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THE

COUNTERSTROKE

By AMBROSE PRATT

Author of "Vigorous Daunt, Billionaire."

(Continued.)

Perigord smiled again and addressed himself entirely to the Prince. "That explanation occurred to me, your Highness, but an exhaustive examination (which their Majesties some time since rendered possible)"——he bowed to the kings)—"of the entire telegraphic correspondence between the principal cities of Austria, Germany, Italy and Russia, during prolonged and well chosen periods of time, has utterly failed to discover a trace of messages which our agents had proved to have been transmitted from place to place with telegraphic speed."

"You claim then that the Nihilists have a private transcontinental telegraph system as well as a direct cable munication to the island, then?"

"Either that or well arranged small private subways between certain centres; their organization, at any rate, is so perfect as to defy detection. Your Highness knows that the secret police of all Europe have assisted us to the utmost limit of their power without result."

"Ah, bah, the police!"

"To resume," said Perigord. "Having conceived this plan, I proceeded forthwith to put it into execution. Klein, the deputy, who—as your Eminence and your Majesties well know—assassinated Lavalovski and twice attempted even greater crimes, had been chosen to make an attempt upon the life of the present President of the French Republic. I ascertained that his idea was to undermine a railway near Mentone and blow up the train carrying the President as it passed through a certain tunnel. This diabolical outrage was happily frustrated, chiefly through the energy of my secretary, the Count von Oeltjen, here." (Oeltjen turned fiery red.) "Klien was quietly arrested and given into my keeping. I had him carried to England, and there adopted certain measures to loosen his tongue. So closely, however, were my movements watched and followed by our enemies that while in the act of hearing his confession in a place guarded with extraordinary precautions, a bomb was fired. Klein was killed, and my servants and myself only narrowly escaped with our lives."

At this a perfect storm of exclamation broke from the excited lips of the kings, who had hung on the speaker's words with breathless interest.

Perigord waited a moment for silence, and then resumed: "The Nihilists were nevertheless too late; Klein had spoken!" (Perigord now watched Prince Carlos with a covert but steady keenness). "Finding his situation hopeless, he confessed that the stronghold of his chiefs rested on the Isle of Anarchos (a fitting name for such a place), a small island of the Archipelago belonging to Turkey."

Prince Carlos raised a face of icy calm to meet Perigord's stare. "I pray God that Klein has told you the truth!" he said with deep earnestness.

Perigord nodded and turned his glance away. "I believe that he has," he answered quietly; "I cannot believe otherwise."

Deep silence lasted for several moments, then King Humbert, clearing his throat, spoke gruffly.

"That is all, sir?"

"Your Majesty, my report is ended. There remains for us to consider two things: first, what shall be done with the person of Katherin Viyella; secondly, what steps shall be taken, if any, to capture the Isle of Anarchos. I venture to suggest that each matter should be disposed of in turn."

"A good suggestion," said the Cardinal.

"Since it promises to save time," said the Kaiser.

The Emperor of Austria sighed. "It is a sad thing to war with women."

"Your Majesty," said the King of Sweden, "we defend ourselves from our enemies; we do not war with men or women."

"You are right and wrong," said the Czar softly. "War is the greatest evil which humanity may suffer; unhappily, to defend ourselves in this instance war is compulsory. I like to think, however, that out of this present evil good must come, even should our plans miscarry; indeed, good has come already, since as representatives of Europe we are met together united in a common cause. And even should we fail for a time in our desires, and before success arrives I or one of us be struck down by an assassin hand, the seed we plant must grow, and I pray shall one day develop into asplendid understanding amity of brotherhood which will be proof against the pricks of time and pride and jealousy, thus guaranteeing for our peoples secure and lasting peace."

"Amen!" said the Cardinal solemnly, and there echoed round the table a deep and reverent "Amen."

"Your Eminence," said Perigord very gravely, "Katherin Viyella is not made of that clay from which traitors spring. She is a wicked woman, but her nature is irrevocably loyal. We cannot release her, we dare not. The labor of long years would be thereby rendered vain, and the precious lives of your Majesties thenceforth irremediably liable to the perils of the past, which perils we now stand on the threshold of finally eradicating. I repeat, we cannot release Katherin Viyella, but we can keep her prisoner."

The kings looked at each other with unquiet glances. No one spoke.

"It is, in my humble conception, our only course," said Perigord.

The kings nodded. The Cardinal drummed on the table with his fingers.

"Where?" he asked, and the question interpreted the expressions of all.

Perigord spoke slowly, looking at each of his august audience in turn: "Siberia; England; Austria; Germany; Hungary; Italy."

No one replied, though many shook their heads.

"Siberia is best, but it is far," said Perigord.

Silence.

"Italy has convents. Your Eminence—"

The Cardinal started. "You are right, Mr. Perigord. I shall take this duty on myself. The woman should, however, be delivered to me at once, for I set out on a journed early i nthe morning. I shall care for her."

There followed a deep murmur of approval and relief. The Czar spoke for all: "Your Eminence's kindness in accepting such a burden commands our lasting gratitude."

"And now," said Perigord, "comes the matter of importance."

The Crown Prince of Italy here murmured something in King Humbert's ear.

The "Warrior King" started, and cried out: "My brothers, is there not a chair for Mr. Perigord? What a clumsy creature am I to act the part of host so badly!"

"Forgive us, my dear sir," said the Czar with a bland smile.

"My dear Mr. Perigord," murmured the others.

Perigord looked directly at the Prince and smiled.

