

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)
I pass Dr. Schleeman's gates and along the Nevski, shrinking under the occasional glare of a street lamp, and gasping with relief each time I leave one behind me, and proceed for a space under cover of the darkness. Meanwhile the black, rolling clouds discharge themselves, whilst the thunder grows and waters after the flickering flash.

Long may the storm last, for if it should clear before I have reached my place of refuge, faint indeed will be my chance. If the moon should shine out and illumine my still wandering feet I am lost.

Soaked through, with my shirt clinging to my body—coat I have none—the water running in rivulets from my hair, I am crawling on my hands and knees, almost under the doorway which leads by a flight of stairs to Maruscha's lodging. Luckily the narrow stone passage has no door to the street, so I stagger in somehow.

The mounting of those steps is like an interminable nightmare. I drag myself up with long agonizing pauses between step by step. There is but the one hope left me now, that of looking over again on Maruscha's face ere I die. At last the topmost step is gained, and I see a bar of light streaming from beneath the door. I lay my head down on the landing and listen. Her light feet are pacing the floor to and fro, now faint, now near. I hear the sweep of her skirts against the door as she turns. Now she sighs, ah! so drearily. Is she living through again the awful scene of my execution?

Perhaps she is meditating self-destruction. Maruscha cannot live without her Vladimir. I raise my head and try to call her name. The sound I make startles and affrights me; it is like the croak of a raven! I have no voice where-with to call Maruscha!

I am lying at her door, where I cannot remain. I crawl close to it, striving to summon up courage to knock. She is near me again. I hear her cry in despair, "Vladimir! my Vladimir! Oh, my murdered love!" I breathe a prayer for her and knock. She has passed in her walk and listens.

"Maruscha—open—it is I!" I croaked desperately. I used to have a man's strong, deep voice; this could never be recognized as proceeding from any human being.

Within I hear a gasp; but still she opens not. I must get it over at once—at any cost! I strike the door with my fist. She makes a resolve. Takes a quick step forward—the key turns in the lock, and the door opens wide.

I cannot see her dear face, but O, she sees mine! She sees me when I crouch on her threshold, a ghastly visitant from the dead! I feel her eyes on me. I hear her catching breath. She recoils, and catches at the table for support.

"Fear me not, Maruscha! It is I, Vladimir!" She covers her eyes to shut out the sight of me. "Maruscha—I am no ghost. I am indeed thy Vladimir in the flesh!" I croak in my despair. I feel my senses leaving me. "I would tell thee all—the wonder of it—but—I die—I—I—pity—Maruscha!"

CHAPTER III.
I wake from a long, lull sleep—a sleep which has become gracious ones, full of the presence of Maruscha, when I have felt the soothing touch of her hands, looked into the deep blue wells of her eyes, and vaguely seen, fathomed there, a wealth of love, and patience, and pity. There is a delicious perfume of roses in the air, reminding me of the home in Kiev.

But I am not at home. My eyes have begun to wander from one detail to another of my surroundings; the dainty toilet table with its gauzy drapery tied with knots of blue ribbons; the hanging book shelves against the wall filled with brightly bound volumes; the crimson curtain of the portiere that runs along one entire side—Maruscha's room is divided by a crimson portiere! The vase with roses on the little table by my bed. I gave that vase to Maruscha!

There is a stir at the other side of the portiere, and instantly her sweet face appears at the opening in the curtains. I see the light of a great joy leap suddenly to her eyes.

"Vladimir!" There is a whole world of joy in her utterance. She has my hand in hers, and our eyes meet in one long look of unutterable satisfaction.

"My dove!" I murmur.
She puts her finger on her lips. Her face is radiant with smiles, and shining like the morning star from the golden setting of her hair.
"My beautiful one!"
"Thou must not talk, but sleep again, my Vladimir!"
She is withdrawing her hand, and I feebly catch at it. She will vanish, this angelic vision, and leave me in darkness.

She bends forward. "Wilt thou not be content, willful one?" she murmurs. Yet she goes to her easy chair, facing me, though she shakes her head.

