

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

Maruscha sheds tears when she speaks of Ivan, and they flow again when she tells me of her secret preparations and flight from home. Ah, what she has suffered!

"May God forgive me the deception!" she cries remorsefully; "I dared not tell them about thee, and had to invent an excuse to get away. I pretended to have received an invitation from a school friend. They think I am with her now."

She hangs her head and seems to ruminate. Presently she observes, "Vladimir, I cannot see that I did wrong. It is said 'Thou shalt leave father and mother and cleave to thy husband.'"

She lifts her face to me, and a look of solemn and ineffable devotion comes into it, before which my spirit falls prostrate. It is so much more than I deserve. I strain her to my heart.

"True, my precious wife."

"And thou needest me, Vladimir; thou hast no one now but me."

"Only thee, and yet everything. My all in all."

There is a pause. A great contentment shines in her eyes that for a space entirely occupies her. Then she requests, "Now tell me all that has befallen thee since we parted in St. Petersburg."

I begin from the moment I tore myself from her embrace, and relate everything down to the hour I met her at the station. Though my recital is often interrupted—sometimes Maruscha breaks into sobs, and I am fain to stop and comfort her. Sometimes she is shaken with hysterical laughter, or utters exclamations of horror, surprise and thankfulness.

After all is told, she must see me in my clerical disguise. When I appear before her in my flowing kaftan, beard and curled locks, she makes the room resound with her merry laughter, so that Rosen enters on us unawares. He joins in her merriment, while I parade before them until they have enough of it. On returning to them, reinvigorated in my citizens' garb, Rosen holds toward me his watch.

"Yes, yes, I know," I respond, with a sigh of regret. "All good things come to an end most rapidly, and I must go."

Yet one good thing comes to me; ah, how good, how precious a thing it is! The crown and seal of this eventful day! It is the voluntary kiss Maruscha bestows on me at the door, which glows on my lips and in my heart as I hurry along the lighted streets.

CHAPTER XXI.

Maruscha has quite put my nose out with my patient. The old man, metaphorically, went down before her, when her radiant face first shone on him a week ago. Though he submits to a little superintendence on my part, I am otherwise superfluous. It is "Molly" (as he calls her) to whom he looks to dress his wound, to shake up his pillows, to read to him the news, and beguile the tedium of his couch with talk. Thus he monopolizes her day.

"That young woman of yours is a treasure; she is worth her weight in gold, Alexander," he said. "It is to be hoped you will make much of her when you get her."

As if I am a likely man to use Maruscha or any woman badly! But it is natural; the English sometimes beat their wives! How long is this to last, I wonder? I am like a third wheel to a cart. I sit apart here at the window staring into the street, and sometimes at Maruscha, though never an answering glance comes my way. She is reading the "share list" to him from the newspaper. Now he stops her.

"Read that item again, Molly, my dear," he says.

And she repeats the figures, which I know convey no meaning to her. In spite of my vexation, I must confess that it is attractive to hear her silvery tongue pronouncing the hissing English. No wonder he keeps her at it.

At last she has got to the end of the column, and I detect a faint, stifled sigh of relief as she lays the paper on her lap.

"Thank you, my dear. Now, would you mind hoisting this cushion a bit so that I can sit upright? There! Bless you, what a pair of hands the small woman has, to be sure! Now, be off with you and take a look at the shops. I want to have some talk with that young man of yours."

Is it possible? Can I hear aright? He is actually sending Maruscha away! She may well look surprised. Like myself she can scarcely believe the evidence of her ears. She rises very slowly, and says:

"I hope you do not think that I am tired already, Mr. Gough. I have not read to you the 'leader' yet. Do you really wish me to go?"

"Yes, go your ways for an hour. We will have the 'leader' when you come back. I have something to say to the doctor. Don't be offended, my dear; it is on a matter of business."

I regard her gloomily. The more so because of Mr. Gough's open admiration. He is completely turning her head.

"Eh, but she's a rare smart lass," he exclaims. "You're a lucky chap, Alexander."

Maruscha smiles, well pleased, though she protests.

"Fie, you flatter, Mr. Gough! And look how Vladimir is vexed! He thinks you spoil me."

