

# ADVENTURES of the WORLD'S GREAT DETECTIVES

By George Barton

## The Clue of the Bamboo Canes

### An Episode in the Life of General Trepoff, Chief of Police of St. Petersburg.

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(This is one of a new series of stories concerning adventures that have occurred in the lives of the world's greatest detectives. Mr. Barton has gathered his material from real life, but in some cases imaginary names have been substituted for real ones simply as a matter of justice to the innocent descendants of culprits mentioned in the narratives. Permissible liberties have been taken in the construction and arrangement of these fact stories, but in all that is essential, they may be regarded as human documents of unusual interest and value.—The Editor.)

The winter palace at St. Petersburg is one of the largest buildings in the world. There was a time, it is averred, when the wonderful structure housed several thousand persons. Noblemen, attendants, servants and employees of all kinds came and went in swarms. The discipline was lax. Scores of soldiers, detectives, policemen and secret service officials were employed to guard the person of the czar, but their very numbers helped to make them a menace rather than a protection.

In October, 1878, a carpenter, carrying his box of tools on his shoulder, appeared at one of the basement doors of the palace and said that he had been sent to assist in making some repairs to the drying rooms of the czar's winter residence. He was admitted without question and within an hour was at work with other mechanics in the lower part of the great building.

The foreman of that section came lounging along. He noticed a new face among the men. He stopped and said:

"What is your name?"  
 "Sergiy Batschokoff."  
 "My employer?"  
 "giving the name of a well-known cabinet maker."  
 The foreman shrugged his shoulders impatiently.  
 "That is irregular. I am tired of having men put on me in this way."  
 The new carpenter held out his hands pleadingly.  
 "I'm sorry," he said, "but I need the work badly—please overlook the irregularity this time."  
 "Very well," was the gruff response, "but this will be the last."  
 So his name was entered with the other mechanics, and that act had far-reaching consequences.

On the 5th of February, 1880, the czar had arranged a splendid dinner in honor of the Prince of Bulgaria. It was a state affair and all of the details were planned on a scale of grandeur commensurate with the greatness of the Russian empire. Five minutes before the royal guests had assembled in the state dining room there was a dynamite explosion in the imperial palace. The mine had been set in the basement and the explosion pierced the two stone floors and made a gap ten feet long and six feet wide in the dining hall in which the table had already been laid for the dinner. The explosion killed five men of the police guard and injured thirty-five others.

The greatest consternation prevailed. The czar, of course, realized that the Nihilists had been at work, but he was terrified to think that they had gained entrance into the palace and that the explosion which had just taken place was intended to encompass his death as well as that of the members of the royal family.

The conspiracy in this case seemed to be widespread and far-reaching. Almost on the eve of the explosion in the winter palace a woman visited General Trepoff, the chief of the St. Petersburg police. She said her name was Vera Zassoukoff, and that she had called for the purpose of demanding satisfaction of General Trepoff for his tyranny in ordering a political prisoner, named Bogolubus, to be flogged for a slight breach of prison discipline. It seems that for years she

had been nursing a grievance against the chief of police. She believed that she was to be the instrument by which Trepoff was to be removed from his position. Her life, it is asserted, was an apprenticeship for one thing—the killing of the czar's chief of police. At the age of seventeen she had been arrested and kept in prison for two years because she had received letters from a revolutionist. After that she passed an examination as a school teacher and was working at book binding. At the end of 1875 she returned to St. Petersburg. Her experience had prepared her for the deed. On the morning in question she presented him with a paper, and while he was reading it fired her revolver and then escaped.

It was soon after this that the czar called upon Trepoff, promoted him to the position of councillor of state and then charged him with the commission of capturing and punishing the man or men who were guilty of the outrage in the winter palace.

Trepoff was a man of remarkable capacity. He was burly in form but singularly nimble in thought. He had the cunning of the fox with the patience and persistence of a well-trained hunting dog. A number of men were arrested on suspicion. That was necessary. It seems to be the practice of the police in all countries to arrest somebody at some time in connection with every crime that is committed. Afterwards, if the person can prove his innocence, all is well, but in the meantime there is a feeling that the police have been alert and have done everything in their power to capture the criminal. But in this instance those who were acquainted with the redoubtable Trepoff knew that he was not satisfied. A dozen or more men were placed in confinement immediately after the explosion, might or might not be guilty, but Trepoff knew in his own mind that he had not captured any of the principals.

