

Mother's Ear

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Hunted to Death.

The jealously-guarded secret of 'Marie Derval,' the mysterious woman who committed suicide at Liffen's Hotel, Pimlico, London, two months ago, after carefully destroying nearly every tangible clue to her identity, is (says the London 'Chronicle') revealed at last. She was a Russian police spy, and she killed herself in despair of escaping the vengeance of the Nihilists, who had sentenced her to death two years before for the betrayal of their comrades to justice.

The amazing life story of this female spy, which contains all the elements of a sensational novel of the secret service type, is thus told by the Chronicle's Paris correspondent:

There is not much doubt now that the mysterious 'Marie Derval' was a Russian woman, Helene de Krebel, thirty-seven or more years of age. She belonged to a very high family in Russia, and in her time appears to have played many, some say sinister, parts on the stage of Russian politics.

For some time she had been a fugitive from Russia. She had travelled extensively, had plenty of leisure, and was not without money. At the present moment, as I have been able to ascertain, there is a sum of £80 standing to her credit at one of the foreign banks in Paris.

Professing the warmest sympathy with the revolutionary propaganda, she is said to have joined the ranks of the Terrorists some years ago. There is some doubt whether her apparent enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause was at that time feigned or real, or whether, tempted by the golden bait held out to her, she consented to sell her comrades and become a spy. This is one of the details in her remarkable career which those outside Russian secret police circles will never know. It appears to be clear, at all events, that Helene de Krebel, to give her the name under which she lived in Paris, proved a valuable police ally, and kept the authorities posted as to the doings of the Revolutionaries. Her timely warnings are believed to have foiled many plots, and on one occasion, it is said, saved the life of the Czar himself.

But this female Gapon had her day. Like the executed Russian Pope, she was at length suspected by her companions. To try her fidelity they resolved to put her to a terrible test. She was chosen to carry out the assassination of an official marked down for death by the Revolutionaries. She feigned assent and undertook the task, apparently with zealous fervor, but instead of carrying out the commands of the Nihilist executive, she supplied the details of the plot to the police. Then, with the connivance of the authorities, she fled from Russia. Some of the conspirators were arrested, others, receiving timely warning, contrived to escape.

The woman's treachery soon became known, for she was a fugitive, and there was no disguising from the Revolutionaries who it was that had dealt them this treacherous blow. The traitress was formally tried by the revolutionary tribunal, found guilty, and condemned to death. For about two years the terror-stricken woman—for she well knew the fate hanging over her—lived the life of an Ishmael. She wandered from country to country, seeking to hide her identity and escape the retribution of the betrayed. She spent some time in America, and went to England, subsequently coming to France, and then going to America again. Tortured by haunting fear, she never remained long in one place.

About seven months ago Helene de Krebel was back once more in Paris in another desperate effort to escape Nihilist vengeance. She took humble lodgings in a secluded part of Neuilly. Here she lived quite alone, rarely leaving the house, and receiving no visitors.

But her period of quietude did not last long. One day during the first week in March the fugitive received a letter which upset her terribly. Others in the house remember the incident well, for it was at first thought she had gone mad. She shut herself in her room, and insisted on locking and barring the door. She wept, shrieked aloud, and walked the room as one demented. When she recovered from this paroxysm, Mme. de Krebel announced her intention of leaving Paris forthwith. She wrote a letter to her parents in Russia announcing that she was going to commit suicide. In great haste she packed four large boxes, which she sent to a local furniture warehouse to be stored. She set aside a quantity of luggage, which

she took with her to London, and telling the people in the house that she would not return, she quitted her lodgings.

The letter that wrought such a change in her plans, and caused her so much anguish, has not been found. The assumption is that it was from some friendly hand, warning her that she had been tracked down by the enemy, who had decreed her death, and bidding her take measures to protect herself by instant flight. Tired of the struggle, and driven frantic by the unceasing flight, Helene de Krebel anticipated the vengeance of those who were seeking her. She had no relatives in Paris. Beyond one or two intimate friends, her banker, and the people in the house in which she lived, no one in Paris knew her.

Some of the clothing and jewellery left behind at the Pimlico Hotel is being sent to Paris for identification. The four trunks left in the furniture warehouse have been opened. The keys of the dead woman's trunks were sent over from London, and fitted the locks of those stored at Neuilly. Now the trunks have been sealed up, not only by the police, but also by the Russian Embassy.

Bambaata and 'John Bull.'

