

"Will you have Sophia for your king?"

"Sophia for our king!" they cried. Lukovitch raised his sword again. All raised swords or hands. The solemn words "God hears us!" were spoken from every mouth.

"It was monseigneur's wish. Let us avenge him! God hears me!" "God hears you!" came all the voices. The ceremony was finished. Six men took up the board on which the king lay, carried it down from the rostrum and along the street to the guardhouse.

Following her dead, she passed out of sight. Immediately the crowd began to disperse, though most of the men with arms gathered around Lukovitch and seemed to await his orders.

"I wish we could get her safe out of it," he said. "Isn't it wonderful, her being here?"

"Yes, but I'd forgotten that." Dunstanbury was still by the window. He had been thinking that his service now would not be to monseigneur. Yet no doubt Basil had mentioned the wisest form of service.

"Yes, old fellow—wonderful! Sophy Grouch! Queen of Kravonia! It beats Macbeth hollow!"

"It's pretty nearly as dreary," said Basil, with a discontented grunt.

"I find it pretty nearly as exciting," Dunstanbury said, "and I hope for a happier ending. Meanwhile—he buckled the leather belt which held his revolver around his waist—"I'm for some breakfast, and then I shall go and ask that tall fellow who did all the talking if there's anything I can do for King Sophia. By Jove, wouldn't Cousin Meg open her eyes?"

"You'll end by getting yourself stuck up against the wall and shot," Basil grumbled.

"If I do I'm quite sure of one thing, old fellow—and that is that your wooden old mug will be next in the line of thereabouts."

"I say, Dunstanbury, I wish I could have saved him!"

"So do I. Did you notice her face?" Williamson gave a scornful toss of his head.

"Well, yes, I was an ass to ask that!" Dunstanbury admitted candidly. It would certainly not have been easy to avoid noticing Sophy's face.

At 6 o'clock that morning Max von Hollbrandt took horse for Slavna. His diplomatic character at once made it proper for him to rejoin his legation and enabled him to act as a messenger with safety to himself. He carried the tidings of the death of the king and of the proclamation of Sophy. There was no concealment. Volseni's defiance to Slavna was open and avowed. Volseni held that there was no true Stefanovitch left and cited the will of the last of the royal house as warrant for his choice. The gauntlet was thrown down with a royal air.

It was well for Max to get back to his post. The diplomatists in Slavna and their chiefs at home were soon to be busy with the affairs of Kravonia. Mistitch had struck at the life of even more than his king—that was to become evident before many days had passed.



Chapter Twenty-nine

IT is permissible to turn with some relief, although of a kind more congenial to the cynic than the admirer of humanity, from the tragedy of love in Volseni to the comedy of politics which began to develop itself in Slavna from the hour of the proclamation of young Alexis.

The first result of this auspicious event—following so closely on the issue of Captain Mistitch's expedition, was to give all the diplomatists bad colds. Some took to their beds, others went for a change of air, but one and all had such colds as would certainly prevent them from accepting royal invitations or being present at state functions.

Young Alexis had a cold, too, and was consequently unable to issue royal invitations or take his part in state functions. Countess Ellenburg was even more affected—she had lumbago—and even General Stefanovics was advised to keep quiet for a few days.

Only Colonel Stafnitz's health seemed proof against the prevailing epidemic. He was constantly to be seen about, very busy at the barracks, very busy at Suleiman's tower, very gay and cheerful on the terrace of the Hotel de Paris, but then he, of course, had been in no way responsible for recent events. He was a soldier and had only obeyed orders. Naturally his health was less affected. He was, in fact, in very good temper except when he touched on poor Captain Hercules' blundering, violent

mission," he said decisively to Captain Markart. The captain forbore to remind him how it was that Mistitch had been sent on one. The way in which the colonel expressed his opinion made it clear that such a reminder would not be welcome.

The coterie which had engineered the revolution was set at sixes and sevens by its success. The destruction of their common enemy was also the removal of their common interest. Sophy at Volseni did not seem a peril real enough or near enough to bind them together. Countess Ellenburg wanted to be regent. Stefanovics was for a council, with himself in the chair. Stafnitz thought himself the obvious man to be commandant of Slavna. Stefanovics would have agreed—only it was necessary to keep an eye on Volseni! Now, if he were to be commandant, while the colonel took the field with a small, but picked, force! The colonel screwed up his mouth at that. "Make Praslok your headquarters and you'll soon bring the sheepskins to their senses," Stefanovics advised insidiously. Stafnitz preferred headquarters at Suleiman's tower! He was not sure that coming back from Praslok with a small force, however picked, would be quite as easy as going there.

In the back of both men's minds there was a bit of news which had just come to hand. The big guns had been delivered and were on their way to Slavna, coming down the Krath in barges. They were consigned to the commandant. Who was that important officer now-to-be?

