

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER IX.

The aspect of the country has changed since I set out from Little Kolga one early morning nearly a month ago. And I, too, am changed. Like a forest tree my frame has hardened and strengthened, and with it my mind has cast out nervous fear and become calm and strong. Since I got Maruscha's letter at Luga telling me that she is at home and safe, I am imbued with hope and confidence, and have journeyed on, associating myself with all sorts and conditions of men without meeting with a single misadventure.

And now I am actually in the government of Kovno, getting very near the frontier, and my first difficulty is staring me in the face. I have noted its approach every time I have occasion to take out Maruscha's little purse to pay for a frugal meal, and, calmly, philosophical, I have thought:

"When the time comes I will find a way."

It has come. The landlord of the inn before whose door I sit has just received on his dirty palm my last ten-copek piece. I have avoided towns as much as possible, but to a town am I now bound, having told Maruscha in my last letter to write to Kovno. The landlord has just informed me that it lies twelve versts from here; I shall therefore be in possession of my letter in a few hours. I rise and stretching myself take up a stout alder stick that I cut at the beginning of my journey, and start at a steady pace up the street. Soon the last wooden hut is passed; the innumerable patches of reclaimed land, and again the trackless wastes of bog and moor stretch away to right and left, over which the sparrow hawks quiver eternally.

"Hallo, brother! Be merciful!" exclaims a voice from the ground. I abruptly stop, and looking down perceive that my stick, which I have been swaying from side to side, has narrowly escaped striking the head of a young man who reclines on the side of the ditch. He blinks up at me with a foolish maudlin smirk, and I at once perceive that he is not sober.

"I beg your pardon," I say, lifting my hat and continuing my walk.

"Hallo, stop! Wait for a fellow, little brother!" cries the man, as he scrambles out of the ditch.

The request affects me disagreeably; I want to get on, and prefer my own company to that of a drunken—what? not a Moujik, nor a voyageur, nor a peasant farmer. What then?

He is dressed in a light summer suit of no provincial cut, though soiled and spotted with grease. His hands show white through the dirt on them, and on the little finger of the left is a costly ring, a thick gold snake with a diamond in its head.

He has struggled to his legs and stands before me, a repulsive looking object, with his sloping shoulders, his thin, blotched face, from which protruded a sharp, mean nose, looking as if the point had been dipped in red ink.

"You might have put out my eye there, my friend," he observes, shutting up the left and cocking the other at me.

"I might, indeed," I respond, "for until you spoke I saw you not. Again I beg your pardon."

"I accept your apology, brother," he says condescendingly, and planting his feet very far apart. "And now may I ask your destination? Kovno, eh?"

"Yes, I go to Kovno."

"Ah, that is luck; I go there also, so we can proceed together. What think you to see a gentleman like me going on foot the distance of twelve versts? I have been cheated, robbed, my friend, of all the money I had in my purse—five hundred roubles, that is what I had when I left St. Petersburg. Well, let it go! Help me along, brother, and I will pay you for it, when we get to Kovno. My uncle is Governor of the Province. I am going on a visit to him. He is rich."

He swaggers along, stretching his short legs to their utmost capabilities in order to keep step with me; yet I attempt not to adapt my walk to his, and preserve a gloom silence in my vexation, whilst I curb my longing to shake him off my arm.

"What is your business?" he asks presently.

"I am a student," I reply shortly.

"What faculty?"

"Medicine."

"Studied in Moscow?"

"St. Petersburg."

"What, St. Petersburg? I, too, am a St. Petersburg student!"

I at once regret having spoken the truth. He stops short at stares at me. "Let me look at you, brother!" Then shaking his head—"No, may I be hung if ever I saw you before!"

He still stares and his jaw drops until his open mouth takes the form of the letter V. "And yet, I have seen someone like you—somewhere."

Suddenly he slaps his leg. "By all the saints!" he exclaims. "I know now. I went to see some fellows hung once, and one of them, the ringleader, had the look of you! Perhaps you remember the case? Everybody talked of it at the time. They called the fellow I speak of Vladimir Alexandrovitch Lubanoff."

