

THE BRIBE THAT FAILED.

One who was very rich one day
Fell ill and murmured piously:
"Restore my health, O God, I pray,
And I will build a church to Thee,
A thousand orphans shall be glad
If I may have the strength I had."

With health regained he strove once more
To be the richest of mankind,
And daily added to his store,
To all the rights of others blind.
He crushed the ones who barred his way
And spurned them where they weeping lay.

Again death stood beside his bed:
"O God," he cried out piously,
"Restore the vigor that has fled,
And I will build new fane to Thee,
And make more orphans cease their cries."
But death bent down and closed his eyes.

And still the world has eager men
Who sin for gain till danger comes,
And piously endeavor then
To bribe the Lord with splendid sums.
Their God is one who waiting stands
With selfish hopes and itching hands.
—Chicago Record-Herald.

THE "X" PAPERS.

A Dramatic Story of the Russian Secret Service.

BY MARY BARBER.

MY honeymoon had barely reached its zenith when "a bolt from the blue," in the guise of an official recall to the sterner romance of the Secret Service and the custody of the "X" Papers fell on our cruise round the Bay of Naples.

On my arrival at headquarters my sole instructions were to convey the sealed packet to the frontier and hold it there till "the authorized one" should arrive to relieve me of my responsibility.

Under the circumstances the best course was to rejoin my bride in order that our sojourn on the frontier might appear but an extension of our wedding tour, and this indeed it was, only always on my person I carried the hidden incubus of the "X" Papers.

The "authorized one" delayed longer than I had anticipated, but the days at the Schwitzerhoff passed, if not so gloriously as in the Naples bay still pleasantly enough. I was, in fact, discovering all days were delightful, wherever spent, if passed with Kirstine! But I did not enjoy them as exclusively with my bride as I could have wished, for she (bless her dear warm heart!) had befriended a lonely little Frenchwoman at the pension.

Poor little Mme. Dutour! According to her pitiful half admissions to my wife she had been brought up in a convent and married—a marriage of convenience—two months ago, but monsieur apparently failing to find her amusing, had left her at the Schwitzerhoff to seek more varied joys at Monte Carlo.

So it happened that I was left alone in the pension garden, rolling cigarettes one morning while Kirstine and Stephanie exchanged confidences.

My reverie was interrupted by an ultra-sentimental rendering of the "Star of Eve" from "Tannhauser" in a thin, somewhat breathless baritone. The singer was evidently sublimely unconscious of the lurking servant of the law, who was, with professional habit, making mental notes to the effect that his height was five eight, physique thin and nervous, clothes good and new, that the knotted fingers loosely clasping an ornately decorated pocketbook behind his back were smoke-yellowed, and that the deep blue of his cheeks and upper lip indicated a desperate struggle with nature on what she had previously intended to be a luxuriantly covered surface.

As the singer passed me in a very ecstasy of "sweetness long drawn out"—just a trifle flat, by the bye—the pocketbook slipped from his unconscious fingers.

It was a bore, but a conscientious man was bound to sacrifice sequestered repose and return to the artist soul the property he had lost in the emotions of Wagner—just half a tone too low!

"Monsieur, a thousand thanks." The artist spoke excellent French. "You have saved my porte-monnaie, but more—far more, besides!"

Then he bowed profoundly, fluttered a sheaf of notes from the now opened pocketbook and displayed an inner receptacle mysteriously closed.

"This contains a souvenir—very precious. It is for this, monsieur, that I thank you with all my heart."

I was for bowing my acknowledgments and departing, but at that moment the lunch bell rang.

"Monsieur will permit me." The singer bowed vaguely between the pension and my person. "I arrived only last night. This place has memories, monsieur—memories—memories."

It was impossible to refuse his proffered company; besides, on nearer inspection, he was more interesting. There was no trace of emotion in his hard, watchful eyes.

