THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW. By SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

Continued from First Page

lantern, and the chill wind came mouning through the cracks and crevices in the decaying masonry.

"There," spoke one of the guides as he set his lantern upon the top of a broken column. "We will stop here."

The words were spoken in a sort of hushed, unmerciful tone, and Ruric felt them strike fearfully upon him. He gazed upon the man who had spoken, and he saw that he was preparing to throw off his pe-lisse, which he had thus far worn. As soon as this was off he moved to where his companion stood and I mean to do as near right as I commenced whispering.

Could Ruric mistake longer? What reason but one could there Oh, when poor mortals do as near have been for bringing him to such right as lies in their power, surely a place? To the left, where the ba- they may leave the rest with God sin had once emptied itself, there was a dark, deep, cavelike place, at the mouth of which a heap of rubbish had collected. What a place in which to hide a dead body! So thought Ruric. But he was startled ness and he is sin itself?" from the dark reverie by a darker reality.

he spat upon the other.

You will not murder me here in cold blood !" uttered Ruric, starting should she reconcile this apparent The stout ruffian clutched the cy and justice?

who never harmed you? Hold! If mankind, and not a single law of all

way. You've got to die, and the sooner you go the sooner you'll get over it. You won't suffer a bit if fering which is now come upon me you don't go to kicking up a fuss. There, now. If you hadn't bothered me 'twould have been all over by "Ah," cried Zenobie eagerly, "but this time."

Oh, what would Ruric have given at that moment for the use of one of his arms! But that was beyond praying for. Yet he had his feet. He said nothing more, but he allow-ed the man to come within a few yards of him, and then he prepared for the only means of defense he had. The huge club was raised, and at that moment Ruric saw that the other man aba had a club. He other man also had a club. He nature, and through that part of en con-

15

"My dear mistress," urged the faithful Zenobic, throwing her arms about Rosalind's neck and drawing her head upon her bosom, "weep no more. Oh, there must be some hope! Surely God will not suffer such an unholy work to be done." "Ah, Zenobie," returned the fair maiden in a fluttering, melancholy

tone, "where can I look for hope?" "I say in God. You have told me we must look to him, and I have believed you. Have you not always been good to God?"

"I have been as good as I knew now, though 1 have sinned." "How sinned? Oh, my mistress,

if you have sinned, then who is pure? Tell me." "We all sin, Zenobic. It is our

nature."

"So I have often heard, but I hardly think you have sinned. What have you done which you knew to be wrong?"

"Nothing, nothing."

"Then how have you sinned?" "Ah, Zenobie, we all do things which we ought not to do. But yet

can. "Then leave the rest with God. without fear. 'And now, if God is just, as you tell me, why should he allow the wicked duke to triumph

Rosalind was puzzled. She had tried to teach her attendant to love One of the men had taken a the a long, heavy bludgeon which the youth had not before seen, and was all the principles of Christianity and embraced them gladly and joyfully. But now how should make this point understood? How injustice with God's universal mer-

"Speak! For God's sake answer me!" the prisoner exclaimed, start-ing back another pace. "Do you mean to murder me?"

"Why," answered the man with the club in a cool, offhanded man-ner, "since you are so anxious to know, I'll tell you. You will die within a minute!" "And will you take the life of one "And will you take the life of one "Stop!" interrupted the villain. "You can't argue us out of it in that

you are the one who suffers while another violates the law. In my at that moment for the use of one of case I did both and do not com-

"I don't know," murmured the

"Yes, I see."

her warmly. our nature come the sweetest of our

bad duke can reduce me, I would not

change places with him. You seem-ed to intimate that God would see me suffer and yet let the duke triumph. Triumph? Oh, Zenobie, for what would you have that man's heart in your bosom and his soul in your keeping?"

"I would rather die!" the girl cried, while a cold shudder ran through her frame.

"Then, you see, he does not go clear. Oh, how blind and simple are those who imagine there can be pleasure in sin !" This opened a new theme to Zeno-bie's mind, and she pondered upon it a long while. But by and by she came back to the theme from whence they had started, and in pur-

suance thereof she said: "My mistress, are you sure the duke will persist in this?" "Aye, Zenobie; I know he will," Rosalind answered, while the old shudder came back to her frame and the old grief to her soul.

