

The CASTLE OF LIES

BY ARTHUR HENDY VESELY
COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY DAVENPORT & COMPANY

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

"Do you mind telling me what it was?"

"Without any, the man who was killed, loved a Miss Brett. She was at this hotel last night with her mother. They heard of my being here, and 'did me the honor to send for me, and to ask from me the details of the tragedy.'"

Locke's heavy face was agitated equally by sympathy and surprise. "Miss Brett?" he asked. "That must be the sister of Sir Mortimer Brett."

"You know her?" I demanded eagerly.

"I have never seen her, but I know something of Sir Mortimer. He is the most picturesque figure in the English diplomatic service."

"Why picturesque?"

"Because he is a British soldier. Who is he, and how do you happen to know him?"

"He is consul general and minister plenipotentiary at Sofia, Bulgaria. There is not an attaché in Europe to-day who has not an inquisitive eye cocked at Sir Mortimer Brett."

"And his claims to distinction?"

"Two only, my dear fellow. One is that he is sufficient to make any man notorious. First of all, scandal has been busy with his illustrious name. However I am afraid that's a very ordinary sort of notoriety. But when I tell you the sober fact that if he is just winked at would break out in the Balkan peninsula you will grant that he is a factor in the game of European politics."

"I have heard enough to have my curiosity excited. Tell me more of the man who controls the destiny of a nation. The scandal, for instance. Is it a matter of common newspaper publicity? I have figured in the papers myself lately, and I feel a certain sympathy for a fellow-sufferer."

"Oh, the newspapers have made him squirm a bit, no doubt. But my sources of information are more accurate than mere newspaper gossip. You see, I happen to be the American consul here."

"Then your gossip of the embassies ought to be worth listening to."

"I settled myself in my chair and lighted a fresh cigarette."

"My dear fellow, you are asking too much of me—really you are! The situation in the Balkans! Good Lord, that's too appalling a subject to be discussed between two friends who have just met."

"Locke," I replied diplomatically, "I suppose you wish to discuss me and my unfortunate affair. Well, I don't. If you wish to show me any sympathy, let me not quite so black as I am painted, ignore the matter completely."

"Of course, of course," he hastened to assure me. "And you really wish to understand why war would break out to-morrow in the Balkans if Sir Mortimer Brett lifted his little finger?"

"If such a knowledge is the prelude to the scandal that concerns him."

"Very well," he agreed good-naturedly. "But don't despair if you are still muddled after ten minutes' talk in Balkan politics. Consul Haddon has said that the man who comprehends the situation in the Balkan State does not exist. But to understand how Sir Mortimer's conduct may plunge Europe into war to-day, just as surely as when Madame de Pompadour twisted Louis XV about her little finger, you must know something of the trouble that seethes and bubbles in Turkish-Macedonia."

"Even the word Turkish-Macedonia is a mere geography name to me."

"Hang it, I have got to give you a lesson in geography as well as in Balkan politics," I replied. "Well, Macedonia is actually no state or country. It is simply a term to designate a strip of Turkish territory immediately to the south of the European independent Bulgaria and insurgent Macedonia that our friend Sir Mortimer Brett is concerned in. In a word, the situation in the Balkans is freed from the Turkish yoke, would help struggling Macedonia to gain her freedom."

"Macedonia itself is an extraordinary bodgespoken name—Greeks, Turks, Serbs, Bozinas, Bulgars—there are a dozen dirty little races, and half a dozen fanatic sects all ready to fly at each other's throats if they were not too busy struggling for their freedom. But Greek, Catholic, Jew, they are all ready to die cheerfully if they can down their Turkish oppressor. It is just this sublime struggle for this that gives a touch of nobility to mongrel, snarling, snapping Macedonia. These Macedonians for years have been putting up one of the pluckiest running fights imaginable. The House of Commons indulges in solemn phrasings about what they choose to call the Balance of Criminally. In other words, they profess to think that the atrocities committed by the Turks and the Macedonians are equally horrible. But, as a matter of fact, English knowledge of Macedonian affairs is gleaned out of the London Times, which gets its facts from the English embassy at

Constantinople, supposedly pro-Turkish in its sympathies.

