

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER XI.

I hear once more the harsh grating of a prison key behind me, and I am fain to groan aloud as I lean against the wall. All is dark before my eyes, whilst my anguished soul cries, "Lost! Lost! God-forsaken!"

Suddenly I feel a rough hand grasp my shoulder. I am swung forward, and find myself the center of a score of faces, all peering and grinning into mine.

I realize that I am in a general cell; that these are my fellow prisoners, and the wrathful blood leaps to my head. I shake myself free and turn fiercely to see who has dared to molest me. In my present desperate mood I am not to be trifled with.

My looks fall on a short, broad, powerfully built man in the black sheepskin cap of a Cossack, under which a pair of bold eyes glitter and dance like wild-fire. He stands before me now, with his broad, brown hands on his sides, his body thrown back, and both attitude and mien bespeaking insolent defiance.

"Confound your impudence! What mean you?" I roar.

"I merely wish to look at you, brother," he replies with cool deliberation. "I am interested, we are all interested in our brother in affliction."

"You insolent, presuming hound!" I gnash on him in fury. The laugh that goes round makes it blaze up like oil on flames. I make a rush so violently and unexpectedly on the Cossack that he staggers back, and but for those behind him would have fallen.

A hubbub of voices is raised: "Go on! At him! Show your mettle, little father! Embrace, brothers! At him! At him!"

The Cossack has regained his balance. His huge nostrils swell out, his breath rushes through them with a snorting noise like a horse. He bends his head forward as does a bison preparing for attack. In another moment he has darted on me, and his preternaturally long arms encircle my middle like bars of iron.

"Squeeze him! Hug him! Well done, Yerack!" shriek the voices, accompanied with such noises as are used to encourage fighting dogs. I draw in my breath, and lifting the Cossack off his feet, fling him from side to side to try and shake him off, but in vain. He clings to me like a bulldog. I cannot fight a man whilst he hangs to me like this, so we struggle together silently, neither gaining an advantage for full five minutes; until a sudden movement on my part brings us both to the ground, I on top of my adversary. And now he looses his hold, and instantly I catch the gleam of steel!

My hand closes on his wrist like a vise. I wrench the weapon from his grasp and fling it from me.

"Coward!" I hiss, and deal him a blow on the head that makes it rebound, like the cracking of a cocoon against the floor.

His limbs relax. A deep groan escapes his breast, and I am free to rise. I do so, and stand gasping for breath and looking down on my prostrate foe. His jaw drops, and his black eyes roll up, exhibiting the whites, giving him the ghastly semblance of death. And now that my passion has spent itself, I shudder with disgust at my own folly and degradation.

"I fear you have finished him," observes some one.

"Served him right!" growls another. "He is a coward and a traitor!"

"Yes, yes, serve him right!" join in the rest. "You have acted like a true man! You are of the right sort."

Their compliments only increase my disgust. What care I for the opinion of such as these? I make no reply, but stalk over to the furthest corner of the cell and fling myself down on one of the inclined boards that are ranged round the wall.

I watch them draw the insensible Cossack to another board, and leave his brow with water from a pitcher. Almost immediately he revives and sits up, seeking me with his roving eyes. When they have found me, he rises and staggers toward me.

"I am a hound and thou art a brave man!" he says hoarsely. "Forgive me; it was the evil one prompted me to use the knife. He had possession of me and I knew not what I did!"

He waits not for my reply, but suddenly leaves my side, picks up the knife from the floor where I had hurled it, and returns it to me.

"Take it," he urges, "it is thine! I smuggled it in concealed in the folds of my sash. Slay me with it if thou wilt. My life is thine!"

As he speaks thus, his voice shakes with emotion and his dark face works strangely. I am touched with the man's contrition in spite of myself.

"Keep the dagger," I say, "it may be useful to thee, and give me rather thy hand!"

"Remember my words: My life is thine!" he reiterated. "Thou hast bought Yerack, body and soul!"

