

# GREAT CRIMES OF THE WORLD GREAT MYSTERIES

## BY GEORGE BARTON

### X. General Trepoff and the Russian Students

(General Trepoff, one time chief of the St. Petersburg police, ranks with the most famous detectives in the Russian empire. He was in control of the secret service department of the police of St. Petersburg during the lawless period extending from 1875 to 1880. He seems to have been successful in this difficult position because he was the warm commendation of the czar, and at the same time, the hearty detestation of the people. His immediate predecessor was assassinated and his own life was in danger on more than one occasion. Vera Zaslowie, a young nihilist, shot at him while he was seated in his office in the early part of 1880. Trepoff was seriously injured but recovered and soon after that was honored by the czar who made him a councillor of state.)

IN THE early part of March, 1887, the czar of all the Russias determined, as a mark of confidence in the loyalty of his subjects, that he would drive in state from the Cathedral of St. Sophia to the Winter palace at St. Petersburg.

The importance of this simple statement may be understood when the reader is reminded that for a period of years the nihilists had been making determined efforts to take the life of the emperor. Only three months before it was announced that the czar, while on his way to the cathedral, had been seriously injured. It is significant that several persons who were near the scene of the "accident" were immediately arrested, and were hanged and the other transported to Siberia. Again there had been an "accidental" explosion in the Winter palace while the czar was attending a state dinner. Nothing ever came of this incident although it was proven later that nihilists had entered the palace disguised as stumblers.

Now however, it was believed in high official circles that the country was to enter upon an era of internal peace. The emperor issued a manifesto of clemency. Arraignment of criminals were remitted; certain criminals were released from prison; exiles to Siberia had their life sentences commuted to years of prison servitude. The nihilists, however, were passive but unsatisfied. They had clamored for certain constitutional rights which were denied them. Nevertheless, they were determined that the czar should celebrate the return of "the era of good feelings" by a public appearance in the capital of the nation. The time agreed upon was Sunday, March 12, 1887.

Five days before that date a cadet in one of the military schools—a young man with royal blood in his veins—the prince of a reigning house of Europe—killed himself. The tragic act was attributed to melancholia due to a hopeless love affair. It was noted that a small romance of this sort would be left to the district police.

Not so. At this stage of the narrative three enterprising agents, M. Trepoff, a general in the army, the chief of the secret police of St. Petersburg, and one of the favorites of the czar. He was a burly man, broad chested, and with a keen eye in his methods. Hated by the people, he treated their attitude with supreme indifference. Whatever his disposition, he possessed the unerring instincts of the real detective. His investigation of the little cadet's suicide was characteristically prompt. It developed a startling fact. It can be stated in a single sentence.

The nihilists of St. Petersburg had determined to assassinate the czar on Sunday, March 12, 1887.

One of the functionaries attached to the palace heard rumors of the plot and rushed to General Trepoff.

"It is unnecessary to be anxious to venture out. Shall we understand the order for the procession?"

The chief of the secret service answered with an expression of annoyance: "The program has been arranged down to the smallest detail."

But—

Trepoff interrupted the speaker by

hanging his heavy hat on the desk before him.

"I take all of the responsibility. If it is necessary to make any change, I shall inform the czar in person."

The general had a regiment of men at work. The middle-aged person in St. Petersburg was considered, fit subject for assassination. He was a man of middle age and some of these were upon such flimsy basis that even the rigor of Russian police could not justify their detention. Hours of reports were made to the czar. Trepoff, he devoured these with eager interest, pursuing up his shaggy eyebrows—and thinking all the while. Presently one of his officers brought a paper—a sort of proclamation—and this bit of paper was given more attention than any of the regular reports. After that no news of other squads of police was received. In return brought in other reports. There was great activity at the secret service quarters, but it must be confessed, not much positive evidence was developed.

It was the eve of Sunday, March 12. One of the personal attendants of the czar called on General Trepoff.

"I am thinking it would be wise to postpone the procession tomorrow."

