

## JENNIE DAXTER: JOURNALIST

BY ROBERT BARR.

### VI.—The Explosion in the Treasury.

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With that the princess ran away and presently reappeared with her wraps on. The two drove to the shop of Herr Feltz on the Grabenstrasse and were told that the chemist could not be seen in any circumstances. He had left orders that he was not to be disturbed.

"Disobey those orders and take in my card!" said the princess.

A glance at the card dissolved the man's doubts, and he departed to seek his master.

"He is working at the analysis now, I'll warrant," whispered the princess to her companion. In a short time Herr Feltz himself appeared. He greeted the princess with most deferential respect, but seemed astonished to find in her company the young woman who had called upon him a few hours previously with the director of police.

"I wanted to ask you," said Jennie, "to finish your analysis somewhat earlier than 4 o'clock tomorrow. I suppose it can be done?"

The man of science smiled and looked at her for a moment, but did not reply.

"You will oblige my friend, I hope!" said the princess.

"I should be delighted to oblige any friend of your highness," replied the chemist slowly, "but, unfortunately, in this instance I have orders from an authority not to be disputed."

"What orders?" demanded the princess.

"I promised the analysis at 4 o'clock tomorrow, and at that hour it will be ready for the young lady. I am ordered not to show the analysis to any one before that time."

"Those orders came from the director of police, I suppose?"

The chemist bowed low, but did not speak.

"I understand how it is, Jennie. He came here immediately after seeing you home. I suppose he visited you again within the hour after he left you with this young lady. Is that the case, Herr Feltz?"

"Your highness distresses me by asking questions that I am under pledge not to answer."

"Is the analysis completed?"

"That is another question which I sincerely hope your highness will not press."

"Very well, Herr Feltz. I shall ask you a question or two that you will not be frightened at. I have told my friend here that you would do anything for me, but I see I have been mistaken."

The chemist made a deprecating motion of his hands, spreading them out and bowing. It was plainly apparent that his seeming discourtesy caused him deep regret. He seemed about to speak, but the princess went impetuously on.

"Is the director of police a friend of yours, Herr Feltz? I don't mean merely an official friend, but a personal friend?"

"I am under many obligations to him, your highness, and, besides that, like any other citizen in Vienna, I am compelled to obey him when he commands."

"What I want to learn," continued the princess, her anger visibly rising at this unexpected opposition, "is whether you wish the man well or not?"

"I certainly wish him well, your highness."

"In that case know that if my friend leaves this shop without seeing the analysis of the material she brought to you the director of police will be dismissed from his office tomorrow. If you doubt my influence with my husband to have that done, just try the experiment of sending us away unsatisfied."

The old man bowed his white head.

"Your highness," he said, "I shall take the responsibility of refusing to obey the orders of the director of police. Excuse me for a moment." He retired into his den and presently emerged with a sheet of paper in his hand.

"It must be understood," he said, addressing Jennie, "that the analysis is but roughly made. I intended to devote the night to a more intimate scrutiny."

"All I want tonight," said Jennie, "is a rough analysis."

"There it is," said the chemist, handing her the paper.

She read:

Calcium..... 29  
Iron..... 4  
Quartz..... 4  
Feldspar..... 27  
Mica..... 367  
Gold..... 52  
Traces of other substances..... 52

Total..... 100

Jennie's eyes sparkled as she looked at the figures before her. She handed the paper to the princess, saying:

"You see, I was right in my surmise. More than one-third of that heap is pure gold."

"I should explain," interrupted the chemist, "that I have grouped the quartz, feldspar and mica together without giving the respective portions of each, because it is evident that the combination represents granite."

"I understand," said Jennie, "the walls and roof were of granite."

"I would further add," continued the chemist, "that I have never seen gold so finely divided as this is."

"Have you the gold and other ingredients separated?"