As she sits before me, bending over her work, and I gazing at her, I see a shyness come over her, such as I have never seen before. The rosy blushes dye her fair skin, and, as if to hide them, her head droops lower.

In my love I am cruel and think only how the blushes are for me, and how lovely they look. At length they fade, and I note that she looks pale and worn, and that there are anxious lines about her sweet mouth, and violet marks under her eyes.

These, too, are for me! Before me I instantly blotting her out from my past, I lie panting, bruised, half with shuddering horror—on her threshold. And after? Her brave heart conquered her dread! She took me in, put me in her own white bed, nursed me.

A great sob-lifts my breast, and breaks the stillness. She looks up startled, and the needlework falls from her fingers. I try to stretch my hand toward her—see her I cannot for tears—but it falls powerless on the counterpane.

"Maruscha," I falter, "let me—let me kiss thy hand!"
She flies to me. "My hand, my lips! What thou wilt; but weep not, Vladimir!"

She kisses me wildly, not thinking what she does, but only of pacifying me. "Thou hast been ill—very ill; thou must not excite thyself—it is bad for thee. Think not of the past, it is over—all over, and thou art with me! Think how I have striven to nurse thee well, and thou wouldst undo all! Fly on thee! Thou hast no pity for me!"

Talking thus, she takes her handkerchief and dries my eyes, sweeps the hair from my brow and lets her fingers rest on it caressingly.

She seats herself on the side of the bed. I possess myself of her hand, and holding it against my lips, my spirit slips away into the sweet oblivion of dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER IV.
My life is a succession of deep and tranquil sleeps and blissful awakenings to the discovery of Maruscha's presence.

And she is my willing slave in all things save one. I may not even hold her hand for long, or carry it to my lips. If I venture on the latter, she gently but firmly withdraws it, casting on me such a look of fond reproach that I am fain to blush like a school girl at my temerity.

Maruscha avoids all mention of that awful chapter in my life, the subject seems so hateful to her that I have abstained from questioning her, though I am consumed with curiosity to know how my sudden appearance out of the grave, as it were, had affected her.

She evidently fears, too, that the discussion of so painful a theme would injure me in my still weak state, for I can see that she has enjoined Ivan—the only member of our section besides herself who knows of my existence—not to let me talk of it to him.

When I would speak of it, he has different ways of eluding me. He will rise hastily, as though something had just occurred to him about which he must consult Maruscha; or he will pretend not to hear me, and put a sudden question, as:

"Has Maruscha read thee Pushkin's latest poem? No? Then I must bring it to thee; it is glorious!"

I feel inexpressibly sad to-day, and Maruscha shares my feeling. As she sits beside me, her sweet, fair face, downcast, over her work, I guess that it is only my presence that keeps her from weeping. Her swift needle glances in and out of the linen she has on her lap. She is finishing a shirt for me to take with me, and there is not much time left now. Ivan comes for me this evening, and we leave together when the darkness falls.

It has been heaven to me, this calm, blissful period of convalescence—all too short, and here is the end of it, and the beginning of fresh struggles with the world.

This move has been talked of for some days past. Ivan has been urgent, and my soul responds to his wishes. Whatever Maruscha may say, there is danger in my sojourn with her. Though the situation was forced on us by necessity, and accepted joyfully by my pure-minded love, we feel that it is one that must be put an end to as soon as possible. A sob escaped her, and in my desire to comfort her I assume an air of cheerfulness I am far from apprehending.

"This is no parting, Maruscha. I go but to Ivan, and whilst I am there we shall see each other daily. Let us not meet trouble half way. And when the parting comes there will still be the prospect of our reunion. The world is wide, and surely I shall find some spot under a free sky on which to build a modest little nest for thee and me. Think of that time, dear heart. Hope for the best."

"Ah, if thou wast but safely out of this terrible land, then I might hope!" Maruscha sighed.
"I have great faith in the future!" I cry. "A man is not snatched from the very waters of death only to be cast back again like a worthless weed. There is some special end in these sudden acts of Providence. Thou wilt see this, my second life will not be wrested from me." I sit down again and draw Maruscha to my side.