"And have you no hope?" "Only one-in Ruric. He may help me." "Oh, I hope he can! He is a no-

Rosalind answered with a look of

gratitude, and Zenobie proceeded: ble than he? Oh, were I to choose a husband now and he was free and was in your position I'd choose-Rurie Nevel before all the emperors of earth."

"So would I," returned the fair maiden. "If I were a countess, as you are, ch, how I should love to make such

a man a count!" "But my marrying him would not make him a count. Were he a count and I like what he is now in station his marrying me would give me the title. But we poor women do not have that power." "Well, then, we should so much

more have the right to choose our own husbands." Rosalind made no oral answer, but her look showed that she sympathized with the sentiment.

"My mistress," at length spoke Zenobie again, this time in a low whisper, "why may we not leave this place ?"

Rosalind started as though she had heard the speech of a spirit, and for a moment a look of hope gleamed upon her face. But it quickly passed away.

"Alas, where should we go!" This was a part of the plan which Zenobie had not thought of, and ere she could make any reply one of the female domestics entered the apartment and announced that a woman wished to see her young mistress. Rosalind asked who it was, but the girl could only tell her that it was a middle aged woman and very good tooking. The young countess bade Zenobie go down and conduct her up. Ere long after-ward the attendant returned, and with her came Claudia Nevel. Rosalind had not seen the good woman for over a year, but she knew her at once, and, starting up from her seat, she bounded forward and embraced

"Ah, Aunt Claudia, I am glad you

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lain just as his companion had rais. sal, and if men break that law they ed his club. "What noise is that?"

"I suppose they're coming to see if wo've finished the job," returned the other, "and, by the saints, we from the effects of the law. Then I ought to have done it ere this. But they shall find it done?' should be a poor, lonesome outcast, forced to live all my days alone like they shall find it done!"

The ponderous club was raised albarren rock upon the top of some again, and, with a quick, decisive movement, the man advanced. Ru-ric made a movement of the body as though he would bow his head for the streke. Every nerve and muscle of his frame was set for the trial, suffer. Had God's intent been followed out there would have been no and for the instant his heart stood still. Quick as thought his body bent—his right knee was brought the duke sins. Do you understand bent-his right knee was brought almost to his chin-and then, with me?" all the force he could command, he planted his foot in the pit of the young girl dubiously. "But, see," resumed Rosalind. "You choose to exercise your social assassin's stomach. The effect was electrical. The wretch bent like a nature, and of your own accord you broken stick and sank down without mingle among your fellows. Do a single sign of life.

The second man uttered an oath you not see that thus you are enjoyand sprang forward with uplifted ing one of God's richest blessingsclub, but Ruric easily dodged the blow, and then, as the thought for and love?" the first time flashed upon his mind he darted to where the lantern stood and overturned it. He had noticed enjoyment?" "Yes, I see." an open passage close at hand which seemed to lead to some sort of a dressing room, and, guided by his memory alone, for it was now dark ns Erebus there, he glided swiftly into it. When he knocked over the

himself in a narrow apartment, the walls and floor of which were of stone and the roof of brick, the latter being arched. In one corner was a couch, and upon it were some old skins.

And here the youth was to be left. His guide simply pointed to the low couch and then turned away. Rurie asked a question, but it was not an-swered. In a few moments more the heavy door was closed upon him, and he was in total darkness. He sought the couch, and, with a deep groan, he sank down.

CHAPTER XII.