On the hotel steps we were greeted by Kirstine and Mme. Dutour, and, since my new friend remained, I perforce presented him to the ladies. In his effusive gratitude for my ridiculously small service he had thrust a card announcing him to be the Prince di Congratza upon me as we walked.

"Oh, Maurice," said my wife as we walked toward the salon, "the guides say that now the weather has cleared we ought to do the Zennor Pass before the snow melts. Stephanie and I have planned it all for to-morrow, if you approve."

"Well, well, we shall see," I replied, noncommittally.

"Monsieur, there is absolutely no danger," cried the Prince. "I know every inch of the pass, and if you will allow me I will act as a cicerone to mesdames, but, since monsieur is nervous—for the ladies' sake alone, of course," he added, with a politeness which in any but an over-civilized country would be allowed its only just requital, "we will consult the trusty guides."

Hans and Amster were called before I could interfere. They smiled coarsely at the suggestion of danger on

the Zennor; it was the right moment, right weather, right everything. During the afternoon I wired to headquarters for particulars and the whereabouts of Prince di Congratza.

The following morning was glorious. The snow scintillated against the deep blue of the heavens and the Zennor looked no more than an hour's stroll away.

The Prince had arranged everything—guides, ice axes, ropes and provisions.

Stephanie Dutour was late—she generally was.

"Madame and I will go on," said the Prince. "You will soon overtake us, but don't delay, or we may tap the lunch baskets."

As I waited in the little salon one of our cipher telegrams was handed to me. It ran: "Height, five feet eight; dark, clean shaven, spare, good voice, musical; tattoo portrait on right upper wrist, traveling in Europe; whereabouts unknown." Well, our new friend corresponded pretty well, so far, to his description!

It was half an hour before Mme. Dutour appeared, clad in a bewitchingly smart and workmanlike costume, the promise of which her performance on the snow utterly belied.

"Oh, monsieur, in pity, one moment; was ever poor woman so puffed?" she would exclaim. "You can run up ice mountains, but be merciful and look at the view, that I may breathe!"

"To feel irritated was brutal; convent walls do not produce deep-chested, free-limbed climbers such as her native hills of Arran had made my Kirstine. Still it was disappointing to see my bride only as one of four black dots on the snow's whiteness—for the advance party had taken both guides—during the best part of the morning."

At lunch time, at last, they awaited us on a little plateau, into which the path widened before the steeper part of the ascent began.

Instantly I observed that not Hans and Amster, but two new guides, were unshowering the baskets.

"A thousand apologies! Three of my countrymen who arrived late last night were anxious to attempt the Kurlansbergh, and begged the more experienced guides," explained the Prince, following my eyes. "That with us they are only part of the mise en scene, and my friends are pressed for time, is my plea for forgiveness."

"Of course, it doesn't matter, Prince," said Kirstine.

"Of course not," I added. But the Prince must have known that he was watched from that moment.

After lunch Kirstine and I made coffee, while Stephanie and Prince di Congratza smoked many cigarettes.

"What a nice picnic it is," said my wife. "The Prince is so merry and charming, and he has been telling me all about the revolution and his lost principalities. Do you know, I begin quite to like him."

"Kirstine," I said softly, and stooping low over the little brazier, "will you do something for me?"

I saw my wife's expression change suddenly. She nodded.

"The sun will be hot on the steeper path. If it makes your head ache you will have to return."

Looking in her eyes I saw she understood.

A moment later I handed the Prince the coffee cup.

"Make a long arm, Prince," I laughed, leaning across the tablecloth which was still spread on the snow.

As he did so I saw his right wrist white and bare between the bronzed hand and linen cuff.

There was no tattoo mark!

Suddenly I heard a cry from Kirstine; she had fallen dangerously near the plateau's edge.

As I ran to her she struggled up.

"No, I'm not hurt, Maurice. I only tripped on something; it must have been a stone."

