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A. MACDONALD



THE MYSTERY OF COUNT LANDRINOF.

BY FRED WHISHAW.

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(Continued) SYNOPSIS.

The hero of this story, Boris Landrinof, is a young Russian, who was sent to England to be educated. He is hastily summoned home by his mother owing to the sudden disappearance of his father, Count Landrinof. Shortly after, in London, he is astonished when a friend tells him he has just seen his father. Accompanied by this friend he returns to Russia. Boris discovers a clue, and sets out in search of two men who have as he supposes abducted his father.

For a few days after Borofsky's departure my mother was sanguine and excited, expecting I know not what good news from London, for naturally no news whatever could be reasonably



I flew to her side.

awaited for some little while. Borofsky would and could do nothing immediately after his arrival there. His task, in the nature of it and in accordance with his instructions, necessitated the greatest caution and deliberation—nothing was to be done in a hurry for fear of causing suspicion and inspiring alarm.

A week passed, and there was no news from our little detective; a second went by and still he had not written, excepting a short note to report his arrival in London, written two or three days after reaching English shores.

Then mother began to grow despondent. There must be a hitch somewhere, she said. Poor dear father had flitted from the lodgings to which Percy had traced him, and Borofsky had lost the scent.

"Never fear, mother, dearest," I assured her. "Borofsky is on his mettle. His reputation is at stake; he will take good care to strike the scene somewhere and come home!"

"I don't know. I have a feeling of depression," said mother. "I do not feel so sanguine as I did that the man Percy found is really and truly my own Vladimir, your dear father. The photograph is very like him, I admit, though when one examines it through a mag-



PURITAN DAMES.

We hear a great deal these days of our puritan forefathers, but little concerning the wives and mothers who landed at Plymouth Rock and founded that colony which was destined to play such a large part in our history.

In 1621 Elder Cushman wrote from Plymouth that he "would not advise any one to come here who were not content to spend their time, labors and endeavors for the benefit of those who shall come after, quietly contenting themselves with such hardships and difficulties as shall fall upon them."

What self-renunciation and heroic purpose was this! They drowned witches to be sure, but that was no part of their puritanism. It is to the puritan women we owe so much for that spirit in our people which gives them the fortitude to endure hardship and stake life and fortune for their convictions.

The American women of to-day have the spirit of their puritan mothers, but their constitutions are not rugged or able to endure half the hardships of these New England ancestors. Very often they are run-down with weaknesses and irregularities peculiar to their sex, and the constant drain upon their vitality makes them chronic invalids. Many women hesitate to go to their family physician, because they dread the local examinations so generally insisted upon by practitioners.

Such women should write Dr. R. V. Pierce, chief consulting physician of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo, N. Y., giving a full description of their symptoms, history, etc., so that he can give them the best possible medical advice. If Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription seems to suit the case the Doctor will say so. If not, then he will give medical advice which will put such women on the rapid road to recovery and health.

magnifying glass, it appears less so than with the eye alone. It would be so dreadful now that our hopes have been raised, if he should prove to be some one else—some one with a strange, though a very strong and undoubted resemblance to father.

"But, dearest," I said, "if this photo so resembles father that both you and I, the two people on earth who know and love him best, instantly agreed that this must be he and no other, how unlikely it is that any one else can possibly be so like him as to take us both in. It must be father. I did not believe it myself until I saw the photo, because I could not understand why—I mean I could not reconcile father's secret disappearance with his character as I know and love it, but now I am convinced in spite of myself."

"The face looks coarser and more weather beaten and haggard through the magnifying glass," said mother. "See for yourself!"

I looked and at once I understood what mother meant. There were lines of care or hard living, or what not. The temples looked baldier than father's and the stubby beard he wore appeared strangely vulgar after father's carefully shaven chin. I said guardedly that this was so.

"But," added, "in spite of all that, mother, darling, I think it must be father. Who else can it be? It is not as though he had a twin brother, or any brother, so like as to be mistaken for him."

To my horror mother's face suddenly grew white, and she sat down quickly in the nearest armchair. She placed her hand to her heart. I flew to her side.

"What is it, mother, what is it?" I cried.

"Oh, Boris, I forgot," she murmured. "I had never thought of it till this moment—I forgot—he bade me forget it, and I did, for it was so great a shame and sorrow to him that he dared not hear it mentioned. Yes, foolish woman that I have been and am, it must be he, and I have believed him thousands of miles away, and so did my Vladimir!"

"Who, mother, who?" I said in desperation. "Of whom are you speaking? What shame and sorrow can there be in connection with my dear father? Tell me all, mother. I am your own son. Do not be afraid to confide in me."

"I am not afraid!" said poor mother. "Your father would have told you himself in good time, maybe, but it is different now, and I will tell you. My dear husband, good and true man as he is, and the soul of all honor, has or had a brother, of whom you have never heard, who is his very opposite, as wrong is of right. This man fell into criminal ways while still almost a youth, and—I will tell you the details another time—was sent to Siberia, a life sentence. He may have escaped. We know nothing of him; as I say, both your father and I have striven to forget his very existence."

"I see," I said, "I see. But did he so resemble father that one might be mistaken for the other?"

