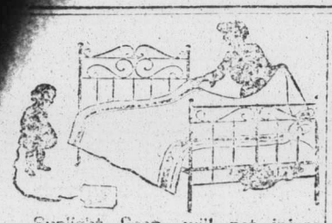

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THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV.

(Continued from Page Six.)

priest. "What terrible thing has been done in Tivoloffsky tonight?"

"Nothing much," said Vladimir calmly. "I have killed two wolves."

CHAPTER XVII.

"I AM GOING TO MARRY YOU!"

It was noon in Tomsk, and the Princess Olga had not yet slept. She sat at her window, which faced toward the great plaza, and watched and listened. Suddenly there came to her ears the faint sound of a bugle. It came from the direction of the new railway station. The princess smiled. Then came a knock at her door.

"Open it, Therese."

Therese was pale and trembling. The events of the past two nights had shaken her nerves till she was on the verge of collapse. But she obeyed and the same lieutenant who had assisted during the night came in.

"I fear for your life!" he said. "Neslerov has recovered and is cursing like a madman. He called for me and ordered me to fetch you to him."

"It will not be a difficult task," said the princess. "I will go."

"But he will kill you. He is speaking words that no sane man could ever speak. He says if he is to be destroyed he will destroy you first."

"Does he know that Vladimir is gone?"

"He suspects it. He has not been to see."

Olga looked from her window. Three men were riding abreast, coming toward the palace, and after them a detachment of the soldiers always at the station.

"Some one comes!" said the officer.

"Yes. Do you know who that is?"

"I do not," replied the officer. "It must be one of the generals."

"You will see," said Olga. "Come! We will go to Neslerov!"

The governor glared at her in mad fury.

"You drugged that wine! You put me to sleep!" he shouted.

"I drugged the liquor, for I had work to do," she answered.

"What have you done? Let us be frank. You came here as an enemy and as a spy."

"I came to right a wrong; to avenge the crime of Graslov."

"What do you know?"

"I know the truth."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Restore that which is lost and undo what was done by wickedness."

An evil look came into his face, and he stepped toward the door. The lieutenant blocked it.

"Out of the way, dog!" cried Neslerov.

"I protect her highness."

"You! You protect against my orders!"

"There is a higher than you. I obey the czar."

Neslerov started back, so powerful in effect is the name of the czar.

"The czar!"

At the very door of the palace a bugle blew its blast.

"Make way! Admit his excellency the governor general," came a voice. Neslerov went white and leaped at Olga.

"You sent for him, and this means my death! We die together!"

"In the name of the czar!" cried Olga, and the sword of the lieutenant touched the breast of Neslerov.

"What means this?"

The voice came from a tall and soldierly man wearing a brilliant uniform, who blocked the doorway with his burly form.

"De Muloff! Governor general!" gasped Neslerov.

"Sit down," said the governor general sternly. "You sent for me in haste, princess. I came as soon as possible. Fortunately there was a train."

"The railroad has saved me and the Duke of Graslov," said Olga.

Neslerov darted a look of hatred toward her.

"Bring Therese, my attendant," said Olga to the lieutenant.

There was another commotion at the entrance, and three soldiers and an officer came in with two prisoners.

"To the governor!" cried the officer. "There was murder at Tivoloffsky!"

Olga started up, and so did Neslerov. The governor general turned calmly to see who had come. The two prisoners were Vladimir and Papa Paulpoff.

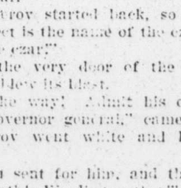
"Bring them in here," ordered Olga. "Let them be brought before the governor general."

"This man murdered the superintendent of police and Unsgethop," said the officer in charge.

"True," said Vladimir. "I did."

Neslerov was the picture of despair and baffled and hate.

LOTASINE



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The prince was somnolent, but his very helplessness moved him [illegible]. Therese, white lipped and shivering, came in. Neslerov looked from one to the other. He knew that something was coming—the end of his career. The governor general waited, looking coldly at Olga, for from her he expected the first [illegible].

"Look at that man, Therese!" commanded Olga.

It was a dramatic scene as the girl stood with perfect poise and pointed her finger at Neslerov.

"I see him," faltered Therese.

"Who is he?"

"Prince Nicholas Neslerov."

"Prince Nicholas Neslerov, let me tell you what the governor general already knows," said Olga, and her voice was cold and steely. "For many years my youth prevented a clear understanding of things. I was born after the death of my unfortunate cousin and so did not fully take in the significance of the mystery of Graslov till a few years ago. But when I did learn of it I resolved to sift it to the bottom and make certain that the one who caused her death should be punished. For years my efforts were unavailing. I pursued every line of investigation that occurred to me, and in them all I had the sanction and assistance of the czar. At last, during a sojourn at Graslov in another name, I met this woman whom you have heard me call Therese. Do you know who she is? She is Mme. Deudoff, widow of that Deudoff who was the slave of your wicked father and yourself."

Neslerov was too crestfallen already to show further effect of her words. He made no answer.