When thieves fall out honest men come by their own. The venerable saying involves one postulate—that there shall be honest men to do it. In high places in Slavna this seemed to be a difficulty, and it is not so certain that Kravonia's two great neighbors to east and west quite filled the gap. These powers were exchanging views now. They were mightily shocked at the way Kravonia had been going on. Their ministers had worse colds than any of the other ministers, and their press had a great deal to say about civilization and such like topics. Kravonia was a rich country, and its geographical position was important. The history of the world seems to show that the standard of civilization and morality demanded of a country depends largely on its richness and the importance of its geographical position.

The neighbor on the west had plenty of mountains, but wanted some fertile plains. The neighbor on the east had fertile plains adjacent to the Kravonian frontier and would like to hold the mountain line as a protection to them. A farseeing statesman would have discerned how important correct behavior was to the interests of Kravonia! The great neighbors began to move in the matter, but they moved slowly. They had to see that their own keen sense of morality was not opposed to the keen sense of morality of other great nations. The right to feel specially outraged is a matter for diplomatic negotiations, often, no doubt, of great delicacy.

So in the meantime Slavna was left to its own devices for a little longer—to amuse itself in its light hearted, unremorseful, extremely unconscious way, and to frown and shake a distant fist at grim, gray, sad little Volseni in the hills. With the stern and faithful band who mourned the dead prince neither Stefanovics nor Stafnitz seemed for the moment inclined to try conclusions, though each would have been glad to see the other undertake the enterprise. In a military regard, moreover, they were right. The obvious thing, if Sophy still held out, was to wait for the big guns. When once these were in position the old battlements of Volseni could stand scarcely longer than the walls of Jericho. And the guns were at the head of navigation on the Krath now, waiting for an escort to convey them to Slavna. Max von Hollbrandt—too insignificant a person to feel called upon to have a cold—moved about Slavna much amused with the situation and highly gratified that the fruit which the coterie had plucked looked like turning bitter in their mouths.

Within the palace on the river bank young Alexis was strutting his brief hour vastly pleased, but Countess Ellenburg was at her prayers again, praying rather indiscriminately against everybody who might be dangerous—against Sophy at Volseni, against the big neighbors, whose designs began to be whispered; against Stefanovics, who was fighting so hard for himself that he gave little heed to her or to her dignity; against Stafnitz, who might leave her the dignity, such as it was, but certainly, if he established his own supremacy, would not leave her a shred of power. Perhaps there were spectators also against whose accusing shades she raised her petition—the man she had deluded, the man she had helped to kill—but that theme seems too dark for the comedy of Slavna in these days. The most practical step she took, so far as this world goes, was to send a very solid sum of money to a bank in Dresden. It was not the first remittance she had made from Slavna.

Matters stood thus—young Alexis having been on the throne in Slavna and Sophy in Volseni for one week—when Lepage ventured out from Zerkovitch's sheltering roof. He had suffered from a chill by no means purely diplomatic; but, apart from that, he had been in no hurry to show himself. He feared to see Rastatz's rat face peering for him. But all was quiet. Sterkoff and Rastatz were busy with their colonel in Suleiman's tower. In fact, nobody took any notice of Lepage. His secret, once so vital, was now gossip of the market place. He was secure, but he was also out of a situation. He walked somewhat forlornly into St. Michael's square, and, as luck would have it—Lepage thought it very bad luck—the first man he ran against was Captain Markart. Uneasy in his conscience, Lepage tried to

mind. His head was sound again, and, on cool reflection, he was glad to have slept through the events of what Stefanovics' proclamation had styled "the auspicious day." He greeted little Lepage by the arm, seized him with cordiality and carried him off to drink at the Golden Lion. Without imputing any serious lack of sobriety to his companion, Lepage thought that this refreshment was not the first of which the good humored captain had partaken that afternoon, his talk so very free.

"Well, here we are," he said. "We did our best, you and I, Lepage. Our consciences are clear. As for subjects we have now to accept the existing regime."

"What is it?" asked Lepage. "I've been indoors a week."

"It's Alexis—still Alexis! Long live Alexis!" said Markart, with a laugh. "You surely don't take Baroness Dobra into account?"

"I just wanted to know," said Lepage, drinking thoughtfully. "And—er—captain—behind Alexis? Guiding the youthful king? Countess Ellenburg?"

"No doubt, no doubt. Behind him his very pious mother, Lepage."

"And behind her?" persisted Lepage. Markart laughed, but cast a glance round and shook his head.

"Come, come, captain, don't leave an old friend in the dark, just where information would be useful."

"An old friend! Oh, when I remember my aching head! You think me very forgiving, M. Lepage."

"If you knew the night I spent, you'd forgive me anything," said Lepage, with a shudder of reminiscence.

