

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

Rosen must have been watching out from the balcony, for he is in the street when the droski stops at the door. To witness his wild state of excitement, an onlooker might suppose that it was his betrothed he had been expecting, and who had arrived. He lifts Maruscha to the pavement, and shakes her hands with frantic energy.

"Welcome! Welcome, Maria Petrovna!" he cries.

Truly, if he had not confided to me his passion for a certain young lady, whose image he carries in that locket attached to his watch chain, I could find it in my heart to be jealous. He gives her his arm up the stairs, too, ignoring my existence; and in the sitting room again takes possession of her hands, and gazing at her with delight and satisfaction, reiterates:

"Welcome! Welcome, Maria Petrovna. I am mighty glad to see you! I was sure you would come to-night—quite convinced of it. And all is in readiness for you, and here is Frau Meyer to show you to your room."

In the doorway appears, smiling, and smoothing her hair, a large-boned, fresh-colored German matron, whom I have not seen before, and whom the good fellow must have got into the house to wait on Maruscha, and do the proprieties.

"Thank you so much, Herr Doktor," responds Maruscha, in her pretty, soft German, though he has spoken Russian; and she beams on him in a way that would turn the heart of the vilest dandy.

"Not 'Herr Doktor,' I pray you," he protests; "call me Don Carlos, as of old."

I recollect with a foolish pang that Carl Rosen knew Maruscha when I did not. It was at Rosen's I first met her, and straightway yielded up my heart to her.

"Since I have your permission, by all means, Don Carlos. Without it I should not have dared to take the liberty with so important a personage as you have grown." She looks at him with a charming affectation of shyness. "You look quite awfully respectable now, the 'Herr Doktor' every inch."

Rosen blushes like a school boy. "You have not forgotten how to tease, Maruscha," he responds, stroking his sleek mustache with a sidelong self-conscious glance at her.

She trips up to Frau Meyer and takes her arm with that winning familiarity, yet courteous grace, which Maruscha always adopts toward those of her sex whose position is inferior to her own; thus sweeping down with a sublime contempt the paltry barrier that an arrogant society has raised between man and man. Maruscha has a profound reverence for humanity, and a strict regard to its rights. She is a socialist to her heart's core. It is only with the base that she is haughty.

"Come; you will take me to my room, dear madame?" she says.

The good woman's countenance flushes with pleasure. I know her heart is going out to my sweet girl, whom she must love, as all creatures do.

CHAPTER XX.

The moment we are alone Rosen rushes at me and begins to wring my hands, since he has had to relinquish Maruscha's.

"Thank God, Vlascha!" he cries joyously. "Thou hast her safe at last! At last, at last, this great anxiety is lifted from thee. It has been a terrible time; but it is over, and all is well."

He wipes his heated, excited face with his handkerchief. I perceive that the affectionate little fellow's eyes are moist. Only now I become conscious of all I owe him, so self-absorbed have I been. His ever ready sympathy; his generosity in placing his house at my disposal; his forethought for Maruscha's reception. As the recollection of it all comes to me, gratitude overwhelms me. I release my left hand and enclose his right in both of mine with a fervent clasp. My vision grows dim as I look down into his guileless visage.

"Dear old Don, thou hast placed me under obligations, such as I—!" He rudely cuts me short.

"Come now, old fellow, none of that. Can a man not entertain his friends without having speeches made at him? I should be offended only that I know thou meanest well."

"I am silent," I reply, with trembling lips.

Maruscha joins us. I see her now without her hat, and with her glorious crown of golden hair. What a radiance she sheds around her! My sunbeam! The great beauty and purity of her looks inspire me with a kind of awe. I feel constrained and awkward in her presence, finding nothing to say, though I watch her every movement, as if spell-bound. All she says and does is a wonder to me, and I even neglect my supper to feed my enraptured senses of sight and hearing. With strange perversity she encourages me not, neither by word nor glance, but devotes herself exclusively to our host, chatting lightly on different topics—her journey, her traveling companions, the excellence of Rosen's cuisine.