"Yes, I think it was a stone," said Mme. Dutour, as I stooped to brush the snow from Kirstine's gown.

hand I assured myself feverishly of the safety of the "X" Papers, and then remembered with a throb of satisfaction that when I fell the Prince had been at the snow on the treacherous edge must have broken under my weight.

What was that? In the clear air I heard a chipping sound, and, looking up, I saw my wife alone on the precipice, cutting each foothold. A movement might be fatal. I closed my eyes, held my breath, and prayed for the first time for years—prayed God to give her a steady hand and hand—just that, no more—over and over again.

A sudden blunt thud—Kirstine's ice-axe had fallen beside me.

In that supreme moment I met my wife's brave eyes, as she stood clinging to a rock about twenty feet above me.

"Thank God, Maurice! I knew He wouldn't let you die!"

"Oh, Kirstine, Kirstine! Why did you come?" was all I could say.

"Because Stephanie pushed you over! I saw her do it. They are coming up from below now. They never imagined I would climb down here! Destroy the papers—quickly, Maurice!"

"All right, I'll manage. Only look up and don't think of jumping," I cried, with a bursting heart.

Frantically I tore at the parchment cover with my teeth. What! It never yielded? At last! At last! Holding the papers in my mouth I wrenched them with my hand, scattering the fragments.

Some awful moments passed. It was slow, torturing work.

Then Kirstine moaned, and I felt rather than saw the Prince's dark face rise above the edge of the plateau. Crushing the remaining papers in my breast I clenched my hand over them and set my teeth. Hissed over me, threw his weight on my chest and seized my injured arm. Then all went out in a red, merciful darkness.

When I came to myself I was in my room at the Schwitzerhoff, and, thank God! Kirstine was beside me. But my joy died out in the burning thought that she was tied to a ruined, disgraced man.

"Maurice, don't you want to know how we were rescued?" said my poor wife. I could not answer, and she told me gently how they had seen her on the precipice from the pension and thought help was needed. "And, dear, you have raved for days about the secret papers, and there is some one here who wants to tell you about them now."

Then—oh, the shame of it!—the Chief came from behind the curtain!

I kept my face to the wall while he spoke of a diamond cross given to my brave girl by the department—quite right; and a check for myself from the funds as a recompense for injury and inconvenience. Well, they bought me out delicately, and with coils of fire, too!

In my gall and bitterness I could scarcely thank him—But what was that he was saying?

"Say it again—say it again!" I shouted.

"My dear fellow, do not excite yourself! We were warned that unusual precautions were necessary. The papers you carried were dummy ones, the real 'X' Papers were safely delivered the day you were attacked."

"But this is the best of all," whispered my wife. "The doctors say you will walk again." And the check she laid against mine was wet with tears—hers and mine.—New York News.

Hints For the Rich.
The following literary hints for the wealthy and cultivated were taken from a German publisher:

A gentleman does not use eau de cologne and read greasy volumes from a circulating library.

A gentleman does not borrow good works when he is in a position to buy.

A gentleman does not talk about the latest literature when he is acquainted only with what has been said of it by the reviews.

A gentleman does not cut books with his fingers, even after having washed his hands.

A gentleman does not possess a box of carpenter's tools, but no paper knife.

A gentleman does not receive books for review and then give them away or sell them without opening them.

A gentleman does not make presents only of things which are entirely without intellectual value.

A gentleman does not send to his book seller for a parcel of books on approval, and after having read them, return them, saying that none of them suit him.

A gentleman does not buy only cheap editions.

A gentleman does not depend for his reading upon the daily journals and illustrated weeklies.—London Author.

Flying in Russia.
Russia has adopted for its navy a system of flying machines of which great things are expected. These are not navigable balloons, but aeroplanes which are attached to and controlled by ships by means of piano wire. In general features they are simply an adaptation of the box kites that are flown for scientific purposes in this country. These "flying dragons," as they are called, are chiefly to be used for scouting purposes. By means of their own shapes when there is a wind, by means of the speed of the ship when it is calm, they will rise rapidly into the air to very considerable heights. Five in conjunction will raise a man, and from this lofty elevation an immense area of water can be inspected for hostile craft. It is hoped by this means greatly to increase the efficiency of destroyer flotillas at finding an enemy.