"How do you account for that?" I demanded with a show of interest. Locke's lecture was not thrilling, but I listened patiently; for I realized that his information was necessary if I would understand Sir Mortimer's predicament.

"The missionaries," continued Locke, "know only too well that the unspasmodic Turk is an even greater scourge than Mr. Gladstone chose to believe him. But the Foreign Office, you will understand, does not intend to risk the peace of Europe because the missionaries rave about the outraging and slaughter of a few thousands of Macedonian women and children."

"For several years they have continued a guerrilla warfare—if you can dignify the dynamiting of a railroad or a bridge and the stealthy slaughter of unarmed bands at warfare. The Macedonian campaign has been managed by a body of men who have their headquarters at Sofia, in Bulgaria."

"They fight in bands. Their arms are hidden in the fields or in the caves of the mountains. When a Turkish host surrounds one of these bands it

"Yes, it is about his diplomatic head that the elements rage. But a Jewish banker of New York city runs him a close second in importance."

"A remarkable statement, that."

"And this little Jew is a remarkable man. A Macedonian by birth, he has made five score of millions in America. But he remembers his country in the time of her need. It is he who offers to clothe, arm, and feed the Bulgarian army, if it fights for the freedom of his race. His one condition is this: the invasion must have a resolutely sure chance of success. That is assured, he thinks, when England agrees to stand behind Bulgaria."

"And the name of this Jewish banker?"

"Otto Kahn. One must not forget him."

CHAPTER IX.

The Episode of the English Ambassador.

We are now ready for the extraordinary episode of Sir Mortimer Brett. Locke resumed. "I think you will find that the narrative grows more interesting."

"I trust so," I yawned.

"Sir Mortimer is a comparatively young man, I understand. But he has already had 15 years to his experience as a diplomatist. He has been trusted implicitly by the British foreign office. He has been nothing less than a dictator in Bulgarian affairs, so far as England is concerned. There have been repeated attempts to bribe him. But he has been strong enough to resist all pressure—whether it be exerted by the sultan or by Ferdinand. But after an unblemished record of 15 years this Bayard in politics has fallen a victim to a vulgar intriguer with a political adventurer."

"Countess Sarahoff is the adventurer—a woman of marvellous charm

in Lucerna. He had left Sofia suddenly under the plea of sickness, whether real or assumed. And now he has disappeared again from here, and he has absolutely no trace of his whereabouts."

"So that when the king's messenger comes here he will still be unable to deliver his dispatches? As you say, it is an extraordinary state of affairs. I suppose that Sir Mortimer continues to be a properly credited ambassador until he receives those dispatches?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And in the meanwhile there is a hue and cry for him?"

"My dear fellow, I have told you repeatedly that you are behind the scenes. Ostensibly Sir Mortimer has gone to the mountains for his health. But the arrival here in Lucerna of the mother and daughter is significant."

"They come to rescue him from the influence of Countess Sarahoff of course. But if she has disappeared with Sir Mortimer, where is she?"

"I am writing with her at the kursal about an hour ago," said Locke, smiling at me grimly.

CHAPTER X.

The Death-Mark.

I had placed my glass carefully on my lips. I raised it slowly on the table. I met Locke's steady gaze not merely in surprise, rather in complete astonishment. He was precisely the kind of woman I had determined she must be. But I had no intention of discussing her with Locke. A plan was already seething in my brain—instead of demanding the instant recall of the minister by cable, I intended to keep that plan to myself. In the meantime I had further details of this escapade of the missing ambassador.

"We will speak of Countess Sarahoff presently," I returned, his smile cold. "But tell me, why should England adopt the slow and clumsy expedient of sending a king's messenger, as you call him, across Europe, instead of demanding the instant recall of the minister by cable? That is my first question, and my second is this: are you my dear Locke, in the secret councils of the British foreign office that you know so much of their plans?"