She darts on me a mischievous glance. I force a smile because Mr. Gough is looking at me. I fear it is a poor attempt. He is laughing as I leave the

room to accompany Maruscha to the street.

"I am beginning to detest that Englishman, Maruscha!" I say, savagely, when we are in the corridor. "And may I be hanged if I go back to him at present! I will go with thee."

"Indeed thou must not, Vladimir. How canst thou think of being so rude? What ails thee? Thou art always cross now."

"How long has this wretched old man to continue to monopolize all thy time and thoughts? It is preposterous. Save in fetching thee to and fro, we have never an hour to ourselves. Is it fair, I ask thee?"

"I thought to do thee pleasure—to forward thy interests, in showing a little attention to thy patient, Vladimir. And this is what I get," she plaints. "Alas, I cannot please thee."

There is a stir of compunction in my breast. Yet am I aware that for some unfathomable woman's reason she has been willfully tormenting me all these days, notwithstanding that she turns on me the most innocent and guileless eyes, and assumes the air of an injured martyr. It is a strange mystery, this feminine habit of tormenting the loved one. Maruscha has ever done so with me, whom I know she loves with all her heart and soul.

"Thou hast not tried to please me, Maruscha," I say, severely. "Thou hast tried to torment me after thy manner and thou hast succeeded. But go not too far; it is enough. Let be now."

We have gained the outer steps, where is bustle of strangers arriving. There is no place for further parley, so I content myself with pressing her hand and whispering with a glance of deprecation, "Be kind."

She replies nothing, but I carry back with me to the Englishman's room the remembrance of a pair of blue eyes, in which compassion and reproach are beautifully blended.

My mood is wonderfully subdued when I enter, and I take the seat to which Mr. Gough motions me at the foot of his couch, with something akin to meekness.

"Now, Doctor, I want to talk to you about yourself," he begins, briskly. "You have already been very frank with me and told me about the precious mess you've got yourself into in Russia. Well, you know my opinion of that; you've made a fool of yourself and, worse than that, you've acted criminally."

I draw myself up with dignity. "Excuse me, sir," I interpose, "but I neither want the censure nor the applause of any man living regarding that action in my past life. In making you acquainted with it, I merely wished to avoid coming into relations with a stranger who seemed disposed to place confidence in me, under false pretensions. And I beg—"

"Just so, my man," he interrupts, putting his hand on my arm. "That's what I like about you. You were fair and square with me, and though I highly disapprove—"

I make an impatient movement, and am about to speak.

"Well, well, I'll say no more. 'Mum' is the word both now and hereafter," he breaks in hastily, "especially as you already know my sentiments. And what I wanted to ask you was this. Have you any plans for the future? You are engaged to this very nice young woman who has no one to look to but you, and you'll have to marry her at once."

"Mr. Gough!" I thunder, boiling over with indignation at what I consider most impertinent interference.

"Bless my soul, you needn't fire up that way. What I say is correct; isn't it?"

"Yet no concern of yours, sir," I retort.

"But I'm making it my concern. And I'll do it, whether you like it or not. Molly's a fine lass—far too good for you. And I want to see her settled with a home over her head. Now, don't fly off again—as I half rise to my feet. 'Bottle up that fizz' and listen to me. I mean well by you, and you know you can't afford to show temper like that."

What this blunt, rough fellow says is true; I have no reason to be proud, nor can I afford it. Though his manner is so offensive, he means well. I compose myself, and look attentive.

"There, that's better," he says, with an approving nod. "Now we can proceed to business. You know who I am, if you have not forgotten. I am a mill owner and 'hang out' at 'New Mills' in Lancashire. I am proud to say that I am a self-made man, and give work to about two thousand men. We require a doctor—have done so for some time past, only I was loth to lay the old chap off, fearing to hurt his feelings; and now my manager writes to me this morning that he is down with gout. So I have resolved to pension him, and if you'll have the berth you're welcome to it. I give five hundred a year for the job, and there's a bit of practice to be picked up in the neighborhood besides."

"But—but, you do not mean to say," I stammer, "that you offer me this—this very excellent post without any credentials? How do you know that I am not an impostor?"