"Ah, well," said Markart after another draft, "I'm a soldier. I shall obey my orders."

"Perfect, captain! And who will give them to you, do you think?"

"That's exactly what I'm waiting to see. Oh, I've turned prudent! No more adventures for me!"

"I'm quite of your mind, but it's so difficult to be prudent when one doesn't know which is the strongest side."

"You wouldn't go to Volseni?" laughed Markart.

"Perhaps not, but there are difficulties nearer home. If you went out of this door and turned to the left, you would come to the offices of the council of ministers. If you turned to the right and thence to the right again and on to the north wall, you would come, captain, to Suleiman's tower. Now, as I understand, Colonel Stafnitz—"

"Is at the tower and the general at the offices, eh?"

"Precisely. Which turn do you mean to take?"

Markart looked round again. "I shall sit here for a bit longer," he said. He finished his liquor thereby perhaps, adding just the touch of openness lacking to his advice and, leaning forward, touched Lepage on the arm.

"Do you remember the prince's guns, the guns for which he bartered Captain Hercules?"

"Aye, well!" said Lepage.

"They're on the river, up at Kolskol now. I should keep my eye on them. They're to be brought to Slavna. Who do you think'll bring them? Keep your eye on that."

"They're both scoundrels," said Lepage, rising to go.

Markart shrugged his shoulders. "The fruit lies on the ground for the man who can pick it up. Why not? There's nobody who's got any right to it now."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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REST AND SLEEP.

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THE woman of the office or shop has more cause than the housekeeper to wear out in days like these. The housekeeper should find time for a nap; she can get into loose clothing, while the business woman must fight it out until the end of the day's work. The tired woman comes home from the office completely fagged out. She is nervous; she finds she cannot rest; she rolls and tosses through the night, a victim of insomnia. The housewife, perhaps the mother of a large family and doing her own housework, should take some little leisure in the middle of the day, if it only be for ten minutes. Slip away from cares and duties and throw yourself down on a lounge or bed for a little while. Try to relax every muscle until your body feels heavy. Then try and stop thinking; relax your mind, throw off worry. For those few minutes or half an hour, he perfectly still. This is the advice of the greatest woman's specialist of our time, Dr. R. V. Pierce, founder of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, at Buffalo, N. Y. Furthermore, he says, the woman who is employed in stores or shops, working at the highest tension all day, must above all things get a good night's rest. A tepid bath and a cup of cocoa or warm milk before going to bed, or perhaps a little light exercise, with the window open so that you breathe pure air, will act upon the nerves, quieting them and soothing the tired-out woman into the first sweet slumber which leads to a long, restful sleep. If such simple treatment, says Dr. Pierce, has no effect on the nervous system, then the woman should resort to some vegetable tonic which will soothe the nerves. If there is a headache, a backache, a sensation of irritability or twitching and uncontrollable nervousness, something must be wrong with the head or back, a woman

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Time Table

In Effect April 26, '08

NORTH BOUND. No. 236—Paducah-Cairo Accommodation leave 6:42 a.m. No. 206—Evansville and Louisville Express 11:20 a.m. No. 26—Chicago-Nashville Limited 8:15 p.m.

SOUTH BOUND. No. 25—Nashville and Chicago Limited 6:42 a.m. No. 205—Evansville-Paducah-Louisville Express arrive 6:25 p.m. No. 321—Evansville and Nashville Mail 3:50 p.m.

Nashville-Chicago Limited carries free reclining chair cars and buffet sleeper. All trains run daily. Trains No. 25 and 26 make local stops between Nashville and Princeton. G. R. Newman, Agent.



TIME TABLE.

TRAINS GOING NORTH. No. 62—St. Louis Express, 10:16 a.m. No. 64—St. L. Fast Mail, 10:05 p.m. No. 92—C. & St. L. Lim., 6:09 a.m. No. 56—Hopkinsville Ac., 8:55 p.m. No. 94—Dixie Flyer, 5:43 p.m.

TRAINS GOING SOUTH. No. 61—St. L. Express 5:19 p.m. No. 58—St. L. Fast Mail 5:37 a.m. No. 93—C. & N. O. Lim. 11:50 p.m. No. 65—Hopkinsville Ac. 7:05 a.m. No. 95—Dixie Flyer, 9:37 a.m.

No. 52 and 54 connect at St. Louis 2 points west. No. 51 connects at Guthrie for Memphis Lin. points as far south as Erin and for Louisville Cincinnati and the East. No. 63 and 65 make direct connection at Guthrie for Louisville, Cincinnati and all points north and east thereof. No. 63 and 65 also connect for Memphis and way points. No. 62 runs through to Chicago and will not carry passengers to point South of Evansville. Also carries through sleepers to St. Louis.