

Better Have CHAMBERLIN Examine Your Eyes.

## THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne

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In response to his summons a servant appeared and conducted the women to their rooms.

"Now, what devilish luck could have brought her here at this time?" said Neslerov to himself. "I must be cautious. But it is so long—she was not born—she can know nothing. But I must be discreet."

"Well, we are here," said the princess to her companion when they were alone. "Now, obey me; let me do the planning. Neslerov must not suspect us. It would ruin all, and there is no telling what he might do. The governor of a province in Siberia is almost supreme."

Her attendant shuddered. "I lived in dread of Siberia for twenty years!" she said, with a shudder. "And now you have brought me here."

"But not as a convict—as a friend, a woman, like myself, resolved to right a wrong."

The princess was soon ready and joined the governor in the dining room.

"I have just been thinking, Olga," he said, his face wreathed with smiles, "that it is at least three years since we met. Your face has not changed much, but you are now a woman and were then a little girl. You are one of the most beautiful women in Russia."

"Thank you."

"And, I might say, the richest."

"Nearly so. But the wealth brings its responsibilities. It is difficult in Russia to do those things that are just and proper with our wealth."

"I never found it so," said the governor, with a laugh.

"Perhaps," said Olga, "you are not interested in the question. To me it is a burning one. Our nobles have too much wealth and our lower classes have too little opportunity to rise. It is not so in England, France or America."

"You had better leave those questions for older heads, princess. You will become involved with the government before you know. You were not born to waste your beauty and talents in such matters. You were born to be admired, to enjoy your wealth."

"I do enjoy my wealth and do what good a girl can do with it. As to being admired, I meet few from whom admiration seems to come with sincerity."

"Oh, as to that, you cannot expect to find the courtiers at beauty's court all as gruff and outspoken as a drosky driver."

"I have met some who were," she said, laughing pleasantly.

They ate slowly, chatting the while.

"You have not quenched my thirst for knowledge," said the governor. "If I were in St. Petersburg and you did me the honor to ask me to visit you, it would even then surprise me. But that you have come to Tomsk, more than half way across Siberia, to visit me is, to say the least, amazing."

The princess gave her silvery laugh again.

"You are as concealed at any other nobleman I have met. I did not come to see you. I came, first, to ride on the new railway; second, to study the conditions existing in this part of the empire, and, third, to look into this new proposition of the czar to induce peasants to settle in Siberia along the line of the railway. It is a very good idea, if the country will support settlers."

"It will under proper help from the government at the start," replied Neslerov. "I am glad you came to me. We shall have a fine time making our investigations."

"I notice that you do not seem to have the free use of your arm," said Olga. "Have you been ill or injured?"

"A slight injury. I fell from an unruly horse."

"You must be more cautious. It must have been a wild beast. You have the name of being an excellent horseman."

When their meal was finished, they strolled together through the rooms of the palace.

"I am quite interested in your palace," said the princess. "It is not the finest I have seen, but it is excellent."

There are some barbarisms, but I presume you get accustomed to them—in Siberia."

"Yes, in Siberia one gets accustomed to almost anything," he answered.

She continued her inspection with interest and suddenly came to a stop before a painting. Neslerov's face became a shade paler.

"My cousin, whom I have never seen!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands and gazing raptly at the picture Vladimir had painted. "Surely, Nicholas, that must be Princess Alexandra, who married your elder brother."

"I think you are mistaken," said Neslerov. "You surely must have seen Alexandra."

"Yes, when a mere infant. It is only from other portraits that I recognize her. She was very beautiful. Oh, what a terrible sorrow to her! To lose her child, heir to a fine estate and princely title, and then lose her own life, so young, with the horrible mystery still unsolved as to whether she died of grief and a broken heart or by the hand of an enemy. Oh, that mystery of Graslov! Will it ever be solved?"

"I fear not," said Neslerov solemnly.

"I did not know you had this picture," said Olga. "It is much finer than any we have at home. It was done by a master hand."

"It was," assented Neslerov. The painting had saddened Olga, and she passed on, making no more of her laughing criticisms.



"My cousin, whom I have never seen!" she exclaimed.