"My man, I know what I am about. I have seen all the credentials I require, and without them I engage no man. You showed me them when you told me those private matters, which shall henceforth be nameless. I never asked your confidence, and you volunteered it, though it was against your interests to do so, because you are an honest man and have a conscience. Leave me alone for knowing good stuff when I see it, and looking after my own interests in trying

to secure it. I want a young, active, energetic doctor for my people. I suppose the lass had better be consulted. The women folk like to have their finger in the pie, and it's well to humor them. You can follow your own counsel all the same."

"And as to Maruscha, she will be overjoyed," I cry. "No need to wait to consult her; I know her mind, and I accept your generous offer. Believe me, it will be my anxiety to prove myself worthy of your confidence, sir."

"Say no more. I know that. Shake hands on it, man, and good luck to you."

CHAPTER XXII.

The transaction is concluded, leaving me in a state of elation which it is beyond me to describe. To sit still and wait for Maruscha's return with calmness is impossible to me. I wander about the room like a caged hyena. Mr. Gough occupies himself with the perusal of his business letters, and seems to have forgotten my existence. I am startled when he suddenly calls to me.

"How about the splicing, Doctor? You must see that it's got to be done at once. Since we've settled this business matter, and you've got a job to go to, the sooner the knot is tied the better. Get a special license, and be married at an English church, like Christians, and I'll give Molly away, bless her. When you take me driving to-morrow to get the air, we might just as well drive to the church as any other place. Eh? It would be killing two birds with one stone."

How he talks! Just as if Maruscha was a piece of furniture to be disposed of as we think fit. Yet, though I know it is vain imagining, how the mere suggestion sets my blood on fire. Maruscha, my wedded wife—mine wholly. My dove, tamed and domesticated, glad to turn and nestle in my bosom. No more audacious flights, leaving me to stretch out longing arms toward her. No more to see her flutter down almost within my grasp, and yet evade me. Ah, if it could be; but he little knows her whom he thinks to trap so easily! She is not to be caught, yet will she fly to me some bright day of her own accord, only she will take her time.

I hesitate so long seeking a reply that at length he asks: "What, are you timid about putting on the yoke?"

"It strikes me, sir, you have some wrong ideas about me," I say with dignity. "When I marry, it will be no yoke I put on, I assure you. It is my wife who will be subject to me, her husband, as is right and proper."

He laughs in a way I like not. "She keeps the whip hand now, at any rate," he mutters, and his remark rankles.

"You know not how to manage women," I respond loftily. "You must use them with a little diplomacy when you are courting them. They like to feel that they have not relinquished their liberty, and you allow them much latitude. You do not, therefore, drop the reins."

His queer old face, which looks as if it had been squeezed broadways, takes a queer expression. He puckers it up into wrinkles in the corners of his eyes and mouth and between his brows. His eyes shoot malicious and sly gleams at me.

"Then you will tighten the reins and drive with Molly to church to-morrow, since it has become necessary," he says. "You can get the license to-day."

"But—but I see not the necessity for such violent haste," I stammer. "If there were, Maruscha would not hesitate; as there is not, it would be impertinent on my part to ask it."

(To be continued.)

Origin of the Term "Spellbinder."

A New York attorney who left these perplexing scenes but recently for scenes which, if less perplexing, need not be more interesting, was the author of the word "spellbinder." This gentleman's name was McCaskie. The word "spellbinder" came into use when he was chairman of the county committee of the city of New York.

The different speakers under the employ of his committee were in the habit of reporting the meetings which they had attended. These speakers were anxious to boom their stock with their manager, hence they would frequently say, among other things, "Oh, I bound them with a spell," or "I kept them spellbound." The reports of the majority of the speakers agreed in this particular. The manager, knowing the ground and motive of their self-laudatory reports, grew tired of them.

One evening one of the Ciceros, more modest than the rest, came in. His name was, and still is, "Jake" Kemple. Upon seeing him, McCaskie inquired of him, "Well, how did you do out there to-night?"

"Oh, just fairly well," replied Mr. Kemple.

Mr. McCaskie looked surprised. Then he said, "Mr. Kemple, I shall raise your salary. I am sick of these 'spellbinders.'"