"If I may, your Majesties, I shall, for I am weary; I have done much today and travelled far." He immediately sat down and opened a paper which, in obedience to a sign, von Oeltjen had handed him.

"If your Eminence and your Majesties consent, I shall read a prepared statement which I think will narrow somewhat our field of choice."

"Proceed," said the Cardinal.

"Your Eminence, your Majesties: I should despair to suggest to you a course which technically interpreted would involve the issue of united Europe making war upon a friendly state. Anarchos is an island owned by Turkey, under the Sultan's ruling and protection. Turkey is at peace with the world. It is therefore impossible that any accredited invasion of the remotest portion of that realm should be countenanced by you. And yet, in order to achieve the fulfilment of our aims and also to restore to liberty a lady who has already suffered unwittingly in our cause two unrequitable misfortunes, imprisonment and the murder of her father, the invasion and capture of Anarchos is of vital import. The difficulty so presented, however, is not insurmountable. If—if, your Majesties, devoted men could be found, willing to risk their lives in an enterprise which circumstances have conspired to place absolutely beyond the reach of your powerful protection should disaster meet their efforts—why, then, your Majesties, with the help of God, we can work your enemies' undoing. I possess a yacht which is sufficiently provided with arms and ammunition to equip two score men. I want no more. A score I have already on board. I should command the expedition. Here are Lord Cressingham and the Count von Oeltjen; therefore I need only seventeen to make my band complete."

He ceased, and looked quietly up. The Cardinal, the kings and princes were staring at him with the keenest scrutiny, as if seeking to read his very heart.

"Your devotion goes so far?" muttered the Kaiser, as if unable to believe.

Perigord smiled. "I regard the affair as a recreation, your Majesty—a pleasant recreation after years of toil."

"I can promise you three men now," said the Kaiser, "a thousand in three days."

"I four," said the Czar musingly, "more I cannot spare; of necessity I am almost unattended."

"I," said King Humbert, "shall supply you with the remainder of your company."

(To be continued.)

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A Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers



EVENING GOWN OF SATIN.

A young matron's evening gown is here sketched, the model, though very simply trimmed, being very stunning in effect, the beauty of the costume depending on the handsome material used and very careful fitting. The original costume was of pale silvery blue satin of a heavy lustrous quality, the skirt being entirely without trimming. It was cut very full around the bottom and was made with a sweep all around, the upper part being gored to fit very smoothly around the hips. The corsage was draped crosswise about the upper part and was ornamented down the front by five large buttons of rhinestones and pearls. The bodice was filled in in front by ruffles of yellowish Mechlin lace, the sleeves being of lace to match, arranged in fichu effect down the outer arm.

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CITY WILL FIGHT THE $7000 CLAIM

At a meeting of the claims committee of the common council yesterday afternoon, it was decided to appeal from the decision of Judge McLeod of Nov. 5 giving Robert Chittick $250 damages on his claim for the expropriation of a portion of his property near Lake Latimer, on the Loch Lomond extension. The appeal will come up for hearing at Fredericton before the supreme court at the end of January. It is understood that the court has the power to rule on all questions submitted to the judge, and can lessen the damages awarded, but not increase them.

Final arrangements were also made to contest the claims for damages amounting to $7,000 which are being brought against the city on account of the accident in Carleton, while some trench excavation work was in progress, and by which Richard D. Dooley was killed and Francis E. Haley injured. The cases are set down for hearing at the circuit court, which will open this day week.

It is understood that Mrs. Mary Dooley, as administratrix of her husband's estate, is suing for $5,000 for herself and children. Mr. Haley is claiming $2,000, on the ground of permanent injuries received.

An interesting point as to the city's liability will be raised in view of the fact that Henry Crawford, whose tender to do the work was accepted by the city, omitted, so it is said, to sign the contract. D. Mullin, K. C., will represent the plaintiffs, and the recorder will appear for the city.

The claims committee appointed the mayor and Director Murdoch to see Mrs. Sterling H. Barker with reference to the placing of a septic tank on her property at Loch Lomond. The city recently obtained a permanent injunction against polluting the lake with sewage from the property.

It is believed that all other claims for damages on the water extension will be held over until judgment is given by the supreme court in the Chittick matter.

O. H. Warwick is home after an extended business trip to England.

F. R. Perry, formerly district passenger agent of the C. P. R. here and now holding a similar position in Boston, reached the city yesterday.



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RECENT DEATHS

On Nov. 17, after a lingering illness, the death of Mrs. W. H. Moore, beloved wife of Wm. H. Moore, of Providence (R. I.), occurred. She is survived by her husband and two daughters, five brothers and two sisters. Mrs. C. W. Stockton, of this city, is a sister, and G. A. McAlary, of Carleton, is a brother.

Miss Hannah McDermott, an aged lady who has made her home for years with her sister, Mrs. Cornelius Moriarty, on Beaver Lake Road, died Monday. She was around the house as usual on Sunday and seemed to be in her usual health. But yesterday morning she was taken sick and died, presumably from heart failure or old age. Mrs. Moriarty is the only sister who survives, besides two brothers—Alexander and Bernard—both of this city.

Charles Peacock, of 41 Westmoriland road, is confined to his home because of injuries received Saturday in the Cornwall cotton factory. He was carrying on his work as oiler, when he fell into an opening in the floor in which a large pulley wheel revolves. His fall was stopped sharply by his striking the shafting, and he was held there. His back was considerably injured. Mr. Peacock is seventy-one years of age.

