## THE PLOT THAT FAILED.

BY ADAM R. THOMSON.

Exactly at noon on the day before that fixed for the marriage of Queen Theresa of Narumbia to Ernest, hered itary prince of Landbery, Captain Klunst, the chief of police of the capital city of Rosenstadt, was ushered in to the private apartment of Count von Schonstein, the Queen's principal min ister of state. He had come to Schonstein's residence in the Birnenstrase by appointment, and the count, though his furrowed countenance were a look of deep gloom, received him graciously and motioned him to a chair. Kluns sat down in silence and waited with some impatience till the minister, having carefully tied the papers on the bundle, at length commenced the con-

versation. "Well, I have seen the Queen," he began in a low voice

"Yes, your lordship?"
"And it is useless trying to move her, worse than useless. She has thoroughly made up her mind, and is even prepared to accept my resigna tion if I persist in my refusal to have the monstrous decree I spoke to you about yesterday in readiness for her signature immediately after to morrow's ceremony.

"But" said the other, "it is mad

ness-sheer madness."
"So I represented to her majesty, Klunst, though not, of course, in those words. I pointed out that many of the she is so anxious to release are members of secret revolutionary societies-men and women who aim at the subversion of the constitution and the overthrow of the throne, whose freedom would even place her majesty in personal danger."
"It is true, my lord."

The count shrugged his shoulders. "The Queen thinks not," he said,

grimly. "But what arguments did her ma

jesty put forward?" None. She is a woman and she does not argue. It almost makes one wish Nerumbia had adopted the Salic law. I'll tell you what she did say, though. She hinted that my ideas are old-fashioned, and stated pretty plainly that, in her opinion, most of our politi cal prisoners, as she pleases to call them, are the victims of police plots."

" Monstrous !" " Just so.

" How can her majesty entertain such a notion?' I don't know unless it is that she

has been reading some of the French But the origin of the is of no consequence. missed me with an instruction to draft the decree and to commence it with a preamble to the effect that Queen Theresa is—is—really, I can hardly bring myself to speak the terrible words—is determined that her marriage shall inaugurate a new era." A new era?

Yes, an era of-mark this, Klunst absolute liberty to every one of her subjects.

Absolute liberty-in Nerumbia! The captain laughed ironically.
Schonstein leaned back in his chair.

"I have explained the situation, he said, " and so far as I can see, only a miracle can avert us from disaster. "Ah!" Klunst drew a long breath, then he remarked, slowly, 'I have something startling to reveal to you, my lord count-something that per haps - though not a miracle - may after all, lead her majesty to reconsider the position."

"What do you mean?" asked the

minister, eagerly.
"I mean, your lordship, that w discovered the existence of the most diabolical plot ever conceived."

"Yes, yes. What is it? Speak, man—speak." Schonstein half rose in his excitement.

"It is a plot to murder-"

"Not the Queen?"
"No, but the prince — the bride groom-to morrow "The prince! Good heavens Where? How?"

"In the cathedral at the commence ment of the marriage service."
"Details." said Schonstein, after

brief, intense pause ; "details." Klunst bowed "They are precise, my lord. Among

those who have been given passes into the cathedral is a certain Duchesse de Malville, who is supposed to be a mem ber of the French nobility. Yes; I recollect the name.

obtained her ticket through one of her majesty's ladies in-waiting. Whom we need not speak of, your

lordship, for she is merely an innocent She knows nothing of the sup dupe. She knows nothing of the sup-posed duchesse's true character and You, Klunst, are better informed?

'said the other simply. woman, whose real name is Adele Laront, is an Anarchist of the most dan gerous type; young, fascinating and
—worst of all—sincere. She is utterly careless of her life, and is, no doubt, gratified at having been chosen by her fellows for the deadly work projected

for to morrow."
"When was she so chosen, Klurst?" "At a meeting held last night — a meeting at which the police were repre-The scheme of the crime was sented. then discussed; and, to put the matter shortly, it was decided that as the wedding party walked up the central woman should spring forward

and stab Prince Ernst to the heart. The count received all these particulars with the utmost calmness, giving no further sign of emotion than an occa sional bite of his iron gray moustache.

