, N.W."

Upon the other were the words which caused my heart to leap joyfully within me. They were—

"Miss Mabel Anson,
Langham Hotel, London."

I posted my letter, hurried upstairs, and paid my bill.

Edna had already packed her trunk, but had changed her mind, and did not intend leaving Hull that day. I heard her inform the chambermaid of her intention of remaining, then I left the hotel, and caught the ten forty-five express for London.

(To be Continued.)

The bare idea of getting bald is distasteful to any man.

DEVICE TO RECOVER GOLD.

Sunk 100 Years Ago in a British Warship.

To the mouth of the River Colne, off Brightlingsee, England, an extraordinary machine was towed and anchored the other day. It is to be used in a final attempt to recover the $2,500,000 treasure of gold, in coins and bars, which is said to have gone down in the British warship Lutine in 1797, near the Island of Terschelling, off the cost of Holland.

A portion of the treasure has been recovered, but an ordinary dredging plant is now useless, as the vessel has sunk into the sand. The new device is a great steel tube nearly 100 feet in length, and wide enough to allow a man to walk erect down its centre. At one end is a metal chamber provided with windows and doors, and at the other a medley of giant hooks and other tackle.

The appartus has just been completed, after years of work, by Messrs. Forrest and Co., shipbuilders, in their Wyvenhoe yard. "One end of the tube," explained a member of the firm, "will be clamped to the side of a steamship or barge. The other end, by means of water ballast tanks, will be sunk until it touches the bottom. Then, by means of compressed air, all the water will be forced from the chamber at the bottom of it, which will be flush upon the bed of the sea.

"Divers will walk down a stairway in the centre of the tube until they reach the submerged chamber. Here they will don their diving costumes, and, opening a series of watertight doors, will step straight out into the water. Engineers will be stationed in the chamber, and following the instructions of the divers, who will communicate with them by means of portable telephones, they will operate the mechanism of two powerful suction pumps or dredges which are fitted to the sides of the tube. These dredgers, it is hoped, will suck away the sand around the sides of the heavy chamber until it gradually sinks by its own weight right down on the dock of the wrecked ship. Then the divers, making their way from the chamber to the deck of the ship, and thence to the hold, will be able to transfer the treasure from the ship to the chamber by easy stages."

The great ocean liner rolled and pitched. "Henry," faltered the young bride, "do you still love me?" "More than ever, darling," was Henry's fervent answer. Then there was an eloquent silence. "Henry," she gasped, turning her pale, ghastly face away, "I thought that would make me feel better, but it doesn't!"

250,000 Acres at Auction!

RICHEST CANADA WHEAT LAND of THE SASKATOON & WESTERN LAND CO., Ltd.

To Be Offered at City of Regina October 12-13-14-15-16-17.

FREE RAILROAD ROUND TRIP FOR BUYERS.

Here are lands that are **near railroads**, nearly all within **ten** miles of an up-to-date railroad, to be offered at auction. They have been retailing at $10 to $15 per acre, but there are many tracts that would be bargains at $20. The Saskatoon & Western Land Co., Ltd., prefers to **wholesale** 250,000 acres of its holdings **in the heart of Saskatchewan**, and will therefore offer for sale this number of acres at this important sale.

Who knows but that some of these rich, fertile acres may be **yours** on a low bid? You do not have to live on this land to get the big bargain value. The market is rising. These lands are a big paying investment for the city man as well as the farmer.

Make your plans to go **now**. Arrange your business so you can be in Regina October 12, when The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s sale starts. Or go to Regina and get on the land **a few days previous to October 12**, so as to get acquainted with the great tract and determine what location you **prefer**. So far as is possible we will accommodate buyers by putting up at any time any special quarter, half or whole section. **We supply free maps of every acre we own in the heart of Saskatchewan.**

If you desire more complete **advance information**, send to our Regina office for

Large Map and 90-page Book Free.

Our map shows each and every section we own. It gives you a **true picture** of our holdings. It shows just how we selected the **most fertile and best located** acres available in the entire Province of Saskatchewan. It shows how ideally the lands are situate—how **near Regina**, how convenient to **Winnipeg** and the grain and stock markets, and the excellent railway facilities. Free. Write for the map to The Saskatoon & Western Land Co., Ltd., Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Our book is a storehouse of information on Western Canada grain lands. Contains ninety pages, and many faithful photographs of **land, crops, homes,** and features of interest in the heart of Saskatchewan. It lists all our property by quarter sections. Free. We want to send it to you. Write for it to The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s office in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s Land is Extra Choice Grain Land. You Get Title From the Crown — An Indisputable Title.

The Saskatoon & Western Land Co., Ltd., had the pick of 3,000,000 acres of best Saskatchewan prairie lands. We took in our grant **extra choice** acres—not all in one continuous piece, but a section here and there, so as to get the most fertile, the deepest soil, ground free from boulders, with best water, near railways—in fact, land ready for the plough, ready to yield the golden harvest and make profits from the very first. Think of it! 250,000 acres of these lands to be offered at public auction.

THE AUCTION.

The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s auction will be held at **Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Nowhere else.** It will be held in The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s own pavilion—nowhere else. It will be held October 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. **Remember those dates.** Don't get there late. Be on hand early. **Don't buy, under any circumstances, of anyone until the auction is on—no matter what you hear.** The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s land is extra choice. Don't take somebody else's word that they have land "just as good."

This land was especially selected—its title is from the Crown. The terms of payment will be the fairest. You will be dealing with a wealthy company that will always stand behind every promise and give you the most liberal treatment you can ask.

The company reserves the right to withdraw any of the lands from sale.

TERMS.

10 per cent. of the purchase price at time of sale, balance of regular first payment of $3.00 per acre in ten days, remainder in eight equal annual installments, with interest at 4 per cent. Survey fees of 10 cents per acre, payable with last installment, and without interest.

Upon a parcel being knocked down, the bidder shall immediately make the deposit of 10 per cent. of the purchase price with the Clerk of Sale. Otherwise the parcel may be put up again or withdrawn from sale.

One Crop Will More Than Pay For the Land.

Figure it out yourself. The average Saskatchewan yield is: Wheat, from 20 to 25 bushels per acre; oats, from 30 to 45 bushels per acre; barley, from 20 to 30 bushels per acre—and so on.

Free Railroad Fare to Buyers.

Every purchaser of 160 acres or more of The Saskatoon & Western Land Co.'s land will have the entire price of his railroad transportation paid back to him. You buy your ticket on the very low homeseekers' rates all the roads give, and we pay it back. That is an inducement for you to **come to the auction** and to **buy now.**

When purchasing your railroad ticket, get a regular railroad receipt from the railroad agent, showing the point from which you start and the amount paid, also the name of the railroad company, the date purchased and the signature of the railroad agent.

Railroad Rates, Excursions, Etc.

On September 25 railways issue homeseekers' excursion tickets for $33.75 from points in Ontario and Quebec to Regina, Sask. Ask your ticket agent for particulars.

Be on hand at Regina for the Great Land Auction, and remember, those who buy receive refund of their fare paid both to and from Regina, no matter whether they hold homeseekers' excursion tickets or regular first-class return tickets. For further information, Hotels, etc., write only to The Saskatoon & Western Land Co., Ltd., Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Make our office there your headquarters.

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