

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

I grind my teeth in an excess of impotent fury. I clutch the air with a wolfish hunger to fly at the throat and crush the life out of this insignificant yet noxious reptile.

"Maruscha," I begin, "this Isajeff—has he ever accosted thee?"

She bends her look to the ground, and I, intent on every sign her face may disclose, observe the vivid color rise, dyeing her neck, her cheeks, her brow. "I like not the man, Vladimir. He is an impudent fellow"—she hesitates. I grasp her arm almost savagely.

"Has he dared to speak to thee?" I gasp. "Tell me—tell me, what has he said? If he has insulted thee by so much as a look—a word—I will go now, at once, and tear the tongue from his throat!"

My vehement words are scarcely uttered ere I am regretting them, for I see the fear spring to her eyes. And now she will not tell me the truth. She laughs unseeingly.

"Now see how thou takest things up!" she says. "For indeed there is none to tell. The man has always been civil to me, only giving me 'good-day' as I went and came, or passing a remark on the weather. It is only that I have taken an unreasonable antipathy to him—a quite unreasonable and unjustifiable antipathy, Vladimir. Thou knowest my strange temper! And thou art wrong," she continues, in nervous haste. "Assuredly thou art wrong that Isajeff has informed the police. Why should he? And how should he suspect—"

"He watched us leaving the lodging. He followed us along the colonnade. We both saw him as we mounted the droak to come here. He has driven after us—"

"I will tell thee what I will do only—only give me time, Vladimir." She presses her hand to her side.

I am subdued. To soothe her, calm her, undo the mischief I have done is now my only thought.

"My sweet love, forgive me!" I beg. "I have frightened thee!"

She smothered bravely a storm of rising sobs, still holding me with both her small hands until she has sufficiently controlled herself to speak. "I need never go back to my lodging—he need never see me again," she begins, watching the effect of her words with wide eyes fastened on my face.

"Go back," I repeat, thrilling with apprehension at the mere suggestion. "Thou wilt go from here to Olga Petrovna's, and quit not her lodging save to go to the station and take train for thy home! St. Petersburg is no place for thee, Maruscha. Promise me that thou wilt leave it to-morrow never to return."

"I promise—but—but—I owe a week's lodging—I must give notice—my clothes!"

"And thou wouldst take into consideration such paltry matters where so much is at stake!" I cry, beside myself.

"Listen to reason, Vladimir," she falters. "If I pay not my landlord he will have an excuse for instituting a search for me. Thou art so violent that I cannot get in a word. I will go to Olga, and she will pay the money for me, and bring away my things."

"So that he can follow her and find thee! No, that will not do! And yet," I say, moderating my tone, "thou art perhaps right about the money"—I muse a moment, "then Olga must find someone else to pay it, and invent some lie. He must be led to expect my return. Say that thou hast been called away suddenly—to a dying relative!" I laugh grimly at the silliness of my inventions. "She has been commissioned to take part of thy wardrobe to send after thee. Thou canst give her a line for the scoundrel to that effect."

"Yes, yes," Maruscha agrees eagerly. "That is well planned. And as proof that I am returning everything will be left standing in the room—my stove and all my belongings."

"Thou wilt be strong now as thou hast ever been, my brave one!" I say encouragingly. "Something tells me our parting will be brief. And I will write to thee as soon as I am over the frontier. Olga will forward my letters."

In a moment her features begin to work, and ere I am aware she has cast herself at my feet, and is clasping my knees.

"Thou canst not mean it, Vladimir!" she gasps. "Thou wouldst not drive me from thee before—before the last! And whither wouldst thou go to-night? Where wilt thou hide? Oh, leave me not in ignorance, or I shall go mad!"

"I will write whenever I can. But, Maruscha, I must also hear from thee. I will make for Luga first, write to me from thy home to the postoffice there."

"How shall I address thee?"

"Ah, yes, I forgot that I am nameless! I will keep the name that Ivan gave me to the landlord—it will do as well as any: 'Waldemar Nicolalvitch Alkanoff. Thou wilt remember?'"

"Waldemar Nicolalvitch Alkanoff," repeats Maruscha, slowly.

"And for heaven's sake, word thy letter carefully, so that if it reaches me not, and the officials open it they will see nothing to make them suspect aught. I will observe the same caution in writing to thee, and will sign my assumed name."