She soon returned to her rooms, where her attendant was awaiting her. The woman's face was pale, and she seemed to be struggling with emotion. Olga stood before her, with a peculiar light in her eyes.

"Therese," she said, "an oil painting of my unfortunate cousin, Princess Alexandra, hangs in Neslerov's own room."

"What?" gasped the woman, starting up. Then, as some strange terror overcame her, she shuddered, and with the whispered cry "We are lost!" she fell to the floor unconscious.

### CHAPTER XVII.

PRINCESS OLGA BEGINS TO ACT.  
"NOW, Therese, tell me what you have learned. Why did the fact that the picture of Alexandra hangs upon the wall of Neslerov's room make you faint? You have learned something. Tell me."

Therese was sitting in a chair, her face white and drawn, and in her eyes was a bewildered look.

"It was not so much what I heard, princess, as what I knew and suspected," she answered.

"I know what you know. I suspect what you suspect. Tell me what you heard," she said sternly.

"It was in the serfs' hall," she said in reply to the princess. "I was eating; no one seemed to ask who I was, and they talked as servants do. Vladimir Pauloff is in danger of his life."

Princess Olga gave a start, but recovered her composure.

"Go on," she said. "Tell me all."

"It seems there is an American—I do not remember what they called him—but he is an American who builds bridges over the rivers for the new railway. He knows Vladimir Pauloff. He is also a friend of that American girl—you remember—we met at the fair in Moscow?"

"Frances Gordon? I remember her. She gave liberally to the charities. Well?"

"It would seem from what I heard that the governor is in love with her, and that she rejected him. These things are well known among the serv-

ants. It seems the American and Neslerov had a fight and Neslerov was injured."

"He told me he fell from a horse. Go on."

"It is believed among the servants that Vladimir is also in love with the American girl and that she is in love with him. And the American—I don't know—but he may be in love with her also."

"Three lovers! She is fortunate—no, I would say most unfortunate. With one true and honorable lover any woman is fortunate, but with three—and one like Neslerov! It is too much."

"You do not seem to suspect where the picture came from."

"Do you mean the oil painting of my cousin, the Princess Alexandra?"

"I mean it. You say it hangs on the wall of Neslerov's room. It is undoubtedly the one painted by Vladimir."

"And when Vladimir and his parents were sent to Siberia Neslerov took the painting?"

"Yes, Vladimir is talented, as you know—at least as I have told you."

"Then Vladimir must be near this place."

Therese shuddered again.

"He is—he is in the dungeons under this palace," she whispered in terror.

A sudden change came over the princess. She walked in agitation to and fro across the room.

"Then Neslerov must suspect that Vladimir holds the key to the mystery of Graslov," she said, stopping again before Therese.

"I do not know what he thinks. The American also is here under a charge of conspiring against the czar."

"Oh, then it becomes clearer. These Americans are shrewd. This one, perhaps, in order to gratify his love of truth, has set himself the task of discovering the truth about Graslov."

"Who knows?" asked Therese. "But how would he know anything about the mystery of Graslov?"

"True, but you say Vladimir and the American girl are in love. Vladimir may have discovered something and told the girl. She may have told the American, who may not be a lover, but a friend. She may have enlisted his efforts in the task of unraveling the mystery."

"It is possible."

"What else did you hear?"

"Nothing; that is all. The American was arrested as he was about to leave for Perm. Vladimir was brought from Tivolofsky, a small village near here."

"By the orders of Neslerov?"

"It must be, since they are in the dungeons of his palace."

"And that is all you heard?"

"All—everything."

"It is enough to place me upon the right scent. You must not, however, give way to these fits of unconsciousness. Be stronger, be brave."

"It is all very well, princess; but if you had lived for twenty years with the horror of that crime overshadowing you, with a constant fear of the Siberian mines weighing upon you, you would not be calm."

"Poor woman! I appreciate your feelings in the matter. But try to maintain your composure, for one mistake now, the slightest suspicion on the part of Neslerov, may destroy the efforts we have made during the last two years."

"Six months, princess."

"For you, since your husband died. I have been working upon this mystery since I returned from Paris two years ago. If God spares my life, I will avenge the crime that was committed against our branch of the Neslerovs."