Pluck and Adventure.

Fought a Huge Python.
THE legend that a snake's tail does not die until sundown is one of the first things that a youngster is told about reptiles.

Captain Golding, of the steamer Afridi, which arrived at New York recently from Asiatic ports, is almost ready to believe that their tails never die, nor any other part of their bodies. Had he had time to discuss the matter yesterday he would probably have asserted that they were possessed of as many lives as a cat. He had an experience on this voyage which convinced him of this.

Captain Golding collects specimens of Asiatic animals when abroad and brings them here for the New York Zoological Society. He makes about three round trips a year, and usually brings in specimens of more than ordinary value. On this trip he undertook to bring over a twenty-four foot python. For good and sufficient reasons he did not land the python yesterday.

The python was a heavy one and exceptionally vicious. It required ten men to take it aboard at Singapore and put it in its cage on board ship. At last the monster snake was secured in its box, and the order was given to start. The weather was superb when the steamer slipped out of the harbor at Singapore, and the voyage up the coast of the Malay Peninsula was begun. About 10 o'clock the first night out the silence was broken by a crash. The animals began to utter cries of alarm, and the deck, in an instant, was in a hubbub. It was evident that something was wrong. Captain Golding quickly ran on deck. He was just in time to see the python, which had broken loose from its box, coiling his way up the starboard companion ladder to the bridge, where the officer on watch was navigating the ship. In another instant there was a yell from the bridge, and the figure of the officer came flying down the port companion way to the deck. It did not take long for the crew to discover the state of affairs and to tumble below. The Chinese cook, who was passing along the deck with a tray of rice, dropped the tray, and, springing into the galley, locked the door. Captain Golding tried to get a light of a line around the snake, but the python was alert and ready to throw his coils around him if he came within reach.

"The mate was the only man who had nerve enough to stay on deck," said Captain Golding yesterday. "He would not take any chances at close quarters, but he got a big bull's eye lantern and threw a bright light on the scene. I armed myself with a broad-axe, and after a half hour of skirmishing for an opening I got a crack at the snake. The axe struck the snake in the middle and cut clean through him. Then I had two snakes instead of one to fight. The two halves wriggled around the bridge, and it took me another half hour to cut the sections into smaller pieces. I did not succeed in killing him until I finally got in a good blow about three feet back of the head. That did the business. When it was all over there were twelve sections lying around on the bridge."

Thrilling Rescue at Sea.
At the request of the United States Government the High Sheriff of Belfast, Mr. Alderman Lowther, presented a pair of binocular glasses to Mr. Hill, third mate of the London steamship Coronda, in recognition of his services in assisting to rescue the crew of the American bark Ella under circumstances of great gallantry.

When the Coronda was on her way from New York to Montevideo on January 17 last on nearing Bermuda she sighted the American bark Ella flying signals of distress. The steamer bore down upon her, although there was a terrific gale blowing, with mountainous seas. The crew of the bark could be seen huddled together on the poop, the captain's wife and children being among them. The steamer's boat was launched, in charge of Mr. Richard Roberts, chief mate, and manned by the third officer, Hill, the carpenter, boatswain, steward and a sailor. They were unable to get near the bark owing to the heavy sea, but a line with a life buoy was floated from the bark to the boat, and by this means all the crew were saved, the captain's children being hauled through the water first, followed by his wife and lastly the captain. The secretary of the local marine board, in reciting the circumstances, said that the English Government had not recognized the gallant action of the crew of the Coronda, stating that as the Ella was a foreign vessel it was not a usual thing to do, but the American Government had sent a gold watch and chain to the master of the ship, binocular glasses to Mr. Roberts and the two officers and money to the seamen. These presents were far from being an adequate recognition of the services rendered. Hill is a young County Antrim man.—London Globe.