"I will be careful," she murmurs, with another heart-broken sigh.

"And now, my own Maruscha, farewell! until our next meeting—our joyful meeting to part never again! Think of that, only that, my love, and the time will seem short."

Her arms are about my neck. I hear her laboring heart throb against mine. A long, last kiss. My anguished soul invokes the blessing on her that my quivering lips refuse to utter, and I tear myself away.

One look back I take to see her totter a few steps after me with arms outstretched, and stop. I wave my hand and flee as if lashed by furies from the sight of her agony—forward—onward—into darkness and uncertainty.

CHAPTER VIII.

Where am I? I halt and gaze around

me in stupid bewilderment. The east is glimmering in cold, silver sheen, throwing an uncertain, mystic light on the faintly defined landscape. I look back along the straight, white road, with its tall telegraph posts starting up at regular intervals. A sudden flash like a golden needle pierces the dim distance.

A ball of gold begins to burn lower down on the horizon. They are the spire of the Admiralty and the dome of St. Isaac's in St. Petersburg, which I have left behind me. Can it be possible that I have come so far? It has been weary work trudging along that road!

I take out my handkerchief and wipe the drops from my face, with a woful stab of dolorous recollection of the touch of Maruscha's little fluttering, solicitous hands as she put the handkerchief into my pocket. In returning it my hand comes in contact with a parcel of sandwiches. Again Maruscha! I draw them forth, for I am ravenously hungry.

I eat with a vision of her as she stood at the table in Ivan's room, forgetful for the moment of her grief in ministering to my needs, her sweet, pale face downcast and absorbed.

At last I am treading the margin of the wood—am entering its stately aisles. And now that effort is no longer imperative, my limbs begin to yield under me. I stagger rather than walk, catching at the boles of the trees for support. Yet a few steps farther into the shade—a mist rises before my eyes. I lurch forward—prone on the ground, and become instantly oblivious.

An incessant tapping over my head is the first thing I am aware of. I open my eyes in vague curiosity and see the dark, interlacing branches of a pine tree above me, and lower down on the red stem a green woodpecker diligently at work.

From force of habit I insert my forefinger and thumb in the watch pocket which was wont to contain a watch, and am withdrawing it with a foolish, baffled laugh, when my finger comes in contact with some small object. I dive for it and pull up a watch key; but that is not all—it is tied with a bit of blue ribbon which is attached to something else. Another pull and I bring to light Maruscha's tiny watch!

It is there in the palm of my hand—the little toy of a thing she has worn at her girdle ever since I have known her. I gaze at it with such a mighty rush of emotion that my whole body thrills with a sharp shock of electricity.

I perceive that the tiny monitor I am gazing at points to the hour of five. I wind it up, and returning it to where the tender, subtle fingers had placed it in preparation of a surprise for me, scramble to my feet.

A long, profound sleep in the invigorating atmosphere of the sun-steeped pines has put new life into me. It is only my feet that are swollen and painful, and I hobble, rather than walk, to the margin of the wood. If I can but get a lift of any kind, I think I will take a bed at an inn for this one night to give my feet a chance of recovering. I stand and look up and down the interminable road.

In advance there is a long cavalcade of carts laden with firewood winding slowly into the distance, each with its attendant Mujik trudging beside it or seated on a shaft of his cart. Toward me a peddler's wagon lumbers on creaking wheels. Its owner sits nodding on the box, framed in the opening of the canvas tent that arches above him. The two little nags crawl along with drooping heads, as if they, too, were indulging in a nap. I take a good look at the peddler.

He is a middle-aged man, with a strong, grizzled beard and broad, Slav countenance. The nose in it is like a potato. There are good-natured creases about the corners of the eyes, so I take courage.

"Good day! God assist you!" I exclaim amiably.

The peddler instantly removes his cap, while a slow smile gradually spreads over and broadens his heavy features.

"God be with you, Gentle," he replies. "Whither are you bound?" I question.

"My destination is Kovno, but to-night I make halt at the village of Little Kolga."

"Ah, that is my way. Would you object to give me a lift for a compensation?"

"The Gentle will honor me!" The peddler leaps down from his seat with as much alacrity as his lumbering body and enormous boots will permit. "Would the Gentle like a seat on the front of the wagon, or would he prefer to recline on the merchandise?"

