

By Order of the Czar

A Story of Russian Power

By MARCUS EASTLAKE

CHAPTER XIII.

I look around me and shiver. The solid masonry of the walls is cooling with damp, which envelopes me, enters my lungs, and literally permeates my being, drowning my spirits, lowering my vitality and extinguishing hope in my breast.

A warden brings me my allowance of bread and a jug of water. He informs me that I can have tea if I choose to pay for it, and shrugs his shoulders when I tell him that I have no money. On lighting my lamp he leaves me.

After a while I stretch myself on the bed, where I lie staring at the light. At times I groan aloud, I wring my hands, whilst the sweat of anguish pours from my body. And thus the night wears away—the ghastly, fevered night, whose hours seem to lengthen out more and more as they crawl toward the pale dawn.

To-day is little more than a wretched repetition of yesterday, only I feel less. I have become apathetic. I have lost the mental energy to think strongly. For hours I sit on one spot and move not, or I stand at the grated window gazing vacantly at the river and the passing craft.

About midday the sky darkens and it begins to rain. It is a straight, steady land-rain without wind, and the monotonous patter of the drops on the water comes to me, mingled with the creaking of the raft and the husky calls of the boatmen.

After my midday meal they take me to walk for a quarter of an hour in a court that is partly covered in, and again I shake off my apathy to observe the faces of the two gendarmes who pace at each side of me. They are stolidly personified. My eyes dart now at an official, now at a passing warden, with a vague hope that the Cossack may throw himself in my way and give me a significant glance or sign. In vain. And we are treading again the damp corridor and the gendarmes leave me in my cell.

The clock in the chapel tower of the prison tells the hour of midnight. I count the strokes mechanically, sitting on the steel with my head against the humid wall. The final stroke is still quivering in the air when I hear a faint click.

Am I dreaming, or is there really a pair of gleaming eyes looking at me through the trap in the door? Is that in very truth a hand holding something toward me? I stagger to my feet, staring with all my might.

The hand beckons impatiently. In two strides I am at the opening! I grasp cold, rough iron! It is a file! A face is advanced so that I can see a long drooping mustache, as black as jet, and a pair of red lips which pronounce one word, "Work!" And the trap is closed. I clutch it, I hug it—the little instrument that is to give me liberty! The reaction from the deepest depths of despair to sudden, full-fledged hope, for a moment overpowers me. I sink on the edge of the bed and find relief in a succession of gasping sobs. Then I get mastery of my emotion, and rise with compressed lips, burning to commence my task. First I deliberately put out the light, after which I mount the stool and work. Even when the dawn began to glimmer I dare to continue it, until every bar is seen through top and bottom, leaving only a thin, unfilled surface to the inside, so that a single thrust will cause the entire grating to give way.

I am examining my handiwork with comparative composure, for I have grown confident during my undisturbed labors, when the unexpected click of the opening trap makes my heart stand still with sudden dismay, whilst the sweet turns key cold on my brow. I have, however, the presence of mind to let the file slip up my sleeve. I dimly describe the points of the Cossack's black mustache thrust through the aperture. I noiselessly speed toward him.

"How much have you done?" he whispers.

"Finished," I whisper in reply.

"Good. Give me the file."

I hand it to him and he thrusts it into the breast of his uniform. Again he bends down to me and murmurs the one word: "To-night!"

I go over to the bed, and fling myself on it with a sigh of supreme satisfaction. "It is done—my task is finished. With a single thrust of my hand I can make for myself an outlet from this foul den to liberty. A few hours and I shall be free!"

It is the very longest day of my life! And when at last the shades begin to gather and enshroud me, I cast myself down on my bed utterly spent with the burden of it, and my worn-out system finds relief in sleep. When I awake the lamp is burning once more, and my supper stands on the table. I eat up all the food that has been brought me, as I have done systematically all day, and take a long pull of water. After which I seat myself opposite the door and wait breathlessly, braced for the moment of action.

Suddenly, without the slightest warning, I am startled by the grating of the key in the rusty lock, and directly the Cossack enters; changes the key to the inside, and locks us in! For the first time I see my stranger friend. A single glance at him inspires me with confidence. Small, almost dwarfish; meager, colorless, his face and form are yet instinct with energy and nerve.

"Ready?" he whispers.

"Quite," I respond promptly.