Now he merely asked, meditatively:
"Why should they wish to assassi nate the prince rather than the

"I cannot you, your lordship, unless

it is that the clothes worn by a man afford less protection to the heart than those of a woman. Or it may be that those of a woman. they think an attack on the prince is less likely to be anticipated than one

on the Queen."
"Ah! Well, in any case the effect would be the same. There is, of course, an international organization, There is, of and it is only the rank of the victim they care about. The prince is a ruler of a larger country than ours, and his murder could not fail to terrorize But, now, what do you pro-Europe. pose to do?"
"To arrest this woman, my lord."

" And on what evidence

"The evidence of my officer; Sau-ber, his name is. He obtained admission to the meeting disguised as a—"
"Never mind that, Klunst; I am quite aware of your methods. But have you no other witnesses?"

"No; though we can trace this woman's history for some years past and prove that she has been in the habit of expressing the most revolutionary opinions.' Schonstein was silent for a moment.

Then he said, decisively:
"The case is not strong enough."

"Not strong enough, your lord-hip?" The captain looked surprised. 'Why, any court-"

"Not strong enough for the Queen, I mean! She will simply believe the whole affair to be an invention of the police; and, so far from abandoning er projected folly, will actually glory the more in its accomplishment. know her majesty's disposition K'unst.

What is to be done, then? "At present, so far as you are con cerned, nothing—absolutely nothing."
"I must not proceed with the arrest?

"Certainly not." "But, my lord-"

"I have no time for further discus sion," interrupted the count, "I wish to be alone now. I have much to occupy me. You have my instruc-tions; if I find it necessary to vary them you shall be duly notified."

With which he rose, and Captain Klunst, mystified and not a little an noyed, had no course but to take his departure. Left to himself, Count you Schon

stein sat for several minutes trying to arrive at a solution of the most difficult problem with which he had ever been confronted. This was briefly how to utilize the plot revealed by the chief of police in such a way as to overrule the headstrong will of the young Queen.

To arrest the would be assassin and endeavor to convict her on police evidence would, as he had at once seen and explained to Klunst, in all proba bility produce an exactly contrary effect on her majesty's mind to that he What other action, then, could he take? For once the minister felt nonplussed; he could not find an answer to the question. And yet on his finding an answer depended his future career, for he had taken up such a definite position in the matter of the suggested amnesty that he would be bound, should this be carried out, to resign his office. He was a patriot, according to his lights, and he honest ly believed the Queen's design both foolish and dangerous. But he was also a strong and ambitious man, who to be thwarted, even by his royal mistress, and who could not contemplate with equanimity relinquishing the political power which was so

dear to his soul. What if he were to do nothing be yond, perhaps, warning Prince Ernest at the last moment of his danger and affording him police protection? If the Queen saw the man she lov actually attacked and at such a time she could hardly fail to experience an overwhelming revulsion of feeling. But the count, daring as he was, hesi tated to take a course fraught with so much risk, more especially as he liked Prince Ernest and believed that, later on, when love's first frenzy had some what abated, he would find in the prince a powerful ally in opposing the democratic tendencies of Queen democratic tendencies of Queen Theresa. No, no, the prince's life must not be endangered.

He had come to this inevitable con clusion when his private secretary en tered from an adjoining room, placed a budget of letters on the table and re-Schonstein opened one, two, tired. three of these communications and glanced at their contents without in-Out of the fourth, however, fell a photograph, and he took it up with a half start. It was not accomwith a half start. It was not accom-panied by any note, but was signed, "Very truly yours, Araold Farring-ton." "A remarkable resemblance," murmured the count, "really remark

He struck a small stood on the table and his secretary re-entered the room. The count handed him the photograph and began abrupt

"Farrington, the leading actor in that English theatrical company which has been in Rosenstadt for the last fort night, has sent me his photograph Muller. You have seen him, of course?"