And without another word, without giving me the chance of expressing the regret that is on my lips, that I should have taken his harmless sport so badly, he goes back to his board and stretches himself on it. His fellow prisoners crowd round him with questions and remarks, but he regards them not, and turning to the wall, remains perfectly still.

In a few minutes they have forgotten us both. A tall, lean Jew sits apart, numbing to himself, and swaying his body to and fro. Ere long the loud, long-drawn moans of the Cossack mingled with the general din.

Thus the weary hours flow sluggishly merging into each other, until a break comes in the shape of a couple of warders bearing an enormous pall of cabbage soup, which they dole out to us in tin vessels, and a basketful of black bread, in rations.

I had wondered where I should get my next meal. Little thought I that it would be supplied to me free of charge by the Russian government.

After supper the warders light two oil lamps that hang high up against the wall. They illuminate with a murky yellow light the motley scene. For a time the games are renewed; coarse jests

are bandied, followed by loud guffaws; songs with rollicking choruses are sung to the beating of feet; then gradually the boards are filled. A few linger wrangling over a game, until the disputed point is decided by a majority, and they too seek repose.

Vainly I toss from side to side. My gloomy musings are interrupted by the appearance of the Cossack, gliding toward me in the dim, yellow light. He squats himself noiselessly on the floor at my head, and gazes at me silently for some minutes. I am the first to speak.

"I am sorry I hurt you," I whisper. "Forgive me, Yerack! I might have taken your harmless jesting in better part."

"Name it not," he whispers back. "It would have served me right hadst thou dashed out my brains. Wilt thou tell me," he murmurs, falling into the familiar second person which seems natural to him, "why thou art here?"

I hesitate. Shall I tell this man my strange, eventful story? Though I know, or think I know that it lies not in the power of any man to help me in my dire strait, yet it will be an unspoken relief to me to unburden my mind to a sympathetic listener. And there is that in this man's manner which inspires me with the conviction of his good faith.

"Hast thou heard of Vladimir Alexandrovitch Lubanoff?"

He starts and stares at me. "All Russia has heard of him," he replies. "I am he."

CHAPTER XII.

As I utter the words the Cossack gazes at me as if I were a ghost. For a moment he seems to be smitten dumb with amazement. His under lip drops. Presently a flush of color rushes to his swarthy cheeks and a strange light to his eyes. He raises his cap and bows his head before me as if I were a king.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" he murmurs. "I believed not the rumor of thy marvelous escape. There is truly nothing too strange to happen in this strangest of worlds. Tell me about it, I pray thee."

Then in low tones I relate to him my history. When I have come to an end he clasps his brow with his broad fingers, and loses himself for fully ten minutes in profound thought. Sometimes he draws a heavy breath, as one does when encountering some obstacle that must be overcome. At last he looks up.

"I have hope," he says. "Be of good cheer, my noble brother. Listen," he says. "One of the warders about the prison is a friend of mine. He is a Cossack, though he has donned the government uniform, and we come from the same district. My term of imprisonment expires to-morrow, and if money and old acquaintanceship fall to win him over, I am not the son of my mother. I know my Cossack. I will arrange in him the slumbering longing for the wild free life of the Steppes. I will make the sight of a uniform hateful to him, and discipline an unendurable yoke. Then I will tell him of thee. The Cossacks love generosity and worship bravery; moreover, he is ever ready for adventure. Nor is gold without its charm for him, and I have the wherewithal to bribe him. Only wait patiently until we have laid our heads together and planned. And when time is ripe we will act!"

Again he wrinkles his brow and seems to think deeply with his eyes on the ground, and again he bends toward me to pour into my ear the result of his cogitations.

"In a few hours, probably, thou wilt be led before the Prefect for private examination. Encourage the suspicion that thou art an important political offender, then they will most likely put thee in a private cell—or, better still, confess at once who thou art, and thou wilt make sure of solitary confinement. Under no circumstances canst thou gain aught but time by withholding thy name; it must be discovered sooner or later."

"Be it so," I respond resolutely. "I will follow thy counsel."