German fashion, we have tea after supper, which Maruscha dispenses. In handing me my cup, our fingers meet. The cup trembles between us. Was it due to my thrilling nerves alone, or thrilled also my sensitive dove at my touch?

She shuns my ardent gaze, yet the tell-tale color spreads from her cheek to neck and brow. At length there is a pause

in the conversation and Rosen addresses me:

"Where on earth hast thou been all day, Vlascha?" he inquires. "I have not set eyes on thee since morning. Surely thou hast not spent the day at the station?"

I rouse. For the first time since Maruscha's arrival I remember my patient. "Thou remindest me that I have something to tell thee. I have set up an opposition shop," I laugh. "I have got a patient. And what is more, I have promised to go to him to-night. He lies at Hotel London, Unter den Linden."

I relate the circumstances of the case. "Poor old gentleman!" exclaims Maruscha, when I have ended. "Vladimir, thou must return to him at once. Think how lonely he must feel in the strange hotel, and suffering such pain. It is thy bounden duty to go to him now."

"That is thy opinion, Maruscha?" I respond, fixing on her a look of scathing reproach, which she refuses to see. "Be it so, I go." I rise and begin hastily to button my coat across my chest. "Good night, Maruscha; I will see thee in the morning, unless—unless my patient should require me."

A burst of laughter from Rosen breaks in on the first act of my tragedy.

"What—already, spitfire!" he cries, and jumping up, comes round to me and pushes me back to my chair. "Out of this house thou goest not until my return, which will be in a couple of hours. As I am obliged to go to my patients, whatever Maruscha may say, it is thy 'bounden duty' to stay and entertain my my guest."

"But if he had given his word—"

begins Maruscha, demurely.

"He will keep it," interposes Rosen. "He has promised to turn up at Hotel London some time between this and midnight, and he will do so. Meanwhile, Vlascha, if thou hast no objection, I will call in passing, and see how the Englishman does. I can also set his mind at ease about thee."

I mumble something to which he listens not, taking my affirmative as a matter of course, and leads the way to the sitting room, where he places Maruscha on the sofa.

I stalk in the rear, feeling my position to be an undignified one. I still contemplate entering a hypocritical protest against this arrangement of Rosen's. Surely I may be allowed to manage my own affairs? I have it on my lips to say that all things considered, I think it advisable that I should go, but it is too late. He is calling to us a hearty adieu, and the door closes behind him.

I am standing some paces from Maruscha. She sits looking down at her fingers, whilst she nervously twists round and round the ring I gave her two years ago. I regard her silently with growing wrath, for she raises not her head nor makes any movement toward me. At length I speak.

"Maruscha, I can still go if it is thy wish." A pause. "Since thou wouldst imply that I neglect a duty in remaining." Another pause. "I like not such implications, even though they are ungrounded. Of course, I left the Englishman in good hands, in charge of the landlady, who is a particularly kind, motherly person; nevertheless, I will go, since it is thy wish." I am by this time in a frenzy of indignation. She sits still in her place, and the sweet protestations I felt so sure of are not uttered. Only—"My wish?" she repeats. "Said I aught of any personal wish in the matter? I would not have thee break an engagement on my account—that is all."

"Thou knowest I pledged myself to return at a particular time. However, it matters not. I do thy will. Good night, Maruscha. Sleep well."

I go to her and hold toward her my hand. She heeds it not, and the corners of her rosy mouth go down and quiver. Now she bursts forth—"How deplorable is it that I must always suffer to be misunderstood by thee!"

A tear glistens like a diamond in the corner of her eye.

"Nay, Maruscha; thy words are plain—"

"I begin."

"Yes, twist and misconstrue them, my poor words, to fit thy case! I am used to this."

She speaks with a beautiful resignation, and her handkerchief goes up. I am at once overwhelmed with the conviction that I am a brute, and that Maruscha is the most injured of women. I throw myself on my knees beside her.

"Forgive me, my long suffering darling! I indeed misunderstood thee. It is my unfortunate temper to be forever seeking a grievance. And now, miserable wretch that I am, I have made thee weep on this evening of all others! Sweet, patient heart, once more forgive me! Ah, it is always 'forgive, forgive,' for I am always wounding thee! Look up again, my dove, and let me read my pardon in thy tender eyes."