"With your permission, little father, I will get inside," I say.

As I advance to mount the wagon he remarks on the lameness of my gait. "The Gentle has hurt himself?" he observes.

"My boots cripple me somewhat," I reply carelessly.

"That is bad, if the Gentle has so far to go."

"I go to Luga. I am a student and have been sitting rather closely over my books, so I thought the walk through the country would clear my brains a little," I laugh.

"The Gentle is right," agrees the peddler. "There is nothing like the country air for bracing the wits, or helping one to think out a weighty matter. I make all my calculations in the open. The Gentle will feel the benefit of it even though he should be obliged to continue his journey by post from Little Kolga. He will still inhale the fresh air."

After this he relapses into silence and whips up his horses. When noontime comes I share his frugal repast and fall into a dose until at nightfall we reach the village of Little Kolga.

"Has the Gentle ever been to a hanging?"

I feel the blood rush tumultuously to my smooth-shaven, tell-tale face. "A hanging? I—hem—no, I have never seen a thing of the kind," I stammer.

"Perhaps the Gentle likes not such spectacles? I never miss a chance. I like to see perish the enemies of our father, the Czar."

The peddler lifts his cap.

"When I last visited the city I went to see a hanging. There were five of them—five gallows in a row, and a man for each. Ah, that was a sight! There were thousands went to see it, and I went early and secured a good place. There is courage in us Russians even in the worst of us. We know how to meet death. They were traitors all, but they died like brave men. I assure you, rascals as they were, my heart glowed to witness how they died! There was one—what limbs the fellow had! He was nobly built, the dog, and he had a face as handsome as a saint. Such a beard! Such eyes, dark and burning! I could not take my eyes off the fellow. I saw only him all through the hanging. And when he spoke his words were like arrows: 'I repent not,' he said, the sinner, yet he was a brave one."

He looks straight before him as if conjuring up the scene and continues: "And what an affair that was! Shall I ever forget it? The rope broke ere he was finished. I was carried off my feet, for the populace in their rage rushed forward to effect a rescue. Surely the Noble must have heard of it?"

"Ah, well, I doubtless heard it spoken of at the time, but I take little interest in such things."

"No? Yet there are always students at the hangings. There were many at this one. There was one close to me went clean mad at the breaking of the rope, and made a rush, but the soldiers drove him back. He had his sweetheart with him, and she fainted. It is abominable that delicate women will go to see these sights! They scream and faint, and yet they like it. They will not stay away."

I answer nothing. I have an unpleasant feeling as of a rope being tightened about my neck, checking the free course of my breath. I take out my handkerchief and mop my face with it.

"The Gentle feels it warm under the cover," observes the peddler. "Will he not sit awhile in the front of the wagon for change of position?"

I gladly scramble to the front of the vehicle, where I sit crouched like a grasshopper, because of my height. The peddler regards me from head to foot with twinkling eyes, and at length breaks into a laugh.

"I crave pardon," he says, "but just such a frame had that sturdy rascal who perished on the gallows. Just such length of limb and breadth of shoulders; yet methinks he was stouter," still observing me critically. Then doubtless perceiving how I color under his fixed gaze he adds quickly: "The Noble has a splendid body, and so had the fellow I speak of, but there the resemblance ceases. God forbid that I should give offense!"

After this he relapses into silence and whips up his horses, for the light is fading from the sky in which the evening star is brightening. We soon begin to pass a smoke-stained cabin here and there by the roadside, and then a long, low wooden building, with benches and tables before the door, where we make halt. The peddler throws the reins on the horses' backs.

"I put up here," he says, "and I thank the Noble for his good company; there is good accommodation at the post station, not five minutes' walk from here."

I thank him for his kindness and slip a roulette into his hand. He begins to expostulate, but with a "good-night" and a wave of my hat, I turn from him to ascend the unpaved, straggling street which constitutes Little Kolga.

(To be continued.)

Family's New York.

Walking up Fifth avenue and out through Central Park the Sunday that I landed in New York, among all the varying and sad impressions made upon me, I was especially moved to inquire, Where are American families? What in the world is the matter with American men, and who taught American girls their manners?