I have, my lord." "Good-isn't it?

"Exceedingly. "Did it ever strike you, Muller"there was a hardly perceptible tremor in Schonstein's voice—"that Farring

ton is extremely like some one we both know very well?" The secretary looked at the photograph carefully for a few moments

saying, at last:
"Well, my lord, I never noticed it
before, but I think you must refer to

Prince Ernest." "Yes, yes; not only are the two as-

do you know?"
"Their last performance is fixed for

tomorrow evening, my lord."
"Ah! Well, Muller, I was present at the play they gave two nights since and at its conclusion I sent for Mr. Farrington and complimented him on his acting. It is, no doubt, in consequence of that interview that he has conored me with his photograph. should like to thank him for his cour tesy personally. Perhaps, too, I may give him some little souvenir-actors, I have heard, are fond of souvenirs but, in any case, I want you to send a note to him-you can easily find out where he is stopping -- and ask him to come here and see me after lunch, say at B o'clock. Let the note go at once

by special messenger. Herr Muller bowed and left the room. The count threw himself back in his chair, drew a deep breath, gave a low whistle and muttered slowly to himself:

"At last I think I see a way, dangerous and difficult, too, not to say terribly expensive; but still a way. only this English actor has sufficient pluck and impudence-and his countrymen, generally, are lacking in neither of these characteristics—then— I-believe I can give her majesty an object lesson she will never forget, and, at the same time, save both Nerumbia and myself."

That afternoon, probably for the first time in his life, Arnold Farrington was positively astounded. The count made him a proposal so extraor-dinary that, but for the heavy monetary bribe with which it was accompanied, the actor would have esteemed the matter a huge joke. As it was, he hesitated, and raised one objection after another, to each of which, however, the minister was ready with an answer. The upshot was that, having satisfied Schonstein, he left, taking with him, with many misgivings, a portrait of Prince Ernest of Landberg. ribbon of the Order of the Gray Eagle, and a draft for a large sum on the secret service account of the Nerumbian treasury. Whatever happened he could, at least, congratulate himself on having obtained payment in advance.

A little later Von Schonstein and the chief of police were again in confer ence

"Klunst," said the former, com mencing the conversation, "before we go any further, I want to be assured that what you told me this morning of the intended assassination of prince is absolutely true?"

"That is so, My Lord. I have questioned and cross questioned my fficer, and he is ready to swear to the accuracy of the most minute detail of

There is no doubt, for instance, that the attack is planned to take place during the procession of the wedding party up the aisle at the beginning of the service? "None whatever; as on that point,

as on all others, Sauber is quite positive."
"Good! Then I have arranged this

affair at last." "I am to arrest the duchesse?" "No, no ; I told you before how futile such a step would be. Come, you shall

hear everything; but, by heaven! Klunst, should a word ever pass your lips-"
"You may rely upon my discretion,

my lord

"Well, I suppose I may, especially since your interests, as well as mine are involved. Let the Queen have her vay, and unloose this disreputable horde of criminals, and there can be little doubt that, provided she is not meanwhile assassinated, her next step will be to abolish the police, whi would abolish you, Captain Klunst. The count smiled grimly, and went of without waiting for a reply : " On the other hand, let the French woman's at tack be duly made, and her majesty dare not, simply dare not, outrage public opinion and—and my opinion— by proceeding with her ridiculous de-

"But I-I do not understand, my lord. You cannot mean that we are to allow the attack to be made?"

"I do. though, Klunst. "I am lost in perplexity, your lord-hip. Have you consulted Prince Ernship. est about this? Is he ready to take the

Schonstein twirled his moustache he was quite enjoying the mystification of the chief of police.

"No," he said slowly, "I have not consulted the prince, nor at this stage do I propose to do so. It is quite un-necessary." "Unnecessary?" The word came

involuntarily from the captain's lips.

Entirely. The prince will not be exposed to any risk whatever."

