

# FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

## DMITRY. A RUSSIAN STORY.

**W**E were on our way to Moscow, Arthur Crabtree and I. We had met in Belgium, and as it was tedious traveling alone, I accepted his proffered company; besides, of course, if he chose to run the risk of having his nose frozen off, he had a perfect right to do so. So behold us, well enveloped in cloaks and furs, giving our fingers and toes a final warming at the little station of Z— while we waited for our sledge and post-driver to make their appearance.

By and by the master of the station put his head in at the door. "Ivan is waiting, most worthy and excellent sir." Not knowing my name or rank, and determined to give me some title, these good people called me "worthy," "excellent," and "respectable" so continually that I began to entertain quite a high idea of my own character.

"Come, Crabtree," I said cheerfully, and we hastened out into the little courtyard, where our black, coffin-like sledge was standing, with a strong little horse harnessed to it.

There was a busy hurrying to and fro, and a jingle and clang of sharp-toned bells. Our little horse had a half-hoof over its neck, and the bells, which were large and loud, hung in this and swung and sounded their sharp notes with every toss of his shaggy mane.

The driver finally came, pulling his fur cap down over his head, and just as we came out he tucked a pair of pistols into his belt and off we started.

"What are those pistols for, Ivan?"

"For the wolves, most respectable, sir," he said, with a grave smile.

"Wolves!" ejaculated Crabtree, with a start.

"Yes, wolves, little gentleman," said Ivan. "But perhaps we shall see none. That is as the good saints will. Still, it is best to be ready."

Sometimes we met another sledge, and Ivan would speak a word or two to the driver.

"There have been no wolves seen this far, worthy sir. Those traders have come through from Moscow."

Presently a handsome sledge, drawn by two fine horses, dashed past us. Ivan drew his little horse humbly out of the way. The gentleman all wrapped up in furs in the back seat bowed courteously as he was whisked by.

"That is Prince D—ch," said Ivan. "He owns all the land here. He is very good. There was something he did once that you might like to hear."

"There was once a post-driver who, with his wife and son, lived in a small house near the station we have just passed. In summer he drove a droshky and in winter a sledge between his village and the station some twelve versts (about eight miles) farther on. Well, he was fond of talking, and as he could talk very well, and was quite amusing to listen to, his friends and neighbors were always getting him to deliver speeches about this thing and that thing, and because he must sometimes have something new, he—poor man—often said a great many things which he did not mean. So one day he said something about the Czar, and a government official was there and heard it, and the next day Dmitry was arrested and taken off to Moscow, with a guard on each side of him.

"His wife cried bitterly as she watched them past the turn of the road, but her son, Dmitry the younger, said cheerily, 'Do not cry, mother; father will soon be back, and in the meantime we have Feodor, the pony, and I can drive the droshky as well as my father—yes, and a sledge, too.'

"So the mother dried her eyes, and the next day Dmitry took his father's place at the post station. Dmitry's travelers would sometimes say, 'Why, Dmitry was a big man with a long beard,' and then the boy would say, 'That was my father, good sirs, and I am here for a time in his place. And every one who rode with him praised his careful driving and the strength and spirit of Feodor, the little pony. However tired Dmitry was, he always found time to attend well to Feodor, and whenever he could he brought him a treat of salt fish.'

"Salt fish!" cried my friend Crabtree, incredulously.

"Russian horses are very fond of salt fish, little—"

I hurried to interrupt Ivan before he could finish the obnoxious term.

"What a strange taste! But go on, Ivan."

"It was all very well for Dmitry in the summer, when the roads were good. But when winter comes," said the old post-driver, "we will see what happens."

"But with the first snow out came Dmitry's sledge. The robes were all shaken out and the bells were shining, and Feodor was pawing the snow and snorting, as if saying, 'Here we are, you see, all ready for winter, just as soon as any of you.'

"Every morning Dmitry presented himself in good time, and each night when Feodor was led back to his stable every one said the boy had well earned his day's wages."