The months lengthened into a year, and still he had not run across the person who was guilty of this great outrage. But the case was never out of his mind day or night, and scarcely a week passed by that he did not invent some new scheme for bringing the guilty man to justice. From time to time persons were arrested for minor political offences, and in these instances he closely scrutinized the evidence in order to form some connecting link with the affair of the explosion at the winter palace.

One morning one of the secret agents informed him that a number of men had been seen in the vicinity of the winter palace carrying bamboo canes. That, in itself, did not seem like a very extraordinary proceeding, but the fact that a number of persons carried the same sort of walking stick made it sufficiently interesting to be worthy of report to the chief of police. The response of Trepoff to this bit of news was characteristic:

"Arrest every man of them and bring them before me."

His instructions were carried out to the letter. Some fourteen men were rounded up and brought to the central police headquarters for examination. They were examined, but nothing of any importance was found in their persons. Then the canes were taken and carefully scrutinized. This search brought rich results. Every one of the sticks proved to be hollow and each one contained a sheet of tissue paper on which was printed a call for a meeting of revolutionists. It was the biggest haul that Trepoff had made in many months. The evidence proved that the men were enemies of the government. It did more than that—it paved the way to another discovery which bore directly on the mysterious explosion of February 5, 1880. One of the prisoners, being put to torture, revealed the names of several of his associates.

One of these was a certain Victor Chalturin. He was the son of a peasant, a very energetic agitator and an experienced organizer of associations of malcontents. The police visited his rooms and made a thorough search of the premises. A number of books and pamphlets found on the shelves and in closets indicated that he was a man with Nihilistic tendencies. That, in itself, while interesting, was not very important. The searchers continued at work and finally came to a cabinet with locked doors. It was broken open and in a secret drawer they found a blue print of the plans of the winter palace. It was worn and frayed at the edges, as though it had been carried in someone's pocket for a long while. Most significant of all, the lines indicating the great dining hall were marked with a cross. These facts were promptly communicated to Trepoff, and he sent out a description of Chalturin to every police official in the Russian empire.

While awaiting reports from his subordinates the energetic chief of police made another discovery. It was a slip of paper which was found in the basement of the imperial palace. On it was written these words:

"Do not delay any longer. Now is the time to act."

Some bits of paper corresponding

and at once began to issue proclamations and pamphlets in order to swell their numbers and strengthen their cause. In January, 1880, their secret printing presses were discovered and seized by the police, and numerous arrests were made. In spite of this, they managed to issue, on the 26th of January, a program in which they declared that unless the government granted constitutional rights the czar must die. The result of this was fresh arrests, banishments to Siberia for some and death on the scaffold for others.

It was at this stage of the game that the Nihilists planned their most daring program. It was to blow up the emperor in his own palace. Its execution, as has already been stated, was undertaken by Chalturin, who was young and fervent and filled with an exaggerated sense of his own wrongs and the wrongs of the people. He was a clever cabinet maker and this enabled him, under the assumed name of Batschokoff, to obtain a situation as a carpenter in the imperial palace. He ascertained that the emperor's dining room was above the cellar in which the carpenters were at work, although between it and the cellar there was a guard room used by the sentinels of the palace. Chalturin lived in the palace for nearly four months, and every night he used a package of dynamite for his pillow. A gardener had been installed in the carpenter's cellar shortly after he began to work there, and this made the introduction of the dynamite exceedingly difficult, and incidentally had delayed the execution of the plot for many months.

It became generally known during the investigation in this case that the winter palace for years had been the refuge for vagabond workmen, friends of the servants, and others. Many of these were without a passport and could not have lived anywhere else with impunity. It seems that there is an old law which gives the right of sanctuary, so far as the police are concerned, to criminals taking refuge in the imperial palace. Naturally, the greatest disorder prevailed there. Discipline was at a low ebb, and the introduction was after all, not such a difficult matter.

In spite of this laxity the authorities were puzzled to know how the dynamite came to be smuggled into the basement of the palace under the very nose of the police. One of the



SHE FIRED HER REVOLVER AND THEN ESCAPED.



THE CARPENTER HELD OUT HIS HANDS PLEADINGLY.