I venture to draw her gently to my breast. She resists not, and I stop my pleadings, scarcely drawing my breath for fear of disturbing so perfect an arrangement. My cheek rests on her golden hair, my arms encircle her. I feel the agitated rise and fall of her bosom. She heaves a sigh.

"Vladimir," she whispers presently; and, oh, the wonder of it; her soft arms steal about my neck; "I am deceitful and wicked."

"Thou art an angel," I murmur.

"No, no! I try to torment thee. It was cruel and stupid of me; and how frivolous, too, after all thou hast suffered."

Her mouth is close to mine. I kiss it.

"Thou wilt have much to endure with me," she continues mournfully, as if I had not interrupted her with that kiss. "Yes, Maruscha, in marrying thee, I make a martyr of myself; yet I will bear the cross, thou wilt find, with becoming fortitude." I respond cheerfully, lifting her face and looking into her eyes.

"Thou knowest not how perverse I am."

"I know it well; and alas, I cannot resist thee!"

"Vladimir!" with sudden energy and a contraction of the brows, "I wish thou wouldst recognize my faults now! It will prevent disappointment afterward."

"I do, I do, my love. I anticipate the shocks that are in store for me, yet am I bewitched. I know exactly how Socrates felt when he was courting Xanthippe."

Maruscha's mouth begins to twitch. She bites her lip, yet her eyes betray the rising laughter. And alas! to hide it, she frees herself from my arms.

"Thou art most provoking, Vladimir," she says. "Not a word of sense can one talk with thee."

Nevertheless, it is in sober sense we talk, as we sit side by side, half an hour later, my arm around her waist, her hand in mine. In reply to many questions of mine she gives me an account of her uneventful life at home, with its silent and concealed undercurrent of anguish; broken harshly in upon by a letter from Olga, with the intelligence of the death of our noble brother, Ivan Ivanovitch. Condemned to a long term of exile, he had poisoned himself in prison. I knew he carried the means of his release on his person, but little thought he would use it so soon. Couldst thou not have been patient and learnt from my experiences that whilst there is life there is hope? Thou art a bitter drop in my cup of happiness, oh, my brother! I have lost in thee what the world rarely gives but once, and seldom that—a true friend.

And the stout heart, Pavel Gregorevitch, banished too. Yet I know Pavel. He will find his feet, will make himself a home in the distant land whither his devoted wife will follow him. And he will raise an army of converts to the cause of liberty, and live as full a life in Siberia as in St. Petersburg.

(To be continued.)

HANGING AS A JOKE.

Machine for Initiatory Ceremonies Designed by an Inventor.

Among the inventions recently granted a patent is one for a hanging machine, which the inventor explains is not really for the purpose which its name would seem to indicate, but to give secret society candidates all the preliminary sensations of such an experience without any danger of fatal mishap. The machine is also designed for use on the stage to stimulate hanging scenes. The inventor of this machine is John J. Duffie of Los Angeles, Cal., according to the Philadelphia Record.

"My invention," says Mr. Duffie, "relates to a burlesque hanging machine, and is to be used in initiatory work in secret organizations, theaters and other places of amusement, and is so constructed that the party supposed to be hanged and operated on by this piece of mechanism cannot be injured in the slightest degree."

"It is intended in secret organizations," further explains the inventor, "to test the bravery and fortitude of the applicant and to test his confidence in his friends, and in theaters and other places of amusement to represent a real hanging."

The initiate wears a jacket for the hanging ceremony. That may be put on while other tricks are being played and the victim thus is hardly aware of its significance. This jacket has some weights and braces under the arms, pads on the hips and a strap attached to the legs, all designed to distribute the weight of the body when in the air.

Back of the neck is a hook from which the spiral spring runs to the dangling rope. The noose is not part of the rope, which is seen hanging from the gallows, but is merely tied to it by a piece of string, so that if the hook in the jacket should break the man would not be hanged by accident.