"Well, one night a traveler came to the post station who said he was the secretary of Prince D—ch and had despatches for him which he must carry through that night."

"The master of the station shook his head. The snow had been falling all afternoon, and the tracks were filled up. It was so dark, too, no one could find the road if it was once lost, which it would be in the first half-hour, the master said."

"But it must be done!" said the secretary. "Call up the men and tell them that the one who takes me to the residence of the prince to-night shall have anything he asks me for."

"But the men shook their heads. No, it was impossible. They would lose the road and then the wolves would get them."

"The secretary was so angry he stamped his feet and cried out: 'Cowards! Is there no one here with a man's soul in his body?' Then Dmitry stepped out into the light."

"I will take you, Sir Secretary."

"But the master pulled the boy back."

"No, no, Dmitry! Think of your mother, who has no one now but you—think!"

"The boy shook himself free. I am thinking, Stepanof, and we can do it well enough. Feodor has only gone five versts to-day and is as fresh as ever."

"The secretary turned to the master: 'Can the child drive?'

"As well as any one, but—"

"That is enough! Then, turning to Dmitry:

"Be ready in a quarter of an hour. I will leave my man here, so your horse will have a light weight. It is eight versts to the next station, and five more to the residence of the prince. Can you do it?"

"We can, Sir Secretary," and Dmitry hurried off to get Feodor ready.

"Two of the men followed him, and one offered him a cloak and the other gave him a knife. 'You may need it, Dmitry,' he said gloomily. But the boy only laughed.

"It is too cold for the wolves to-night, isn't it, Feodor?" and the little horse whinnied softly in reply.

"The secretary was standing in the door, wrapped in his long cloak. He jumped into the sledge without a word, and in a moment they were off. Dmitry waved his hand to old Stepanof, who stood shaking his head after them.

"Oh, how cold it was, and how the snow drifted in their faces! The secretary pulled up the collar of

Dmitry, thinking of Feodor's pleasure.

"Come, now," and the secretary half carried the boy into the room. He called the host, and soon some bread and sausage, and a steaming kettle of tea, were placed on the table.

"Here, drink and eat," said the secretary, pushing the things toward Dmitry.

"He drank a glass of the scalding tea thirstily, and by and by began to eat.

"The secretary, walking up and down the room, watched him kindly, but anxiously. 'What a sturdy, faithful spirit!' he said to himself. 'The prince ought to have him.'

"Presently, when he saw the boy had finished, he said briskly:

"Well, Dmitry, shall we go on again?"

"Dmitry rose quickly. 'I am ready!'

"That's right—deeds, not words," said the secretary, laughing, and in a few minutes they were off

"Only to see the prince! That is easily done, for he has requested me to bring you to him," said the secretary; "but come, now, what will you have for yourself?"

"Only to see the prince," said Dmitry, softly.

"Well, come, then, you odd child," and the secretary led him through room after room, till they came to one where the prince, in a fur-lined dressing-gown, sat at breakfast.

"There is the prince," said the secretary. "Now, if you have anything to say, say it!"

"Dmitry hurried forward and threw himself at the feet of the prince, who was smilingly regarding him. 'My father—' he gasped, then burst into loud sobs. The prince kindly raised him, and then he told how long he had hoped for a chance to plead for his father, who had been now two years in prison—for saying what he did not mean," sobbed Dmitry. He told of his mother's prayers and tears, of the lonely home, of the hope, that had sustained him all the previous night, that if he could only see the prince all would yet be well.

"The prince and his secretary exchanged looks of sympathy; and then, raising the child, who had again thrown himself at his feet, the prince promised that if his influence could do it his father should be free.

"And now," said Ivan, "Dmitry the elder is master of the post station yonder, and the young man

you saw driving the prince's sledge just now is the boy who risked his life to win his father's pardon. Now, worthy and most excellent sirs, here is the station. This is as far as I go; you will get another driver here."

Ivan bade us good-by with many smiles and bows, and we stumbled into the warm little room at the station as fast as our half-frozen feet would let us.