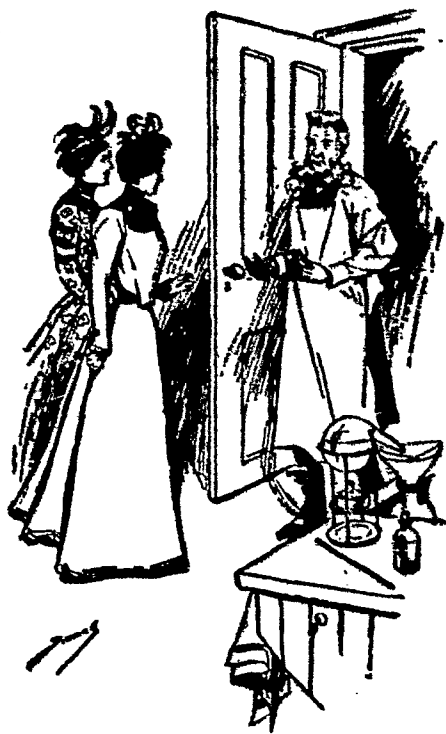
"Yes, madame."

"I shall take them with me, if you please."

The chemist shortly after brought her the components in little glass vials, labeled.

"Have you any idea, Herr Feltz, what explosive would reduce gold to such fine powder as this?"

"I have only a theoretical knowledge of explosives, and I know of nothing."



The chemist shortly after brought her the components in little glass vials.

that would produce such results as we have here. Perhaps Professor Carl Seigfried could give you some information on that point. The science of detonation has been his life study, and he stands head and shoulders above his fellows in that department."

"Can you give me his address?"

The chemist wrote the address on a sheet of paper and handed it to the young woman.

"Do you happen to know whether Professor Seigfried or his assistants have been called in during this investigation?"

"What investigation, madame?"

"The investigation of the recent terrible explosion."

"I have heard of no explosion," replied the chemist, evidently bewildered. Then Jennie remembered that while the particulars of the disaster in the treasury were known to the rest of the world no knowledge of the catastrophe had got abroad in Vienna.

"The professor," continued the chemist, noticing Jennie's hesitation, "is not a very practical man. He is deeply learned and has made some great discoveries in pure science, but he has done little toward applying his knowledge to any everyday, useful purpose. If you meet him, you will find him a dreamer and a theorist. But if you once succeed in interesting him in any matter he will prosecute it to the very end, quite regardless of the time he spends or the calls of duty elsewhere."

"He is just the man I wish to see," said Jennie decisively and with that they took leave of the chemist, and once more entered the carriage.

"I want to drive to one more place," said Jennie, "before it gets too late."

"Good gracious!" cried the princess. "You surely do not intend to call on Professor Seigfried tonight?"

"No, but I want to drive to the office of the director of police."

"Oh, that won't take us long!" said the princess, giving the necessary order. The coachman took them to the night entrance of the central police station by the Hohenstaufengasse, and, leaving the princess in the carriage, Jennie went alone to speak with the officer in charge.

"I wish to see the director of the police," she said.

"He will not be here until morning. He is at home. Is it anything important?"

"Yes. Where is his residence?"

"If you will have the kindness to inform me what your business is, madame, we will have pleasure in attending to it without disturbing Herr Director."

"I must communicate with the director in person. The Princess von Steinheimer is in her carriage outside, and I do not wish to keep her waiting."

At mention of the princess the officer bestirred himself and became effusively polite.

"I shall call the director at once, and he will be only too happy to wait upon you."

"Oh! Have you a telephone here? And can I speak with him myself without being overheard?"

"Certainly, madame. If you will step into this room with me, I will call him up and leave you to speak with him."

This was done, and when the chief had answered Jennie introduced herself to him.

"I am Miss Baxter, whom you were kind enough to escort through the treasury building this afternoon."

"Oh, yes!" replied the chief. "I thought we were to postpone further inquiry until tomorrow."

"Yes; such was the arrangement, but I wanted to say that if my plans are interfered with, if I am kept under surveillance, I shall be compelled to withdraw from the search."

A few moments elapsed before the chief replied, and then it was with some hesitation.

