

not without troubles of my own—from Sarajevo. I'd like to shake hands with you again, Captain Gregory."

The Montenegrin's white teeth flashed under his moustache in a gratified smile and his hand shot out impulsively.

"Yes, the Austrians do me the honour to interest themselves in me," he assented. "And I can imagine they look on you, Captain, with some distrust. Count Sergius tells me you are with us."

"Indeed, yes, I am with you!" responded the Englishman simply. "But I'm afraid, Captain Gregory, I'm not going to see as much of you, just now, as I would wish. It is not only in Bosnia that the Austrians are looking for you. It is right here in Belgrade, also; and right now. They're hot on the scent."

"Curse them!" said the Montenegrin. His eyes flamed, but he seemed by no means surprised at the intelligence. Count Sergius, however, was more disturbed.

"What do you mean, Bob?" he demanded. "You've just arrived. How do you know so much already?"

"Well, you know, I was at the Prefecture just now, raising a row about some stuff I've had stolen since crossing the frontier. Of course, I was having a devil of a time to make myself understood, in a mixture of English and French—because at that time I thought it prudent not to know a word of Servian! That being so obviously and naturally the case, the agent of the Austrian minister, who came in while I was there and appeared to be in a great hurry, talked quite frankly before me.

"He was demanding the immediate arrest and extradition of one Gregory Nicolaievich, for the shooting of an Austrian official of some sort, somewhere on the other side of the river. I must confess that the description of the guilty personage did not exactly tally with your present appearance, Captain Gregory. But—"

"I have several appearances," interrupted the Montenegrin, smiling. "I find it advisable at times!"

"Quite so," agreed the Englishman. "Well, it appeared that the Prefect was most unwilling to be convinced that it was his duty to arrest you, but the Austrian, as usual, was obstinate and from the strictly legal point of view, Captain, he seemed to have a case! The Prefect had to yield, which he did with a very bad grace and as much delay as possible. But, procrastinate as he may, the warrant is doubtless out by this time and we may be sure our Austrian friends will let no grass grow under their feet. They seem to want you badly and I should judge that all the time you've got is none too much, Captain. If I can be of service, please command me absolutely."

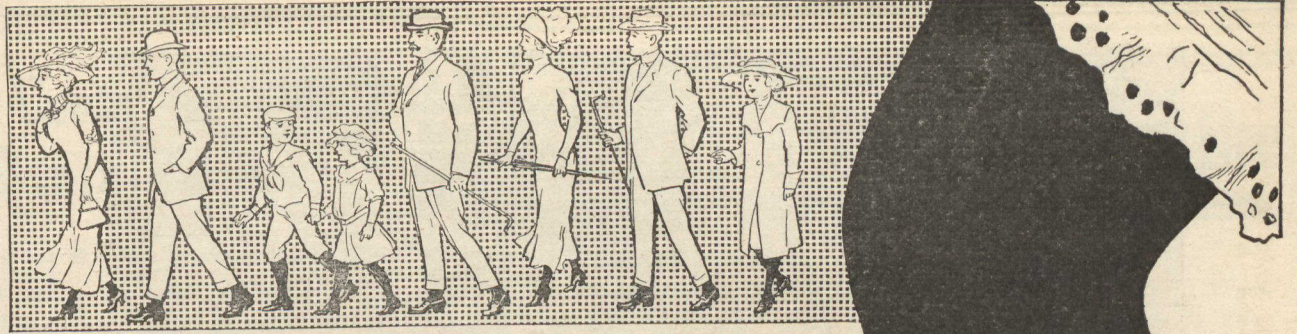
"Is it something new, Gregory?" demanded Count Sergius, with a trace of anxiety in his voice. "It's doubly necessary to be prudent, just now, surely!"

THE mountaineer gave a little laugh of satisfaction.

"It was quite unavoidable, believe me, Serge Ivanovich," he answered. "There were several of them and they permitted themselves to be too inquisitive. I was a little abrupt perhaps, but if I had not been so, they would have found—what it was necessary they should not find. And I should not have been here. They wanted to search me for letters, documents of any kind, you see. And that means a minute search! I told you there were difficulties to be considered when things were across the river!"

"If they track you here, my Gregory," said Sergius, "I've no doubt you have some way of escape ready. But it might lead to complications, to more suspicions where I am concerned. And suspicions would be inconvenient. I crave obscurity now, for some time on."

"Oh," said the Montenegrin easily, "they've been thrown off my track for a while. They probably won't know I've come here at all. There are plenty of backyards in Belgrade, and Michael, down-stairs, is a friend. I came by the backyard route and I'll



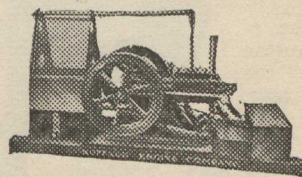
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