The victim is placed on a trap door, which at the proper moment is sprung by the executioner on a platform. The shock of the fall of a few feet is broken by a set of springs and weights concealed in the posts of the gallows.

It is the first hanging device of the kind ever patented, officials at the patent office said. It takes its place among a large array of devices more or less generally used in initiatory ceremonies. It lays claim to no utilitarian mission, but on other grounds seeks to take its place with the thousands of inventions, records of which are crowded in the patent office.

Not Qualified.

"I would like to get a position as assistant bookkeeper," said the young man at the door.

"Can you keep a day book?" asked the merchant.

"I—I'm afraid not, sir," faltered the applicant. "I only attended night school."

Helping Hand.

"I am awfully poor, you know," began the smitten young man, "but—"

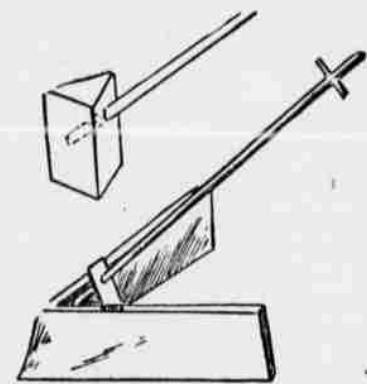
"Well," interrupted the frigid-hearted heiress, "I'm willing to help you along in the world. Here's a nickel to pay your car fare home."



Hand Plow for Snow.

When there is such a quantity of ground to be cleared of snow as is found around the average farm home, something more than the ordinary snow shovel is needed. If the snow is deep and the space to be cleared considerable, then one should bring into use a large plow with the horse to pull it. For a hand plow nothing is better than the simple one made in the following manner:

Select two pieces of board free from knots, each three feet long and six inches wide. Bevel the end of each board and nail them together in the form of a V. If necessary they may be braced at the wide end by a strip three inches wide and the necessary length. Then put in a pole five feet long with a cross piece at the upper end. To strengthen the end in which the handle is inserted cut a block of wood as large as possible, and fit it



SIMPLE HAND PLOW FOR SNOW.

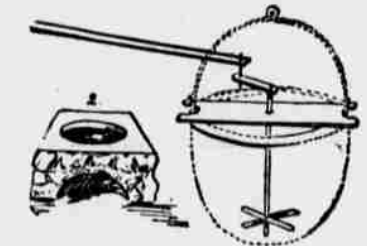
in the end where the two pieces of board join.

This will make it easier to insert the handle firmly and will make the side pieces stronger as well. The small cut in the upper part of the illustration shows clearly how this block of wood should be formed and the handle inserted to get the best results.

Stirring Cooking Food.

Where more or less food for stock is cooked, some handy way of stirring it ought to be devised. Of course, the old-fashioned ladle, or the great wooden spoon, is always available, but if the quantity is large, to use these instruments means aching arms and shoulders. A stirrer which will save much labor is readily made in the following manner. Make a shaft of a strip of wood two inches thick and long enough so that it will extend three or four inches above the top of the kettle. At the bottom of this shaft make paddles by crossing two thin boards two or three inches wide.

Fasten a crank to the top of the shaft and to this crank fasten a pole, or not, as preferred. Then prepare a strip of board six or eight inches wide, bore a hole through the middle, through which to pass the shaft, match both ends to fit over the handle of the kettle and at one end fix a



TO STIR COOKING FOOD.

slide and a set screw to hold it in place. If the cooking of the food for stock is done away from the house, as it ought to be, one should build a fireplace of bricks and cement in which to set the kettle. The illustration shows both the fireplace, or pot, as suggested, and the plan for making the stirrer and it will be seen that it is comparatively easy to arrange the device as suggested—Indianapolis News.

Some Incubator Hints.

Do not turn the eggs for three days from beginning the hatch, nor after the nineteenth day.

Leave chicks in the incubator from twenty-four to thirty-six hours after they are hatched; they do not need feeding for at least thirty-six hours after they come from the shell. Nature has provided for their sustenance during this time.

Keep the temperature as near 103 degrees as possible, but do not worry if it runs up to 105 degrees, or as low as 90 for a short time. Watch the size of the lamp flame, and keep it as nearly the size that will produce the proper temperature as possible.