"I should be distressed to have you withdraw; but, if you wish to do so, that must be a matter entirely for your own consideration. I have my duty to perform, and I must carry it out to the best of my poor ability."

"Quite so. I am obliged to you for speaking so plainly. I rather surmised this afternoon that you looked upon my help in the light of an interference."

"I should not have used the word 'interference,'" continued the chief, "but I must confess that I never knew results to follow amateur efforts which could not have been reached much more speedily and effectually by the regular force under my command."

"Well, the regular force under your command has been at work several weeks and has apparently not accomplished very much. I have devoted part of an afternoon and evening to the matter, so before I withdraw I would like to give you some interesting information, which you may impart to the government, and I am quite willing

that you should have all the credit for the discovery, as I have no wish to appear in any way as your competitor. Can you hear me distinctly?"

"Perfectly, madame," replied the chief.

"Then, in the first place, inform the government that there has been no robbery."

"No robbery! What an absurd statement, if you will excuse me for speaking so abruptly! Where is the gold if there was no robbery?"

"I am coming to that. Next inform the government that its loss will be but trifling. That heap of debris which you propose to cart away contains practically the whole of the missing 200,000,000 florins. More than one-third of the heap is pure gold. If you want to do a favor to a good friend of yours and at the same time confer a benefit upon the government itself, you will advise the government to secure the services of Herr Feltz, so that the gold may be extracted from the rubbish with the least possible loss. I put in a word for Herr Feltz because I am convinced he is a most competent man. Tonight his action saved you from dismissal tomorrow; therefore you should be grateful to him. And now I have the honor to wish you good night."

"Wait—wait a moment!" came in beseeching tones through the telephone.

"My dear young lady, pray pardon any fault you have to find with me and remain for a moment or two longer. Who, then, caused the explosion, and what was its object?"

"That I must leave for you to find out, Herr Director. You see, I am giving you the results of merely a few hours' inquiry, and you cannot expect me to discover everything in that time. I don't know how the explosion was caused; neither do I know who the criminals were. It would probably take me all day tomorrow to find that out, but as I am leaving the discovery in such competent hands as yours I must curb my impatience until you send me full particulars. So, once again, good night, Herr Director."

"No, no! Don't go yet. I shall come at once to the station, if you will be kind enough to stop there until I arrive."

"The Princess von Steinheimer is waiting for me in her carriage outside, and I do not wish to delay her any longer."

"Then let me implore you not to give up your researches."

"Why? Amateur efforts are so futile, you know, when compared with the efforts of the regular force."

"Oh, my dear young lady, you must pardon an old man for what he said in a thoughtless moment! If you knew how many useless amateurs meddle in our very difficult business, you would excuse me. Are you quite convinced of what you have told me—that the gold is in the rubbish heap?"

"Perfectly. I will leave for you at the office here the analysis made by Herr Feltz, and if I can assist you further it must be on the distinct understanding that you are not again to interfere with whatever I may do. Your conduct in going to Herr Feltz tonight after you had left me and commanding him not to give me any information I should hesitate to characterize by its right name."

"My commands seem to have offered little obstruction to you. Herr Feltz doubtless gave you the information when you asked for it."

"No; he did not. He gave me the information only when he was assured that if he withheld it longer Princess von Steinheimer would have procured your instant dismissal from the force. You have every reason to be grateful to Herr Feltz, and I want you to understand that."

"I do understand it, and I am grateful to him. Am I to have the pleasure of seeing you tomorrow?"

"I hope not. When I have anything further to communicate, I will send for you."

"Thank you. I shall hold myself always at your commands."

This telephonic interview being happily concluded, Jennie hurried through the main office to the princess, stopping on her way to give the paper containing the analysis to the official in charge and telling him to give it to the director when he returned to his desk. This done, she passed out into the night, with the comforting consciousness that the worries of a busy day had not been without their compensations.

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### VII.—The Wizard in His Magic Attic.