The Briton is ever-prone to despise his enemy and he has had to swallow some pretty sharp lessons in consequence. The colored gentleman known as Bambaata seems at this present writing inclined to make a good deal of trouble for the South African authorities; and it is 'unto them'—as the expressive poker phrase goes—to see that a force adequate in all things takes the field against the rebels. John Bull has a habit of starting his military operations with a force too ridiculously small to be effective. It is only when disaster opens his eyes to the character of the foe that a really adequate supply of men and munitions is despatched.

Take the previous Zulu war, for instance. At first the British general, Lord Chelmsford, remarked that the only thing he was afraid of was that the Zulus would not fight. The raising of native levies was cried out against, although Lord Chelmsford pointed out that the regular troops at his disposal were too few for the work to be done. The inadequacy of the British force, and the commander's contempt for the fighting qualities of Cetewayo's warriors—persisted in despite the warnings of John Dunn and other experts—was bloodily commented on in the disastrous field of Isandula. A Zulu army, 25,000 strong, rushed the British camp, and assailed all but a few fugitives. Five hundred and thirty officers perished in the slaughter.

Of course, directly the disaster became known in England, reinforcements were hurried out, including cavalry, for which the British commander had vainly begged. Eight thousand men were despatched from England, and before the reinforcements from home could land, reinforcements came from Ceylon and St. Helena. Sir Garnet (now Viscount) Wolseley was later sent out to supersede Lord Chelmsford; but before he arrived the decisive battle of Ulundi had been fought, and the Zulu war of 1879 was at an end. Instead of lasting two months, as would have happened had a British victory instead of a Zulu triumph opened the campaign, the war had been prolonged for over half a year, with much sheer waste of British lives and treasure.

'I shall eat my Christmas dinner in Pretoria,' General Buller said, as he sailed away to command the South African field force on Oct. 14, 1899. Or, rather, perhaps some imaginative reporter put this boast into the mouth of the stern and silent soldier. Anyhow, everybody thought the war would be over in about three months. It was another instance of the Briton's ineradicable habit of despising his enemy. The inventions of Ladysmith, Mafeking, and Kimberley, the disasters of Stormberg, Nicholson's Nek, and Magersfontein in quick succession, were so many hard slaps in the face for complacent John Bull, and made the worthy gentleman set his teeth and realize with a half-angry bewilderment that he was in for a bigger job than he anticipated. And so it proved; for the war lasted two and a half years, and the 'fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay' had swollen into a gigantic army of nearly 400,000 before peace was restored.—'T. A. T.' (London).

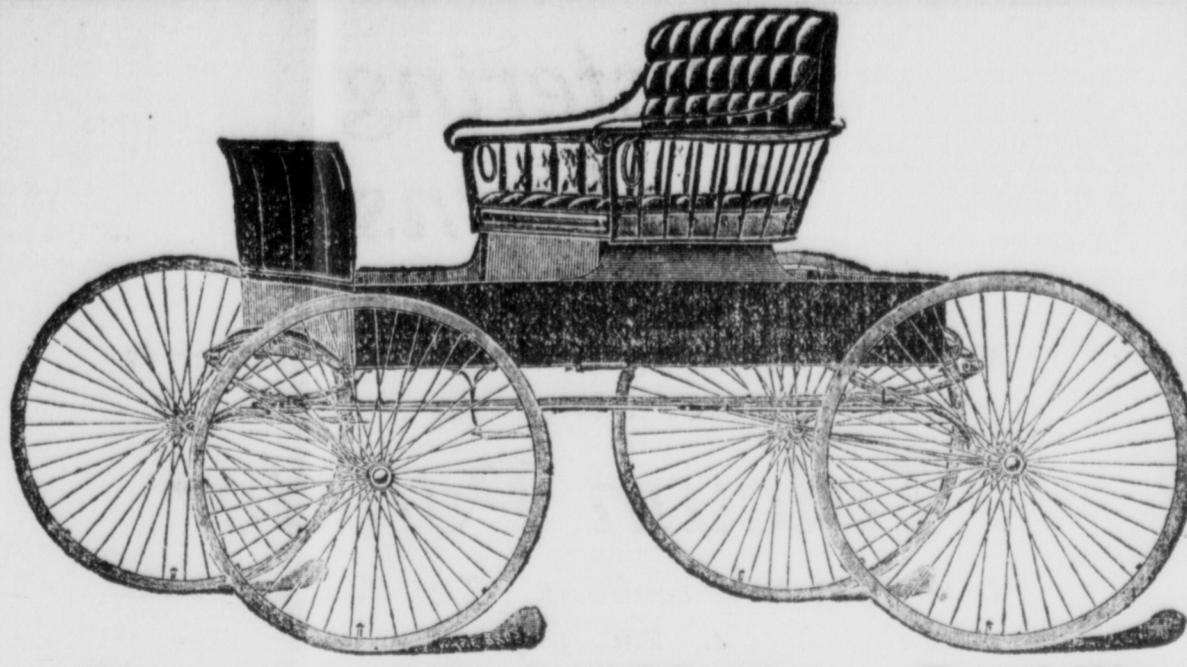


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TOO MANY LAWS.