"For twenty years this woman has lived with the truth locked in her bosom because she feared her husband. The governor general is here and will hear this case at once, and from that moment when he hears the truth you are in his hands. Therese, who is that man?"

She pointed at Vladimir as she spoke.

"That—is—the Duke of Graslov!" said the woman firmly.

"Tell your story."

"It was twenty years ago, your excellency," said Therese, speaking directly to the governor general, "that the Little Prince Alexis was lost. He was missing from the palace at Graslov one evening, and the poor princess was beside herself with grief and anxiety. A search was made, and my husband, who was in the service of the duke, returned from the Kama and reported that the child had been seen wandering on its banks, and he brought back a portion of its garments, which he said he found close to the water. It was believed that the child was drowned, and the princess grieved for her dead boy. The poor princess did not survive the shock long, and when she died there was trouble between the two branches of the Neslerovs. Her family claimed that the duke had misused her and caused her death. It was never settled, and the two families have since been enemies.

"It was not less than two years after when, one night, while he was intoxicated, my husband said something that aroused my suspicion—that he knew what had become of the young prince. I taxed him with it, and he was maudlin enough to confide in me. He had been poor, but since the loss of the young prince he had not worked, but had plenty of money. This also caused me to suspect. He told me, in his drunken fashion, that the Duke of Graslov did not wish the son of the princess to inherit the title or estate. As the father of the boy had died he was the heir, but the duke preferred his younger son, Nicholas.

"The two, the duke and Prince Nicholas, paid my husband to take the child and drown it. He was a wicked man, my husband, and he agreed. He did take the child to the Kama and was about to take from it the telltale clothes when it cried lustily, and a powerful man sprang from the bushes and took the child. There was a fight in which my husband was badly whipped. But he did not dare report to the duke that he had failed, and so he carried out the plans and reported the finding of the clothing at the river. This was the clothing he had taken off preparing to throw the child in the river. To me this revelation was a great shock, but my husband threatened my life if I ever breathed a word of it to a single person. I knew he would keep his threat, and so I dared say nothing, for the house of Graslov was rich and powerful, and I feared to speak even to the police.

"Thus I lived year after year with the shadow of my husband's crime upon my heart, until I thought I would go mad. Moved by an impulse I could not control, I determined to learn if the child was alive. I found it in the house of the blacksmith Paulpoff at Perm. Having learned that the little Alexis was well and happy I felt easier, but resolved that when my opportunity came I would reveal the truth. The old duke died and Nicholas became his heir and finally became governor of Tomsk. A short time ago my husband died, and I was free to tell. There came to Graslov one day a beautiful girl, giving a name that was not familiar, but she was the picture of that lovely princess who had died, and I watched her. I knew she was searching for the truth, and I told her what I knew. We went to St. Petersburg, where she told the czar, and he gave her authority under his seal. We went back to Perm, but the Paulpoffs were on their way to Siberia. The princess resolved to follow, and this meeting is the result."

"How did you know the boy in Paulpoff's house was the young prince?" asked the governor general.

"I saw his mother's picture which had been around his neck. I recognized his face, his voice, his manner, and Paulpoff told me how he came into his possession."

"This is strange," said the governor general, turning to the old man sternly. "How was it that you kept the young prince and did not disclose the fact that he was alive?"

"It was the prayer of his poor mother," said Papa Paulpoff. "I, too, have my story, and this day I was wandering by the river and had been fishing. I heard the cry of a child. I ran toward the sound and I saw the man taking off his clothing. He cursed it and struck it and I said that its voice would call to the czar. I knew he meant to murder the child, and so I attacked him. I was a powerful man then, though not nearly so powerful as Vladimir is to-day—is now. We fought, and I severely whipped him. I then took the child home with me and resolved to restore him to his parents, for I supposed he had been taken for revenge by enemies. When I saw the beautiful face of the prince I knew it was the face of the boy's mother, and so I began to think what was in the babe who lived near the Kama had such a woman. I had heard of the beauty of the Princess Neslerov, and so I went to the palace. I saw her at the [illegible] at a ball, but I was [illegible] her. [illegible]

"My picture!" she cried. "Where did you get that picture? Who are you? What have you done with my child?"

"Michael Paul," I [illegible].

"Oh, Michael Paulhoff," she cried, "I [illegible] that for her heart would [illegible]."

"I am telling [illegible]," I answered, "and it is [illegible] to the life or death [illegible]."

"Listen!" she [illegible], trying [illegible] to see that we were not [illegible]. I was in the house of [illegible]. My husband, who was the [illegible] of the duke, is dead. My little son would be the heir of this estate, but the duke prefers that his own younger son should inherit, and so they have plotted to destroy my child. Thank God for [illegible] you on this earth, Michael Paulpoff! You were sent to save my boy. And now listen. Were he to return here or were it to be known that he was alive, no matter in what part of Russia he might be, they would manage in some way to kill him. Even now I must be lost some spy overhears our words and reveals the truth. I do not [illegible] have you [illegible] quickly and [illegible] you [illegible] now, but you must never come to me. Some day I will come to you and claim my boy. Will you swear, Michael Paulpoff, to cherish my boy and preserve this [illegible]?