Klunst's face was a study, but he

said nothing.
"Simply because," the count resumed, "the attack will not be made on him at all. The chief of police fidgeted nervous ly in his chair, but speech was still be-

yond his powers. "It will be made," said the other, in a low voice, "on a gentlemen who has agreed to enactthe part of bridegroom for the passage up the aisle only-Arnold Farrington, the great English actor, who is visiting us just now.

He paused, and at last Klunst managed by a gesture to signify his desire for further information. The count was quite ready to gratify him.
"Briefly," he explained, "this is how matters stand: It has been ar-

ranged, as you know, that Prince Ernest is to wear to-morrow the uniform of a captain of Hussars, with one decoration only, the ribbon of the Order of the Gray Eagle. Well, Farrington has in his theatrical wardrobe the retonishingly slike, but they are of the same height and build. I wonder now" has in his theatrical wardrobe the repair of abruptly—" when do quisite uniform, and I have lent him

these Eaglish actors leave us, Muller, my decoration. Farrington bears a strong resemblance to the prince, and, with a little make up, it would be next to impossible, in the dim light of the cathedral, to distinguish between the two men. You follow so far?"

"Ye es," gasped Klunst.
"H'm! It has also been arranged that Prince Ernest is to await the Queen immediately inside the great door of the west end of the cath when, after kissing the bride's hand, he, with the rest of the party, will at once move up the aisle. This part of the programme, however, the prince will carry out by deputy, for his car-riage—you know he and I are to pro-ceed to the cathedral together—his carriage will be unavoidably delayed." The chief of police wiped his moist

But, my lord," he murmured, "if

this Englishman should be killed?"
"There is no fear of that. He is going to wear a coat of mail under-The only risk he neath his uniform. runs is the really slight one of detec-tion, for which he has been well paid. But now, Klunst, I wish you to note carefully your share in this transaction. First of all, the so called duchesse must be watched, and should she by any chance leave the city, the fact nust be at once communicated to me. The captain bowed assent.

"Her movements are under obser

vation," he remarked.
"Now, for yourself, then. You will post several officers in plain clothes near the central aisle of the cathedral. and will, of course, be yourself among them. The moment the attack is made Farrington will fall, and it will then be for you and those of your men who are not engaged in arresting the wo man to surround him before the Queen has time to intervene, and carry him quickly to the vestry at the south of the altar. There you must immediately get rid of the men, and an instant ater the prince and I will join you. The prince, whom I shall have meanwhile taken into my confidence will then himself go into the cathedral explain to the Queen in a hurried whisper that he was not wounded, but had merely fainted with excitement, and the interrupted ceremony will be proceeded with. So shall we save Nerumbia.

"Your instructions are difficult to give effect to, my lord," said the chief of police, gazing at Schonstein admirbut I will do my best.

ingly, "but I will do my best." Till we meet to-morrow, then, Cap tain Klunst, farewell.

"Farewell, my lord count, till to morrow. "We are to commence a new ers then, you know," added the minister

laugh, as the other rose to go. "Ha! ha! a new era Klunst, closing the door behind him. It was the season of winter, and the next day proved cold and gloomy. Nevertheless, long before the hour of l, at which the wedding was to take place, the streets of Rosenstadt were gayly decorated with flags and bunt ing, and were thronged with crowds of merry faced citizens who had turned out to do honor to the occasion. Ar nold Farrington noted all as he lay

back among the cushions of a closed carriage listening dreamily to the pealing bells, and wishing his adventure well over. It had been the pub-licly expressed desire of the Prince of Landberg to be permitted to proceed to the cathedral quietly, so that Farrington was not worried by any inconven ient demonstration en route. Arrived at his destination, however, he grew omewhat anxious, for here he had to the burgomaster, explain encounter that Count von Schonstein had been detained for a few minutes, and sub-mit to be escorted up the stone steps of the cathedral, and so through the great

door at which he was to await the com ing of the Queen. dismounted from the vehicle and his fears were immediately set at rest. The hours he had devoted to his make-up had brought their reward ; equious officials who stood bow ing before him had evidently not the slightest doubt as to his identity with the prince. He entered the cathedral just three minutes before 1; and as he gazed at the richly dressed personages who thronged the vast nave, speculated calmly as to the precise po sition of the woman who was to attack