Confusing and Conflicting Legal Procedure.
(Toronto Saturday Night.)

The best brains of this and every other country are engaged, generation after generation, in confusing the laws and complicating legal procedure. In these times, when the average of education is so high, the laws have to be very complicated or all the people would understand them and a great, powerful and profitable profession would be no more. Moses had his laws on tables of stone. Now the slabs of stone have been broken into a million fragments, and there is not one steadfast, granite law to which you can turn with absolute confidence. The slabs of stone have been broken into innumerable odd-shaped fragments, of which laymen can make nothing, but which a skilled lawyer, for a high fee, can piece together with whatever result he is retained to accomplish. He can pick out a fragment here and a fragment there, and delve away down underneath for another that nobody else seems to know about, and gradually patch up a case in law that the bench views with the greatest professional admiration—and your case is won. That is to say, it is won for the time being! Then your opponent gets an expert to rummage among the million odd-shaped fragments, and he pieces together a case in law more admirable from the professional viewpoint than that your expert had rooted out—so you lose. But it is not over. There are all shapes and sizes of pieces left, the combinations are inexhaustible. You and your enemy can fight it out for life, if you can stand the expense; the law is exhaustless, the courts almost countless, always increasing, and each devoting itself more and more to some neat specialty. When an action appears to have about run its course, some lawyer representing some third party, can arise and score a new point altogether, which will have to be referred to another court. Away they all go at a dollar per minute to investigate this new phase of the question.

Quite recently one of our local judges in hearing a case arising out of an estate, flatly declared that he would not permit three separate suits to proceed at the same time, involving the same property and the same dispute as to facts. He ordered that the suits must be bunched into one and the costs not multiplied unnecessarily. Some day a patriot lawyer will write a book in which he will give cases, names, facts, and figures, showing how properties have been eaten up in the local courts by what may be described as wanton litigation, or legal proceedings inspired only by the fees that would attach thereto. Judges should be instructed by Parliament to use what authority they possess, and they should be given greater authority, to stifle vexatious and unnecessary litigation. When a case reaches a court the history of it should come with it and a statement of all costs so far incurred, so that the judge or judges could examine the justice the litigants are getting in their quest for justice, could protect them on their way, could condemn unnecessary and expensive procedure, and arbitrarily rescue property or a misled person from being ruined in a spendthrift law-fight. Our judges, as a rule, wash their hands of responsibility for the spread of a law-fight from court to court, although they know, very often, that the rival lawyers have embarked on a contest of wits, ingenuity, resourcefulness, for which their clients will pay a pretty penny in the end. The interests of the people rest with the bench. The judge is not only a referee to decide which lawyer has been most expert; he is, also, and chiefly, the custodian of Justice, and the lawyers who attend before him are attendants. If the servants of the temple deal extortionately with and practice on the superstitious of those come to worship, the whole system will suffer in the end. The world grows wiser. Education spreads. Arbitration begins to displace litigation among men of large affairs, and it would be well if judges were to begin laying a firm hand on their doskets with a view to weeding out preventable litigation and disallowing unnecessary costs.

Wife Beaters in Germany.

(Louisville Courier-Journal.)

"Wife beaters," said a magistrate, "are wisely punished in some German towns. "The wife beater is not imprisoned. He is compelled to do his work as usual. But his salary is handed over each week to his wife and he, from Saturday night till Monday morning is kept in jail. "This punishment usually lasts about 10 weeks. One administration of it cures the wife beater as a rule."

A hereditary dairymaid, with a title 300 years old, was a prisoner in the Bow Street Police Court, London, Saturday. Catherine Barry, an aged woman, who has a refreshment stand in St. James' Park, was summoned for selling milk from which 10 per cent. of the fats had been abstracted. "My family has sold milk in the park for three centuries, and this is the first complaint of any kind against us," said she, indignantly. No one could contradict her, but she was fined \$2.50 and had to pay \$3.12 costs.