"I gave the promise, excellency, and I have kept it. But she also said, 'In case I die, Michael Paulpoff, guard my boy as you would your own, for I think he will be like his father—strong, but no match for the wicked and designing ones. Do not permit any one ever to know this truth.'

"I have obeyed, excellency. The boy was named Vladimir, and I soon came to love him as my own. He was, as the princess said, strong and of an easy going, simple temperament. He grew up to help me in the forge. The princess did die, and so I held my tongue, as she bade me. But Vladimir—or Prince Alexis—was talented, and he learned to paint. He discovered one day the picture of his mother and became enamored of it. He wished to paint it, and I permitted him. Then one day Neslerov came and saw it. I was frightened, for I knew he would suspect, and I knew from his manner that we would soon hear from him again.

"We were charged with conspiracy, excellency, we who had honest hearts and had never wronged any one, and were handled off to Siberia. We were sent to Tomsk, where no doubt Neslerov intended to kill the young man when he got an opportunity. Then one day that American named Denton came to our hut in Tivoloffsky. In some way he had learned of the picture. I do not know why he was interested in Vladimir, but he asked to see the picture and questioned me.

"'Paulpoff,' he said, 'Vladimir is not your son.'

"I shivered, for I did not know but he was a friend of the governor. But he said he was going to learn who Vladimir was, so I told him the story. He said that Vladimir could not be any worse off than at present, and he could secure the help of the government to restore the estate to him and punish Nicholas Neslerov. He took the picture, and some one came to our hut after that and whipped my wife to death. Vladimir swore vengeance, and today he has killed Jansky and Unsgethop."

"This is a strange story of cruelty and crime," said the governor general. "But, so far as you are concerned, I congratulate you, Prince Neslerov, duke of Graslov. And this faithful old man, whose life is almost run, how can I show my appreciation of what he has done for Russia? Paulpoff, you shall name your own reward, and it is yours."

"To live with Vladimir," said the old man simply.

"And this American! Where is he?"

"Wounded; lying in the house of a priest at Tivoloffsky," answered Vladimir, or, as he should now be called, Alexis.

"Nicholas Neslerov, what have you to say?" asked the governor general.

"It is a lie," said Nicholas.

"Your own face does not indicate it. I believe this is the truth. You are a prisoner! Call the officer of the guard!"

"I am here, your excellency!"

(To be continued.)

THE TRADE IN EGGS.

Some advice regarding the marketing of fresh eggs and the preservation of eggs for future use or shipment, is given by the poultry division, Ottawa, concerning fresh eggs Mr. Hare says,—eggs to be palatable should be eaten in a strictly fresh condition; therefore they should reach the consumer without unnecessary delay. This requires (1) that the eggs be collected regularly every day and stored in a cool room (temp. 40 to 50 Deg. F.) until a sufficient number are on hand to deliver to a dealer (2) that the dealer forwarded the eggs to the consumer at least once a week and (3) that the merchant handle perfect the eggs from deterioration while in his possession.

Some farmers are so situated that they can establish a city trade in fresh eggs the year round, strictly fresh eggs shipped from the farm to the city merchant weekly, are usually bought at a premium of several cents a dozen. For all farmers a most profitable branch of the business is the trade in fresh winter eggs, for which there is a great demand and new laid eggs the supply is limited and high prices are paid. Exporting firms buy great quantities of eggs during the spring and summer months.

There is a growing preference on the home markets for brown-shelled eggs. The shells of the eggs should be wiped clean, if necessary, and the eggs graded in size. For shipment to the merchant the eggs should be packed in cases holding twelve dozens or thirty dozens each.

Egg preservation.—While no process of preservation will retain the fine flavour of a new laid egg, so that later it can honestly be sold as such, yet for culinary purposes when the supply of new laid eggs is limited, preserved eggs meet this demand. The eggs are placed in the preservative during the spring and summer. None but fresh eggs should be packed; stale or cracked eggs are not only bad in themselves, but they will affect those packed with them. The eggs should be fairly clean, as those that require washing are poor keepers.

Eggs can be preserved in lime water, or placed in cold storage.

The lime water is prepared by adding one pound of new lime to four gallons of water. The mixture should be well stirred and the liquid portion, which is saturated lime water, poured into a crock or water tight barrel; the vessel containing the lime water should be placed in a cool room. As exposure to the air tends to weaken the preservative, the vessel should be covered with a piece of burlap upon which a paste of lime is spread. The eggs can be placed in the preservative every day; they should be packed closely in the vessel, but no part of any egg should be above the surface of the liquid. Afterwards the eggs should be examined occasionally and if necessary fresh lime water added to keep the eggs always covered.

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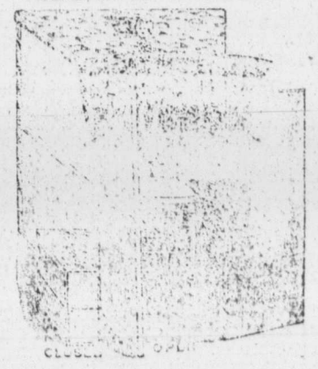

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