

Better Investigate Chamberlin's Line Of Bicycles.

THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

By Ashley Towne

Copyright, 1903, by Charles B. Etherington

"What do you know?" "I know the truth." "What do you intend to do?" "Restore that which is lost and undo what was done by wickedness." An evil look came into his face, and he stepped toward the door. The lieutenant blocked it. "Out of the way, dog!" cried Neslerov. "I protect her highness." "You! You protect against my orders?" "There is a higher than you. I obey the czar." Neslerov started back, so powerful in effect is the name of the czar. "The czar?" "At the very door of the palace a bugle blew its blast. "Make way! Admit his excellency the governor general," came a voice. Neslerov went white and leaped at Olga. "You sent for him, and this means my death! We die together!" "In the name of the czar!" cried Olga, and the sword of the lieutenant touched the breast of Neslerov. "What means this?" "The voice came from a tall and soldierly man wearing a brilliant uniform, who blocked the doorway with his burly form. "De Muloff! Governor general!" gasped Neslerov. "Sit down," said the governor general sternly. "You sent for me in haste, fortunately. I came as soon as possible. Fortunately there was a train." "The railroad has saved me and the Duke of Graslov," said Olga. Neslerov darted a look of hatred to her. "Bring Therese, my attendant," said Olga to the lieutenant. There was another commotion at the entrance, and three soldiers and an officer came in with two prisoners. "To the governor!" cried the officer. "There was murder at Tivolofsky!" Olga started up, and so did Neslerov. The governor general turned calmly to see who had come. The two prisoners were Vladimir and Papa Paulpoff. "Bring them in here," ordered Olga. "Let them be brought before the governor general." "This man murdered the superintendent of police and Unsethoph," said the officer in charge. "True," said Vladimir. "I did." Neslerov was the picture of despair and baffled rage and hate. His glance was venomous, but his very helplessness made him baggard. Therese, white-lipped and shivering, came in. Neslerov looked from one to the other. He knew that something was coming—the end of his career. The governor general waited, looking chiefly at Olga, for from her he expected the first blow. "Look at that man, Therese!" commanded Olga. It was a dramatic scene as the girl stood with perfect poise and pointed her finger at Neslerov. "I see him," faltered Therese. "Who is he?" "Prince Nicholas Neslerov." "Prince Nicholas Neslerov, let me tell you what the governor general already knows," said Olga, and her voice was cold and steely. "For many years my youth prevented a clear understanding of things. I was born after the death of my unfortunate cousin and so did not fully take in the significance of the mystery of Graslov till a few years ago. But when I did learn of it I resolved to sift it to the bottom and make certain that the one who caused her death should be punished. For years my efforts were unavailing. I pursued every line of investigation that occurred to me, and in them all I had the sanction and assistance of the czar. At last, during a sojourn at Graslov in another name, I met this woman whom you have heard me call Therese. Do you know who she is? She is Mme. Dendoff, widow of that Dendoff who was the slave of your wicked father and yourself." Neslerov was too crestfallen already to show further effect of her words. He made no answer. "For twenty years this woman has lived with the truth locked in her bosom because she feared her husband. The governor general is here and will bear this case at once, and from that moment when he hears the truth you