Wildcat Attacks Railroad Men.
A construction train on the Montrose and Tunkhannock road came to a standstill near Springville, Pa., Monday night owing to the engine slipping an eccentric, and the engineer and his fireman got out to repair damages. As they were working they heard a terrific yell, and then a wildcat sprang from the bushes on the engineer, knocking him down. The fireman hit the cat on the head with a wrench and it quit the engineer and attacked the fireman. This gave the former time to draw his revolver, and he put a bullet through the brute's head; killing it. It weighed forty pounds. Both men were badly lacerated.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Duty and Death.
Under the above title a short paragraph recently appeared in a Manchester paper stating that Samuel Short, aged fifty years, an engineer at a colliery, while lowering twenty-four men down the shaft of his mine, had an apoplectic seizure and died almost immediately. Before he fell, however, with most wonderful grit and forethought for a dying man, he stopped the engine and thus as his own faded out saved the lives of twenty-four others.

Church Bells Unnecessary.
Two churches in Neodesha, Mo., have offered their bells for sale. The rest of the churches have none. The church trustees and the pastors agree that the bells are an unnecessary annoyance.

Heroism in Peace and in War.
When the New York pier of the new East River Bridge was crowned with an incandescent confusion of white-hot beams and blazing timbers, from which showered an endless rain of half-molten bolts and fiery billets and dripping entanglements of flame-twisted wire, it was deemed necessary that firemen should mount to the top to fight the conflagration 330 feet above the river.

There was no calling for volunteers or other particular recognition that men were about to make a desperate venture of their lives. The foreman of an engine company bawled something and the foreman of a hook and ladder company echoed the cry, and the next moment men of both divisions of the fire fighters were racing up frail wooden ladders through the hallistorm of chunks of metal that were so hot that when they struck the heavy planking of the piers far below they bored right through it.

The most daredevil exploits of war times do not furnish a parallel of heroism to this charge up the burning ladders that was merely a part of the day's work to the men who made it.

Hero Hobson's sailing into Santiago Harbor and sinking the Merrimac beneath his own feet startled the country into applause that is not yet wholly stilled. It was a gallant thing, and the man who did it earned all the glory and advancement it obtained for him, but who would not rather dare the fire of Spanish batteries, and risk drowning or imprisonment, than climb up a hundred yards of trembling, narrow ladder, exposed every yard to the unceasing bombardment of falling debris, dragging a hose that in itself was a source of added danger, to get into an inferno at the top?

The war hero does his daring under the influence of patriotism and with the excitement of fame; the fire heroes carried up their hose to save cables and steel beams from being ruined, and now nobody even knows their names.

"I don't know just who they were," says Chief Croker, who was up there himself. "They were members of Engine Companies Nos. 11 and 17 and Hook and Ladder Companies Nos. 16 and 11. I am going to try and find out their names and try to get a few days off for them."

The war hero earns promotion and everlasting honor for his exploit; the peace hero may get two or three days off for his.

And the wonder and the glory of it is that the firemen do this sort of thing day in and day out, and it never occurs to them that there is any disparity in the rewards.—New York American.

A Dangerous Shower-Bath.
A story is told in the World's Work of a youth who, partly from ignorance, partly from a spirit of foolhardy adventure, put his life in jeopardy. He and his companions were spending a vacation in the Yosemite Valley, and had been fishing for mountain trout on the Hillouette.

"To-morrow," he said, "I shall take a shower-bath under the seventeen-hundred-foot fall."

"You are a fool," said his companion.

"Not at all," came the reply. "The river is very low. What there is of it turns to spray in the first hundred feet; it will simply come down like rain. Why, you'd go under the Bridal Veil yourself! Only that's prosaic. This is something big. Come on."

"Not L!"

