

A MYSTERY OF THE NEVA.

A STORY OF RUSSIAN INTRIGUE.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XXVI.
"The Stranger."

Where was Elma? What was the cause of her inexplicable disappearance into that gloomy forest while we had slept?

I returned to the hotel where I had stayed on my arrival—a comfortable place called the Phoenix—and found there alone. Both Felix, the Finn and my host, the woodcutter, had received their douches and left, but but to the last-named I had given instructions to return home at once and report by telegraph any news of my lost one.

A thousand conflicting thoughts arose within me as I sat in that crowded saloon, filled with a glib crowd of commercial men of Abo. I had, I recognized, now to deal with the most powerful man in that country, and I suffered a distinct disadvantage by being in ignorance of the reason he held that sweet English girl a prisoner.

The tragedy of the dastardly manner in which she had been willfully maimed caused my blood to boil within me. I had never believed that in this civilized twentieth century such things could be.

Michael Boranski had given his pledge to assist me, yet he had most plainly explained to me his fears. The Baron was intent upon getting Elma into his power. Was it at his orders I wondered, that this sweet-faced girl had been deprived of speech and hearing. Had she fallen an innocent victim to his infamous scheming?

About me men were eating strange dishes and talking in Finnish, while others were smoking and drinking their vodka, but I was in no mood for observation. My only thought was of Elma, who was now lost to me.

I recollected that look of sweet trust and confidence in her splendid eyes when in our peril I had held her small soft hand in mine. Over a cigar I reviewed all the strange facts and saw, to my intense chagrin, what the loss of Elma meant to me. She was there, in that grey, inhospitable country, ruled by the tyrant of the Czars, and it was my duty to rescue her.

Why she had disappeared without warning I was at a loss to imagine, yet I could only surmise that her flight had been compulsory. Some women possess a mysterious sense of intuition, a curious and indescribable faculty of knowing when evil threatens them, that presents a strange and puzzling problem to our scientists. It is unaccountable, and yet many women possess it in a very marked degree. Was it therefore possible that Elma had awakened and, being warned of her peril, had fled without arousing me? The suggestion was possible, but I feared impossible.

Another very curious feature in the affair was the sudden manner in which Michael Boranski had exerted his power and influence in order to render me service. He had actually bribed the guards of Kajana; he had instructed the faithful Felix; he had provided our boat, and he had ordered the gun to open the water-gate for me.

Why?

There was, I felt convinced, some hidden motive in all that sudden and marked friendliness. That he really hated the English I had seen plainly when we had first met, and I had only compelled him to serve me by presenting the order signed by the Emperor, which made me his guest within the Russian dominions. Even that document did not account for the length he had gone to secure the release of the woman I now loved in secret.

The more I thought it over the more anxious did I become. I could discern no motive for his friendliness and, truth to tell, I always distrust those who are too friendly.

What straight and decided line of action should I take? Carefully I went over all the strange events that had happened in England, and while anxious to obtain some solution of the amazing problem, yet I could not bring myself to leave Finland and allow Elma to fall into the clutches of that high official who so persistently sought her end.

No, I would go to him and face him. I was anxious to see what manner of man "The Stranger of Finland" was. Therefore that same evening I left Abo and travelled by rail up to the junction at Toijala whence after a wait of six hours, I resumed my slow journey to Helsingfors. I put up at Kamp's, an elegant hotel on the long esplanade overlooking the port, and found the town, with its handsome streets and spacious squares, to be a much finer place than I had ever believed.

When I inquired of the French director of my hotel for the residence of His Excellency the Governor-General he regarded me with some surprise, saying:

"The Baron lives up at the palace, m'sieur—that great building opposite the Salutor. The driver of your drosky will point it out to you."

"Is His Excellency in Helsingfors at the present moment?" I asked.

"The Baron never leaves the palace, m'sieur," responded the man. "This is a strange country, you know," he added, with a grin. "It is said that His Excellency is in hourly fear of assassination."

"Perhaps not without cause," I remarked, in a low voice, at which he elevated his shoulders and smiled.

At noon I descended from a drosky before a long, grey, massive building, over the big doorway of which was a large escutcheon bearing the Russian arms emblazoned in gold, and on either side, a colossal cordon of ivory of bright blue and gold came forward to meet me, asking in Russian:

"Whom do you wish to see?"

"His Excellency the Governor-General."

"Have you an appointment?"

"No."

"His Excellency sees no one without an appointment," the man told me, somewhat gruffly.

"I am not here on public business, but upon a private matter," I explained. "Perhaps I may see His Excellency's secretary?"

"If you wish, but I repeat that His Excellency sees no one without a previous appointment."

(To be continued.)

The Coming of Grandma

By BERTHA BLAKE

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The man strode toward her with undisguised pleasure in his eyes.