are in his hands. Therese, who is that man?" She pointed at Vladimir as she spoke. "That—is—the Duke of Graslov?" said the woman firmly. "Tell your story." "It was twenty years ago, your excellency," said Therese, speaking directly to the governor general, "that the little Prince Alexis was lost. He was missing from the palace at Graslov one evening, and the poor princess was beside herself with grief and anxiety. A search was made, and my husband, who was in the service of the duke, returned from the Kama and reported that the child had been seen wandering on its banks, and he brought back a portion of its garments, which he said he found close to the water. It was believed that the child was drowned, and the princess grieved for her dead boy. The poor princess did not survive the shock long, and when she died there was trouble between the two branches of the Neslerovs. Her family claimed that the duke had misused her and caused her death. It was never settled, and the two families have since been enemies. "It was not less than two years after when, one night, while he was intoxicated, my husband said something that aroused my suspicion—that he knew what had become of the young prince. I taxed him with it, and he was maudlin enough to confide in me. He had been poor, but since the loss of the young prince he had not worked, but had plenty of money. This also caused me to suspect. He told me, in his drunken fashion, that the Duke of Graslov did not wish the son of the princess to inherit the title or estate. As the father of the boy had died he was the heir, but the duke preferred his younger son, Nicholas. "The two, the duke and Prince Nicholas, paid my husband to take the child and drown it. He was a wicked man, my husband, and he agreed. He did take the child to the Kama and was about to take from it the telltale clothes when it cried lustily, and a powerful man sprang from the bushes and took the child. There was a fight in which my husband was badly whipped. But he did not dare report to the duke that he had failed, and so he carried out the plans and reported the finding of the clothing at the river. This was the clothing he had taken off preparing to throw the child in the river. To me this revelation was a great shock, but my husband threatened my life if I ever breathed a word of it to a single person. I knew he would keep his threat, and so I dared say nothing, for the house of Graslov was rich and powerful, and I feared to speak even to the police. "Thus I lived year after year with the shadow of my husband's crime upon my heart, until I thought I would go mad. Moved by an impulse I could not control, I determined to learn if the child was alive. I found it in the house of the blacksmith Paulpoff at Perm. Having learned that the little Alexis was well and happy I felt easier, but resolved that when my opportunity came I would reveal the truth. The old duke died and Nicholas became his heir and finally became governor of Tomsk. A short time ago my husband died, and I was free to tell. There came to Graslov one day a beautiful girl, giving a name that was not familiar, but she was the picture of that lovely princess who had died, and I watched her. I knew she was searching for the truth, and I told her what I knew. We went to St. Petersburg, where she told the czar, and he gave her authority under his seal. We went back to Perm, but the Paulpoffs were on their way to Siberia. The princess resolved to follow, and this meeting is the result." "How did you know the boy in Paulpoff's house was the young prince?" asked the governor general. "I saw his mother's picture which had been around his neck. I recognized his face, his voice, his manner, and Paulpoff told me how he came into his possession." "This is strange," said the governor general, turning to the old man sternly. "How was it that you kept the young prince and did not disclose the fact that he was alive?" "It was the prayer of his poor mother," said Papa Paulpoff. "I, too, have my story. On that day I was wandering by the river and had been fishing. I heard the cry of a child. I ran toward the sound and saw the man taking off its clothing. He cursed it and struck it and said that its voice would soon be stilled. I knew he meant to murder the child, and so I attacked him. I was a powerful man then, though not nearly so powerful as Vladimir—as the prince—is now. We fought, and I severely whipped him. I then took the child home with me and resolved to restore him to his parents, for I supposed he had been taken for revenge by enemies. When I saw the beautiful face of the princess, I knew it must be the boy's mother, and so I began to think who among the nobles who lived near the Kama had such a woman. I had heard of the beauty of the Princess Neslerov, and so I went to find her, leaving the child at the forge. I saw her at Graslov and asked to be alone with her. She ordered her women away. I showed her the portrait of my picture," she cried—"the picture that was on little Alexis! Oh, what have you to tell me?" "I told her what had happened, how I had taken the boy and that he was safe and well in my house. She began to weep tears of mingled joy and sorrow. "Who are you? What is your name?" she asked. "Michael Paulpoff, princess, I told her. "Oh, Michael Paulpoff," she cried, and it seemed that her heart would break—"can I trust you?" "With anything, lady, I answered. "You are welcome to the life or death of Michael Paulpoff." "Listen!" she whispered, turning each way to see that we were not watched. "I am in the house of enemies. My husband, who was the heir of the duke, is dead. My little son would be the heir of this estate, but the duke prefers that his own younger son should inherit, and so they have plotted to destroy my child. Thank God for placing you on this earth, Michael Paulpoff! You were sent to save my boy. And now listen. Were he to return here or were it to be known that he was alive, no matter in what part of Russia he might be, they would manage in some way to kill him. Even now I tremble lest some spy overhear our words and reveal this truth. I do not wish to have you relinquish him and will give you something now, but you must never come to me. Some day I will come to you and claim my boy. Will you swear, Michael Paulpoff, to cherish my boy and preserve this secret?" "I gave the promise, excellency, and I have kept it. But she also said, 'In case I die, Michael Paulpoff, guard my boy as you would your own, for I think he will be like his father—strong, but no match for the wicked and designing ones. Do not permit any one ever to know this truth.' "I have obeyed, excellency. The boy was named Vladimir, and we soon came to love him as our own. He was, as the princess said, strong and of an easy going, simple temperament. He grew up to help me in the forge. The princess did die, and so I held my tongue, as she bade me. But Vladimir—or Prince Alexis—was talented, and he learned to paint. He discovered one day the picture of his mother and became enamored of it. He wished to paint it, and I permitted him. Then one day Neslerov came and saw it. I was frightened, for I knew he would suspect, and I knew from his manner that we would soon hear from him again. "We were charged with conspiracy, excellency, we who had honest hearts and had never wronged any one, and were bundled off to Siberia. We were sent to Tomsk, where no doubt Neslerov intended to kill the young man when he got an opportunity. Then one day that American named Denton came to our hut in Tivolofsky. In some way he had learned of the picture. I do not know why he was interested in Vladimir, but he asked to see the picture and questioned me. "Paulpoff," he said, 'Vladimir is not your son.' "I shivered, for I did not know but he was a friend of the governor. But he said he was going to learn who Vladimir was, so I told him the story. He said that Vladimir could not be any worse off than at present, and he could secure the help of the government to restore the estate to him and punish Nicholas Neslerov. He took the picture, and some one came to our hut after that and whipped my wife to death. Vladimir swore vengeance, and today he has killed Jansky and Unsethoph." "This is a strange story of cruelty and crime," said the governor general. "But, so far as you are concerned, I congratulate you, Prince Neslerov, duke of Graslov. And this faithful old man, whose life is almost run, how can I show my appreciation of what he has