In came the host with his kettle of tea, and Crabtree immediately scalded his mouth with it—he had done that regularly at every station at which we had stopped.

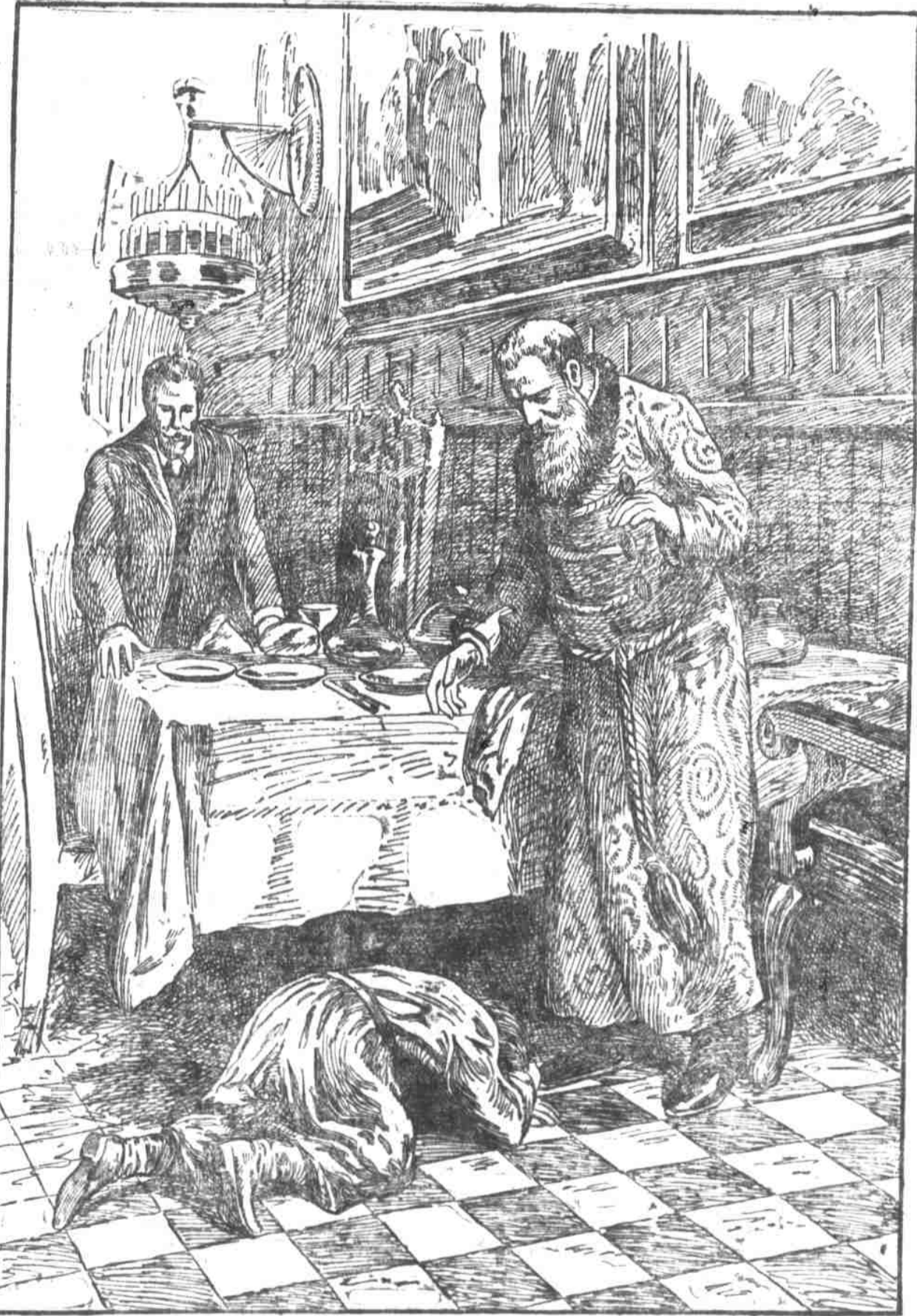
"How long will you remain here, most worshipping gentlemen?" asked the host, with a twinkle in his eyes as he saw poor Crabtree's disturbed face. "It will soon snow," and he gave a careless glance at the sky.