At this juncture the gaunt figure of the Jew rises in the opposite corner, and his mumbled words reach us. Yerack gives my arm a squeeze. "Courage! Hope!" he murmurs, ere he glides back to his board.

Yerack is gone. He was removed from the cell an hour ago, throwing toward me a significant glance as he passed out. And now again the door of the cell is opened. This time for me, and I am led along several corridors, down a short flight of stone steps into an ante-room. I find myself standing at the end of a long table.

Opposite me in an armchair sits a little, gray man, in the undress uniform of a general. At a glance I ascertain that the Governor occupies another armchair somewhat apart and that Andrei Piotrovitch and the two gendarmes who took me in custody are also present.

The little gray man, who is of course the Prefect, eyes me with severe fixity out of a bush of fuzzy gray hair in a manner that is intended to strike me with awe.

"In the first place," he begins, "please to inform me whether the name on this envelope," here he lifts Maruscha's letter from the top of some papers that lie before him, "Waldemar Nicolalvitch Alikanoff, is your real name or an assumed one?"

"It is an assumed one," I reply promptly.

"Humph!" he ejaculates. "Ah—indeed! Perhaps, as you seem disposed to be candid, you will also inform me by what name I may with confidence have the honor of addressing you?"

"Certainly. My name is Vladimir Alexandrovitch Lubanoff."

If a smoking bombshell had fallen into their midst it could not have created a greater sensation. An amazed exclamation arises to every lip, followed by a stir as of a sudden breeze among the trees. Andrei Piotrovitch is the first to break the silence that succeeds.

"Ha!" he exclaims. "Hinted I not so, my uncle? I recognized him, and mine is the reward! You must confess, Vlad-

imir Alexandrovitch, that I recognized you?"

"The reply I cast on him a look of scorn. 'Hold thy prating tongue, Andrei,' I hear the Governor whisper, as he flushes deeply, 'for thou wilt compel me to expose thy lies!'"

Meanwhile the Prefect has recovered himself.

"You admit that you are the Vladimir Alexandrovitch who by some marvelous mischance escaped the fate you so richly merited?" he questions.

"I am that man," I answer firmly, "who suffered—yes, suffered to the full the death he was condemned to die! I was hung. I endured the shame of it, the pain of it, even to the final death-throe! I satisfied justice that demanded my life; for I was dead. A Higher Power than the mighty Czar himself restored me my life! This life I now hold I declare to be mine by the gift of God! I had a right to do my utmost to preserve it, and he who would rob me of it commits a theft on the living God!"

"The State of which you are the enemy, Vladimir Alexandrovitch, must decide that question," says the prefect. "Meanwhile we must consign you to prison until we have communicated with the authorities in St. Petersburg. Your case is out of our jurisdiction. Your examination will take place where your heinous offense was committed, and the authorities there must pronounce your sentence. Officers, withdraw your prisoner!"

The gendarmes are leading me away when the Governor steps forward, and taking one of them aside, says something to him in a low, impressive voice. The man salutes, and rejoining us, we pass out. My guard conducts me to the right and we enter another part of the prison. Here a warder joins us and we tramp on, the air becoming even more oppressive with damp, the walls showing patches of vivid green mould and gray mildew as we advance.

At the extreme end of the corridor we pause at last. One of the heavy oaken doors is opened. I enter a cell which has the air of a charnel house. The door shuts behind me with a groan, the key is turned in the ponderous lock and I am alone.

(To be continued.)

SHOWER BATH FOR FIBBERS.

Children of the Flowery Kingdom Do Strange Penance.

Among the many curious customs that offer such endless source of interesting study to the westerner traveling in Japan perhaps there is none that arouses his interest so much as that which obtains throughout the flowery kingdom among the rich and poor alike of washing away their children's lies by a species of shower bath that is a cleanser of the physical as well as the moral being, says the Detroit Tribune.

Abutions may play a large part in every form of Japanese worship. Before the shrine which is to be found in almost every home there is a sort of crude bathtub made in the stone floor. The water for these is supplied from pipes which send a heavy stream down from the roof. Seated before the altar in the middle of the "tub" the prevaricating culprit is made to suffer the penalty of his many lies.