"I never saw him," said mother, "but they are said to have been very much alike as boys."

CHAPTER X.

MEETING IN A LONDON RESTAURANT. "But stop a minute, mother!" I cried, bewildered by the sudden revelation. "Let us consider. What does the existence of this criminal uncle of mine exercise upon the mystery? Do you suggest that this man in London may be father's brother and not father, is that it?"

"That is what struck me; only that it must be remembered the unfortunate man is, or is supposed to be, suffering a life sentence in Siberia."

"He might have escaped!" I reflected. "Let me see, supposing that he has escaped and is at large in London, is, in fact, the man Percy found, how would that affect father's disappearance? It need not affect it at all, need it, excepting that we should have wasted all this time over a false clue? No, mother, I don't think it can be this precious uncle. When one comes to think of it, things point so conclusively to father having left for London at the time of his disappearance—the police declare it, the station officials testify to it—it must have been father himself and not his brother, for, in the first place, how could he have escaped from Siberia? And even if he did it is likely that he would have deliberately come to St. Petersburg, the most dangerous place to appear in that an escaped convict could choose? And then think of the coincidence of the time of his departure with father's disappearance! No, it would be too extraordinary."

"I am thinking," said mother, "that this Andre, the brother, may have come to St. Petersburg on purpose to harass your father and obtain money from him. Poor father may have been so

upset his reason, so that he—

"No, mother, I can't believe it!" I interrupted. "Father is too sane and manly to collapse in that way at the risk of seeing his rogue of a brother only consider. We will not do him the injustice of believing it possible. What was this Andre sent to Siberia for?"

"Political murder. He got into a bad spot at the cadet corps as a youth. He knows why he should have inclined to revolutionary ideas, a youth of such position and prospects as he enjoyed. But he did. The commandant expelled him for some foolish speech or action, and he went from bad to worse. Eventually the poor wretch was concerned in a diabolical plot, was arrested, tried with the rest—under his assumed name thank God—and dispatched to Siberia."

"Where he is still to be found, never fear, mother. Did he actually kill a man?"

"I believe so!" said mother, shuddering.

"Oh, they'll have taken good care of him, don't doubt it. He is still there. This man in London is father and no other. He must be. We must find a better theory for his turning up in England than this. Your original one about delusions and financial worries is better than the other. Borofsky will bring back dear old father to us; never doubt it, mother."

"God grant it prove so, dear, brave Boris," she sighed. "I would not be cruel or unkind, but I do sincerely hope and trust this terrible Andre, whose crime caused your dear father so much shame and bitter sorrow, is, as you say, securely looked after in some Siberian mine. If he were really at large, I should fear I know not what for our beloved."

"How could he injure father, excepting by revealing himself and causing father shame?" I asked. "I am sorry to hear of this shady relation, dear mother. But I really don't see how he can have anything to do with this mystery of ours."

Mother became pacified gradually and thought with me that there were too many chances against the probability of my disreputable uncle having turned up in London to make such a theory worth troubling ourselves about. We therefore dismissed it, leaving Andre the convict to languish in his Siberian mines, so far as our imaginations condescended to recall from time to time the rascal's existence. It was father that Percy had found, not a doubt of it.

And now, to confirm us in this view, an important letter arrived from Borofsky and arrived in the nick of time.

Borofsky wrote in a jubilant strain. He had not cared to write before, he explained, because, though he had soon hit upon the original of Percy's photograph, he had been unable, until now, to make any progress toward making acquaintance with him. But now there was at last something to report.

Borofsky had shadowed his man for several days, learning in this way where he took his meals and how he employed his time, and so on. Mr. Robinson—as Percy had called him in his telegram—seemed to have many friends in town and visited two or three every day. This did not surprise us. It rather pleased us, for it went to prove, as we agreed, that father could not be very seriously demented if he could visit his acquaintances, of whom, of course, he possessed many in London.

(To be Continued)

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—says "be good and you will be lonesome." You can be good and be not lonesome by reading some of our new 25 cent lines, by such writers as Rose Carey, Charlotte, M. Braeme, and others.

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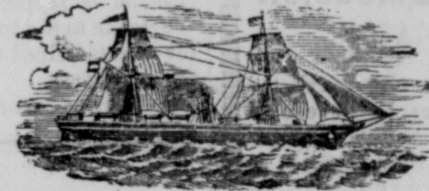
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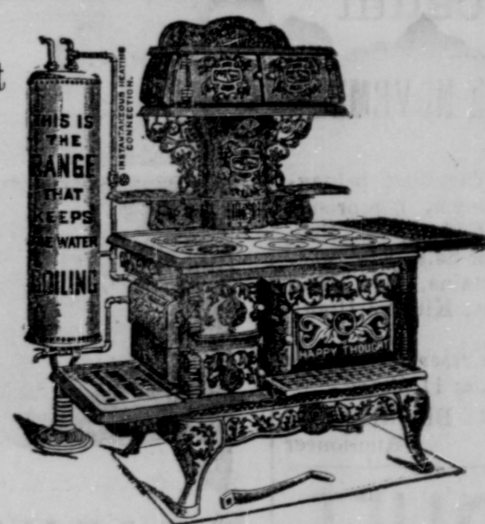
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