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When Jennie entered the carriage in which her friend was waiting, the other cried: "Well, have you seen him?" apparently meaning the director of police.

"No, I did not see him, but I talked with him over the telephone. I wish you could have heard our conversation; it was the funniest interview that I ever took part in. Two or three times I had to shut off the instrument, fearing the director would hear me laugh. I am afraid that before this business is ended you will be sorry I am a guest at your house. I know I shall end by getting myself into an Austrian prison. Just think of it! Here have I been 'holding up' the chief of police in this imperial city as if I were a wild western brigand. I have been terrorizing the man, browbeating him, threatening him, and he the person who has the liberty of all Vienna in his hands, who can have me dragged off to a dungeon cell any time he likes to give the order."

"Not from the Palace Steinheimer," said the princess, with decision.

"Well, he might hesitate about that; yet, nevertheless, it is too funny to think that a mere newspaper woman, coming into a city which contains only one or two of her friends, should dare to talk to the chief of police as I have done tonight and force him actually to beg that I shall remain in the city and continue to assist him."

"Tell me what you said!" asked the princess eagerly, and Jennie related all that had passed between them over the telephone.

"And do you mean to tell me that you are going to give that man the right to use all the information you have acquired, and allow him to accept completely all the kudos that such a discovery entitles you to?"

"Why, certainly," replied Jennie. "What good is the kudos to me? All the credit I desire I get in the office of The Daily Bugle in London."

"But, you silly girl, holding such a secret as you held, you could have made your fortune," insisted the practical princess, for the principles which had been instilled into her during a youth spent in Chicago had not been eradicated by her residence in Vienna. "If you had gone to the government and said, 'How much will you give me if I restore to you the missing gold?' just imagine what their answer would be."

"Yes, I suppose there was money in the scheme if it had been really a secret. But you forget that tomorrow morning the chief of police would have known as much as he knows tonight. Of course, if I had gone alone to the treasury vault and kept my discovery to myself, I might, perhaps, have 'held up' the government of Austria-Hungary as successfully as I 'held up' the chief of police tonight. But with the director watching everything I did, and going with me to the chemist, there was no possibility of keeping the matter a secret."

"Well, Jennie, all I can say is that you are a very foolish girl. Here you are, working hard, as you said in one of your letters, merely to make a living, and now, with the greatest nonchalance, you allow a fortune to slip through your fingers. Now, I am simply not going to allow this. I shall tell my husband all that has happened, and he shall make the government treat you honestly, if not generously. I assure you, Jennie, that Lord Donald—no, I won't mention his name, since you protest so strenuously—but the future young man, whoever he is, will not think the less of you because you come to him with a hand some dowry. But here we are, at home, and I won't say another word on the subject if it annoys you."

When Jennie reached her delightful apartment—which looked even more luxuriously comfortable bathed in the soft light that now flooded them from quiet toned shaded lamps than they did in the more garish light of day—she walked up and down her sitting room in deep meditation. She was in a quandary. Whether or not to risk sending a coded telegram to her paper was the question that presented itself to her. If she were sure that no one else would learn the news, she would prefer to wait until she had further particulars of the treasury catastrophe. A good deal would depend on whether the director of police took any one into his confidence that night or not. If he did not, then he would be aware that only he and the girl possessed that important piece of news. If a full account of the discovery appeared in the next morning's Daily Bugle, then, when that paper arrived in Vienna, or even before, if a synopsis were telegraphed to the government, as it was morally certain to be, the director would know at once that she was the correspondent of the newspaper whom he was so anxious to frighten out of Vienna. On the other hand, her friendship with the Princess von Steinheimer gave her such influence with the chief's superior that after the lesson she had taught him he might hesitate to make any move against her. Then, again, the news that tonight belonged to two persons might on the morrow come to the knowledge of all the correspondents in Vienna, and her efforts, as far as The Bugle was concerned, would have been in vain. This consideration decided the girl, and, casting off all sign of hesitation, she sat down at her writing table and began the first chapter of the solution of the Vienna mystery. Her opening sentences were exceedingly diplomatic. "The chief of police of Vienna has made a most startling discovery." Beginning thus, she went on to details of the discovery she had that day made. When her account was finished, and cooled, she went down to her bedroom and slept.