The volume of water comes dashing down upon his defenseless head with a force that would make a robust American lad "see stars." But the Japanese liar knows there is no other way to appease the wrath of the injured god of truth, so he succumbs to the inevitable with a much better grace than that with which his western brother takes his whipping, and sits before the shrine of his family divinity reading aloud for the benefit of a number of bystanders the long list of lies that has brought him to this uncomfortable pass.

The shrine before which this moral water cure takes place resembles those which are so common in the houses of Catholic countries. The decoration of flowers and numerous candles is much like that with which the pious Italian adorns the altar of the virgin or of his patron saint. Only the hideous little squatting figure of the Japanese god shows that this is an infidel shrine. In the morning the reverent head of the house puts a cake, a little heap of rice and a sprig of green upon the altar, an offering intended to propitiate the god and draw down his blessing upon the family. When darkness comes a little lighted lamp is placed beside the idol to cheer him in the long hours of the night, during which, according to Japanese belief, he faithfully guards the household from all harm.

Cane Seats for Railroad Cars.

The plush seat is the central evil which the Kentucky board is attacking. It has been placed under State ban, and the board proposes to indict every railroad official it can reach in the State who can by any possibility be held responsible for operating cars with such seat coverings. Either leather or cane is permitted as a substitute. The requirement extends both to sleepers and day coaches.

There is no question but that the plush seat is one of the most receptacles for filth that could be devised. The dust that blows in through the open car windows is caught and held fast, and if any disease germs are in the air they are pretty sure to find a camping-out place on the plush until a human victim comes along.

Leather seats are not open to any such sanitary objection, but they are hot and often uncomfortable, and not at all to be compared for downright ease with the cane seats, which are used in tourist sleepers and the least pretentious cars. Another good seat covering is of linen, which can be taken off and cleaned at frequent intervals.—Chicago Record.

Caught on the Rebound.

Slowboy (at summer resort)—I am going to the post office, Miss Peachy. Shall I ask for you?

Miss Peachy—Of course you may, Mr. Slowboy, but it isn't necessary to go to the post office. You will find papa down in the billiard room.



LITTLE STORIES AND INCIDENTS

That Will Interest and Entertain Young Readers.

The Busy Child.

I have so many things to do, I don't know when I shall be through.

To-day I had to watch the rain Come sliding down the window pane.

And I was humming all the time, Around my head a kind of rhyme.

And blowing softly on the glass To see the dimness come and pass.

I made a picture with my breath, Rubbed out to show the underneath.

I built a city on the floor; And then I went and was a War.

And I escaped from square to square That's greenest on the carpet there.

Until at last I came to Us; But it was very dangerous.

Because if I had stepped outside, I made believe I should have died!

And now I have the boat to mend, And all our supper to pretend.

I am so busy every day, I haven't any time to play.

—Pittsburg Press.

easy of solution.

The center of one of the handkerchiefs has only to be slipped under the loop made by the other handkerchief where it is tied about the wrist, and the loop thus made carried over the hand.

The two of your friends together in this way and follow the directions given. You will soon catch the idea of how to quickly separate them.

Children of the Wilds.

Captain Jermann, of Rio De Janeiro, who recently returned from a journey into the rubber districts of east Bolivia, almost in the heart of Central America, visited a town in the very interior, so far from civilization that it required a horseback ride of three days to get to it. There he found two schools for boys and one for the girls of the place, but only one teacher, who was an old half-breed.

"But," says Captain Jermann, "the children were just as good and well behaved as if they were enjoying the best educational chances in the world. They were so polite as the most cultured people in the outside world, and were eager to show me attentions, without, however, pressing them upon me. They never entered a house, not even a shop, without knocking at the door or the side and obtaining permission to come in. After this permission was given they always took off their shoes, which they left outside."

He Had a Coincidence.

"Johnny," said the teacher, "can you tell me what a coincidence is?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Johnny. "We've got one at our house."