That evening the princess met Neslerov in the dining room with no show of emotion. Her smile was as winning and her wit as sharp as ever.

"I have not seen you during the afternoon, fair cousin," said Neslerov. "But I have not forgotten you. I have been gathering the resources of Tomsk to give you a fitting welcome to our city. Tomorrow night there will be a reception and fete here in your honor."

"Tomorrow night? That is quickly done."

"It does not take long to arrange such a thing here. We have so few social pleasures that when the opportunity occurs we grasp it greedily. The officers of the garrison and the head officials, with their families, will attend. You must not expect to see the grandeur of a fete in St. Petersburg or Paris."

"It would weary me," said Olga.

The perfecting arrangements for the fete made Neslerov hurry away, and Olga was soon left to herself. She had resolved upon certain plans, but the activity of the palace in the preparations for the coming festivities seemed destined to balk her. She roamed through the great rooms alone, scanning the faces of those she met, speaking to few, but watchful for the opportunity she craved.

It was nearly midnight when she became discouraged and went to her room. The servants of the palace were still at work arranging the rooms for the dance.

But the princess did not retire. She sat down near a window and waited.

From the ballroom windows the glare of lights spread out upon the surrounding trees and buildings. From below came voices of those who were making ready for the reception.

Therese came in to prepare her mistress for bed.

"Not yet, Therese," said the princess wearily. "I shall not retire."

"You will make yourself ill," said Therese nervously.

"Do not fear—I shall not be ill. But I am not ready for bed. I must wait—and act."

"You will learn nothing tonight."

"It is a night to learn. Leave me alone."

Therese stood a moment watching the princess with a wistful, loving glance, and then she went to her own room.

The princess sat with scarcely a motion for more than two hours. An observer might easily have supposed she had gone to sleep. But suddenly the glare of the lights from the ballroom died away, and the princess rose to her feet.

"It is finished," she said, "and they are weary. Tomorrow night will be a severe one, and they will retire at once. Some one must be on guard—and gold is powerful. Tonight I must learn something."

Still she waited and soon all was silent in the palace.

"I wonder if Neslerov is asleep," she said. "Neslerov! I could almost hate the name, though it is my own. How so cruel and heartless a man became a member of our family I cannot conceive. Even though the relationship is remote, some cousinships removed, I believe, yet I regret that any should exist. No—not now—I am glad; for were he not sufficient relation to warrant my presence in his detestable palace I could not have this opportunity to learn the truth. Oh, Neslerov! Vengeance will be mine—and it will be sweet."

She had incased her feet in light Parisian slippers, and in these she stepped noiselessly from the room. The great bare corridor was dimly lighted and no person could be seen.

While caution was necessary, it was not because Olga feared. She was too powerful herself to fear injury in the palace of Neslerov. If the governor suspected the purpose of her visit, she would be no longer welcome, and the solution she had so long sought would be delayed.

Silently she crept down the great winding stairs into the main hall. This was a wide, high apartment, and from it opened many doors into other apartments. On one side were the offices of the government of the province, on the other the living rooms of the governor's household.

The doors upon the left, leading to the reception room, the governor's room, the great ballroom and the dining room, were closed. Two of those on the right were open. In one room there was a light, and from it came the subdued voices of two men and the odor of tobacco. The other room was dark.

The princess remembered these rooms. She had seen them in her inspection of the palace. That from which came the voices and in which a light was burning was the office of the superintendent of police. The one next to it was a smaller room, connected with the other by a door, which was locked. This small room had been intended for an office, but was now used for the purpose of storing books, records, police material and desks. It was part of the suit allotted to the superintendent of police.

Olga stood in the hall and listened. She heard the name of Paulpoff. With a fluttering heart she darted into the darkened room and took up her position near the closed door between that and the office.

The two speakers sat near that door, with a round table between them, and upon the table was a supply of liquor and cigars.

The work of preparing the palace for the festivities on the following night did not come under the supervision of the police, but all connected with the palace were interested, and these two were the last to retire.

The speakers in that other room were Jansky, superintendent of police, and Inspector Unsgethoph.