The reporters immediately got hold of the word. Ever since then (1888) the word "spellbinder" has been in vogue.—Woman's Home Companion.

Just the Thing.

Weary Walker—What keep' yer so long? Did she give yer anything?

Ragson Tatters—Yeh, she gimme a pie, an' I tell yer it wuz just the thing.

Weary Walker—Honest?

Ragson Tatters—Sure. De upper crust come in handy ter mend de soles o' dese ole shoes o' mine.—Philadelphia Ledger.

It Would Seem So.

Him—What I value above everything else is my peace of mind.

Her—Well, I don't blame you.

Him—What do you mean by that?

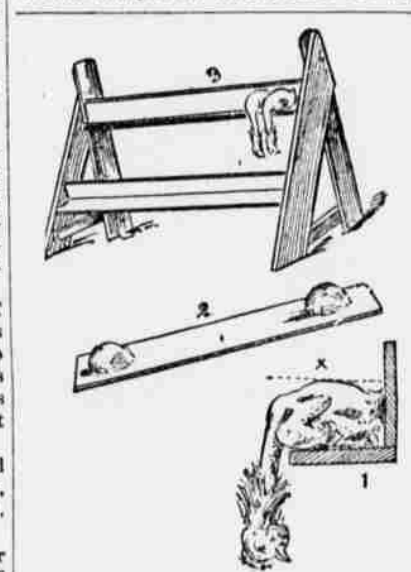
Her—One naturally values a thing of which he has but a small piece.



Fowls For Market.

While the main consideration to the consumer is that the fowl should be reasonably plump and properly picked, the large city merchants demand certain things in the way of packing which the poultry raiser must carry out if he would be successful in such markets. One of the things is that the fowls be "shaped" before they are packed, and while this process makes a form that is not particularly pleasing, it is, perhaps, better than the misshapen fowls which would result if they were placed in boxes or barrels without any sign of packing. To make a shaper, first build a frame and then in this frame construct two troughs, each ten feet long. These troughs are constructed by nailing together two boards, seven-eighths of an inch thick and six inches wide, at right angles.

After plucking the fowls, lay the carcasses in the trough, with the heads hanging down, the legs alongside the breast and the breast downward. By gentle pressure force the carcass down into the angle of the trough. Cover each carcass with oiled paper; then have an inch board six inches wide to lay on the carcasses, and weight this board down with a brick or heavy stone at either end. As the carcass of the bird is slipped under the board, move the lower brick or stone to obtain the weight. The carcasses should be kept in this position for six or seven hours, and they will then be shaped and ready for packing in crates. The illustration shows the construction of this shaper in detail, and, as will



FOWL READY FOR MARKET.

be seen, any handy man can construct it readily.—Indianapolis News.

Egg Facts.

In order to furnish more definite information about the poultry business Secretary Wilson recently directed one of his men to get together all the facts available regarding the subject. The results of this inquiry present some surprising facts. According to the latest available tables, the value of all fowls on farms is \$85,734,000. About \$15,000,000 is deducted from this sum to represent the fowls under the age of three months, so that the balance embraces the stock that is kept for breeding and laying. The estimated number of chickens in the country is 250,000,000, producing for market in one year poultry worth \$126,000,000 and eggs worth \$144,000,000, a total value of about \$280,000,000. This represents an income of 40 per cent.

Use For Old Axes.

Cast-off axes can be made useful, as shown in the cut. The best use for this tool is for loading and unloading ties off a truck. It will save a lot of heavy lifting and tugging. A slight blow will sink it in.

MADE OVER AX. To a tie. The part shown by dotted line, is cut out, while the remaining part is hammered out and pointed. I am a blacksmith by trade, and made twenty-five of these useful implements last winter.—W. B. Kelley, in Farm and Home.

Sheep Notes.

Feed only what the sheep will eat up clean.

Divide the flock according to age, size and sex.

A well-growing and vigorous condition in the sheep is best for wool growing.

Following the careful selection in buying and judicious breeding come the factors of care and feed.

Wool is very nitrogenous, and to grow a good fleece of wool with a strong fiber and of good quality, feed something rich in nitrogen.