"A king's messenger," drawled Locke, "is supposed to have a brain between his shoulders, and to exercise his discretion. The foreign office would wish to be quite sure that the scandal was not a clever ruse of a secret agent, or a Turkish spy. Even if the scandal exists, there might be mitigating circumstances."

"You wish me to infer that this king's messenger is given discretionary powers of delaying or withholding his dispatch? But how do you know that? That brings me to the second question."

"You are dead, I can put two and two together, can't I? I can see a church door, as Benedict said, when I am standing in front of it."

"Oh, then, you are simply guessing," I cried, frustrated.

Locke spread the tips of his fingers together, and regarded me humorously. "You forget I am consul at Lucerna, and I am not averse to taking out the magnificent income allowed me by the United States government by sending a budget of news occasionally to my dear friends."

"I understand; you newspaper men are ubiquitous. Before the mysterious knowledge of the press I am silent."

"I need hardly say, however, that I am strictly confidential."

"Of course."

"So far I have not breathed a word of the interesting story I wish to make a grand coup. I am waiting for the finale of the story—the dramatic and perhaps tragic denouement. For the sake of my dear friends, I wish to say, Locke produced his pocket-book. From its voluminous folds he extracted an envelope. He held it toward me in silence. I took it curiously. It bore an unfamiliar stamp."

"It is the stamp in the corner I wish you to examine carefully. In ten years a collector will pay a pretty price for such a stamp. Always it is rare as strawberries in January. It was issued less than a month ago to mark the anniversary of Ferdinand's accession to the throne. Yes, it is Bulgarian. That is a simple matter. His secret agents are on the lookout in every capital of Europe. But you see they are not wholly successful."

"As Locke had suggested, I looked critically at this double stamp which had caused Ferdinand so much anxiety. Two heads were depicted. They were placed by side, a man of middle age and a handsome boy. It appeared to me a rather ordinary sort of stamp."

"Hold it upside down," commanded Locke. "It is interesting." "Cover the left-hand corner with your hand, so, now, do you see that a portion of the heads of the father and son makes an unbroken line with the other?"

"That is the death-mark! And the death-mark is that of Prince Ferdinand."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

He who loses money loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; he who loses his spirits loses all.

Illinois State News

Recent Happenings of Interest in the Various Cities and Towns.

CHARGED WITH BIG THEFT.

Peoria Accused of Misappropriating Funds Belonging to State.

Peoria.—Frank K. Whiting, a member of one of the oldest families here, was arrested in Los Angeles, Cal., on the charge of misappropriating \$38,000 from the estate of his insane sister, Mrs. Ella Parkman, of which he had been acting as conservator. The charge of larceny was preferred against him by the Fidelity and Deposit company, of Baltimore, Md. Whiting was forced to resign the conservatorship a month ago.

DOUGHERTY CASE AGAIN.

Peoria School Board to Begin Suit for Damages for Blowing Safe.

Peoria.—The Peoria school board has empowered its attorney, H. C. Fuller, to begin suit for damages against those concerned in the burglary of the library safe when the board desired an opinion of the defalcations of former Superintendent Dougherty was obtained.

Just who the defendants in the suits will be, Mr. Fuller has declined to state, although he has admitted that they might include N. C. Dougherty, Ralph and Horace Dougherty, Denver, Colo.; Mrs. N. C. Dougherty and Mabel Dougherty.

The board hopes in this manner to reopen the matter and start an investigation that will lead to the discovery of the large sums of money believed to have been hidden away by Dougherty.

GETS MEDAL FROM THE KAISER.

Illinois Singing Society Remembered on Fiftieth Anniversary.

Belleville.—The Lebanon Gesangverein at its golden anniversary celebration was presented with a gold medal which had been sent by the German emperor. It is the pioneer German musicians' society of Illinois. Fifty staging societies participated.

Broom Corn Yield is Large.