But I was there to see. The water, as he had said, came down, a considerable part of it, in rain and spray that flew out incredible distances. But to crawl down, dressed in a bathing-suit, closer to the main stream that falls to the pool and upon the rocks, with a murderous swish in the air and a roar in the ears like a railway train, was daring to foolhardiness. At any moment a veering wind might swing the whole mass upon the tall, slim figure backing tentatively on all fours down the jagged talus slope, his eyes glancing cheerfully. A steady breeze kept the fall swung out a little the other way, and the spray hurled out far up the other slope. The roar was deafening.

All at once the wind shifted. The water swung back, and in a flash the human figure was blotted out in a deluge that turned me sick. For a second, that seemed an hour, it played on the spot feebly, it seemed to me, standing horrified there, and then slowly it swept away.

And then there was a movement, a painful, crawling movement down there on the slope, and I scrambled down the slippery rocks to help a blinking, creeping, much-spruced youth, bleeding from a hundred cuts, up to where his clothes lay. He was still too dazed to speak. When his breath returned and his extra glasses were perched again on his nose, he said:

"The oceans fell upon me. Come back to New England."

WISE WORDS.
Eloquence is not of the lungs. Wisdom seldom runs in a rut. Man is ever greater than his tools. The best self-help is helping others. Altruism is the highest individualism. The death of self is the life of the soul. To reject correction is to refuse wisdom. All methods fail without right motives. The poor in goods are often rich in grace. Full gratitude is the spring of free giving. The infernal must fall before the eternal. The grace to do small things may be greater than the gift of doing great things. He who is wise in his own conceits is apt to be foolish in his own concerns. The wise man will bide his knowledge where fools are laying out their ignorance.—Ram's Horn.

Art in Railway Building.
In the general plan, equipment and application of electric power to the working of the new electric underground and elevated railways in Berlin, little is presented which can be regarded as novel or especially suggestive. The one respect in which the German constructors leave others far behind and offer an object lesson worth careful study, is in the artistic beauty the architectural charm and sense of fitness which they have imparted to the stations, the bridges, and even the ordinary overhead viaduct sections of the new road. In Germany the requirements of public taste are never permitted to be neglected or forgotten. Where the new Berlin line passes through a public square, it is on solid and artistically designed masonry. The above ground stations are of stone, steel and glass, no two alike, but each especially designed to fit, not only the requirements of traffic at that point, but the adjacent buildings as well—the architectural framework in which it is set. The whole management of the enterprise, from start to finish, illustrates the wise, firm control which the municipality of Berlin maintains over corporations which ask for franchises at its hands.—Cassier's Magazine.

Welsh Rules For Street Cars.
Cardiff, Wales, has just started a new electric railway service. A number of by-laws have been framed by the corporation for the regulation of the traffic and passengers, and this is how they are summed up in rhyme:

Thou shalt not use curs words or swear,
Or play sweet music on the air.
Or give out cards or ask for alms,
Give way to trams or such like charms.
When drunk thou shalt in nowise ride;
No dog or beast shall with thee hide.
Thou shalt not cut or scratch thy name,
Defile the car, deface the same.
Thou shalt not smoke, thou shalt not spit,
No antics, mind, but merely sit.
Don't try to boss or interfere,
Or show the driver how to steer.
Just sit you down and take your rest—
The men must know their business best.
And keep your hands off curious things,
The trolley rope, the bell that rings.
Upon or off a moving car,
Thou shalt not jump, so, friend, beware.
Nor carry gun or dangerous thing,
Nor with disease that risk may bring.
Pay up, nor grumble at the fare,
Before you quit or leave the car.
Such is the law, don't say it's new;
There's fines for those who don't obey.
—Western Mail.

A Natural Mistake.
A Wichita fisherman is in deep disgrace with his daughters. He was invited out to luncheon a few days ago and mistook a piece of macaroni on his plate for an angle worm.—Kansas City Star.