"You can swim?"

"Like a fish."

"Come then. You first; I follow. Straight across where Yerack awaits us."

I am on the stool preparing to thrust out the grating.

"Toward you! Toward you! Pull the bars inside," whispers the Cossack. "It will make less noise. And by all the saints, the light!" he darts to the lamp and puts it out, and is standing below me ready to receive the grating from my hand.

Already I am drawing myself up to the stone edge. My head is through the aperture when—what was that? A familiar click! The Cossack has me by

the legs and is actually pulling me back!

I hear him say:

"Ah, just in time, Anton Antonovitch! Not quite smart enough, my brave. Ha, ha!" as he drags me to the ground.

And while I am struggling, dazed and bewildered, to my feet he has rushed to the door, unlocked it, and by the dim light that illuminates the corridor I see him seize some one by the arm, jerk that some one into the cell and lock the door again.

"Just in time! Just in time to help me," I hear him repeat, with a strange, wild, exultation in his voice.

Then there is a short, fierce struggle in the dark. The bed creaks under a falling body. . . . A cry of "help!" that is instantly smothered, followed by gasps and groans.

What means it? Who is the vanquished? Is it the Cossack who lies groaning on the bed or that other one? In vain my eager eyes try to pierce the darkness. It is as black as pitch. The Cossack's voice reassures me at length.

"I have him!" he pants.

Another groan and a gurgling sound.

"You were going to spoil our little game—what?" says the Cossack with cutting irony; and there is an unpleasant thud as a head being knocked against a wall.

"Where are you, my brother? Come here quick!" I feel my way toward the voice, and my hand comes in contact with the arm of the Cossack.

"In my trousers pocket, you will find a match box. Strike a light," he dictates.

"I must see what I am doing here."

I comply, and see a ghastly sight. On his back on the bed, his body convulsed, his face purple and swollen, his tongue protruding from his mouth, is the warden. The Cossack's fingers are tightly twisted in the collar of the prostrate man's uniform, and the Cossack's knee is on his chest. He is to all appearances lifeless.

"He will tell no tales," observes the Cossack. And the smile with which he regards his senseless foe is truly diabolical.

"Yet he might come round. Shall I make sure?" He draws a small stiletto from the bosom of his coat and suspends it in mid-air.

I stay his hand.

"Slay him not," I say. "If he be really dead, God speed his soul. If the life is still in him, leave him the chance of it. His death will not benefit us."

"Humph! less trouble to have given him his quietus," he murmurs, hiding away his knife again. "We cannot leave him thus. We must tie the dogs on us sooner than we expect."

While he talks he loses no time. He produces some strong cord from his pocket and binds the man's wrists together behind his back. After which he proceeds to gag his gaping mouth with a handkerchief. "It is cleverly done," he chuckles. "I was quick. Yes. In an instant I had him! Once he had got away to give the alarm, though we might still have escaped by the window, I would not have given the snuff of a candle for our chances of landing at the other side save into the arms of the gendarmes. It was even the best thing that could have happened that he should have come; for now, I reckon, they will not be likely to find out that the bird has flown before 5 in the morning, and by then they will find it a difficult task to get near enough to him to strew salt on his tail."

While speaking his quick, nervous fingers are busy tying the knot at the back of his victim's head.

"There now, thou art fixed up—warranted not to go off!" he continues apostrophizing the insensible man. "Adieu, my friend, and a good recovery! And now out with the light and let us start. Yerack will think that all is lost."

In less than five minutes I am cleaving the cold, black water, striking out blindly for the opposite shore. In my rear comes the Cossack, gasping and spluttering.

The river is not wide, and I already feel the bank. Groping for a hold, my hand comes in contact with a branch, by which I pull myself up. The Cossack is close on my heels.

"Catch hold of this branch!" I whisper, bending it down to where I hear him gasping.

So hastily is it snatched from me that I almost lose my balance. I recover myself to find a dark object rising at my feet.

"Onward!" he pants, taking the lead.

A little more scrambling, and we are on the road. The Cossack hurries me along a few paces. Then a form steps out from the trees and silently confronts us. It is Yerack!

CHAPTER XIV.