"Maruscha," I continued, "I have been thinking much of our future whilst I lay there, and of how thou wouldst help me to make it worthy. That other life was all wrong. I made nothing of it." "Vladimir!" interrupts Maruscha, and her eyes shine like stars. "Thou gavest thy life for the great cause?"
"And what has it availed? Is the world the better for my sacrifice? The tyrant still oppresses. Liberty still lurks in secret places, and will continue to do so. And why? Because as a nation

we are not ripe for liberty. One-half is asleep, the other is in the thrall of consuming passions, and nothing at all is changed. Hitherto I was at the wrong end. Mistake thou not the lurid flare of passion for the pure flame of enthusiasm? I fear it is so."

Ivan's knock and signal interrupts us. Maruscha is leaving me to open the door. I detain her.

"Thou art disappointed in me, sweet love?" I whispered, watching her face with anxiety.

Her eyes seek the ground. "I—I—understand thee not," she falters.

"Yet thou canst trust me?" I breathe. The blue, bewildered eyes turn on me, and our glances meet. I see her clear and kindle until naught shines in them but pure, unalloyed love. Then suddenly, as if by an unaccountable impulse, she puts her two hands on my shoulders and, with aspirations, thy God are busy mine!"

She stoops and presses her lips to my forehead, and leaves me quickly to admit Ivan.

He enters with a coat over his arm, and after greeting us, produces from his pocket a soft felt hat, which he throws on a chair. Now he comes and stands before me, regarding me critically.

"How long hast thou been up to-day?" he inquires at length.

"Only about an hour. I have husbanded my forces for this evening."

Maruscha makes us some tea, and whilst we take it Ivan tells us the latest news. Fifty men and women have been arrested on suspicion of being implicated with the nihilists. Three assassinations of tyrants have occurred in different parts of the country, and everybody is talking of the daring "leader" in to-day's issue of the "Voice of the People." Ivan produced the newspaper and read it to us.

And all this falls flat on me. No longer can I rejoice at these things, they only make me sad. The day has gone by when the walls of a city could be made to fall at the blast of trumpets. My heart is full of the approaching leaving-taking, and gloomily I watch the twilight shadows creep up and close around us. I seem to see the relentless angel of fate pointing to the gates of my Paradise, and bidding me depart into the dark unknown region without, and, alas! I may not even take with me my Eve!

Maruscha scarcely speaks a word. She stitches away at the shirt, and when she has finished it, busies herself packing some things for me in a bag. As the shades deepen, Ivan also becomes silent. He goes over to the window and stands with his back to us, blowing a tune through his lips.

Maruscha comes to me. I fold her silently in my arms, and thus we remain, heart to heart, cheek to cheek. At length Ivan says, but without looking around, "We had better not let it get too late, Vladimir!"

One long, silent kiss I press on Maruscha's lips ere I release her. "Whenever thou wilt, Ivan," I reply, clearing my voice, for it sounds strangely husky.

Hearing Maruscha stir about the room, Ivan judges that he may return. I begin to get into the coat he has brought forward for me, while Maruscha stands and straightens the hat. He takes it from her hand, and puts it on my head, slouching it down in front to almost conceal my face. Maruscha puts up her face and we solemnly kiss each other. Ivan draws my hand through his arm, and Maruscha precedes us to the door.

"Adieu, Maruscha," Ivan extends his hand toward her.

She takes it and swiftly, ere he is aware of her intention, she lifts it to her lips.

"Adieu, and God bless thee, my brother," she murmurs, with eyes brimming with gratitude.

I, holding his arm, feel the shock that thrills his body, but his voice is clear and calm as he replies, "God bless thee also, my sister!"

Maruscha stands watching us as we slowly descend the stairs. At the foot I pause to wave my hand toward her, though her form is swallowed up by the darkness, and we issue forth into the still evening.

(To be continued.)

Task Too Hard to Endure.
The man of the future sat back at ease in his luxurious arm chair, his feet arranged before him along the lines of least resistance.

At his elbow was a keyboard that connected him with the outer world. He touched a button and through a gold-mounted transmitter was thrust his morning paper. He touched another and a tray containing his breakfast rose before him.