Trepoff raised those eloquent eyebrows in surprise.

"You are to be congratulated," he cried, "and confess to the world that the Emperor of Russia fears to appear in the streets of his capital!"

"Yes," protested the other, "but the danger is for me to consider," he said, each word carefully measured.

The messenger bit his lips in perplexity. The chief of the secret service looked at him suddenly.

"Does the czar know of the plot?"

"No; not a word; but he is timid."

"Reassure him," said Trepoff. "I will guarantee the safety of his Majesty."

"All right," replied the attaché, bowing himself from the room.

On the night preceding the procession an inoffensive-looking young woman was arrested and locked up. Early on the morning of the historic day several composers and editors—apparently innocent of any wrong—were taken into custody. Still others were surrounded by the czar's men. An hour before the time they appealed to Trepoff. He gave them a curt but comprehensive answer: "Let the procession proceed."

The route over which the czar traveled was lined with police. They stood alone, in pairs and in squads. They were conspicuous and yet not unduly so. For hundreds of them in plain clothes mingled freely with the people.

Just before the parade started Trepoff arrested four students who were young men waiting to see the royal show. The people protested against the arrest as an outrage, but the grizzled head of the St. Petersburg police calmly explained to the crowd that the calm demeanor of the prisoners seemed to justify the protest of the people. One of the men carried a book under his arm, and was seen to be reading on the sidewalk, a devotional volume; another had a green bag containing legal documents; the third, apparently with a good deal of secret at the czar, carried a pair of opera glasses, while the fourth had nothing unusual about his person, unless a roll of paper was seen to be read by him. Simultaneously six persons were being arrested at Paulovna on the Finnish railroad.

Thousands of the people stood on the sidewalks on that chill, gray March morning, awaiting the gorgeous procession. It came presently, with the czar in the lead, followed by the members of the Ministers of State. His Majesty was attired in semi-military dress, and if he felt any apprehension, did not show it. The official who accompanied him glanced furtively about as if constantly expecting the unexpected. The czar bowed to the right and the left and received in return cold, curious glances from the crowd. He felt any enthusiasm they did not show it. Was their silence intended as a mark of respect for their sovereign?

Here is the story of what had been going on behind the scenes, the knowledge of which had been so carefully kept from the czar.

The first clew came in a most casual manner. One night a couple of men in a room in the Nevsky and at a contracted attention by their earnest whispered conversation. During part of the talk the name of the czar and the date, March 12, had been overheard. That was enough. Detectives placed on their tracks followed them like bloodhounds. On the eve of the fateful 12th one of the men met a woman in the streets of St. Petersburg and had a hurried conversation with her. Five minutes

after they separated the woman was placed under arrest. A search of her person revealed a large quantity of nihilist proclamations, all calling for the death of the czar. She was literally loaded down with the documents which were being distributed to those in the conspiracy. She admitted that the young cadet who had committed suicide had been selected to assassinate the Emperor. But when he realized the meaning of his assignment he killed himself. She stopped at this stage of her confession. Neither person would have any more to do with the matter. She would induce her to give the names of the others concerned in the plot.

ADVANCE A SINGLE STEP AND I'LL BLOW OUT YOUR BRAINS!"

An onlooker from another country would have no reason to be surprised if the procession moved quickly and safely to the Winter palace. It had been accomplished without a single mishap of any kind. The telegraph carried the news to all quarters of the world—the czar had appeared in public and received the homage of his people. The day of assassination was past, and the delusion of a contented people was hugged by the autocratic ruler.

But things were different in the famous room of the amiable M. Trepoff. The police revealed. General Trepoff was there arranging in consecutive form the result of five days of hard work.

which means that we shall easily go from Paris to Rouen in an hour and a half. When I select the figure of 300 kilometers for the two or three days that, at a minimum, would be required for crossing the Atlantic. Besides, there will always remain the defects of steering, which in this particular case would be more serious than when you are flying over dry land.

