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THE ACE OF CLUBS.

A ROMANCE OF BUSSIA AND SIBERIA.

BY PRINCE JOSEF LUBOMIBSKI.

AUTHOR OF "SAVAR-HADJI, A STORY OF TURKISTAN," ETC

CHAPTER XI.

As the search in Lanin's house was fruit

Palkin bad withdrawn his condarmes

"I shall appear to night in a black domino l'alkin bad withdrawn his gendarmes

lets, l'aikin bad withdrawn ins gendarmes and left Jana perfectly free.

It was not 10 o clock yet and the clerks had not yet begun work in the offices, although it was Monday when Wernin and his daughter entered the Ministry of the Interior and sont their cards to the head of the division. Schelm sent word that he was engaged with the Minister and could not whole day was to pass in this fearful anxiety.
No, Jana resolved to call on the Minister himself Popoff, however, showed her how danger us such a step would be, as all chance of bribing Schelm would thus be lost.

The minister knows the whole affair from

Schelm's report only. He would send us straight back to him."

"What can be done? I cannot live in this uncertainty. I am dying of apprehen-

"We must be patient till 7 o'clock. I shall go with you, Countess, and wait for you in the carriage. If you do not succeed my turn will come. We shall have time iny turn will come.

In the meantime Mmc. de Dugarcy had come in. 'What news?' she asked.
"Alas! no news as yet. Have you heard anything?"

anything?

indeed. I know that your hushand left the theatre in search of you. He had heard a conversation between two men on the pit, who asserted they had seen you come out of a gambling hell which I had made a meeting place for mysterious pur poses. He had ran out of the theatre like a madman in company with your friend Miller, whom I have never trusted in spit. of your friendship for him. Since then no

"What?" cried Jana, excitedly. "Vladi-mir could doubt me!"

one has seen him

"What could you expect, dearest? Think of his great love, his jealousy, the eccentrication for which people are kind enough to blame me, and especially your not con-ing. It was evidently a preconcerted plan. Prince Max, who told me all this, said a few moments ago: 'I do not understand it at all. Lanin is secured of belonging to a conspiracy and was arrested in an unknown house. Then he whispered into my ear: 'This is a secret of state; they have used your name and mine.' Your husband, you must know, had asked the Prince to chalhave been able to learn, but it is enough.

They have made use of my name also, and I am determined to clear up the whole affair. I mean to support you with all my power, but it will be a difficult task. Every-body trembles at the mere mention of your

p" Pear Rita, how vulgar the world is, The wind at the same time! For mysell, hymere I feel by I in a subdued by a property of the subdued by a constant of the subdued by a property of the subdued by the subdued by the subdued better. But

wel better But

buried in her

when re they

You sha'l recognize me by the camellia I shall wear, but I shall, of course, see your father, who will be at your side."
"No doubt."

"No doubt."

"Remember, however, madame, that you must speak to the Emperor at all hazards," said Popoff. "This will be your last opportunity, because from this time you will be looked upon as connected with the family of an exile."

there at 10 at the latest Then the Count

Do not fear," replied Mme, de Dugarey, "I am not a Russian subject; I shall, forc, always be able to approach the Emper-

"Ah " said Jana, "when it becomes clear that Vladimir's innocence cannot be estab-lished, will you then still be free to visit us?

Will not your husband separate us "
Mile de Dugarcy hung her head, for that
morning she had been informed at the em bassy that soon she would no longer be at liberty to enter the house of a man who was accused of high treason.

"To-night, however," she said, "each one must do his duty. I promise I shall do all in my power. Your husband is, in my eyes, perfectly innecent and I shall spare no trouble to establish his innocence. At the At tho

trouble to establish his innocence. At the hall we shall ricet again. Mr. Popoff, prepare your ammunition."

"Maslame," said Popoff, decisively, "I warrant the victory."

"God grant," sighed Jana.