I saw men and women promenading together and I saw not a few children romping unattended by their elders or else in the company of nurses. I saw nowhere what makes the chief beauty of all Paris avenues and parks Sunday afternoons—innumerable family parties—fathers and mothers with their children, small and big, often the grandparents, too, gayly going along, glad of the sunshine, the fresh air, the exercise, and most of all, glad to be together in their pleasure.

Then the girls I saw on Fifth avenue, promenading in pairs or in groups, with swinging stride, laughing loud, and talking louder. Where do they get their manners? In Paris, the home of the grisette, les petites femmes, it is the rarest possible thing to see a girl of immodest bearing on the street—myself, during two years' residence here, I have never seen it. This, I think, results largely from the subtly refining influence of schools taught by religious.—Harper's Bazar.

Convincing the Barometer.

Sir Archibald Geikie tells a story in his book, "Scottish Reminiscences," which he says is characteristic of the simplicity of some of the Scots. It concerns a farmer in the Cheviot Hills who had been told that it would be useful to have a barometer in the house, for it would tell him know whether the weather would be good or bad.

After he had been persuaded to buy an aneroid barometer, which has a large round dial, he hung it up in his hall, and duly consulted it each day, but without much edification.

At last there came a spell of wet weather. The barometer continued to record, "set fair." The rain continued to fall heavily, and still the dial made no sign of truth. Then the farmer's temper rose.

He took the instrument from the nail and marched with it to the bottom of the garden, where a brook, swollen with the drainage from the upper slopes, was rushing along, brown and muddy. He plunged the barometer into the flood.

"Will you believe your ain een now, then!" he cried, angrily.

Throw aside your dignity, and romp and play with children; make them love you by loving them, and you will add years to your life.

HORSESHOE LUCK.

Superstitions Concerning Crescents of Iron All but Universal.

The origin of belief in "horseshoe luck" is so ancient that its origin has never been determined with certainty, and no superstition is more universal. Ever since horses began to wear shoes, those crescents of iron have been accounted lucky emblems of all peoples, races and nations that have been acquainted with their use.

The Chinese, for instance, say they nail them up over their doors as a charm against evil spirits, because of the close resemblance in shape between them and the arched body of the sacred snake. Nagandra, one of their principal deities.

Ask a Turkish Mahometan for information on the subject and he will tell you that it is because they are in form like a crescent, the sacred emblem of Islam.

A Polish Jew will explain that at the Passover the wood sprinkled upon the lintel and doorposts, in the manner directed by their ritual, forms the chief points of an arch; hence, obviously, the value of arch-shaped talismans such as horseshoes are.

The stolid and unimaginative Russian peasant, on the other hand, maintains that the luck associated with the horseshoe is chiefly due to the metal, irrespective of its shape, iron being traditionally a charm wherewith to nullify the malevolent designs of evil spirits and goblins.

Very different is the story by which the Irishman seeks to account for his liking for the same talismanic symbol. The name "Ironclad" or "Ireland," he will tell you, originated as follows:

The whole island was once submerged in the sea, out of which it rose only once in seven years, and then only for a short time. Many attempts had been made to break the spell and induce the country to remain permanently above the waters, but all were vain until, one day, a daring adventurer threw a horseshoe from a boat on the topmost peak of Wicklow mountains, just as they were disappearing beneath the waves. Then, at last, was the ban removed. The Emerald Isle began forthwith to rise again from the ocean depths, into which it had sunk. And it has been dry land—more or less—ever since.

In England, up to comparatively recent times, horseshoes were extensively used almost everywhere as anti-witch charms, and the custom is not even yet an extinct one. No witch, it used to be said, could enter a building over the door of which a horseshoe—or, better still, three horseshoes—had been affixed, prongs downward.

The origin of this particular belief is referable to the old legend of St. Dunstan. This versatile English ecclesiastic was a skillful farrier, and one day, while at work in his forge, the Evil One entered in disguise and requested Dunstan to shoe his "single hoof." The saint, although he at once recognized his malign customer, acceded, but caused him so much pain during the operation that Satan begged him to desist. This Dunstan did, but only after he had made the Evil One promise that neither he nor any of the lesser spirits, his servants, would ever molest the inmates of a house where a horseshoe was displayed.—Chicago Chronicle.

CHARGED MILEAGE.