Do not open the egg chamber after the chickens begin to pip the shell, even if some chick seems to be having a hard time to get out. A chick that cannot get out of the shell without help is not worth saving. If the chicks gasp and struggle, do not bother them—it is good for them.

See that the incubator sets perfectly level, otherwise the egg chamber will be warmer in one place than another.

Use only the best oil, and feed and trim the lamp every morning, no matter how long it might burn without doing this.

Open the egg chamber only when turning the eggs. Take the eggs out to turn them, and shut the egg chamber while they are out. Let the eggs cool for from ten to thirty minutes, according to the weather, every day.

The Mortgage Paid.

We ain't havin' many luxuries, like city folkses do.

We ain't wearin' all the latest styles an' all our clothes ain't new;

Of our honesty and goodness we ain't makin' no parade.

But we're havin' all we want to eat an' got the mortgage paid.

We ain't pilin' up a fortune for the boys to fight about.

When our last day's work is over an' we're steppin' down an' out,

But it's good to have succeeded in the effort that we made.

For to keep things runnin' smoothly an' to get the mortgage paid.

We have had our share of ups and downs, as other people do.

But we've tried to keep our spirits up when things were lookin' blue;

We'll be ready for the ending when the game of life is played.

For we've raised the children best we knew and got the mortgage paid.

—The Gentlewoman.

Sowing Peas in the Fall.

Market gardeners are familiar with all of the plans which will enable them to get crops on the market early. Near some of the large cities these men grow nothing but the early varieties of all classes, doing nothing with the mid-season and late sorts. Their plan of raising early peas is to prepare the ground in the fall just as thoroughly as they would in the spring, and just before the ground freezes hard they sow the very early hardy varieties, drilling them in not over two inches deep. Mulch is then put over them for the winter and as soon as the ground can be worked in the spring, cultivation begins, as if the seeds were spring sown. The result is generally a very early crop that brings the highest market price. The plan is worth a trial by any one located near a good market.

Smoking Meat Safely.

Take an old stove and lead the smoke through a long stove pipe, b, into a large box, a. Set the box a

little higher than the stove. Drive nails through the top of the box and bend them into hooks, c, to hang your meat. Make a small door in the side to put the

meat through. With a stove you can control your fire and it is also much safer.—Henry Nessen, in Farm and Home.

BOX SMOKE HOUSE.

Kill Off the Cabbage Lice.

Cabbage aphids is one of our worst cabbage pests. The lice multiply very rapidly when conditions favor them and are a source of great loss and annoyance. They may be killed only by insecticides that smother, or kill by contact; ordinary poisons have no effect on plant lice. Kerosene emulsion diluted with 10 parts of water, applied thoroughly to the lower side of the leaves when cabbage plants are small, is effective in a measure. Fumigating seed stocks in spring with carbon bisulphide gets rid of the original brood. The pest is nasty and should be treated wherever found.—Farm and Home.

Road Dust for the Hennyery.

Collect a few barrels of dry earth, road dust, fine dry dirt in the cornfield or potato patch, or anywhere that is most convenient. This is a handy thing to have in the fall and winter for sprinkling under the roosts and on the floor of the poultry house. It absorbs ammonia, keeps down smells, and keeps things ship-shape. It will pay to attend to this when it can be so easily done. It costs but little and is a real advantage.

Sheep Shearings.

The way to keep ideal sheep is by trying to improve them.

Sheep are always improving or they are deteriorating.

Stationary troughs and racks are not desirable in the sheep stable.

Ewes will produce larger and better lambs if in plump condition at time of mating.

At weaning, if possible, the ewes should be placed in a field out of hearing of the lambs.

An uneven lot of good sheep are better than an uneven lot of poor ones.

It is well to place the ewes on short pasture for a week or more after the lambs are weaned.

In fattening sheep especially, punctuality in feeding should be strictly observed.

In many cases, after the corn is laid by, the sheep may be turned into the cornfield to good advantage.

Sheep are easily managed, are first-class fertilizing machines, good farm scavengers and yield two harvests annually.