"Helena, this is indeed an unexpected—"

"Surprise?" broke in the girl, unmindful of the ambiguity her interruption lent to his remark.

"Pleasure," corrected Norton firmly. He did not fail to detect an undertone of sarcasm in Helena's tone.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Oh," she said simply, but that one word conveyed depths of incredulity.

"Going away?" asked Norton, looking about for some traveling impediments. And yet if Helena had been going away surely he would have known it.

The girl flung him a scornful glance. "No," she said, tapping her foot nervously on the tiled floor of the station.

"And you?" looking pointedly at the bunch of violets he carried.

"I've come to meet a train."

Helena glanced at the big clock on the wall. "It's six minutes yet," she informed him knowingly. Since his arrival her chin had been elevated perceptibly.

Norton's glance followed hers to the clock. "Jove, it's now my train!" he said, and with a hasty adieu, he rushed off through the great doors, leaving her staring after him dazed.

Again her eyes sought the clock. No, she was not mistaken. Florence had wired that she would arrive at 3:10, and it was now only 3:04. "Never mind meeting me," she had added in her telegram, but Helena had only laughed away her friend's instructions. Florence had always been overthoughtful.

Now she sat down on the depot bench. Norton must have been misinformed as to the time of arrival—why, of course, Florence had sent him word too.

It seemed quite unnecessary to Helena and yet she suddenly recalled that he had stopped off at Touhkeepsie, once or twice. She saw it all now. Norton had only been coming to see her, taking her out, keeping in touch with her, on account of Florence. He wished to be welcome at the Bradford home when the girl visited them. "Never mind meeting me"—the words in Florence's message rang in Helena's mind. Why were they so secretive about it all?

The girl brushed her hand over her eyes. Was she dreaming or—oh, she longed to be at home where she could bury her head in her pillows and—

She started. Coming toward her, attentively guiding an elderly woman, was Norton. He held her arm and look-



THIS WAS PERHAPS HIS GRANDMOTHER.

ed down into her wrinkled face with a tenderness Helena had never before seen in his eyes. Then—he did not come to meet Florence? This was perhaps his grandmother. She was too old for his mother.

Norton raised his hat and smiled as he passed her, but Helena stared at him stupidly, barely nodding her head. A dark flush mounted to his very hair, but as he followed her into the carriage Helena saw him hand the old lady the violets. The girl's brain cleared.

How she had misjudged him! Her heart beat wildly, and she longed now to rush after him and apologize for the way in which she had greeted him. But, even when she saw him, how could she explain her behavior?

In her excitement and in the rush of conflicting emotions which surged

through her Helena almost forgot the train she was to meet. But, girl-like, her guest was looking everywhere for some one from the Bradford family. In spite of her suggestion that none of them should be there.

"I knew you'd come," she said after an effusive greeting.

"Of course, goose," retorted Helena, hugging her friend's arm enthusiastically. "Not meet you when I haven't seen you for months?"

But all afternoon, above the clat and gossip incident to her guest's arrival, Helena's mind reverted to her conduct at the station. Would Norton ever come to see her again? And if he did not, could she afford to write him a note of apology?

That evening when the bell rang her heart did somersaults with undue energy. And when Norton was announced she could scarcely keep her

joy within bounds. Never before today had she realized what a large part he played in her life; how much she had learned to believe him hers in spite of the indifferent manner in which she always treated him.

Florence was not ready to go downstairs, and her hostess, glad of the opportunity to see Norton for a minute alone, preceded her.

"Helena," began the man, holding out his hand just as he did that morning in the depot, "I had to come tonight." He searched her eyes, half looking for the scorn which he saw in them in the station. He was visibly relieved, if puzzled, when he discovered her old sauciness playing in them again.

"Why?" she asked hypocritically. "It is for me to ask why—after this morning," he said softly and stepping closer to her.

"Florence arrived this morning," Helena began irrelevantly.

The man frowned—not at the news she had imparted, but at her persistence in changing the subject.

"And my grandmother, too, arrived," he said.

Helena nodded. "Yes, I saw you."

"I wouldn't have known it from your glance."

"Perhaps you are imaginative—or over-sensitive," the girl persisted, trying to make the outcome easier for herself. She felt—oh, so wickedly deceitful; she almost hated herself. Both cheeks burned, and she avoided his direct gaze.

"Look here, Helena," said Norton, laying one hand on her shoulder. "Why were you so—so different this morning? Was it because my dear old grandmother is so—so different from the women we meet here?" Helena raised a protesting hand, but he hurried on. "My father, as you know, was a self-made man—and his mother—but don't think I am ashamed of her."

Helena's lips quivered and her eyes burned. "Oh, believe me, it wasn't your grandmother. I think she's lovely. I—I thought you had come to meet—Florence," she cried, throwing up her head and looking him squarely in the eyes at last.