What, now, is to be the flying machine of the future? As regards its form it will probably be of various types, but the materials used in its construction will doubtless be different from those employed today. Carvax, I believe, will be found to be a material for the "wing" material, and being replaced by bamboo, which is both stronger and lighter. The great difficulty is that of workmanship. No European craftsman as yet understands how to work in bamboo, though the necessary skill can be acquired with comparative ease.

On the other hand, I regard as quite impossible—at least for a long time to come—the trip from Paris to New York. It is out of the question to carry enough fuel for the two or three days that, at a minimum, would be required for crossing the Atlantic. Besides, there will always remain the defects of steering, which in this particular case would be more serious than when you are flying over dry land.

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But Trepoff had a foundation on which to build his case. Here was a bit of paper. It would have to be traced to its origin, the writer, the printer, the illicit printing press had been set up somewhere in the city. All this time the two men who had talked incautiously in the restaurant were being followed. They were seen to enter a house in the Jewish section. The records of the police showed that the house was occupied by a Zondelev, who, at one time, had been a printer.

That was sufficient. In less than an hour afterward the house was raided. An officer with a squad of police broke into the place without notice. What they found did not seem very damaging. Four persons were sitting home, at the time—two men and two women. Mme. Kriloff, the head of the house, was a woman of about 45 and of unusual intelligence. The other female was her servant. One of the men was rather aristocratic in appearance. He said he occupied a minor ministerial office, and color was given to his statement by the fact which he had in his hand. The other man, named Lubkin, was a consumptive, about 23 years of age.

"Where is your printing press?" demanded the officer.

Madame shrugged her delicate shoulders and outstretched her hands in a manner which said plainly enough that the police were welcome to any printing presses they might find in that place.

"Your printing press is a bulky thing. It should not be hard to find. But the officers searched the house from cellar to garret without result. All the while the quartet sat in the large dining-room, prisoners, and the two women were put through the "sweating" process, but they revealed nothing. The aristocratic-looking man, who had been sitting aside for a moment. One of the policemen picked it up and opened it. Astonishment made him speechless. He silently handed the portfolio to the chief, who was filled with manuscripts and proofs of a prohibited nihilist paper called "Land and Liberty." The aristocratic-looking person with the portfolio merely smiled at the consternation of the officials. He realized the gravity of his offense. He knew the penalty. But he never quailed for an instant.

"Come, shouted the chief, "you're convicted already. You might as well confess. Where is the press?"

The quartet remained silent. They were young, and the silence was one of submission, but not of fear. Suddenly the chief gave a shout of surprise and pointed to the cupboard. The other policemen followed the chief's indication by their accusing finger. They saw nothing and their blank countenances said as much.

"Don't you see?" almost shrieked the official.

"No," replied the chief lieutenant.

"What is it?"

"A dab of ink on the door of that closet."

"A dab of ink?" repeated the other.

"Yes! Yes!" he retorted, "a dab of ink on the door of the closet!"

Slowly a consciousness of the meaning of the words penetrated their dull heads. At the same moment they made a simultaneous dash for the cupboard. To their amazement they met with resistance. Mme. Kriloff, her servant, the aristocratic man of the portfolio, and the consumptive composer were lined up against the door of the cupboard. The armed and Mme. Kriloff, pointing her pistol at the head of the chief officer, said with great deliberation:

"Advance a single step and I'll blow your brains to bits. Save yours."

Here was a dilemma. The chief knew if he moved a single step to reach for his pistol this frenzied woman would die under his threat. Only two other policemen were in the room with him, and they were covered by the aristocrat and the consumptive composer. The chief knew of his men were in other parts of the house. He backed out by degrees. It was humiliating, but he felt that it was necessary. He must have time to think of a plan. His two companions retreated with him. As they reached the outer sill

## French Inventor Writes of Aeroplane Exploits

BY HENRY FARMAN.

(Translated from the French.)