I thrill to hear my name thus mentioned; nevertheless I am sufficiently master of myself to reply with perfect composure:

"Yes, I remember—all the particulars."

"He was a fine fellow, that Vladimir Alexandrovitch, and you are a fine fellow. We will have a good time together

in Kovno. I will stand treat. My uncle—"

"Thanks for your good intention," I interrupt, "but I remain not in Kovno. I am merely passing through."

Meanwhile the exercise in the fresh air gradually sobers him. He talks less, and finally not at all, having enough to do with puffing and blowing. I pretend not to observe, and stalk on. At length the gasps out:

"What is all the hurry? We are not walking for a wager. Why should we blow ourselves this way?"

"I am not in the least blown," I reply, "and excuse me if I decline to rest with you. I must get on to Kovno with all haste. I have business there."

He lets go my arm and stares at me, whilst his nose seems to grow sharper, and the red rims round his eyes to deepen.

"What? Have I heard aright?" he says—"you would leave a brother thus, in this awkward predicament?"

"I have no choice; I am obliged to proceed. But look you, take my advice, wait here until some vehicle comes up and bargain for a life. You have only to say that you are a nephew of the Governor."

CHAPTER X.

I finish not my sentence, for I see coming toward us, in a cloud of dust, a large "calash" drawn by four horses. My companion has started forward, and is peering in the direction of the equipage with his hand arched over his blinking eyes.

"By all the saints, it is very like—yes, it is my uncle's calash!" he exclaims.

"That is well; then I have the honor to wish you good-by," I say, moving quickly away.

"No—leave me not! Stay and help me out of this! What will he think to find me thus? Oh—ah, help me to some life! You are a fellow-student—both fond of walking—fine day—back me up, brother!"

I bite my lip and pause irresolute. There is nothing for it but to meet the inevitable with a bold front.

"I will stay," I reply. "You may rely on me."

He wrings my hand, and proceeds to mop his face with a dirty cambric handkerchief; after which he pulls down his waistcoat, straightens himself, and already the cloud of dust is receiving us.

"Ah, my uncle, I thought I was not mistaken! I knew your trotters at a glance. I hope I see you well, Vassili Grigorievitch!"

The sole occupant of the carriage, a thin, sharp-featured man of middle age, dressed in uniform, peers at the speaker, and then exclaims:

"Is it possible? My brother's son, Andrei Piotrovitch?"

"Yes, my uncle, I am he! Ha, ha! You have expected me for some days; but not thus, not now!"

"I have looked for this arrival every day for a week! And now what is this? I meet thee here, on foot and in this plight?"

"Ah, yes, that is just it, a plight! Walking on a dusty road improves not one's appearance. Ha! ha! I feel quite disreputable. But it is only on the surface, my uncle. You see, I am passionately fond of walking in the country, and the day is so fine I could not resist. A freak—a mere freak, and now I have had enough of it. My friend—hem—has I was saying, my friend here was just complaining of fatigue when you came in sight, Vassili Grigorievitch."

"The lying scoundrel!" I think, yet I dare not contradict him, and stand silently enduring the severe scrutiny of the Governor.

"Hem!" he nnsals at length, and with draws his eyes. "Where are thy effects, Andrei Piotrovitch?"

"Sent in advance, my uncle; they will arrive before us."

"Hem!" ejaculates the Governor again. And to the man servant who has descended from the box: "Yeremei, opeh."

The carriage door is held wide.

"May I pray you to ascend, monsieur?" the Governor is addressing me, though he is looking past me.

"I thank your Excellency, but I am really walking from choice, therefore beg to decline your courteous offer."

"Ah—indeed are you fond of walking, an accomplished pedestrian, and doubtless a true votary of Nature. I congratulate you on your good taste, sir!" Then to his nephew: "Yet I understood thee to say that thy friend had complained of fatigue, Andrei Piotrovitch?"

