A MYSTERY OF THE NEVA.

A STORY OF RUSSIAN INTRIGUE.

(Continued.)

"The doctor was here a quarter of an hour ago," whispered the sister,, whispered the sister, "and he fears he is sinking."

"He has uttered no words?" I asked, anxiously. "Made no statement?"

"None. He has never regained consciousness, and I fear, sir, he never will. It is a case of deliberate murder the police told me yesterday.

"I clenched my fists and swore a fierce revenge for that dastardly act. And as I stood beside the narrow bed I realized that what Olinto had said regarding my own peril was the actual truth. I was a marked man.

Was I never to penetrate that inscrutable and ever-increasing mystery?

... ...

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LOLA.

Throughout the long night I called many times at the hospital, but the reply was alwas the same. Jack had not regained consciousness, and the doctor regarded his case as hopeless.

In the morning I drove in hot haste to Bassett Road, Notting Hill, and at the address Olinto had given me found Muriel. When she entered the room with folding doors into which I had been shown, I saw that she was pale and apprehensive, for we had not met since her flight, and she was no doubt at a loss for an explanation. But I did hot press her for one. I merely told her that the Italian Santini had given me her address, and that I came as bearer of unfortunate news.

"What is it?" she gasped, quickly.

"It concerns Captain Durnford," I replied. "He has been injured in the treet, and is in Charring Cross hospital."

"Ah!" she cried. "I see. You do not explain the truth. By your face I can tell there is something more. He's dead! Tell me the worst."

"No, Miss Leithcourt," I said gravely," "not dead, but the doctor fears that he may not recover. His wound is dangerous. He has been shot by some unknown person."

"Shot!" she echoed, bursting into tears. "Then they have followed him, after all! They have deceived me; and now, as they intend to take him from me, I will myself protect him. You Mr. Gregg, have been in peril of our life, that I know, but Jack's enemies are yours, and they shall not go unpunished. May I see him?"

"I fear not; but we will ask at the hospital." And after the exchange of some further explanations we took a hansom back to Charring Cross.

At first the sister refused to allow Muriel to see the patient, but she implored so earnestly that at last she consented, and the distressed girl in black coat and hat crept on tiptoe to the bedside.

He was conscious for a quarter of an hour or so," whispered the nurse who sat there. "He asked after lady named Muriel."

The girl at my side burst into low sobbing.

"Tell him," she said, "that Muriel is here—that she has seen him, and is waiting for him to recover."

We were not allowed to linger there, and on leaving the hospital I took her back again to Notting Hill, promising to keep her well informed of Jack's condition. He had returned to consciousness, therefore there was now a faint hope of his recovery.

Day succeeded day, and, although I was not allowed to visit my friend I was told that he was very slowly progressing. I idled at the Hotel Cecil, longing daily for news of Elma. Only once did a letter, come from her, a brief, well-written note, from which it appeared that she was quite well and happy, although she longed to be able to go out again. The Princess was very kind indeed to her,, and, she added, was making secret arrangements for her escape across the Russian frontier into Germany.

I knew what that meant. Use was to be made of certain Russian officials who were secretely allied with the revolutionists in order to secure her safe conduct beyond the power of that order of exile of the tyrant Minister. I wrote to her under cover to the Princess, but there had been no time yet for a reply.

I saw Muriel many times,but never once did she refer to Rannoch or their sudden departure. Her only thought was of the man she loved.

"I always believed that you were engaged to Mr. Woodroffe," I said one day, when I called to tell her of Jack's latest bulletin.

"It is true that he asked me to marry him," she responded. "But there were reasons why I did not accept."

"Reasons connected with his past, eh?"

She smiled and then said:—

"Ah! Mr. Gregg, it is all strange and very tragic story. I must see Jack. When do you think they will allow me to go to him?"

I explained that the doctor feared to cause the patient any undue excitement, but that in two or three days there was hope of her being allowed to visit him.

Several times the police made inquiry of me, but I could tell them nothing. I could not for the life of me recollect where I had before seen the face of that man who had passed in the darkness.

One afternoon, ten days later,I was allowed to sit by the bedside and question him.

"Ah! Gordon, old fellow," he said faintly. "I've had a narrow escape —by Jove! After I left you I walked quickly on towards the club, when, all of a sudden, two scoundrels sprang out of Suffolk street, and one of them fired a revolver at me. Then I knew no more."

"But who were the men? Did you recognize them?"

"No, not at all. That's the worst of it."

"But Muriel knows who they were," I said.

"Ah yes! Bring her here, won't you?" the poor fellow implored; "I am dying to see her once again."

Then I told him how she had looked upok him while unconscious, and how I had taken the daily bulletin to her. For an hour I talked with him, urging him to get well soon, so that we could unite in probing the mystery and bringing to justice those responsible for the dastardly act.

"Muriel knows, and if she loves you she will no doubt assist us," I said.

"Oh, she loves me Gordon. I know that," said the prostrate man, smiling contetedly; aod when I left I promised to bring her there on the morrow.

This I did, but having conducted her up to the bed at the end of the ward I discreetly withdrew. What she said to him I am not, of course, aware.

All I know is that an hour later when I returned I found them the happiest pair possible to conceive, and I clearly saw that Jack's trust in her was not ill-placed.

But of Elma? No lurther word had come from her, and I began to grow uneasy. The days went on, I wrote twice, but no reply was forthcoming. At last I could bear the suspense no longer and began to contemplate returning to Russia.

Jack, when at last discharged from the hospital, came across to the Cecil and lived with me in preference to the "Junior." He was very weak at first and I looked after him, while every day Muriel came and took tea with us, brightening our lives by her smart and merry chatter

She knew that I loved Elma, and was also aware of the exciting events in Russia, Jack having told her of them during their long drives in hansoms when he went out with her to take the air. ... ...

One day I received a brief note from the Princess in St. Petersburg, urging me to remain patient, and saying Elma was quite safe and well. There were reasons, however, why she was unable to write, she added. What were they? I wondered. Yet I could only wait until I received word to travel back to Russia and fetch her home. The Princess had promised to arrange everything.

December came, and we still remained on at the hotel. Once Olinto had written me repeating his warning, but I did not heed it. I somehow distrusted the fellow.

(To be continued.)

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National Construction Co., Has Entered Into a Contract With the G. T. P. to Build the Line.

Montreal, Aug. 20.—The National Construction Company has entered into a contract with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company to build their line from Winnipeg to the Pacific Ocean, as well as the branch line from Fort William to Lake Superior Junction.

This corporation, which is composed of leading capitalists and railway men, will in consequence be much in evidence during the next few years. In a word, it is the National ConstructionCompany that all the tenders were being asked for will be addressed. This method has been adopted by nearly all large railways in this country, as it will be remembered that Sir Wm. Van Horne first became known in Canada as the manager of the North American Construction Co., a corporation that was formed to build the Canadian Pacific.

It looks as if the first hundred miles of the Lake Superior Branch of the Grand Trunk Pacific would be pretty heavy work. The specifications for instance shows 2,000 acres of clearing, something over 200,000 yards of solid rock, and 250,000 yards of loose rock. Then there are nearly six million yards of earth work, or 60,000 yards per mile.

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