Who will make a long telegram to the central telegraph office, pay for it, and come away quietly before any one can ask him inconvenient questions?"

"Would it not be better to call on Steinheimer?"

"A Steinheimer? That is your commissionaire or telegraph messenger? No, I think not. They are all numbered and can be traced."

"Oh, I know," cried the princess. "I will send our coachman. He will be out of his livery now, and he is a most reliable man; he will not answer inconvenient questions or any others, even if they are asked."

To her telegram for publication Jennie had added a private dispatch to the editor that it would be rather inconvenient for her if he published the account.

Next morning, but she left the decision entirely with him. Here was the news, and if he thought it worth the star he might hold it over; if not, he was to print it regardless of consequences.

"As a matter of fact, the editor, with fear and trembling, held the news for a day, so that he might not embarrass his fair representative, but so anxious was he that he had not slept a wink that he had a slight relief when, on glancing over them, he found that not one of them contained an inkling of the information locked up in his desk. And so he dropped off to sleep when the day was breaking. Next night he had nearly as much anxiety, for, although The Bugle would contain the news, other papers might have it as well, and so for the second time he waited in his office until the other sheets, wet from the press, were brought to him. Again fortune favored him, and the triumph belonged to The Bugle alone."

The morning after her interview with the director of police, Jennie, leaning a small hand satchel, in which she placed the various bottles containing the different dusts which the chemist had separated, went abroad alone and, calling a fiacre, gave the driver the address of Professor Carl Seigfried. The carriage of the princess was always at the disposal of the girl, but on this occasion she did not wish to be embarrassed with so pretentious an equipage.

The cab took her into a street lined with tall edifices, and left her at the number she had given the driver. The building seemed to be one of the oldest flats and tenements. She mounted the stairs after a while, and only at the very top did she see the professor's name painted on a door. Here she tapped several times without any attention being paid to her summons, but at last the door was opened partially by a man whom she took, quite accurately, to be her professor himself. His head was white and his face deeply wrinkled. He glanced at her through his glasses and said to her:

"Young lady, you have made a mistake. These are the rooms of Professor Carl Seigfried."

"It is Professor Carl Seigfried that I wish to see," said the girl hurriedly, "the old man was preparing to meet the door."

"What do you want from him?"

"I want some information from him about explosives. I have been told that he knows more about explosives than any other man living."

"Quite right—he does. What then?"

"An explosion has taken place, producing the most remarkable results. They say that neither dynamite nor any other known force could have had such an effect on metals and minerals as this power has had."

"Ah, dynamite is a toy for children!" cried the old man, opening the door a little farther, exhibiting an interest which had up to that moment been absent from his manner. "Well, where did this explosion take place? Do you wish me to go and see it?"

"Perhaps later on. At present I wish to show you some of its effects, but I don't propose to do so here in the passageway."

"Quite right, quite right," hastily ejaculated the old scientist, throwing the door wide open. "Of course, I am not accustomed to visits from fashionable young ladies, and I thought at first there had been a mistake, but if you have any real scientific problem I shall be delighted to give my attention to it. What may appear very extraordinary to the lay mind will doubtless prove fully explainable by scientific. Come in, come in!"

The old man shut the door behind her and led her along a dark passage into a large apartment whose ceiling was the roof of the building. At first sight it seemed an amazing discovery. Huge as it was it was cluttered with curious shaped machines and instruments. A twisted conglomeration of glass tubing, bent into fantastic angles, stood on a central table and had recently been occupying the professor's attention at the time he was interrupted. The place was lit with candles.

There was a large lamp in the center of the room, and the professor, who was a small, thin, old man, with a long white beard, and a pair of spectacles, looked at her through his glasses and said to her:

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