I HAVE always thought that the future of aerial navigation belonged to the "heavier than air," and that the flying machine was destined to supplant the balloon. I am of this opinion today more than ever. The dirigible balloon has been pushed practically to the limit of its possibilities. It will possibly succeed in making seven or eight hours more, but my judgment is that it is all we may expect of it. It is not a mechanical means of locomotion, it is a mass born aloft by means of gas and driven forward by means of a propeller. It remained to be determined whether the problem of the "heavier than air" was capable of solution; for my own part I believe that the problem has now been solved, and that whatever things turn out, a dirigible balloon costs always a great sum—300,000 or 400,000 francs, not counting the successive supplies of gas. The dirigible balloon costs me all told only 30,000 francs, and would cost only half as much could such vehicles be turned out wholesale.

My apparatus was a big job. It was necessary to make the different parts as light as possible and to find a motor affording the maximum power with the minimum of bulk and weight. I pass over the details of construction, which would be burdensome to the reader. As for my attempts, they were numerous.

It really seems to me that all the machines built before mine were lacking in stability. At all events, whenever they have succeeded in leaving the ground they have smashed themselves on landing. It is well known that hitherto I have met with no accident worthy the name. Two months ago, I have been experimenting in the way of dirigibles. I have accomplished numerous jumps and flights. The flying machine I use is of the cubical type; that is to say, it is composed of a cubical frame, big one in front, measuring 12 meters in length, two in width, and two in height; a smaller one behind, linked to the front one by a horizontal bar, the whole is completed by a "cage," or pointed basket, in which are the motor, the reservoirs, the driver's seat, the apparatus to control the motor, and the rudders. In front of this cage is placed the height-and-depth rudder, at the rear the rudder properly so called.

If it may interest the reader, I am prepared to initiate him in a few words into the mystery of flying machine navigation. These, then, are the parts to look after: the two rudders, the sparking plug, the carburetor, and the apparatus governing the pressure of gasoline and that of water. I have to move my body to right or left according as the machine leans in one direction or the other. I don't want to seem trifling, though I must say that the onlookers have often bothered me in my experiments and in my movements. It is important during a flight to watch over the explosions within the motor, for the

least weakening on its part will fetch me to the ground. All this is pretty complicated and pretty difficult to get at. I lack in skill and practice. With time and perseverance I am convinced that I shall acquire them. Besides, flying machines are really approaching nearer to perfection, thanks to constant modifications, and will soon demand much less in the way of precaution and address.

My first ground run was by no means easy, but to fly far more difficult. I have left the ground every day for two months, yet it is only lately that I could lay claim to a real flight. To leave the ground was a dash against the wind; then, when you have got some grip on it, you must lift the height-and-depth rudder. At the last moment, and just there is the crux of the problem of elevation. When the front cage takes a good hold on the air, and you feel yourself almost lifted, then, and not till then, must you lift the height-and-depth rudder. At that moment its action produces no violent jerk or sudden change of position. My first record was established by M. Santos-Dumont. Unfortunately my record was not officially registered, cared little about that, for I was convinced that I should soon achieve still more interesting flights. In fact, a few days later I succeeded in making 400 meters, then 900, and finally 1,200 meters. The official record of the record was obtained. Moreover, I sustained no appreciable accident, nor was my apparatus damaged. Furthermore, I kept an absolutely horizontal position.

At present I am unable to fly more than a kilometer, since the field of maneuvers is no longer than that of the dirigible. A very important point is the regulation of the motor. When I have mastered that completely, I shall have made a great gain in the way of speed. The first step in this increase will serve to compensate for the errors in steering that are inevitable at the beginning; in the next place, it will play a fine part in the general running of the apparatus.