"The whole thing is a complete mystery to me," said Unsgethoph, speaking somewhat thickly, having drunk considerable liquor. "It is a mystery. First we receive one command, then another, and we do not know what to do. The governor is not wont to act thus."

"You are not the first to have felt the influence of this great mystery," said Jansky. "The governor is discreet."

"Oh, I said a complete mystery. I would not call it a great mystery. That would bring it to the dignity of a celebrated case."

"So it is. It is one of the most celebrated cases in all Russia."

## Facts Concerning Illegal Actions of Board

Four Dollars and Twenty Cents Per Week Paid for Boarding Prisoners. Fuel and Light Furnished Free.

History of the Illegal Acts by Which Sheriff Bell Was Overpaid \$250 in 1902.

Four Sessions of Board Fail to Act. After Waiting Two Months to Allow Board and Sheriff to Straighten Matters Without Publicity The Review Prints the Facts.

During the year 1902, by an illegal act of the board of supervisors Sheriff Bell was overpaid not less than \$250.00. The board has been fully advised of the facts ever since the January session but up to this time no steps have been taken to see that this sum is returned to the county treasury where it properly belongs. The REVIEW has been aware of the facts since early in January but has heretofore refrained from giving them to the public in order that the matter might be settled without public scandal and on the direct promise of a member of the board that the money would be refunded to the taxpayers at the special session held Feb. 3rd. Since that promise was made the board has been in session four times. The dates of the sessions were Feb. 3rd, Feb. 7th, March 2 and March 21st. The board was also informally in session on March 12 when the court house was sold. Nothing has been done and the REVIEW feels that it would not be doing its full duty toward the people were the facts longer suppressed.

### THE FACTS IN THE CASE.

The REVIEW regrets that the inaction of the board of supervisors forces it, in the interests of the taxpayers, to bring to light an illegal and unwarranted action which has cost the people of this county no less than \$250.00 during the past year. The REVIEW will simply state the facts, the people can draw their own conclusions.

In January 1902, Sheriff Henry Bell appeared before the board of supervisors and complained that he was not receiving sufficient compensation for boarding and lodging prisoners in the county jail. The price then paid was 12½ cents for each meal and 12½ cents for lodging or \$3.50 per week. Considering that an allowance of \$15.00 per month is made for washing etc, and that the county provides rent fuel, light and water it would seem that \$3.50 per week was sufficient.

But the Sheriff made the board think otherwise, in spite of the fact that the best boarding house in Denison charges but \$4.00 per week for board and lodging and the proprietor has to pay for taxes, light, fuel, water etc; in spite of the fact that students at the Denison Normal College, young men and young women from the best homes in the county receive like accommodations for \$2.75 per week, in spite of these facts, the board of supervisors on Jan. 18th 1902 raised the pay of the sheriff from 12½ cents to 15 cents or from \$3.50 to \$4.20 per week. Just think of it, the county paying more for boarding and lodging the drunks and bums and thieves of the county than the county recorder was paying for his own board and lodging.

But this is not all, were the matter one of extravagance only the people might "kick and be d—d" to use the words of our illustrious county treasurer, but this is not all—the raise as made by the board was absolutely illegal, in violation of the statutes, and without warrant in law.

The board yielded to the importunities of the poor under-paid sheriff and on Jan. 18, 1902, passed the following resolution.

From proceedings of the board of supervisors Jan'y. 18. 1902.  
"Resolved by the board that the compensation for the boarding of prisoners confined in the jail be fixed at 15 cents per meal and 15 cents per night for year 1902."

The above was the resolution, but had any member of the board looked in the Code of Iowa on page 252, section 511, paragraph 16 he would have found that the legislature had been looking out to head off just such obliging and careless boards and just such grasping sheriffs.

This is what the inquiring member of the board would have found had he looked in the Code of Iowa at the paragraph mentioned before voting for the above resolution.

"For boarding a prisoner a compensation of 12½ cents for each meal and not to exceed three meals in twenty-four consecutive hours and twelve and one-half cents for each night's lodging."

This is in the chapter devoted to the compensation of the sheriff. It is strange that the sheriff had never noticed this paragraph, for surely he would not knowingly have ask the board to commit an un-