My companion utters one word in a language unknown to me, and Yerack retreats into the black gloom of the trees. There is a stamping of horses and the muffled rolling of well-greased wheels. My sight having grown accustomed to the darkness, I can make out a "troika" and some sort of vehicle as they emerge on the road. We quickly climb into the latter, which proves to be a cart laden with sacks of wool. Yerack springs to the seat in front, and away we speed as only a Russian "troika" can.

Nothing says Yerack to either of us until between us and Kovno lie many versts, and the barren land is all about us. Suddenly he observes:

"Well, brothers, so far, good. And now for the transformation scene. Thou, Vladimir Alexandrovitch, as thy hands are white and thou hast something of a clerical air about thee—here he gives vent to a sly chuckle—"art to be transfigured into Russian priest, with purple, silk kaftan and flowing locks; not forgetting a beard that would grace a patriarch. It rests with thee to play thy new role well. Art thou satisfied with it?"

"Yerack, my friend, I have no words wherewith to thank thee!" I exclaim warmly.

"Bah, I merit no thanks. If I save thee, it will be life for life. I like to be level with people. And for thee, brother Kalatch, as the leopard cannot change his spots, and thou art always a Cossack confessed, every inch of thee, I

have procured a Cossack's dress. In any other thou wouldst surely look like a Cossack in disguise. With a bushy beard from ear to ear and a quarter of an 'erebik' off thy mustache, methinks thou wilt pass."

"I would thou wouldst make haste and let me rid myself of these soaking duds!" replies Kalatch, with irritation, while his teeth knock together like castanets. "I am certainly sickening of aque!"

He gropes among the sacks and brings up two bundles, which he presents to us respectively. It is one of the most difficult things imaginable to make a complete change of toilet in a cart on top of a pile of sacks, while three horses are tearing full gallop with you through the darkness. However, necessity has been known to make a man accomplish wonders.

What bliss it is to lie still among the sacks with a dry skin, after the wet clothes have been stowed away, and listen to Kalatch describing in his terse, powerful diction, his adventure with the warden! And how Yerack enjoys it! "Good—good; well done!" he interpolates, slapping his leg.

Meanwhile a dull, smoke-gray streak has been widening on the horizon, and now I can make out the details of Yerack's dress where he sits before me on the front of the cart, and also the head of Kalatch emerging from the sacks, surmounted by the tall Cossack's cap. His profile is between me and the horizon, so that his hooked nose and the bushy beard are marked out against the growing light. Though they continue to converse together, I no longer gather the substance of their conversation, for I think of Maruscha, and how soon I may get a letter dispatched to her. I cannot help feeling a consuming anxiety about her, though I keep assuring myself that she is safe from interference until the inquiries subsequent to my trial in St. Petersburg should be instituted.

"Yerack," I say at length, "where are we at present? It is necessary that I get to a post town soon as possible."

"We are about ten versts from Borlitch," replies Yerack, without looking around.

"I must send a letter from Borlitch," I say.

"Bah—nonsense!" exclaims Yerack, impatiently. "This is not a time to write letters! It is bad—bad—to send writing through the post! I believe not in this letter writing, it has lost many a man!"

"Yerack, when I tell thee that the safety of one to whom I owe my life is endangered through me and that the individual knows not of it, therefore without being warned cannot escape it, thou wilt recognize that I cannot argue this point with thee."

The Cossack gives a dissatisfied grunt, but says no more about it. Presently he informs me that we pass through Borlitch on our way to Vilna. "Where thou wilt take train direct to Kovno," he adds quietly, as if it were the simplest thing in the world my passing the frontier.

"To Kovno?" I repeat in amazement. "Yes, that is the program. And thou wilt arrive safe and sound in the Prussian town without a single hindrance. The officials at the frontier will doff their caps at thee and say, 'God speed thee, Holy Father!'"

A long silence ensues. Kalatch's head disappears from the range of my vision, and ere long loud snores rise at intervals near me. Yerack slackens the pace of the horses to a steady trot, and thus we proceed until we come to a long bridge thrown over a stream. He pulls up at the side of the road.

"Come, rouse thee, Kalatch," he cries. "Get down and stand by the horses' heads."

Kalatch, still half asleep, stumbles over the edge of the cart, and mechanically does as he is told.

"Now give me the clothes, Vladimir Alexandrovitch."