"Said I so, Vassili Grigorievitch? Surely not! You must have taken me up wrong. I said that I was fatigued, could scarcely say so of my friend—hem—

Ivan—hem—Ivan Feodorevitch. Here his uncle's gaze being removed from him, the perverted jackanapes winks and makes a grimace at me. "Ivan Feodorevitch," he repeats with emphasis and another wing, "can walk his fifty versts a day as easily as you can take a pinch of snuff, my uncle!"

It is evident to me that since he is comfortably installed in his uncle's carriage and the embarrassment of the meeting is tided over, Andrei Piotrovitch would not be sorry to part from me.

"Indeed! A manly accomplishment," observes the Governor, making me a stiff bow. Presently he asks me: "Are you making any stay in Kovno, Ivan Feodorevitch?"

I wince at the name the young fool has fathered me with, and to which I am compelled to answer: "No, your Excel-

lency, I am merely passing through."

"Ah, well, if we are not to have the pleasure of your company, Ivan Feodorevitch, I have the honor to wish you good-day," and the Governor raises his cap with another stiff bow, to which I respond.

"Au revoir, Ivan Feodorevitch!" exclaims Andrei, with an audacious grin.

The man servant shuts the carriage door, swings himself to the box, and in a few moments I stand alone in the road. I step out after this, and the vest stones crop up quickly one after another. I advance into the town until the houses begin to take the form of streets, and I feel the round boulders of the pavement under my feet. Then I ask my way to the general postoffice of a respectable looking citizen.

I am directed to the usual square, flanked on all sides by government buildings, over whose entrances hovers the spread eagle, in the center of which rises an equestrian statue, probably of Peter the Great. I am presently entering the postoffice. In ascending the steps my eyes rove up the street, and are arrested by the sight of two officers whom I met in the suburbs, who are just turning the corner together. They both look toward me.

Well, there is nothing extraordinary in two gendarmes walking together, nor is there anything remarkable in the fact that they happen simultaneously to direct their eyes toward me. It is accident—pure accident, I think, shaking myself free of the vague uneasiness that is creeping on me. And I push open the swing door of the "Left Letter Department."

"A letter for Waldemar Nicolaivitch Alikanoff?"

"Yes, there is one." The clerk hands it to me and my fingers close with a thrill of joy on the precious missive. All is well; is well; my heart sings. I spring down the steps and have gained the street, when a hand is put on my shoulder and I see before me the police officer, one of whom addresses me courteously:

"You are a stranger in town, I believe, sir?"

"Yes, I am a stranger to Kovno; I am passing through the town," I reply, looking the man steadily in the face. Fortunately he cannot see my flying pulses.

"Exactly. I am sorry to have to trouble you, but we have orders to inspect the papers of travelers. The police inspection department is just across the square if you will have the goodness to accompany us."

The man indicates a large stone building opposite. It costs me a supreme effort not to groan aloud, and my voice shakes as I stammer:

"I have not my papers here. Would it not suffice if I present myself with them to-morrow?"

"I regret to say that it would not," replies the officer. "Under these circumstances we are bound to place you under arrest until your papers are forthcoming."

"Well, it is no use parleying about it," roughly interposes the other officer. "The man must come with us. That is the sum total." And he lays his hand on my arm.

"The gentleman is quite willing to go with us and set this little matter right," observes the polite officer, and he quietly strokes his companion's hand from my arm, taking his place on my other side.

I still hold Maruscha's letter crushed in my fingers, forgetful of it in this moment of perplexity. I am reminded of it, by its dextrous withdrawal.

"Permit me," observes the polite officer.

He raises it to his eyes and slowly reads the address aloud. "Waldemar Nicolaivitch Alikanoff." He bows toward me as if a third party were in the act of presenting me to him. "A good name. A good Russian name!"

"I have not read that letter, it is from my betrothed," I say, choking down my indignation. "Will you permit me to read it? Surely it can make no difference so that you retain it in your possession?"

"My duty is to place it in the hands of the Prefect unopened," is the response. "As there is nothing treasonable in it, he will return it to you."

The cold sweat breaks out on my brow. "Oh, Maruscha! Maruscha! God in His mercy grant that thou hast not compromised thyself!" I inwardly groan.