I have succeeded in gaining sufficient control of my machine to be able to secure what seemed to me the most orderly stages of my experiments to be the most difficult point—i. e., dirigibility while in the air, ability to round a curve and to rise in other than a straight line. On the 25th November I succeeded in describing a circle and flying in a direction opposite to that in which I had set out. It was a mild and slightly misty day. The wind was coming at me from the entrance to the field of maneuvers at Issy-les-Moulineaux, where at present my experiments are conducted. I started, you understand, against the wind and my motor ran finely; within the first few meters I felt the flying machine take hold of the air, and soon I reached the height of about 100 meters. Arriving almost at the gate of the field, I made my first turn; then, a few meters further on, I turned again so as to double on my tracks, and touched ground to meet me from my point of departure. I was overjoyed when I had thus

## Girls Plan Clearing House for Sweethearts

A clearing-house for Cupid, with a State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a Judge of the Municipal Court championing its cause, has been organized by the daughters of wealthy families of Oak Park, Ill., a fashionable residence suburb of Chicago.

Death of opportunity for choosing husbands, together with what is denominated aristocratic courting in Chicago, is responsible for the establishment of the clearing-house. It is proposed to remedy condition with all possible speed.

The educator, who declares Chicago's young men and women know nothing about the fine art of love-making, demands that courtship be taught in the public schools, "just as arithmetic is taught." He declares such a course is a necessity.

The jurist demands the enactment of a law governing courtship. He says that the law should abolish the crime of wife desertion.

The girls who are back of the movement, which, in reality, is intended to bring the court of matrimony, plan to meet at the clearing-house, which will be a clearing-house for young women get acquainted with "lots of young men," so that each may have a better chance than formerly to find her "before marriage, not after."

In this effort to enthrone the deity of love in a city that is notorious for the great number of its divorces, Miss Busse took the lead. She is not related to Mayor Frederick A. Busse, but is the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer. She has a dimple in either cheek and a twinkle in her bright blue eyes.

Miss Busse and about forty of her feminine friends in the younger set of Oak Park society formed an organization which they named Cupid's Club. That was the nucleus of Cupid's clearing house. Miss Busse was elected president, Miss Fay Ware vice-president, and Miss Clara Scott secretary and treasurer. "I don't know all you know about my purpose," said President Busse, as she unobtrusively began her executive address.

Some of the members giggled; others solemnly nodded their heads.

"We must have a declaration of principles," continued the president, "and her face flushed a little. "It is not that the club should be seen in public, but to set ourselves up as wooers."

"It's time we usurped the right," interrupted a rotund young woman, rising from behind a big old painting in the parlor of Miss Ware's home, where the first meeting was held. As if scared by the sound of her own voice in such a public place, she hid her face behind the picture.

"Speech! Speech!" cried half a dozen feminine voices.

Persistent calls brought the young member again to her feet. Not one of the 40 will reveal her name, but any one of them is "perfectly willing" to tell what she said at that secret session. This is the way she is quoted:

"Since you must know what I think,

## Camels as Railway Builders.

Engineering Magazine.

A light railway which by its partial completion is already proving a factor of considerable importance in the development of the Dark Continent is that known as the Western Oases Railway. It will link up the once prosperous, but more lately neglected, Nile valley, rich green patches in the Libyan desert. Take a map of Egypt, and on the Nile you will see a place called Farshut. That is the starting point of the Western Oases Railway. From Farshut the course runs in a southwesterly direction to a place called Meteng, then turns and drops, almost due south, to Kharga. A depot was established at El Der, some 100 miles from Farshut and 90 miles to the northeast of Kharga village, where are the remains of a Roman fortress. While the greater portion of the material was transported by pack camel, certain heavy details such as boilers, rails, frames, etc., were necessarily to be transported on wheels by means of draft camels. In order to expedite matters 30 special camels were purchased and trained, while the rougher portions of the desert track were improved as far as possible and a good zig-zag road cut on the cliff descent from the desert plain to the oases. The operations in question will, it is anticipated, do not a little in the repopulating of the large area comprised in the concessions, and render the communities dwelling therein not as at present merely self-sustaining, but capable of the large production of commodities suitable for exchange with those of Western Europe.

By Chance.

Chicago News.

They met by chance.

They met but once before;

They met but once before;

And she was smiling sore.

They met but once before;

And she was smiling sore.

Don't care to allow;

They met but once before;

The auto and the cow.