done for Russia? Paulpoff, you shall name your own reward, and it is yours." "To live with Vladimir," said the old man simply. "And this American! Where is he?" "Wounded; lying in the house of a priest at Tivolofsky," answered Vladimir, or, as he should now be called, Alexis. "Nicholas Neslerov, what have you to say?" asked the governor general. "It is a lie," said Nicholas. "Your own face does not indicate it. I believe this is the truth. You are a prisoner! Call the officer of the guard!" "I am here, your excellency!" "This lieutenant," said Olga, "whose name I do not know, assisted me in freeing the prince from the dungeons under this palace. I told him he would be a captain." "Your name?" said the governor general. "Ormidoff." "Captain Ormidoff, conduct this prisoner to the same dungeon in which he had confined the prince, and see that

you—Jack, I want to marry if— you want me." "Frances?" "That's right," said the soft voice of the old priest. "He is all right now. I say to you, Denton, that an angel hovered at your bedside, and it was not the angel of death. It was a strong, fine young woman." "I nursed you, Jack, and papa has been here every day." "And I'm here now," said the voice of Gordon. "Is he awake?" "He is awake, but he hasn't said he wants to marry me," said Frances, with a laugh. "He don't need to say it. Well, old chap, I'm glad you've pulled through, but I'm hanged if I think you would if it hadn't been for Frances." "I am sure of it," he answered, "and I am going to spend all the rest of my life paying her for it." She laughed—the happiest laugh of her life—and stooped and kissed him. THE END.

CASSINI CALLS ON HAY. United States Protests Against Russia's Manchurian Demands. Washington, April 27.—Russia's demands in Manchuria and their effect on American interests were the subject of a conference between Secretary Hay and Count Cassini, the Russian ambassador, which occurred at Secretary Hay's house and lasted for nearly an hour. It is denied that the ambassador brought official advices from his government, but the fact that he is still suffering from an attack of lumbago which has confined him to the embassy for several weeks, is evidence of the urgency of the call. Steps already have been taken by the state department to ascertain the true inwardness of Russia's latest move. Ambassador McCormack at St. Petersburg has been instructed by cable to present to the Russian foreign office a note which, while diplomatically known as one of inquiry, is in substance a strong protest against Russia's demands. Cabled instructions also have been sent to Minister Conger at Peking to express to the Chinese authorities the dissatisfaction of the United States with Russia's demands and our hope that China will not accede to them. In the department's note, which Ambassador McCormack probably has presented already, Russia's attention is called to the assurances which repeatedly have been given the United States relative to the preservation of the integrity of China and the continuance of the open door policy. Russia also is reminded of the severe blow to American trade which must follow the granting of the first two demands, that no more ports or towns in Manchuria be opened and that no additional foreign consuls be admitted. Appreciating the fact that the interests of this country in Manchuria are those of trade and not territory, Russia, it is stated, is disposed to make certain trade concessions to the United States in Manchuria at the proper time.