Like Home Touch.  
 Tired and dusty, a party were returning by rail from a holiday trip. Simkins, a little bald man, seated himself to read, but dropped off to sleep. On the rack was a ferocious crab in a bucket, and when Simkins went to sleep the crab woke up, and finding things dull in the bucket, started exploring. By careful investigation Mr. Crab reached the edge of the rack.

Down it fell alighting on Simkins's shoulder, where it grabbed the man's ear to steady itself. The passengers held their breath and waited for developments, but Simkins only shook his head and said: "Largo, Sarah! I tell you I've been at the office all the evening!"

Little wits are often great talkers. —De la Roche.

A Good Score.  
 "What's hoggie at your suburb?"  
 "Forty cooks a year. Last year we had only forty-one."—Exchange.

Evidently an Amateur.  
 "Getting ready for your suburban gardening?"  
 "Yep. I've got a spade, a pick, a hoe, a rake and some garden seed, but I've ransacked the market and nobody seems to have any angle worms for sale."

A Delicate Compliment.  
 "My new gown received a very sincere compliment the other day."  
 "As to how?"  
 "The proprietor of a restaurant I went into asked me to sit near the window. Said it would lead one to his place."

**Churches and Tuberculosis.**  
 Statistics showing how serious a problem tuberculosis is to the ordinary church congregation have been issued by the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis. From reports received from over 725 churches, with a membership of over 312,000 communicants, and from twenty denominations, and from 205 cities and towns in 12 states in

various parts of the country, out of nearly 7,000 deaths in 1910, over 700 or 10 per cent. were caused by tuberculosis. This means 2.24 deaths for every thousand members or communicants. While the percentage of deaths from tuberculosis compared with other diseases is not higher in the churches, according to these figures, than in the country at large, the tuberculosis death rate, as shown by

the church returns, is higher per thousand communicants than that for the general population in the registration area of the United States, where the census bureau gave as 1.67 in 1909.

It is impossible a man who is false to his friends and neighbors should be true to the public.—Bishop Berkeley.

FIRST SECTION

FORTY-FOURTH YEAR

## HONOR TO THE DEAD

Liverpool City Pays Tribute to the Late Mayor Gaynor.

Body to be Brought Home on Board the Lusitania.

(Canadian Press Despatch) LIVERPOOL, Sept. 13.—The body of the late Mayor Gaynor of New York was removed from the pool town hall, where it had accorded honors by Great Britain taken to the Cunard Steamship, Lusitania, where it was placed in a special mortuary chapel on the ward between deck for the homeward journey. The Lusitania is due to arrive at New York on Friday, September 19.

A special guard of six police men watched over the body in the hall throughout the night. The body rested on a great faldene, which had been brought to Liverpool from Westminster Abbey.

Early this morning the body was re-embalmed and covered that it was not in contact with the air. The body was then taken to the ship.

A death mask of the features of the late mayor of New York taken this morning in accordance with instructions received by cable from Mrs. Gaynor.

The Liverpool City Council heard the Bishop of Liverpool, the Rev. Francis James Chavasse, to co-operate with the civic authorities and they persuaded Rufus Nor to consent to the holding of religious services at seven o'clock morning in the dim light of candles and in the great fog, enshrouded the highway, the Rev. Theodore A. Howard, vicar of Matthews, conducted the Church of England funeral rite over the remains of the dead mayor.

The only attention paid to the body was by the nurse who accompanied the body to the States consul, and the secret of the funeral was kept until the late mayor of Liverpool, the Rev. Francis James Chavasse, was carried to a hearse which drawn by four horses through half deserted streets of the city to the landing stage. It was then ferried to the ships tender and conveyed to the Lusitania, which was lying in midstream.

## COUNTY COUNCIL HAVE ARGUMENT

What Does Maintenance Collegiate Mean? Whitewash Case.

There promises to be a very session of the county fathers' Court House this afternoon. Following the opinion as to what constitutes maintenance at the College Institute exists. The county do not think it should bear the expenses when the walls of the institute receive a coat of white or when a new typewriter is purchased. These are two instances. Mr. John Buskard will appear for the council and make an effort to convince the councillors that the county should bear half of such expenses.

Another matter which is of considerable interest is the matter of county joining hands in maintenance of the road which to the House of Refuge and the Sanitarium. The session is called these special matters.

## NEW HAVEN WRIT

Opticism has been the order of the New York, New Haven Mountain Express, almost every photograph herewith shown.