Meanwhile, with a gendarme on each side of me, I have crossed the square and am entering the police offices. We pass into a small ante-room and stop at a door at which the officer who seems always to take the initiative knocks. It is torn open instantly, and an irate head is thrust out, surmounted by a military cap.

"What now?" exclaims this individual. "No use coming to me! I have nothing to do with it. After business hours—going home to dinner. Should have been gone an hour ago."

The gendarme draws him aside and whispers to him.

I strain my ears to catch the purport of the gendarme's remarks, but only hear: "The Governor, 'St. Petersburg,' and the name Andrei Piotrovitch." Only three words, yet they are enough to inform me as to whom I owe my arrest, and the knowledge lightens not my apprehensions.

Whilst the gendarme is whispering, the listener fixes his goggle eyes on me as if he would look me through. I endure his looks with the indifference of despair.

When the gendarme has finished whispering, the official pronounces the fiat. "Lock him up! Case will be heard to-morrow. Too late to-night. Present your report to the Prefect to-morrow. Meanwhile, lock him up."

His orders are executed and at 8 o'clock that night the iron-studded door receives me into its dread shadow.

(To be continued.)

Three-fourths of all the pills sold in the United States are made in Detroit. This arena of activity has therefore acquired the name of the "Pill City."

THE POPULAR PULPIT

DEDICATION OF LIFE.

By Dr. John Batcom Shaw.

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.—St. John xii, 24.

There are four things one can do with a kernel of wheat. It can be ground into flour and wasted. Or it can be immediately consumed, in which case its benefit is only temporary and limited. Or it can be stored in some bin or bag for future use, but if this is done its value will gradually deteriorate because its vitality steadily lessens. Or, last of all, one can plant it, and then what? It begins and continues to decay until it reaches a certain point, when it reappears in another vital form and in the harvest it yields is largely multiplied.

Life presented precisely these four choices to Jesus Christ—self-destruction, self-gratification, self-preservation, or self-dedication. The first of these, wasting his life, was unthinkable to him. The second was settled once for all in the great wilderness struggle, where Satan sought to persuade him to live his life for his own sake, and utterly failed. After that the choice lay between self-preservation and self-consecration. Should he store his life or plant it? Should he lay it up for a future and, perhaps, a larger good, or should he lay it down in immediate and unreserved surrender? The decision was forced upon him by this visit of the Greeks. Was he within three days of his death, and yet the great Gentile world was unreached, even untouched? Moved by this fact, there came to him a passing temptation to postpone the cross for a little.

Whereupon he reasoned with himself, as only Jesus could reason: "He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall keep it unto life eternal. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." And so reasoning, he flung the temptation from him and resumed the rugged road up Calvary, stopping not until he had poured out his rich, full-life in an unquestioning sacrifice for the larger eternal good, not of the Jews or the Greeks alone, but of the whole world.

Askest thou in exultation
What the cross of Christ has done?
Ask the splendors of creation
If they feel the noonday sun.
Ask reviving vegetation
Springing forth on joyful wing
If it feels the inspiration
Of the breath-enchanting spring.

The same four choices confront every man. Few would choose deliberately to waste their lives, though many are actually doing so. No high minded person who feels the responsibility of living and realizes what a holy thing life is, would think of living his life unto himself. To most people who will read this sermon the choice lies between self-preservation and self-dedication. Shall I store my life or plant it? Shall my motto be "Spend thyself" or "Spare thyself?"

Here I would locate your temptation, and it is a most subtle one. Because the storing of one's life has usually an unselfish purpose behind it. You do not want to store it for your own ultimate consumption, but for the future dedication of yourself to others. You have decided to plant your life sometime, but for seemingly good reasons you do not want to plant it now.

This is the high minded young man's temptation. He wants his life to tell for the good of his fellowmen, and he means that it shall, but he is going to wait until he makes a success in business or in his chosen profession before he puts his ideal into command. In other words, he decides to store his life for future sowing instead of planting it at once, and nine cases out of ten sowing time will never come for him.