LEE RESIGNS HIS OFFICE Missouri's Lieutenant Governor Gives Up Post. Resignation is Mailed to Governor Dockery and Becomes Effective at Once—Senator Thomas L. Rubey Succeeds to the Office. St. Louis April 27.—Lieutenant Governor John A. Lee has resigned his office as assistant gubernatorial executive of Missouri. The resignation was mailed to Governor Dockery at Jefferson City after Mr. Lee had spent much of the day in conference with his advisers. It is not necessary that the resignation be accepted by Governor Dockery. Under the constitution of the state a resignation is self operative and becomes effective the moment it is filed with the governor. Senator Thomas L. Rubey of La Plata, Mo., president pro tem of the senate, who represents the Ninth senatorial district, succeeds to the office of lieutenant governor. Lieutenant Governor Lee's resignation is voluntary. Until Saturday he was undecided what course he would pursue and declined to say whether he would resign. After consultation with his advisers he decided to withdraw from office and he announced to his friends that he had become a private citizen. He expressed gratification in laying aside the cares and responsibilities of office and remarked that holding a position of trust was a thankless job at the best. Mr. Lee seemed relieved as a result of his action. He declined to talk of the possibilities of the grand jury investigation now in progress or of what his future action would be in regard to the inquiry. Mr. Lee gave out the following public statement: "A desire to retire from political life and personal publicity has prompted my resignation. Now that I am just a private citizen I hope that my enemies and critics will forget some of my faults and mistakes and try to remember, if possible, some of the things that I might be commended for. If one has failed to fulfill public requirements and has made an error, it seems to me that when he voluntarily relinquishes all claims to office and honor and sets out to make whatever reparation he can that he should at least be permitted to continue to live. I feel that my effort to reform abuses in legislative matters has brought upon me troubles that I could have avoided by a policy of silence and concealment and that determination to do right and refusal to be deterred therefrom has brought about my political downfall." Senator Rubey, who is forty-one years of age, was formerly a member of the faculty of mines and metallurgy at Rolla, Mo., and resigned this position to engage in the banking business at Macon. Later he moved to Lebanon and was elected to the senate in 1900. During his legislative career he voted and worked against the interest of the baking powder combine.



"I am your slave forever."

UNGOVER VIGILANTES' WORK.

Plow Turns Up Remains of Man Lynched Ten Years Ago. Butte, Neb., April 27.—The mystery surrounding the sudden disappearance of old man Hill and his son Charles, in 1893, was undoubtedly solved so far as the latter is concerned, when Charles Daily plowed up a skeleton on his farm which was located on the south bank of the Niobrara river in Holt county. The remains had been buried face down, evidently in a big hurry and were identified by people who had known him in life. It has always been pretty well understood that the Holt county vigilantes made away with the hills, but up till now no trace of them was ever discovered and it was the general supposition that the vigilantes hung them first and then sunk their bodies in the quicksand of the Niobrara. The incident recalls the fact that the principal actors in the Barrett Scott tragedy, which happened a few miles from where the remains of Charles Hill were found, have nearly to a man left this country. Election Riots in Spain. Madrid, April 27.—The general elections are reported to have resulted favorably to the republicans, who obtained victories in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and other large towns. Slight rioting occurred at Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada and elsewhere. At Barcelona several persons were wounded by revolver shots. Russia's reason for contending for the closed door in Manchuria is the claim that the open door is not a commercial, but a political question. She continues to assure the United States that in some way this country's interests will be protected in Manchuria.

Seeks a Successor to Tyner.

Washington, April 27.—Postmaster General Payne had a talk with Attorney General Knox about a suitable man to put in charge of the legal division of the postoffice department. As General Tyner, the assistant attorney general, has been removed, and Mr. Christianey, the officer temporarily in charge, is to remain away pending the investigation, it becomes imperative to provide another man in the place, at least temporarily. The question of the selection of some one to succeed General Tyner permanently will be taken up by Postmaster General Payne very soon. Pole Vault Record Smashed. Des Moines, April 27.—H. Thurman Chapman of Drake university, in Des Moines, broke the world's pole vault record at the home field, making a vault of twelve feet. The world's record was eleven feet and ten and one-half inches, held by Clapp of Yale, who has been physical instructor at the Keokuk (Ia.) Young Men's Christian association for two years. American Squadron to Greet Loubet. Bona, Algeria, April 27.—When President Loubet arrived here he received a telegram from Foreign Minister Delcasse, who is at Tunis, informing him that the American squadron will proceed to Marseilles to greet the president when he arrives at that port, April 29, and to salute in honor of his return to France.