It seemed an easy thing to do. He had but to lift his finger.

A photograph began calling off the opening of the stock market. A piano attachment gave out the strains of the latest opera. Three friends in distant parts of the empire bade him good morning and communicated some piece of gossip in response to his inquiry. He talked with the manager of his office, with his tailor, his airship maker, his architect.

With him it was indeed a busy day. Finally his head sank back. He was overcome by the unusual exertion. He looked worried.

HE FOOLS HIS CHICKENS.

A Novel Way to Break a Hen from Sittling.

Timothy Varney, who lives three miles east of Le Sueur and keeps about 200 hens, has been greatly troubled, as have most people who keep hens, by the persistent desire manifested by the fowls to sit, in season and out, on eggs, stones or doorknobs or anything else that comes handy, says the St. Paul Pioneer Press. But he has got hold of a plan now which he has quietly tried this season, with perfect success, and which he warrants will cure the worst light brahma cluck that ever vexed the heart of man of all desire to sit, and all in less than three hours.

The cure consists of a cheap watch, with a loud and clear tick to it, enclosed in a case that is white and shaped like an egg. When a hen manifests a desire to sit out of season he gently places this bogus egg under her sheltering breast and the egg does the rest. It ticks cheerfully away and soon the hen begins to show signs of uneasiness, and stirs the noisy egg around with her bill, thinking, perhaps, that it is already time for it to wriggle out of the shell.

It is more nervous as the noise keeps up, and soon jumps off the nest and runs around awhile to cool off, but returns again to her self-imposed duty. It gets worse and worse with her, and she wiggles about and cackles, ruffles her feathers and looks wild, until at last, with a frenzied squawk, she abandons the nest for good and all. That incubating fever is broken up completely.

Mr. Varney finds use for half a dozen of these noisy eggs, and claims that they pay for their cost over and over during the year, by keeping the hens at the business of laying and not permitting them to waste the golden hours in useless incubating.

SPRUNG FROM SAME SOURCE.
Whale and Lion Said to Be Identical Origin.

As everyone knows, or ought to know, the whale is not a fish, but mammal, and zoologists have long pondered and disputed about its family tree. In Eocene times the ancestors of mammals were beginning to take shape somewhat like those of to-day and to lose the grotesqueness inherited from their reptilian progenitors. To be sure, animals were very different from those of to-day. Horses were no larger than dogs and had five toes, while cattle-like tinocerars, twice the size of an ox, with six horns, tuslike teeth and five toes, cropped the heritage of Wyoming. Along with these peculiar plant feeders there dwelt some very primitive flesh eaters, to which Professor Cape gave the name of creodonts.

The scene shifts to modern times. Professor Fraas of Stuttgart, Germany, is delving in the rocks near Cairo, Egypt. He is getting out huge jaws bones that have been petrified. The jaw bones are those of whales and the rocks near Cairo were, in Eocene times, the seashore. The professor has studied his whale jaws and compared their teeth with other fossil teeth. Now he tells us in a recent Abhandlungen that these teeth of ancient whales are like those of the ancient carnivorous creodonts. From this he argues that in Eocene or earlier times some primitive flesh eater took to an aquatic life. From these old times to the present whales have been becoming more fishlike.

It is hard to believe that the ravenous lion and inoffensive and toothless whale of to-day had a common ancestor, yet they both have the same taste for blood, only the whale swallows his food whole.

Modern Bread Poor.
I was informed a few weeks ago by a gentleman who owns large flour mills that the craze for white bread is being carried to such extreme that many millers are putting in expensive machinery for the purpose of actually bleaching the flour, says a correspondent of the London Times.

This is being done by ozone and nitrous acid, the object being to make an artificially white bread and to enable grain to be used which would otherwise give a darker color to the flour.

The development of the grading process during the last few years has been such that the old-fashioned stones have been replaced by steel rollers actuated under great pressure.

The germ and other most nutritive constituents of the wheat are thus to a great extent abstracted and the valuable character of the bread greatly reduced.