A CONFERENCE AND HOW IT WAS INTER-

derstand now ?" Rosalind Valdai and Zenobie were together in their sitting room, and thoughtfully. the former had been weeping. She looked paler than when we saw her before, and her brow was heavy. Smiles no longer crept about the subject to ills here. But look bedimples of her cheeks, and her eyes youd the grave, and how bright it is had a sad, mournful look. Her face with hope! I have a father and a plainly, showed that she had suffered mother there. Oh, in all my misery,

have come! You will let me call earthly enjoyments. Such a law-"Hark!" uttered the second vil- the law of sociality-must be univeryou aunt, as I did in those happy times long gone by ?" must suffer, and the only just way

"Aye, sweet Rosalind," returned the widow, imprinting a warm kiss upon the fair white brow. The countess noticed the strange

sadness of the woman's tone, and then, for the first time also, she noticed the sadness of her look. bleak mountain. But I would rath-

"Aunt Claudia, you look sad," she said, while a chill dread struck to her own heart.

"Aye," the widow uttered, as though she were afraid to venture the question she wished to ask; "I have been very sad because I have had a terrible fear. Has-has not Ruric been here?"

"Just then. Day before yesterday he was here-in the forenoon." "And I have not seen him since!" the poor woman groaned.

"Not seen him? Rurie gone? Oh, where, where ?" the blessing of sociality, friendship

Count Damonoff when he left here," interposed Zenobie, who joined in "Well, so far God is good in havthe grief. ing given you that power for such

"Ave; so he told me," returned the mother. "I have been there,

"Well, now, under that law, when my father and mother died I found tends the count went out to the inn a friend in the duke and here have found a home. But circumstances have changed. The duke has become wicked in thought-he wants

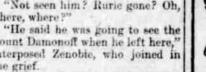
"O God, have mercy!" ejaculated more money-and he will prostitute a power which in obeyance of God's law would be good to my ruin. of grief.

At this moment there came a rap Now, God cannot save me without upon the door, and Zenobie went to pinom, morphine, chloroform or ether. rending to pieces one of his most powerful laws and one which is meant for a universal good. The moment he does that he destroys that principle of human dependence whence flow those most holy virtues of love, friendship and charity. He

must act by universal laws and not by partial rules and individual exceptions. So as long as I can enjoy the blessings of social life I must be subject to the evils of treachery and social wickedness. Do you not un-



"When?" uttered the maiden, catching the whole fear now. "Within these three days."



and they have not seen him since that evening. The surgeon who at-

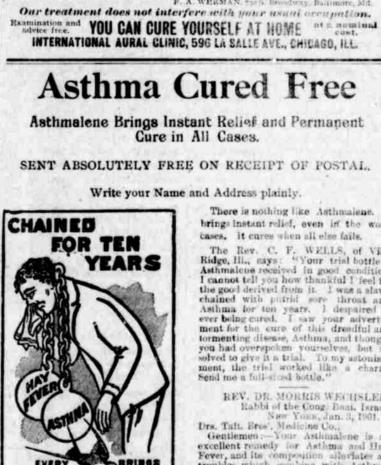
where Rurie put up his horse, and the animal was still there, his owner having not called for him."

the young counters in a paroxysm

answer the summons. It was the

and howing very low, "you will par-

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



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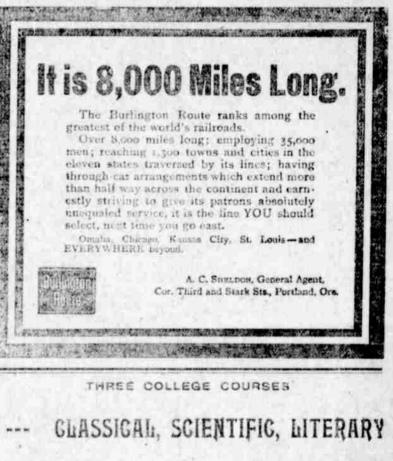
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black monk. Vladimir, who thus de-manded admittance. At any other time both Rosalind and Claudia might have been startled by the strange visit, but now they instinc-tively hailed his coming as a source of hope. "Ladies," spoke the fat monk, ap-proaching the spot where they stood and howing very low, "you will par-

nbject to the evils of treachery and ocial wickedness. Do you not un-erstand now?" "I see, I see," the girl murmured houghtfully. "Aye, Zenobie," the mistress add-"Aye, Zenobie," the mistress addday. This testimony you can make such use of as you see fit. S. RAPHAEL, Home address, 235 Rivington street, 67 East 129th st., City.

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