At 70 clock Mr. Schelm received the Count and his daughter with that cold and stiff official air which he assumed with his subordinates. The Councillor offered him a million rubles, then half of his whole fortune. Jana—proud Jana—humbled herself before him, and with tears in her eyes begged for mercy. It was all in vain.

mercy. It was all in vain.

Schelm, whose eyes began to sparkle as he exulted in the offers of the old man and the

exulted in the offers of the old man and the humiliation of Jana, who knelt before him, only answered coldly:

"I am out of the question now. But calm yourselves. The Czar is merciful. The criminals will be sent as colonists to Siberia. That is the limit of punishment."

"But you know that Vladimir is innocent," exclaimed Jana.

Schelm removed his spectacles and played.

Schelm removed his spectacles and played the part of an astomshed man to perfection, "innocent! He? The Ace of Cluls, the

head of the conspiracy?"

"Enough of this farce, this hypocrisy,"
cried Jana, indginantly. "You avenge your
self for an innocent jest and your revenge is
terrible. You alone have invented the whole conspiracy, or, at least, with devilish can ning, managed to involve my husband in this affair!"

Schelm piously folded his hands.

"I appreciate your grief, madame, but I cannot help you. Calm yourself; go home and send for a physician."

He rang a bell and a clerk entered.

written his name and says your Excellency

will no doubt receive him.
"Nicholas Popoff!" exclaimed Schelm,
with a glancout the card. "Let him come up at once. When he does come look well at

at once. When he does come rook wen avhim."

"Very well, your Excellency"

"As soon as he is in my bureau you will hasten to the nearest police station and ask for two policemen; these you will station at the entrance of the Ministry. When the stranger leaves me you will accompany him, and, under some pretext, hand him over to the police. You know him. I am sorry he used to be employed here"

"I have been here only two months."

"Then look at him all the more carefully

"Then look at him all the more carefully He is a very dangerous fellow. Let him be He is a very dangerous fellow. Let him be searched carefully and bring me everything

tiat is found on him."

"Your Excellency," said the clerk. "Col.
Palkin happens to be in the Minister's bareau,
I might perhaps—"

"Do what I have ordered," said Scholm

"You deliver this man into the hands of the police if I should not change my mind. In that case I shall say, 'I do not with to see any one.' That will be a sign for you to send

"Perfectly, your Excellency "
"Perfectly, your Excellency "
"Now send the stranger up "
"Ha ! ha!" cried Schelm, delighted. "He alone was still waiting. He comes into my presence not of his own ac od."

The clerk comes back ushering in Popoff.
He drew near to Schelm.

"Ah! Is that you?" said Schelm. "What do you wish?" A mere trifle, Count Ianin's pardon."

Schol n sprang up from his chair.
"Count Linius! What have you to do

"I am his e retary. He took me in when

I was driven away from here. I wrote to you at that time that I should keep silent unless I was attacked. I have kept silent unless I was attacked. I have kept silent. Now you perseen my benefactor and rohme of my daily hread. You will not won der if I defend myself, therefore, I say I ask for Count Lanin's pardon Step. I express ed myself badly; I ask for documents establishing his innocence and the immediate stopping of all proceedings against him. "Ha'ha'" said Schelm, as soon as head gradually recovered from the first sur-

had gradually recovered from the first surprise. "Now I have the whole mystery in my hand! I allowed you to finish your speech. That ought to be enough for you. If you wish for an answer here it is. You are a rebellious and dishonest clerk' Away!

Out of my sight "
Popoff drew still near

"I shall not go till I have what I want.

I have proof against you in my handa."

"Ha! ha! a copy of a few lines! show me your proof. The low clerk Popoff against the head of division. That is laughable, but I will take pity and talk with you as my accomplice. The old certificate is already in my possession yours has no value. No-hody will inquire about the means if the end is only attreed. That is what you your-self said. The Minister will even thank me for having acted thus. To whom will you show your paper? At best to some subor-dinate official. You had better lisshow your paper? At thest to some sunor-duate official. You had better lis-ten to me, my friend. Give me back that paper and perhaps I'll pardon you. Al-though it is of no value to any one, I do not

like my signature to be seen in the world."
"I shall only exchange it for the freedom
of the Count."

cannot help you. to....
and send for a physician."