"Helena," the man said, and his breath came quickly. "And you cared?" The girl nodded her head slowly.

A few moments later she raised her eyes shyly to his.

"Don't you think we might have a matron of honor instead of a maid?" "She shall be my best man if you say so."

Safer Games Than Chess.

Checkers is a less dangerous game than chess. Few checker players go crazy, although many are crazy to play. A safer game than any of them is seven up, and there is nothing the matter with four handed euchre. And then there are cribbage and sixty-six, both of which are almost entirely safe, as very few cribbage or sixty-six players ever get more than half crazy, and then only when they lose seven or eight games in succession. But perhaps the game that allows the most latitude for vigorous kicking without in any way affecting the mentality of the kicker is the game of spade hearts, occasionally played in Boston and other places down east, where the game originated. A man must be of sound mind to be able to play spade hearts. He can't keep the queens off him if he gets rattled, and a queen costs twice as much against him as a jack, king or any other heart. Men of ugly tempers never play the game. To be a good player one must be a cheerful loser and keep still about it.—Lafayette (Ind.) Journal.

The Salmon Fisheries.

With the exception of the Puget Sound region, all salmon fisheries outside of Alaska had a prosperous season in 1904, handsome gains having been made on the Columbia River and the salmon streams of Washington, Oregon and California. This is quite contrary to the outlook about the middle of the summer, but the later runs were profuse, and packing was continued for a longer period than usual. The Puget Sound canneries suffered severely, meeting a loss from last year of nearly 50 per cent. The product of the several regions was as follows:

	1903.	1904.
Cases.	Cases.	
British Columbia	473,674	465,894
Puget Sound	455,393	276,920
Columbia River	333,158	423,073
Washington, Oregon and California Rivers	98,618	184,669

Total

There is shown a loss on the world's total pack of 336,366 cases, wholly accounted for by the decrease in Alaska. The total value of the Alaskan output, at the figures furnished by the packers in all cases but one, was \$7,735,782. The figures show a loss of \$2,553,853 from the aggregate market value of the pack for 1903.

The aggregate number of salmon of all varieties taken was 28,025,841, against 34,615,813 in 1903. The total number of hands employed was 12,867, made up of 5,645 whites, 2,002 na-

tives, 3,499 Chinese, and 1,721 Japanese. The introduction of Japanese labor was practically new last year, and was rendered necessary by the difficulty in procuring Chinamen to man the canneries. A considerable number of Filipinos and Porto Ricans were also employed in work heretofore done by Chinese.

Has a Queen of the May.

British Columbia is the one part of the British Empire in which the old English custom of dancing round the May Pole is kept up. The only departure made in British Columbia is in the change of date. In England May Day used to be the one chosen for the festival at Vancouver the festivities are generally put off till about the middle of the month.

For over forty years New Westminster has kept up the pretty custom. This year it took place on May 14. The Queen of the May was chosen a day or two before. She and the ex-Queen were the two principal figures among hundreds of gaily dressed children. She rules the Royal City for one day. The program was as follows:

About 1 p. m. a procession was formed down town, at the head of which were two carriages, one containing the Queen of May and the other the ex-Queen. The former had her maids of honor and the latter a retinue. Escorted by the city band and a military band, the Queens were driven to Queen's Park, where the crowning took place, followed by the May Pole dance and children's games. In the evening a ball was held in the Dominion Fair buildings, at which the girls of the two royal parties were the reigning belles.

Elizabeth's Statue.

There is a relic of the old Lud Gate in the front wall of the Church of St. Dunstan's, Fleet street. It is the statue of Queen Elizabeth which used to be over the centre arch, facing west. When the gate was taken down in 1760 ("to admit more air into the city") the corporation presented the statue—with others of King Lud and his two sons—to Alderman Sir Francis Gosling, who gave it to the church, in a niche on the southeast front of which it has remained ever since.

Forgiveness is a woman's privilege. Is it not? And to need it is a man's.—Beatrice Heron-Maxwell.

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No. 301 Express for Montreal, Chatham, Loggieville 16.25

No. 317 Suburban for Marysville 6.15

" 319 Suburban for Marysville 8.15

" 321 Suburban for Marysville 11.15

" 323 Suburban for Marysville 15.00

" 325 Suburban for Marysville 17.10

" 327 Suburban for Marysville 18.25

" 329 Suburban for Marysville 21.00

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON

No. 302 Express from Montreal, Quebec, Chatham and Loggieville 12.05

No. 304 Mixed from Chatham Junction, Chatham and Loggieville 16.30

No. 318 Suburban from Marysville 8.15

" 320 Suburban from Marysville 11.00

" 322 Suburban from Marysville 15.00

" 324 Suburban from Marysville 17.05

" 326 Suburban from Marysville 18.20

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