"Well, what is it?" asked the teacher.

"Twins," was the prompt reply.

Teeth that Would Not Ache.

"What shall I get you for your birthday?" asked a father of his 5-year-old daughter, who was suffering from toothache.

"I'd like some teeth like mamma's, so I can take 'em out when they ache," replied the observing miss.

A Grass Widow.

Little Margie—Mamma, the lady up stairs is a widow, isn't she?

Mamma—Yes; that is, she's a grass widow.

Little Margie—Why, mamma, did her husband die of hay fever?

AMERICANS IN CUBA.

Large Industries Passing Into Hands of Progressive Business Men.

The real estate and mines of Cuba, as well as new manufacturing industries, are going into American hands. Some Spanish-speaking Americans, American born, but naturalized Cubans, have told the writer that already 40 per cent of the Cuban land is owned by Americans. This probably is an overestimate, but the truth lies in that direction. During the terrible war years of large plantations of from 5,000 to 10,000 acres were driven by the butcher, Weyer, into the cities. Supplies arose to starvation prices, for 200,000 people starved to death. Their plantations were useless. Spaniards burned their sugar plantations, destroyed their buildings, and even cut down their mango trees, leaving nothing to support life. Rich planters mortgaged their land to the utmost to get the necessities of life. Once the war was over, they found themselves prostrated, unable to get from under mortgages. The result has been that vast tracts of the best land in Cuba have been on the market for one-tenth their value fifteen years ago. Americans with capital have bought thousands of such plantations, as well as smaller ones, in some instances subdividing and selling to smaller investors, in others turning by their own industry a wilderness into fruitful fields. At Banos is the second largest sugar plantation in Cuba, operated by capitalists from Boston. It shipped last year 150,000 bags of sugar of 320 pounds each. A number of others are measurably as prosperous. There are, at present, no sugar refineries in Cuba. All sugar is shipped out crude. But as refined sugar costs much more in Cuba because of shipment to the United States and return, plus the price of refining, already plans are on foot for refining plants there, where sugar cane grows sixteen feet high, needs planting but once in twelve years, and two crops a year are cut. In Havana are three shoe factories, the first in Cuba, where shoes are made by machinery fit for a man to wear—for a Cuban shoe is an instrument of torture. In all Cuban cities are many factories for making shoes by hand in Cuban fashion. One of the proprietors of these complained to the writer that the Havana factories were ruining his business, and would that of all his fellow craftsmen. For the good of humanity, one would say who had tried to wear a Cuban shoe, may they do so speedily! The celebrated copper mines of Santiago Province, one of the richest known, have recently passed into the hands of an American syndicate.—Pittsburg Press.

Swore Like Seward.

Secretary Seward was an Episcopalian, and this story is told: On one of the occasions when President Lincoln's patience was tried by a self-appointed adviser, who got warm and used strong language, Mr. Lincoln interrupted him by saying, "You are an Episcopalian, aren't you?" And when asked why he thought so he said, "You swear just like Seward, and he is." That was Mr. Lincoln's way of getting rid of such advisers.

Swore Like Seward.

Mr. Conservatism gets more cunning and lays up more dollars than anybody we ever heard of.

SPEAKER CANNON.

Characteristics Which Make Him a Great Presiding Officer.

So far as keeping the House in a good frame of mind is concerned, Speaker Joseph Cannon has been the most successful presiding officer in many years. Mr. Carlisle was cold and unsympathetic. Mr. Cragg was timid and did not keep his side well in hand. Mr. Reed was strong, but his strength was that of an autocrat. Mr. Henderson was jolly, undignified, and ill-fitted for the task. Mr. Cannon may seem to lack dignity at times, but he has the absolute respect and devotion of the entire House, Democratic as well as Republican. They regard him as a sterling figure, and his very ruggedness and hatred of sham appeal to all who come in contact with him.