It is the opinion of many who can speak with authority on the subject that bread, instead of being as formerly the "staff of life," has become to a great degree an indigestible non-nutritive food, and that it is responsible, among other causes, for the want of bone and for the dental troubles in the children of the present generation.

It is doubtless true that the variety of food now obtainable in a measure compensates, in the case of those who can afford it, for this abstraction of phosphates; but I think I am justified in stating that every medical man, if asked, will give it as his opinion that very white bread should be avoided and that "seconds" flour, now almost unprocurable, should only be used either for bread or pastry.

When a woman looks in a mirror she is never able to see herself as other women see her.

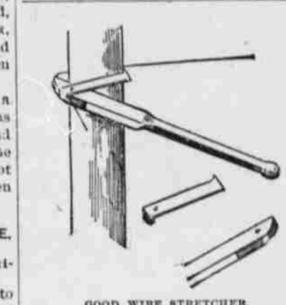
More women weep over onions than over love affairs.



FARM AND GARDEN

Handy Wire Stretcher.

On most farms there is more or less wire to be handled either in the way of putting up dividing fences or trellises for grape vines. A poorly stretched wire is always making trouble, but there is no need of having this annoyance when the tool illustrated may be easily made with the help of a blacksmith, and at small cost. The handle is two feet long of one and one-half inch stuff, but hard wood must be used. On the heavy end of the handle, which should be formed as shown, fasten a piece of strap iron with screws to prevent the wire from cutting into the wood. The short strip shown just above the detail drawing of the handle inches long, is a piece of iron seven seven-eighths of an inch wide; one end is bent over seven-eighths of an inch and a hole is bored in the flat side one inch from the bend. This piece of iron is then bolted on to the handle as



GOOD WIRE STRETCHER.
shown so that it will swing easily and the tool is complete. It is readily made and works to perfection.—Indianaapolis News.

Select Your Seed Corn.

The farmer who has a uniformly good corn crop is generally the man who looks after his seed himself. He does not buy from any dealer whose circular happens to fall into his hands and plant the seed without testing. The careful farmer picks out his seed from the best of his own corn or that of his neighbor, sees that it is properly dried and cared for during the winter and tests it before planting in the spring. The careless farmer does not do these things and then kicks because his crop is a failure. He ought to have a man to apply some good lousy kicks to his person. The seedmen are not always to blame. Some of them are honest. The farmer should test his seed for himself, and if it be good give the seedman his due; if on the other hand, it be bad, let him dispose of it the best he can. A failing that growers have is to delay securing their seed until too little time is left to obtain an adequate knowledge of its real value. I cannot too strongly urge corn growers to see to it now that well-matured ears of a desirable type and the product of a variety noted for successive large yields be secured for next year's seedling.—Clinton M. Schultz.

Good Pig Pen and Trough.

We like the two compartments in a pig pen, one for sleeping and one for feeding, says a writer in Ohio Farmer. Place the trough across the end of

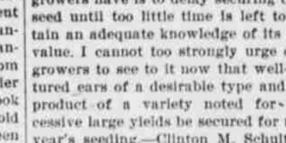


FIG. PEN AND TROUGH.
feed room, next to feed alley, with a swinging partition, so you can push it back to put swill in or clean out, and the pigs cannot interfere. A cement floor is all right. We prefer a solid wood trough, V-shaped, and secured so that pigs cannot loosen it by their rooting. A few years ago we gave the following illustrations of an improved hog trough. Fig. 1 shows the swinging partition or gate pushed back, leaving the trough outside, for putting in feed. Fig. 2 shows the latch and lever to be attached to swinging gate or partition, by bolt, B. The rods R, R, run through staples, S. A is a guard in which the lever L slides. Push lever to left and the door swings



LEVER FOR MOVING THE GATE.
back, leaving trough where it can be cleaned and feed placed in it; then swing the door back by pulling lever to the right.

Care of Farm Machinery.
The man who leaves his farm machinery out in the wet is looked upon as being shiftless these days. It hurts his credit with the merchants and the banker. Too many farmers neglect to oil the polished parts of plows, spades, sickles, etc., and when he again wants

to use them he finds, to his annoyance and cost, that they do not work well, are sometimes out of order, and need slight repairs. Valuable time must then be spent to put the machinery in proper working condition. A few hours spent on rainy autumn days, or whenever outside work cannot be carried on, might have saved him time which, in the busy season, means money.