A Boston surgeon of national reputation was spending a few weeks in a little hamlet in the north of Massachusetts. It was before the days of rural free delivery, and the trip to the post office was one of the excitements of the day. Many of the inhabitants exchanged their daily gossip while waiting for the mail. The doctor now delights to repeat the following pleasant chat which he overheard:

You live over at the Four Corners, Bill. What kind of a feller is the new constable? I've heard he was meaner than a potato bug."

"Well, I don't know as you'd call him mean, but he is a little mite prudent and ain't negligent about the cents. I suppose some folks would think he was mean."

"Is he as mean as Jabez Althing?"

"No," answered the other, in slow deliberation, "he ain't quite so mean as Jabez. Now, for instance, Friday he had to serve an attachment for the new carpenter on Mrs. Bowles, who wouldn't pay the carpenter for building her henhouse. When he got over there he found she didn't have anything he could attach except the hens. So he had to get them all together, somehow, and he chased each one around the house about forty times before he caught 'em. I guess he was at it nearly half the morning. You know he'd driven three miles to get there, and the law allows so many cents per mile he has to travel."

"Well, when I went by the house he was figurin' and multipl'n and divid'n on the back of a shingle, and I says to him, 'Howdy-do, constable? What are you calculatin'?' An' he says to me, 'I'm calculatin' how much mileage is due me fer chasin' them hens.' That's what makes me think he ain't downright mean, but just prudent."—Youth's Companion.

Crooked.

Bill—You could tell he is crooked by his face.

Jill—Sure, he can't keep a straight face.—Yonkers Statesman.

Fight Outside.

She—Do they fight much in your church choir?

He—No, they generally wait until they get outside.—Yonkers Statesman.

JAPANESE DEMONSTRATE THE EFFICIENCY OF FIELD MORTARS.



HOW A MODERN MORTAR BATTERY WORKS.

The mortar is a type of ordnance employed for high angle fire. It is not as well proportioned or as graceful in its design as other forms of ordnance, being far too short for the size of its bore. The most modern product of American and English gun builders is more like the accepted notion of what a great gun should be. One of these monsters of civilized warfare exhibited at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition illustrated this growing tendency of gunmakers to improve upon the mortar's proportions. In this unique demonstration of the methods and armament of seacoast defense the War Department furnished a well devised and adequate popular illustration of a subject which was not only necessarily unfamiliar to dwellers in the great interior of the continent, but, because no person is ever permitted to examine the coast defenses themselves, was of equal educational service to visitors who live within sight of those carefully guarded earthworks.

Although the United States has been foremost in its employment of the mortar for coast defense, every seacoast approach in the country being provided with an elaborate system of mortar battery protection, England has not been laggard in the same direction. France, although she has for many years taken the lead in the manufacture of this type of ordnance, has been slow to adopt it for the defense of her seaboard.

The use of field mortars has not yet been put to the actual test of modern battle conditions. It was the hope of military observers that the present conflict in Asia would serve as an experimental issue for field mortar warfare. That this exploitation of the gun was expected to take place may be accounted for by the fact that at the beginning of hostilities Russia led the world with a regularly organized and equipped division of twenty-four batteries, six mortars to a battery. That the anticipations of the foreign military observers in the field have not been realized is explained by the continuous retreat which the Russian land forces have been compelled to maintain. Contrary to the original expectation, it is now the Japanese that are likely to demonstrate the efficiency of the mortar as a field resource. With the almost incredible adaptation which they have shown in so many ways since the beginning of the war they have begun to turn the very weapons which were designed to assist in their overthrow against their would-be destroyers.

EDISON IS FAILING.

Great Scientist in Constant Fear of Cancer of the Stomach.

"I am feeling poorly—very poorly. The old X-ray trouble is after me. It won't let go. It killed my assistant. Yes, sir; killed him by inches. Now it's after me. Knobs all along my stomach—great big ones running in a semicircle. Can't eat anything nowadays. It isn't indigestion, either. The doctors don't know what to make of it. Old Father Time will have to diagnose it I guess."

It was a gray-haired and seemingly palsied man who spoke thus, says the Chicago Inter Ocean. The world calls him Thomas A. Edison, the greatest inventor that history has ever known. He is spending his time nowadays in a weather-beaten house called "The Monastery," three miles outside the village of Stewartville, N. J. The vener-



THOMAS A. EDISON.

able shak gets its odd name from the fact that no women are allowed there.