Sheep are rustlers, gleaners, scavengers and quarterly dividend payers, for they give you wool, lambs and mutton.

Arrange to afford the ewes plenty of opportunity to exercise.

Feed the fleece and at the same time feed the body which is to produce it.

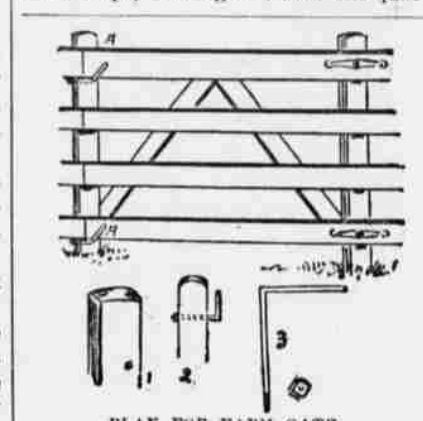
The foods which conduce most to bodily growth will make the best wool.

Don't buy a ram unless he has a good length of wool on his belly and legs.

In order to get a good fleece the sheep must be kept in a vigorous condition.

Making a Farm Gate.

When a gate is of considerable length, as farm gates must be to let a wagon pass through, there is always danger that they will sag, and mainly because the device used for the latch is faulty. Try the following plan of constructing a latch and see if it does not work well: Have the blacksmith bend a piece of half-inch round iron in L shape, making one arm one-quarter



PLAN FOR FARM GATE.

ter of an inch longer than the thickness of the post and the gate-board; the other arm should be about ten inches long. Bore a hole through the post under the board near the edge of the post, put the threaded end of the bent iron through and screw on the nut. Have the same arrangement at the lower part of the gate. When the gate is to be closed, turn the bar so that it will not be in the way and so when the gate is closed it will rest on the bar. Then turn the bar back so that the upright piece will be in position over the board. If, after a while, the bar works too readily, a nail may be placed in position, against which the bar will rest when it is turned.

The illustration, with the drawn details, shows the whole plan in such a clear manner that anyone can construct such a gate and attach the latches.

Measuring Corn in Crib.

The common practice is to call two bushels of corn on the cob a bushel of shelled corn. This is not strictly correct, and in some States the legal bushel of ears is seventy pounds. But assuming that two bushels make but one, it will be easy to multiply the length, breadth and height of the crib in inches and thus get the number of cubic inches it contains. Then divide this by 2,150, the number of cubic inches in a bushel, and you have the number of bushels of ears. This divided by two will give you the approximate shelled corn. Another rule is that two cubic feet of dry corn on the cob will make a bushel of shelled corn. Then measure the length, breadth and height of the crib and divide these cubic feet by two to get bushels of shelled corn. These two methods will give a wide difference, for in a crib measuring twenty feet long, ten feet high and ten feet wide there should be by the first method a little over 800 bushels, while by the last method there would be 1,000 bushels. We do not believe that either method is perfectly accurate, and that the true measure lies between the two, the first being too small and the last too large.—St. Louis Republic.

Loss in Cured Fodder.

It has been found at the Ontario Experiment Station that the smallest necessary loss in curing occurs when the corn is fairly well matured and well cured, and contains not less than 30 to 35 per cent of dry matter. For clover the results indicate that 28 to 32 per cent of dry matter is better than a lower or higher per cent. Corn well matured and just in the glazing stage with the leaves still green is in the proper condition for the silo, and clover in full bloom, or a trifle past, and in good condition for hay, but not too dry, is the proper stage for this.

English Wheat.

The wheat crop of England is the smallest on record, surpassing even the previous lowest record of 1835. The trouble is not wholly due to an unfavorable season, but is the result of the steady shrinkage in acreage caused by the land being used for other crops.

Great Cranberry Marsh.

The largest cranberry marsh in the world is to be located in Burnett County, Wis. It will cover 4,000 acres. The tract is along the east bank of the St. Croix, extending from Norway Point, fifteen miles southeast of Hineley, to near the mouth of Crooked creek, twenty miles east of Hineley. It is about eight miles in length, and is from half a mile to two miles in width. The nearest point of the completed marsh will be within twelve miles of Grantsburg, Wis.—Exchange.