

# THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW.

By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

Continued from First Page

"You will not leave this palace again until you are the Duchess of Tula?"

"I will never speak the word that is necessary to make me your wife—never! At the altar, if you be by my side, my lips shall be sealed, and no power on earth shall loose them!"

"Do you mean this?" whispered the duke.

"As God lives I do!"

"Then mark me!"—the stout, dark nobleman gazed fixedly into the maiden's face as he spoke, and in his look and tone there was a fiendish expression that could not be mistaken—"I shall do all in my power to make you my lawful wife. If you refuse me, you shall be beaten with the knout in the market place, where all may see the ungrateful girl who refused the heart and hand of the noble Duke of Tula. Aye, and after that art beaten thou shalt be cast into the streets for dogs to bark at. Dost hear me, Rosalind Valda?"

With one deep, soul-dearing moan the poor girl sank down, shivering and pale. The duke caught her as she fell, and, having laid her senseless form back upon the couch, he strode from the apartment.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE MARK FALLS LOWER DOWN AND REVEALS THE HEART.

It was early evening ere Zenoibie entered the apartment of her young mistress. As she opened the door she found all dark within. She moved into the room, and, shading her candle with her hand, she gazed about. The wind still howled fearfully without, and the snow came driving against the windows. When the girl had reached the extremity of the place, she called her mistress's name, and she was answered by a low groan from the couch in the corner. Thither she hastened, and there she found her mistress.

"Rosalind—my mistress!" she cried, kneeling down.

"Who is it?" the maiden asked, starting up and gazing frantically around.

"It is I, Zenoibie. Say, my dear, good mistress, what is it? What is the matter? What has happened?"

With a quick movement Rosalind put her attendant away and sat up, and, having gazed about her for some moments, she murmured:

"Where am I? Who is here?"

"It is I, Zenoibie. You are in your own chamber. Come, you are cold here."

Without resistance the maiden suffered herself to be led to the place where the heated air came up from the furnace below, and there she sat down.

"What is it?" again asked Zenoibie eagerly. "What has happened?"

Rosalind bowed her head upon her hands, and after some moments of thought she looked up. She was very pale, and a fearful tremor shook her frame.

"Zenoibie," she uttered in a low, strange whisper, "ask me no more now. I am not well. Oh, ask me no more now."

"My mistress," returned the faithful girl, placing one arm about Rosalind's neck, "you know what you may tell me and what you may not. But whom will you trust if you trust not me? Oh, give me your love, and if I can serve you let me do so."

"I would trust you with life itself," the maiden returned, "and some time you shall know all that has happened here, but not now—not now. Oh, I cannot speak it now!"

"Say no more, my mistress; only let me serve you. You will have some refreshment—something to eat."

"You may bring me some wine, Zenoibie."

And thereupon the young girl hastened away.

In the meantime the duke was in his private room below. He was pacing to and fro across the floor, with his hands behind him, and his brow was dark and lowering. Ever and anon he would stop near the door and listen and then proceed. At length there came a rap upon the door, and the duke said, "Enter."

It was a priest who entered the apartment—a small, deformed man, somewhere about 50 years of age. His face was very dark, his features sharp and angular, his eyes dark and sunken deep into his head, his brow heavy above the eyes, where the shaggy brows hung over, but sloping back from thence, leaving the points where phrenologists locate benevolence and veneration deficient and flat. Upon his shoulders he wore a huge, ungainly, and, all in all, he was just such a man as a timid person would shun. His name was Savatano. The duke had been the means of getting him into the church, and in consideration thereof he had bound himself to do the duke's evil work. But this is not all.

Some years before there had been a murder in Moscow, and Savatano did the bloody deed. It was a work of pure vengeance. Olga had him apprehended, but he was not brought to justice. The duke found

him to be a shrewd, unscrupulous wretch, willing to serve those who would pay him well and ready to let himself then to any one who could save his life. Olga was a man of plots and schemes. He fancied that such a man as Savatano might be of use to him, so he proposed to save him if he would serve his benefactor. The villain was glad enough to accept the proposition, and the bargain was made. Could Savatano enter the church and assume the sacred garb he might in many cases work to better advantage. The wretch readily agreed to this, too, and through Olga's powerful influence he gained a place in the church. He knew that the duke held his very life, and he failed not to serve him. His clerical robes shielded him from much suspicion, and, moreover, the place gave him additional advantages to work at his diabolical trade. His salary from the government was sufficient for his support, while an occasional sum from his master enabled him to enjoy many of those luxuries which were denied to most of his brethren. Olga feared not to trust this man, for the fellow had nothing to gain by betrayal, but everything to lose.

And such was the man who now entered the duke's private room. He entered with a bold air, for, though he was somewhat in the duke's power, yet there was a peculiar satisfaction in knowing that when he fell the noble lord must fall with him, part way at least. Brethren in crime cannot count much upon respect.