He rang a bell and a clerk entered.
"Please accompany these visitors down.

Pardon me, my time not my own."

"Be careful, Mr. Schelm," said Jana
"Wo shall fight till our last breath."

"You are right," replied Poposi coolly.
"In my hands this little sheet of paper may be worth little enough, but in the hand of count Lanin or his wife it Zoes quite far, and if you do not do what Tank I shall hand it to some one and tell the whole, story to meet the same of the worth little enough, but in the hand of count Lanin or his wife it Zoes quite far, and if you do not do what Tank I shall hand it to some one and tell the whole, story to meet the same of the worth little enough, but in the hand of count Lanin or his wife it Zoes quite far, and if you do not do what Tank I shall hand it to some one and tell the whole, story to Ariella'Shelter rarious at the discourtery from the palusher.

of mercy."

"Shall I dis poor old man and his scarched: you will find nothing.

"The standard will be searched: you will find nothing.

"The standard will be searched: you will find nothing.

"The standard will be searched: you will find nothing.

Schelm was reaching for the bell, "please do not play with it!"

Popoff's voice sounded so threatening that Schelm was reaching for the bestood, aiming at his former chief, with a pixtol in his hand and his eye glowed with such irrevoculation of the property of the property of the property of the party of the property of the property of the property of the party of the party of the property of the property of the property of the party of the property of the property of the property of the party of the party of the property of the party of the property of the party of the property of the party of the party

Catarrh

IS a blood disease. Until the poison is expelled from the system, there can no cure fer this louthsome and dangerous malady. Therefore, the only effective treatment is a thorough course of Ayer's Sarsaparilla—the best of all blood purifiers. The sooner you begin the better; delay is dangerous.

the better; delay is dangerous.

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Boggs, Holman's Mills, N. C.

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waited till the last moment, because I know very well that if I take your life I jeopardize my own also. The moment, therefore, you move or call I kill you like a mad dog. They will rush up as soon as the mad dog. They will rush up as soon as the shot is heard, arrest me, and then I shall tell shot is heard, arrest me, and then a blank all I know, and they will soon find out, in addition, all I do not know. I count upon the being big enough to reach the the scandal being big enough to reach the highest personages. I sacrifice myself, but I save the Count and he will not let my mother suffer, nor my betrothed, nor my

Schelm had lost his mind entirely and

turned deadly pale.

"To threaten me with a pistol—here in the Ministry of the Interior—such a thing has never happened in Russia. You are mad!"

"Wennest finish our business!" said Popoff, raising his pistol.
"Tell me what you wan?!" stammered

Schelm. "Thave told you twice; the documents prov-

"Have told you twice; the documents proving Count Lanin's innocence!"
"How can I furnish them when the
Count is guilty! I know nothing—I can do
nothing—I have no proofs."
"Enough!" cried Popoff, toying with the
trigger. "Will you do my bidding or not."
"I'll try, I'll endeavor, and after all I do
not care so much for him."
"What fools were are in the foot of

"What fools men are in the face of anger," snecred Popost contemptuously. danger," sneered Popoli contemptuously.
"You keep me waiting, hoping that some-body may come and save yeu. Do you think I'll leave your room and be arrested as I come out? I can find the papers myself. They are there in the concealed mehe behind the partrait of Alexander. Open it at once

Schelm was beside himself. If looks could kill men, Schelm's would have annihilated

Popoff instantly.

A second time Popoff touched the trigger.
Schelm bowed low as if to avoid the ball. Almost unconsciously he went up to the patter, touched the spring and, auttering curses, opport the box.

"Now stop?" cried Poposs. "I'll find the papers and return them when Count Lanin

Schelm stood there as if struck by light-Schelm stood there as it struck by lightming and his eye glowed with such irrevoc
hand and his eye glowed with such irrevoc
him for an instant to turn the pistol aside
from Schelm's head. That was the critical
from Schelm's head. That was