

# 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 this, 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, and that Rosa enters on us unawares. He joins in her merriment, while I parade before them until they have enough of it. On returning to them, reinvested in my citizens' garb, Rosa 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, whose 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 holding 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 mere 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.

"Pie, 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 detect 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 me from 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 for-

ward thy interests, in showing a little attention to thy patient, Vladimir. And this is what I get," she plains. "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 knew 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 a 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. I am 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 as 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—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 as it, man, and good luck to you."

## CHAPTER XXII.

The transaction is concluded, leaving me in a state of elation which 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 about 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 tumb 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 glances 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."

"It's best to get it to-day."

## NOT A GHOST, BUT A CAT.

It Was Walking on the Piano Keys in a scary way.

A Walbrook family was sitting about the dining table one evening last week and the conversation had turned upon the subject of ghosts, says the Baltimore Sun. Divergent views being held by the various members of the family, the discussion became animated.

Suddenly above the hum of voices, the clatter of dishes and clink of silver, there floated in through the light draperies which separate the dining room from the parlor the notes of the piano in that inharmonious jumble which is usually produced by the first untutored efforts of a tot to make the big music box "talk." The conversation in the dining room was brought to a sudden stop and the diners became motionless, some with soup spoons half way to their lips, while all assumed attitudes of concentrated attention.

Every one in the house was at the table; doors and windows were mostly closed and even if they hadn't been it was incredible that any one should have had the audacity to walk into a house and begin to play the piano. The subject of the interrupted conversation suggested the nearest solution of the riddle—ghosts. A queer expression succeeded the animation of a moment before on each face and the diners stared blankly across the table at each other.

Then the phenomenon was repeated, the notes this time being a little higher up the keyboard than before. The ladies began to turn pale and those of the opposite sex took on an expression of puzzled annoyance. When the piano gave forth a third series of discordant sounds one of the men, with an air of heroic daring, arose from his chair, went to the door on tiptoe and gently drawing aside the curtains peeped cautiously into the next room. Then followed some very emphatic words, which at once relieved the tension in the dining room.

"John!" one of the ladies managed to gasp forth, but her fears and curiosity stayed the feeble protest here and she finished in a tone in which resentment struggled with curiosity. "What is it?"

"Come and see," was the ungenerous reply, and a slow and circumspect movement toward the dividing door took place. Half a dozen heads peered very carefully through the curtains as John held them back, and in the dimness of the parlor was seen a black and white cat, the especial pet of the entire household, perched on the keyboard of the piano and sedately regarding her astonished masters and mistresses.

"Puss, puss, puss!" called one of the ladies, in a greatly relieved tone, and puss bounded over the keys, again producing the "ghostly" discord, jumped to the floor and came up in obedience to the call.

There was no further talk of ghosts.

Just the Thing.

Wearly Walker—What kep' yer so long? Did she give yer anything?

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

Wearly Walker—Honest?

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

It Would Beem 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.

No circumstance can repair a defect of character.—Emerson.



## Fowls For Market.

While the main consideration to the consumer is that the fowl should be reasonably plump and properly plucked, 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 be seen, any handy man can construct it readily.—Indianapolis News.

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 into 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.

Loss in Cured Fodder.

It has been found that the Ontario Experiment Station that the smallest necessary loss in curing occurs when the corn is fairly well matured and well cared, and contains not less than 50 to 55 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 1836. 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.

Sheep Notes.

Feed only what the sheep will eat up clean.

Divide the flock according to age, size and sex.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Honesty in Horse Trades.

To recover damages in a horse trade, it is necessary to prove willful deception. A horse was sold represented to be all right in every way, but when the buyer placed it in the wagon, it

knocked the front of the vehicle to pieces. In the lawsuit following, the defense was that the horse was a quiet worker when the defendant had it, but that it had never drawn any vehicle of the kind in question. The judge said he believed that the defendant represented what he believed to be true when selling the horse, which was a young and only partly trained animal, and the verdict was for the defendant.—Massachusetts Ploughman.

The Boy on the Farm.

Have you got a boy? Does he get up early, milk cows, feed team, cuttle and pigs? Does he take the team and plow or drag, or rake, or mow all day? What are you doing for him? Do you give him anything at all except his board and clothes and a little schooling in winter? What inducement do you offer him to stay with you and help you on the farm?

Suppose that instead of enforcing your legal claims to his services until he is of age, and thus disgusting him with farm life, and paving the way toward an unloved, neglected old age for yourself, you do the fair thing by this boy. Give him something for his own, let him be earning and saving a little money. Don't deny him the opportunity of an education if he desires one, for an ignorant man is surely going to be placed at a fearful disadvantage in the coming years; give him the best team and the best tools to work with and encourage him by kind appreciation. The reason so many boys leave the farm disgusted is because they are treated like little slaves by selfish, avaricious parents. You can treat a boy like a horse, or an ox, but the horse or ox will not run off, and the boys can and will, and we don't blame them.—Home Monthly.

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.

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