Pontiac.—The acreage of broom corn in this section of the state has been materially increased this year. This is caused by the present satisfactory and strong condition of the market, the very limited supply of old broom corn, and an expressed desire on the part of large manufacturers to get hold of more Illinois broom corn.

Lincoln Less Built.

Lincoln.—Justice Rudolph decided the case of Gentry Bros. vs. the City of Lincoln, a suit to recover \$40 of license fee paid for the right to exhibit here a month ago. The city demanded the fee for a circus and menagerie, while they claimed the right to show ten dollars, the fee for a pony show. The court decided favoring the latter contention.

Found Dead in River.

Carlyle.—The dead body of Herman Dorries, of Breese, was found in

"COME ON IN, EVERYBODY."



Mississippi river at East St. Louis.

He was proclaimed young Republican, and was defeated for sheriff 15th November. Whether his death was accidental or a suicide is unknown.

Jules Fears Chancel Water.

Joliet.—Unless the sanitary trustees take steps to guarantee the safety of the extension of the drainage channel south of Lockport, leading to the new power house, the city of Joliet may apply for an injunction to prevent the water from being turned in. It is said certain recommendations for safety have not been carried out.

Boy Has Blood Poison.

Decatur.—Death poison has set in in both feet of Willie Moran, a small boy of this city, who slid down the cellar door barefooted. His right foot struck a nail on the door and was all open and when he landed at the bottom of the incline the other member was put out of business by a clatter.

Dedicate Murrayville Church.

Murrayville.—The dedication of the new St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic church took place July 21. The building was erected at a cost of \$25,000.

Blush Lays Hospital Corner Stone.

Pontiac.—Rev. Bishop Orrell, of Peoria, laid the corner stone of the new St. James hospital in this city. The hospital will cost over \$70,000.

Lincoln Invites Illinois Red Men.

Lincoln.—Lincoln Red Men are planning a gathering of Red Men from the counties of Illinois and Indiana to be held Wednesday, August 21.

Offered Baby to Best Bidder.

Peoria.—Martin J. Joyce, a bootmaker, was endeavoring to sell his motherless son to the highest bidder when an officer happened along the street and later arrested him on a charge of child abandonment.

Accepts Call to Illinois.

Urbana.—Prof. William F. M. Goos, dean of the engineering laboratory at Purdue University, has been elected dean of the engineering college in the University of Illinois. He will take up his work September 1.



"The Situation in the Balkans! Good Lord, That's Too Appalling a Subject to Be Discussed."

And peaceable peasants herding their sheep on the hills or tilling their fields.

"Such a hopeless struggle as this might continue for years," I interrupted. "Where does Bulgaria come in?"

"Bulgaria comes in right here between the Bourhis of trumpets, and Prince Ferdinand is at the head of the procession."

"Actually Bulgaria is independent; nominally, Ferdinand does fealty to the Sultan, and at the same time is under the thumb of Russia. He is a petty princeling with no inordinate sense of his own importance as a cannibal king in a top hat. He has surrounded himself with more state than a czar or a Kaiser. Ferdinand's great ambition is to be crowned king. Now he only rejoins in the title of prince. He has vainly implored his great master Russia's permission to assume that title, but Czar Nicholas prefers that little Ferdinand be humble. Then if you won't let me be king," says Ferdinand, "I won't play with you anymore. So Master Ferdinand is most anxious to exchange the doubtful friendship of Russia for a more indignant protector. He has decided that he would like England to be that protector."

"But what has this to do with Bulgaria's going to the assistance of Macedonia?" I exclaimed, impatiently.

"Simply this: Ferdinand knows that before he dare assume the title of king, he must make himself more popular with his subjects than he is at present. Macedonia is with its consent means of accomplishing this. But before he flings his army into Macedonia territory, he must be sure that he will have a free hand. Let England once assume that moral support, and Ferdinand will invade Macedonia to-morrow."

"It is at this juncture, I suppose, that Sir Mortimer Brett, consul general and minister plenipotentiary, holds the center of the stage?"