"I have come, my lord," the priest said, as he shook the snow from his robe and then took a seat by the furnace pipe.

"And how is the count?" asked Olga.

"He is recovering, I am sure."

"Does Kopani say so?"

"Yes. He says he will have him out within a month."

"By heavens, Savatano, this must not be."

"But tell me, my lord, what is the particular need of the count's departing?"

The duke gazed his visitor a few moments in the face and then said:

"Why, since the affair interests you, I'll tell you. Thus far I have paid you promptly all your dues, but I cannot do so much longer unless we can make some of our points work. My property is on the decrease fast. I have not enough left to live on. Within the past three years I have made some bad ventures. I put it into—But never mind; suffice it for me to say that I am at the end of my fortune."

The duke was about to say that he had placed large sums in the hands of the Minister Gallitzin for the purpose of carrying out the conspiracy by which the Princess Sophia was to have been placed upon the throne, with Gallitzin for her prime minister and himself also high in power. He chose not to tell of this. And no wonder, for heads had ere then been taken to pay for such indiscretions.

"And now if this count survives I thus have one source cut off. My half of Drotzen is used up and mortgaged to him, but if he dies the whole comes to me. His father and myself married sisters, and they owned Drotzen, and on his side the count is the only heir. So in the event of his death the whole comes to me. You understand this now."

"Perfectly," returned the priest.

"And 'tis a pity your first effort did not succeed."

"So it is," said the duke uneasily.

"When I sent him with that message to the gunmaker, I felt sure he would be slain, and then I hoped that the other could be disposed of for having slain him. But the emperor has turned all my plans upside down, for the present at least. Savatano, you must have a hand in Damonoff's medicine."

"That is easily done, my lord," replied the priest quietly.

"You have free access there?"

"Yes."

"And can you not watch with him some night?"

"I think I can."

"Then do so. When he is dead, 200 ducats are yours."

"Then he dies."

"Good! And now there is one more. This gunmaker must be got out of the way."

"Ah!" uttered Savatano, looking up incredulously. "Do you mean so?"

"Most assuredly I do."

"But why him?"

"Do you fear to undertake the work?"

"Not at all, my lord. I only wished to know why he was wanted away."

"The reason is simple. I must marry with Rosalind Valda. Her property is worth the whole of Drotzen twice fold—over two million of ducats."

"So much?" uttered the priest, opening his eyes with greedy wonder.

"Yes; it is one of the finest estates in Moscow, and it pays her now a yearly income of a hundred thousand ducats. She does not know it. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the priest in concert. "She doesn't, eh?"

"No; she knows nothing about it. But I must secure this, and in order to do it I must marry her, and—if I would be sure of that this occurred gunmaker must be out of the way."

"But what is he to her?"

"She loves him."

"And is not your authority?"

"Hold, Savatano. I'll explain to you in a few words. I'm afraid the

emperor has taken a fancy to this youngster, and if he has he may be appealed to in this case. The girl will take marriage hard. I shall have to hire you to perform the ceremony."

"Which I should be pleased to do," returned the priest, with a coarse smile.

"You shall have the opportunity. But first we must have the young Novod taken care of."

"I think I can manage that, my lord."

"And how will you do it?"

"I suppose you don't want him put where he can get off and come back here."

"No. Finish him while you are about it."

"But, and it must be done so that in no possible way suspicion can fall upon me. You must contrive some way so that suspicion shall be led at once to some apparent point and there baffled."

"Leave me alone for that, my lord. I can call help if I want it."

"Are there not places in the city where a body can be hidden—where it may be so disposed of and never be found?" asked the duke as the thought came to his mind.

"Never mind," returned the other, with a confident nod of the head.

"If I meddle with the matter, it shall be well done."

"Very well. I'll trust it with you."

For a few moments after this there was a dead silence, during which only the moaning of the wind could be heard. But at length the duke started up, and, with sudden energy, he said:

"Ah, Savatano, there is one thing I came nigh forgetting. You have heard of this strange monk—Vladimir his name is?"

"Aye, and I have seen him too. You mean that huge lump of human fat?"

"Yes. And now tell me who and what he is. He was at the duel, and I know he has been here to my house. Who is he?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## POSSIBILITIES OF THE POSTAL SYSTEM.

Cheap Mail Facilities One of the Chief Factors in Our Prosperity and Progress.

"Common is the commonplace." The most valuable of civil benefits is such a commonplace matter, that we scarcely give it a thought. It would take a winter on a whaler afloat in an ice floe to make us truly appreciative of the worth of the postal service. What a wonderful thing it is! Wonderful in its organization, with its vast machinery for the collection and distribution of letters, its railway mail cars, its route riders, the unfolding order and precision of its methods. Wonderful it is too in its results. It knits together families widely separated. It carries across the sea some tender lover's message or perhaps a little flower picked from the daisied grave of an English churchyard. Every hour of every day the mail bag is packed with words which awaken love and laughter, and words which deepen the furrow in the cheek and dim the falling sight with bitter tears.