"Can you give us a good room?"

"Excellent, worthy gentlemen, and to-morrow you will have the best horse between this place and Moscow."

"Well, Crabtree, what do you say? It does look like snow, and—"

"And I smell something awfully good out there," said Crabtree, whose burned mouth permitted him to speak again. "Let us stay, by all means. We don't care to play Dmitry and the secretary to-night, at all events."



"DMITRY HURRIED FORWARD AND THREW HIMSELF AT THE FEET OF THE PRINCE"

his cloak and loosened the pistols in his belt.

"Boy, are you sure you know the way?"

"No, Sir Secretary," said Dmitry, modestly; "I cannot be sure in this storm; but I know Feodor knows the way."

"The secretary shrugged his shoulders. 'I was mad to attempt it,' he muttered.

"Colder and darker grew the night. The secretary dozed sometimes. Feodor's bells jingled slowly; it was heavy work, drawing the sledge through the unbroken snow. But whenever the secretary waked, there was Dmitry snapping himself to keep from freezing, or talking cheerily to the pony. He always seemed alert and wide awake, so by and by the secretary forgot that he was not in his own comfortable bed, and he fell fast asleep.

"He was waked by the stopping of the sledge. Lights were moving about, and Dmitry was saying: 'We are at the station, Sir Secretary. Do you wish for anything?'

"The secretary jumped out, yawning and stretching himself.

"Have you been awake all the time, child?"

"All the time, sir."

"How have you managed it?"

"Dmitry smiled, and drew the knife one of the men had given him out of his belt. 'Sometimes I was forgetting; then see'—showing up his sleeve and showing small pricks in his arm.

"We will stay here half an hour," shouted the secretary, "if all the despatches in the dominion wait. Some of you fellows rub down this horse. Shall he have something to eat?" he asked Dmitry.

"Some salt fish, please, Sir Secretary," said

again.

"On, on into the stormy night. Feodor shook the snow out of his eyes and plodded steadily forward.

"They were nearing the residence of the prince. The secretary was wide awake now. Sometimes Feodor would stop and snort, as if to say, 'Where now?' Then Dmitry would turn to the secretary, and after a few words Feodor would trot on again.

"At last the great gates were reached. The secretary sprang out and rang a bell which they heard clattering and clanging a long way off. Lights moved to and fro, voices talking, and presently the gates opened, and the secretary walked into the courtyard, followed by poor, tired little Feodor, with steaming sides and drooping head, his half-frozen little master still holding the reins.

"A splendid personage in velvet and gold lace hurried out to meet them.

"His Highness has been expecting you anxiously, Sir Secretary, he said, bowing low, but had given up all hope, the night being so stormy."

"I would never have reached here had it not been for this child," said the secretary, lifting Dmitry to the ground. "Take him and treat him well!"

"But Feodor—" murmured Dmitry, half asleep.

"His Highness's own groom shall see to Feodor," said the secretary, beckoning to one of the men. "Feodor is the best little horse I ever saw." And Dmitry went off well pleased.

"Next morning the secretary sent for the boy.

"Well, my young friend, now what reward shall I give you for last night's work?"

"The boy's face flushed. 'Only to see the prince, Sir Secretary,' he said huskily.

**'KNOWLEDGE AT COLLEGE.'**

By ANNA N. BENJAMIN

There came a young freshman to college. When he heard that he had to get knowledge, He said, 'Goodness me! Why, how can this be?— What a queer thing to do at a college!'

**The Snake Charmers Tune.**

There's a tune," said a sly Bengalese. Which will charm any snake that you please: Take a long, heavy stick, Hit the snake with it—quick!

Then proceed with the tune at your ease.

P.S.—You can't play it on a piano!

JOHN BENNETT