The X-ray ailment developed several years ago while Edison was experimenting with the Roentgen rays. He it was who perfected the fluoroscope. An assistant named Dalley helped him in his work. Dalley had his face near the X-ray. Edison had the strange light near his stomach. Dalley developed a cancer on his face. It killed him a month ago. Edison is now in constant fear of a cancer in his stomach. That is why he had to give up his X-ray experiments.

Partly for recreation he began visiting "The Monastery" to work on a new invention in cement. And in this he is now engrossed. He retires at 3 o'clock in the morning and rises at 6 a. m. The rest of the day is spent in work or "day dreaming." There is something weird about these "dreaming spells." For hours he sits in a chair, his massive head buried in his breast, his hands clasped together, and his thumbs twitching convulsively.

No one can rouse him at these times. Birds hop at his feet and perch upon his shoulder. Caterpillars drop from the trees and go on exploring expeditions through his shabby clothes—through the shabby clothes of a man whose wealth is placed at a low estimate at \$4,000,000. Always when he emerges from his "dreams" he has some fresh idea, some new plan to pursue.

The people in Stewartville love and fear this wonderfully weird man. He has changed greatly, they say. In only one respect, declare the knowing ones, is he the Tom Edison of former years

—he can and does still swear voluminously and with great art when his temper is aroused.

LANDSLIDES OF THE PAST.

Other Elections Have Been Folly as One-Sided as the Latest.

In the history of this country there have been political landslides, besides that of Nov. 8 last. Thomas Jefferson was elected President in 1804 by 163 votes to 14 for Charles C. Pinckney, the Federalist candidate. In 1820 the re-election of James Monroe would have been unanimous except for the desire of one elector to reserve to Washington the exclusive honor of a unanimous choice. Accordingly one vote was cast for John Quincy Adams, the remaining 231 votes being given to Monroe. Andrew Jackson's second election in 1832 was by a vote of 219 to 49 for Henry Clay. Martin Van Buren defeated William Henry Harrison four years later by 170 to 73; and at the following election the tables were turned by a vote of 234 to 60 in favor of Harrison. The next two elections were closer; but in 1852 Franklin Pierce defeated Winfield Scott by a vote of 254 to 42.

Lincoln defeated McClellan in 1864 by an electoral vote of 212 to 21, although this result was greatly disproportionate to the popular vote, which was divided: Lincoln, 2,218,067; McClellan, 1,808,725. Grant defeated Seymour in 1868 by 214 to 80 votes. The only electoral plurality since the great war, to exceed that for Roosevelt was obtained by Grant over Greeley in 1872. Grant's vote was 286 and Greeley's 42. The death of Greeley occurred between the dates of the popular election and the casting of the electoral vote and the Greeley electors of five States cast their votes for Thomas A. Hendricks.

Cleveland's election in 1892 was by a great electoral plurality. The division was: Cleveland, 277; Harrison, 145. Cleveland's popular plurality was nearly 400,000. McKinley's second defeat of Bryan was also overwhelming. The electoral vote was 292 to 155, and the popular vote 7,218,353 to 6,357,807.—Chicago Daily News.

Varied Farms of Oklahoma.

The first journey of the missionary superintendent was made to Colony. From Oklahoma the route lies westerly seventy-six miles, over the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railway. As the train leaves the metropolis it glides along rich farm lands, where preparations have already begun for fall sowing of wheat, or near cotton fields, whose dark green foliage is decorated with the silver white bolls, even now bursting open to tempt the hand of the picker.

Side by side with this leading product of the South may be seen broad acres of tall corn, with leaves already brown, and golden ears hanging gracefully, ready to be plucked by the shucker who drives his team and cart in this forest of fodder through which his cattle will roam all winter and grow fat upon the rattling leaves. Fields of luxuriant alfalfa are on either side of the track, and great watermelon patches, on which the luscious fruit lies so thick that it would be impossible to drive a team across without crushing monsters weighing from forty to sixty pounds each.—Christian Intelligencer.

Time for Serious Reflection.
"When does a young man commence first to think seriously of marriage?"
"Usually about two months after he's married."—Philadelphia Inquirer.