But with all this there is going on through the mail service a dissemination of human knowledge, a reaching out of human help which is one of the crowning blessings of our century. The correspondence sends forth by Chautauqua, are sent to every village and hamlet the broader knowledge which is so eagerly craved by many who are shut in to the homely duties of a humble life. Without the mail service the plan of education would be impracticable.

Every mail, too, carries from the great centers, the advice of great physicians, which it would be impossible for the distant public to obtain were it not for the mails. Few people realize how many thousands depend on the mail service for medical treatment. Not long ago when some postal affairs were being discussed in connection with the erection of the new postoffice building in Buffalo, N. Y., some light was thrown on this subject by the statement that the mail by Dr. R. V. Pierce amounted daily to something over 1,500 pieces. Of course this is not a common case, because Dr. Pierce's relation as chief consulting physician to Buffalo's famous institution, The Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, makes his advice and that of his staff of specialists much sought after, especially by women, to the treatment and cure of whose special diseases Dr. Pierce has devoted over thirty years of almost constant labor. But though this example is out of the ordinary, it may serve as an evidence of the amazing benefits reaped by the public from the mail service. Literally at the cost of a two-cent stamp, since Dr. Pierce invites sick women to consult him by letter without charge. And this would seem to be one of the most remarkable services rendered by the postal system, perhaps the supreme service of all. For while it is a splendid thing to be able to shop in New York while living in Kansas, and a grand thing to be able to command the learning of great professors while working in the Michigan woods, it is a still grander thing that by means of this cheaply supplied service, men like Dr. Pierce, who have the disposition to be helpful, are enabled to place their skill and knowledge at the disposal of those who are being dragged down by disease, without the possibility of help from those about them. When one contemplates the vast and far-reaching benefits of the mail service, so briefly touched upon in this article, it makes the familiar gray uniform of the postman the most glorious of all uniforms, for it is worn by the soldier in the army of peace. It makes one feel like taking his hat off to the on-rushing mail train, and cheering the work and wisdom of Uncle Sam.

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## THE HOME GOLD CURE.

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No Noxious Doses. No Weakening of the Nerves. A Pleasant and Positive Cure for the Liqueur Habit.

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Wives cure your husbands!! Children cure your fathers!! This remedy is in no sense a nostrum but is a specific for this disease only and is so skillfully devised and prepared that it is thoroughly soluble and pleasant to the taste so that it can be given in a cup of tea or coffee without the knowledge of the person taking it. Thousands of drunkards have cured themselves with this priceless remedy and as many more have been cured and made temperate men by having the "Cure" administered by loving friends and relatives without their knowledge, in tea or coffee and believe today that they discontinued drinking of their own free will. Do not wait. Do not delude by apparent and misleading "improvement." Drive out the disease at once and for all time. The "Home Gold Cure" is sold at the extremely low price of one dollar, thus placing within reach of everybody, a treatment more effective than others costing \$25 to \$50. Full directions accompany each package. Special advice by skilled physicians when requested without extra charge. Sent prepaid to any part of the world on receipt of one dollar. Address Dept. E. 750 Edwin B. Giles & Company, 2330 and 2332 Market Street, Philadelphia.

All correspondence strictly confidential.

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Every mail, too, carries from the great centers, the advice of great physicians, which it would be impossible for the distant public to obtain were it not for the mails. Few people realize how many thousands depend on the mail service for medical treatment. Not long ago when some postal affairs were being discussed in connection with the erection of the new postoffice building in Buffalo, N. Y., some light was thrown on this subject by the statement that the mail by Dr. R. V. Pierce amounted daily to something over 1,500 pieces. Of course this is not a common case, because Dr. Pierce's relation as chief consulting physician to Buffalo's famous institution, The Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, makes his advice and that of his staff of specialists much sought after, especially by women, to the treatment and cure of whose special diseases Dr. Pierce has devoted over thirty years of almost constant labor. But though this example is out of the ordinary, it may serve as an evidence of the amazing benefits reaped by the public from the mail service. Literally at the cost of a two-cent stamp, since Dr. Pierce invites sick women to consult him by letter without charge. And this would seem to be one of the most remarkable services rendered by the postal system, perhaps the supreme service of all. For while it is a splendid thing to be able to shop in New York while living in Kansas, and a grand thing to be able to command the learning of great professors while working in the Michigan woods, it is a still grander thing that by means of this cheaply supplied service, men like Dr. Pierce, who have the disposition to be helpful, are enabled to place their skill and knowledge at the disposal of those who are being dragged down by disease, without the possibility of help from those about them. When one contemplates the vast and far-reaching benefits of the mail service, so briefly touched upon in this article, it makes the familiar gray uniform of the postman the most glorious of all uniforms, for it is worn by the soldier in the army of peace. It makes one feel like taking his hat off to the on-rushing mail train, and cheering the work and wisdom of Uncle Sam.

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