This is the successful business man's temptation. He is public spirited, large hearted, conscientious. It is his honest conviction that no man should live unto himself. But ask him to aid you in some ministry to our ignorant and degraded classes, where money is not called for, but the giving of one's self in immediate and practical self-dedication, and he will excuse himself on the basis of his now strenuous life and tell you when the stress of life lessens, as he means it soon shall, he is going to give himself unstintingly to such work. He is storing his life—laying it up for future sowing instead of laying it down in present planting.

This is the rich man's temptation. He, too, does not believe that a man

should live unto himself. Wealth to him, perhaps, is a trust and he wants faithfully to discharge it; but he puts off the execution of his benevolent impulses, he awaits some more suitable or advantageous time for distributing his money. He is going to make a will and bequeath most of his fortune to charity. He is resolved upon storing his life for future planting and the strong probability is that it will never get sown.

Here, as elsewhere, my friend, self is our great foe. Self-preservation means self-regency and self-regency means self-supremacy. We must put self down—not half way, but clean down under our feet—or it will finally put us down. To stop halfway in the process of self-surrender and self-dedication is to insure ultimate self-defeat. To store one's life is better than to waste it or to consume it for one's personal gratification, but we are not to be satisfied with the better—we should seek the best, and the first best. If we want our lives to yield the largest harvest possible we must do with them what Jesus did with his life—lay them down in immediate and complete consecration.

Love thyself last, and O, such joy shall thrive thee

As never yet to selfish soul was given.
Whate'er thy lot, a perfect peace shall fill thee,
And earth shall seem the ante-room of heaven.

OF UNIVERSAL SIGNIFICANCE.

By Rev. P. P. Rice.

Jesus spoke of the act of Mary as he spoke of no other single act in all his ministry. He said it should be told wherever the gospel should be preached. It must have had, therefore, some intimate relation to the gospel itself. It must have symbolized or illustrated something of universal significance. It cannot be that he would have it told simply to extol the woman or the sacrifice which she made. It was a principle of his kingdom that individuals were not to be exalted in it, and the sacrifice which Mary made was merged by the side of that which many others have made. These are incidental features, the heart of it all is rather in the attitude of the woman toward the Master. The passion and humility of her love and the abandon of its expression are the unique features of the scene.

It was Mary of Bethany who thus anointed the Savior. It was this woman who, through multiplied experiences, had come under a deep sense of gratitude to him. She had found in him response to every holy aspiration and desire, and a sympathy that was as a new life to her. Her soul, like the psalmist's, had thirsted for God, and, sitting at his feet, her thirst had been satisfied, and there had sprung up within her a sense of personal gratitude and affection which must express itself. What she did was criticized by Judas, but our Lord approved it, because it indicated that attitude of heart toward him which he desires to see in all who would claim the blessings he is able to bestow. Indeed, it is the indispensable condition of the bestowal of every spiritual blessing.

One who would be a Christian must not simply believe in him, much less any truth or dogma about him; he must love him, and if he would attain a high degree of Christian perfection, he must have the same passion which characterized Mary in this act of anointing.

Moreover, herein lies not only the essence of the Christian religion, but its power as well. There is little in abstract truth to help us in the conflict with evil. Forms and commandments are alike impotent in the fierce battles against sin which we are called upon to wage.

If the unholy and unwholesome tendencies of our lives are to be checked they must be met by some deep, swelling current, some absorbing passion that sweeps us away from evil toward goodness—away from self toward God. It was such a passion that Mary expressed. It had been begotten in her by the contemplation of his divine beauty in word and deed. It had been fanned into a flame by his gracious ministries of mercy and love, and it could not be contained. Sin is powerless in the presence of such a passion. And so faith, which is the New Testament definition of that passion, "is the victory which overcometh the world."

Short Meter Sermons

The worst bankruptcy is to lose heart.

It's a waste of energy to spur a rocking horse.

The best way to silence conscience is to obey it.

Earth's harvests come from seed thrown out to die.

The man who has only a two-inch lake of wisdom always thinks he has to dam it in with a big wall of words.