On the stroke of the hour cheers from without announced the advent of the young monarch, and at the same moment the count and the Prince of Landberg alighted unobserved at a small door at the other end of the building. Schonstein's only ground for uneasiness was over; he had told his story to the prince in such a way as to gain his serene highness assen to the steps taken for his safety, and for Nerumbia's safety and for the safety of the count. Together they safety of the count. entered an unoccupied vestry and awaited events with confidence

The mighty organ pealed forth; the procession must have started up the aisle. Another moment, and—unemotional man as he was—the count's heart began to beat wildly. It the deed should cause a panic? But no, no; Klunst was a reliable officer; he would prevent anything of

Some seconds passed; but nothing seemed to have happened. Then the organ ceased, and the two men in the vestry distinctly heard the resonant voice of the Archbishop beginning the marriage service.

Schonstein's brow grew moist, his lips parched; he had comprehended the terrible truth. The attack has not been made. The passage up the aisle had been accomplished in He could find no words in which to reply to the dismayed look of inquiry cast upon him by the astonished

There was a noise at the outer door, nd Captain Klunst, his face blanched,

his limbs trembling, stood before them
"My lord count," he panted, "what "My lord count," he panted, "what is to be done? This woman Leront, this anarchist has failed us. She is not in the cathedral." He paused for breath.

"Go on," muttered Schonstein, "She has escaped?"

" No, no ; her lodging was too care fully watched for that to happen. But she must have found out that we were watching her. She has simply kept in That is all. doors. " All !" echoed the count.

"All!" cried the prince excitedly.
It is not all. Why—why, good heavens, count !-while we three are standing here, Theresa-the Queenmy Queen-is-is-being married to an English actor!"

The count greaned, but could offer no suggestion. He and Klunst looked at one another blankly. The tension was becoming unbearable.

"Fire ! Fire ! Fire ! The cry came from within the cathedral, and was followed by a stampede and the shouts of the excited people rushing for the great west door of the building. Another moment, and into raised the alarm-Mr. Arnold Farring-

ton. "I-I had to do it !" he gasped, adiressing the count. "Why, they were actually marrying me to the dressing the count. Queen, and I—I have a wife in Eng-land. There is nothing like a cry of land. There is nothing like a cry of fire to clear a place quickly; and, goodness knows, in this suit of mail I was hot enough to do the thing realistically. No one will be hurt, the exits are too good. By Jupiter!" added, "here comes her majesty

For answer, the count, who, in the presence of a pressing danger, had recovered himself, seized Farrington by the arm and hustled him out of the vestry into the street. His carriage was still waiting and the two men jumped in.

I have failed to save Nerumbia, said the count, hastily, "but there is yet time to save myself.

"And me, I hope," remarked Farngton. "I guess I'd better get rington. away from this country of yours as soon as convenient, count. " Like fury to the railway station !

cried Schonstein to the coachman. Thus abruptly did the Count von Schonstein bring bis political career to an end. A more pliant minister was immediately placed in his stead, who, at the conclusion of the deferred marriage ceremony on the following day, presented for the Queen's signature a decree giving immediate liberty to all prisoners throughout the realm.
Whether this will lead to the direful results anticipated by the count time alone can show. It has since come to the knowledge of the chronicler of these events, however, that the Duchesse de Malville, alias Adele Leront, was allowed by the demoralized police to make good her escape, and al o that at present Queen Theresa is well and happy. At the same time there are said to be matters connected with her majesty's first attempt at matrimony as to which she in vain seeks enlightenment from her prudent and far seeing spouse, Ernest, hereditary Prince of Landberg. — Chambers' Jour-

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