Shorthorns in America.

The number of Shorthorns in this country is estimated to be 250,000, but I think there are not more than 100,000, all told. People fail to take account of such periods as 1880-1890, when the pure-bred cattle business was at low ebb. Hundreds of breeders, finding the business of breeding unprofitable, sold their stock as grade cattle, and let them go for beef purposes. Whole herds in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Illinois were disposed of in that manner, and all efforts to keep accounts of pedigrees was abandoned. Thus many were lost to record altogether. Another thing to be taken into consideration in regard to the supply of Shorthorn cattle in this country is the fact that the life of an active, pure-bred Shorthorn bull, when allowed to run with grade herds, is very short, usually not over four years. After that time he is a fat, and his career as a producer ends then and there. It is merely a guess, and a mighty vague one at that, to estimate the number of Shorthorns in this country.—W. A. Harris.

Patronize Your Neighbor.

Many farm seeds are raised by farmers. It is well to purchase seed from neighbors who are careful to eliminate any weed pest. In every locality there is one farmer who takes a great deal of pains with his home-grown seed. He fans the chaff from his wheat, cuts the plantain from his clover field and is vigilant in destroying weeds that try to grow in unused places. Such neighbors are public benefactors, and it is the duty of nearby farmers to patronize them, and be willing to give a premium above the market price for seeds. Again, responsible growers of bluegrass and other seeds advertise their seeds and guarantee their purity. As a rule, a surer plan of getting clean seed is to purchase from a grower of rather than a dealer in farm seeds.—W. B. Anderson, in Indianaapolis News.

Best Feed None Too Good.

When cows are tested for records they are not fed on straw and fodder or with the view of saving in the food, but on the contrary, the best foods that can be obtained are not considered too good or costly. Grain, clover, pasturage, linseed meal and roots assist, each to afford a variety or change, to promote the appetite and to induce the cow to eat as much as she can digest, hence such cows have great digestive capacity, and can utilize large quantities of food. The fact that they are well bred is simply an evidence that they are from families that have been noted for good records. It is the food that makes the milk and butter, but an ordinary cow does not possess the capacity of consuming and converting large quantities of food into milk and butter compared with one that is pure bred.

Points in Sheep Raising.

A small, fat sheep will always bring better prices than a large, poor one. Overstocking is usually injurious to the sheep and ruinous to the farmer. Dryness is one of the requirements in the production of the finest grades of wool.

Sheep are naturally gregarious. When one is seen by itself something is evidently wrong. With sheep, rather more than with any other class of stock, care must be taken not to overfeed.

In connection to fatten sheep, the feeding should not be crowded at first, but, gradually increase the amount of the ration.

Poultry Pickings.

New blood should be introduced frequently.

Crowding is a foe to thrift and productiveness. Injurious effects are often produced by inbreeding.

A hen, to be profitable, should lay a dollar's worth of eggs in a year.

A little salt given in the soft food of fowls is very acceptable to them.

Supplying lime, charcoal, gravel and crushed bone will assist in feather-making.

In supplying water to little chickens arrange so that they cannot get their feet wet.

It is quite an item in handling a flock of poultry to have them as gentle as possible.

As a rule, it is not profitable to keep hens over two years old, unless they are valuable stock.

While in arranging the poultry house warmth is an essential there, fresh air is equally important.

Raw corn meal is not a good feed for little chickens from the fact that it heats and swells after eating.

Top and side ventilation, arranged so as not to blow directly on the roosts, is just the thing for summer.

Never select a cock with a drooping or "ewe neck," and also avoid one that falls to have a good, strong, wide-spreading tail.

Many a case of indigestion may be traced to a heavy feed in the morning, and the next meal taken from theavings of breakfast after being trampled over.

It is pretty hard to give a growing cockerel or pullet enough corn to make it lay on fat, especially when running out, as so much of the food goes to the production of bone, feathers and muscle.