One of the secrets of Mr. Cannon's success lies in the practice he indulges in of keeping in close touch with the House membership. He makes a



SPEAKER CANNON.

study of every man on the floor. When an important bill is up in committee of the whole, instead of remaining in the Speaker's room, he is on the floor, listening to the debate and observing how each man acquits himself. If he is not in committee of the whole he is in the cloak room smoking or chatting. Sometimes it is the Republican cloak room, and sometimes it is the Democratic cloak room.

What "Lloyd's" Really Is.

How many newspaper readers who find daily references in the news dispatches to "Lloyd's" have any clear idea as to the exact nature of that famous British institution?

Perhaps the most of them have a vague impression that it is a huge marine insurance concern, having a large measure of control—unofficial, but real—over the shipping regulations of the world. The great corporation which still retains the name of its founder of Elizabethan days and which has had its headquarters in the Royal Exchange in London since 1774 has nothing to do as such with marine insurance or the taking of risks and paying of losses, but its members have. It is, in fact, a great maritime exchange, incorporated in recent years by parliament, and it is to the world of shipping and through its members of marine insurance what the house of Rothschild is to the banking world.

Aside from the fact that Lloyd's affords marine insurance brokers a place of meeting with their clients, its great function is the collection, publication and diffusion of information with respect to shipping. It is the direct outcome of the enterprise of the keeper of a London coffee-house, Edward Lloyd was brought much in contact with seafaring men and merchants, and his foresight and enterprise led to the development of a system which has become world famous.

Huge Bible of the Tibetans.

The kah-gyur, or Tibetan bible, consists of 108 volumes of 1,000 pages each, containing 1,083 separate books. Each of the volumes weighs ten pounds and forms a package twenty-six inches long, eight inches broad and eight inches deep. This bible requires a dozen yaks for its transport and the carved wooden blocks from which it is printed need rows of houses, like a city, for their storage. A tribe of Mongols paid 7,000 oxen for a copy of this bible. In addition to the bible there are 225 volumes of commentaries, which are necessary for its understanding. There is also a large collection of alleged revelations which supplement the bible.

Careless of Honors.

Pastor Knelp, the famous discoverer of the "barefoot cure," who was appointed chamberlain by the pope, cared little for the honor. He did not even take the trouble to open the letter announcing the appointment and first learned of the honor conferred upon him by the arrival of deputations at the Woerselhofen cloister to congratulate him. He declined to be addressed, however, as "monsignore." It was with difficulty that he was persuaded to leave his retreat to go to Rome to thank the pope.

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Mr. Conservatism gets more cunning and lays up more dollars than anybody we ever heard of.



A diamond studded little dog— Upon his Uncle's job Tom sees. O, say, he cried, I'd like to know is that a watch dog—tell me please?

All Have Their Toys.

There isn't a place in the world where the children have no toys. Even in Australia among the degraded and animal-like bushmen, the children have toy fire sticks which they rub to produce flame. In the Polynesian islands the baby savages have toy blow guns.

Eskimo land is a perfect Santa Claus land of ivory and bone toys, many of which are made to move, so that the little Eskimos have dogs harnessed to sleds and little seals and whales and canoes which are so carved that the tiny man in them bobs back and forth as if he were paddling, and will even throw a harpoon.

But all savage children try to copy new things. Now, in the very heart of Africa, travelers find the little negroes playing with pieces of wood that they have carved into imitation of the rifles that they have seen the white men carry. They even stick a ball of cotton in the muzzle end to imitate the smoke.

The Siamese Twin Puzzle.

Here is a lot of fun which some of our younger readers have perhaps never tried on their friends. Look at the picture and see if you can find out a way for the two boys to get apart. Two small girls who were tied together in this manner rode home in a street car together, slept all night over it and did not guess the riddle



STRUGGLING TO GET APART.

until after breakfast the next morning. The antics which they cut up in trying to get apart furnished fun not only for themselves, but for a whole room full of people.

To make it really exciting, a number of couples should be set going at once and a prize offered to the pair who first get apart. Such a wriggling and twisting into all sorts of absurd positions as this will result in could hardly be equaled by a nest of boconstrictors.

And the problem is, after all, quite