I dive among the sacks and fish up the two wet bundles. He takes them from me, and looks anxiously up and down the road. Having satisfied himself that it is deserted, he hurries up stream and is soon lost to sight in the tree-fringed windings. In about ten minutes he returns without the bundles.

"Sunk them in a pool," is the laconic reply.

I am on the road, stamping up and down to stretch my legs, about which the long silken skirt of the kaftan is flapping. My appearance must be startling, for as Yerack catches sight of me, he utters a little cry of surprise, which attracts the attention of Kalatch, and he, too, laughs at me. I break into a laugh at the open-mouthed wonder on their faces.

(To be continued.)

The Old Lady and the Lawyer

A certain lawyer, famed for high charges, had incurred the enmity of an old lady on account of the same. Wishing to get even with him she consulted him about drafting her will.

As she was a very wealthy old lady without near relatives, she had many charitable associations to benefit, and the accurate draft of the will required much patience, skill and time. Among the provisions she made a generous bequest to this lawyer and nominated him executor. After the execution of the will she called for her bill, whereupon the lawyer, with the vision of ample fees in the prospective settlement of the estate, and the memory of the generous bequest, told the old lady that under the circumstances he should charge nothing, but finally to satisfy her business scruples, made out a receipt in full to date for one dollar, whereas the smallest sum he could have properly charged would have been one hundred dollars.

The old lady marched home with her will, set herself to work, copied it out carefully word for word, leaving out the bequest to the lawyer and nominating a new executor.

In the course of time she died, and the disgust of the lawyer at the contents of the will was so great that he inadvertently let out the secret, to the huge delight of his brother lawyers.—Leslie's Monthly Magazine.

Too Sanguine.

Edna—And after our marriage I am going to keep a cook.

Belle—You are too reckless, my dear.

Edna—Reckless?

Belle—Yes. You should say you are going to try to keep a cook.

BITS FOR BOOKWORMS

George Cary Eggleston's juvenile, "Running the River," has been adopted by the Kansas Pupils' Reading Club.

"Oriental Aphorisms," gems of East Indian philosophy, compiled by Emily Palmer Cape, a 16 mo. packed with condensed wisdom, is among the recent books of the Grafton Press, New York.

A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, will publish at an early day "Beaconsfield: A Romance of Queen Victoria's Reign," by an Englishman whose identity is not revealed. It is apparently a compound of historical novel, romance, biography and study of society and of politics, and, most of all, a study of that most extraordinary man of the nineteenth century, Benjamin Disraeli, at once statesman, man of the world, sport, romancer, dreamer and prophet.

"A Dictionary of the Dramas," a guide to plays, playwrights, players and playhouses in the United States and Great Britain from the earliest times to the present, a two-volume work by W. Davenport Adams, is nearly ready for publication by the J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. Indeed, the first volume is out. Attention is given to managers, scenic artists, musical composers, critics and writers about the theater, as well as for the theater.

Jack London in appearance suggests rather the sailor than the man of letters, the "Sea Wolf" in his milder moods rather than his assumed biographer. Of medium stature and weight, he is broad shouldered, well muscled, sturdy, and of a sea breezy carriage, with the roll of the mariner in his gait. He is smooth shaven, has a firm, square set chin, keen gray-blue eyes, and a mouth with what a gushing admirer terms "pictured corners."

Among his hobbies are kite flying and Socialism. He is fond of sailing, and does much of his writing aboard his sloop yacht in San Francisco Bay.

Hall Caine, it is stated, spent three months in Iceland accumulating data and local color for his latest novel, "The Prodigal Son." He then induced an Icelandic to accompany him to Switzerland, Paris and the Riviera, where the other scenes of the story are laid, for the purpose of observing the impressions that these places made on a native of that remote land of ice and snow, and also that he might employ his companion as a sort of perpetuating encyclopedia of information, to whom he could refer when his own memory failed him, or when new points to be settled arose in the planning of the book.

Certain critics of a Sherlock Holmes turn of mind have assumed to detect in Anthony Hope's latest novel, "Double Harness," a reflection of the author's changed views of matrimony since his own marriage a little over a year ago. The married Londoners in the book do not, it is true, find their paired condition in all respects satisfactory, and the volume does not present the usual cleverly cheerful characteristics of most of Mr. Hope's previous work. Unfortunately for the ingenious theories of the literary sleuths, it now is stated that "Double Harness" was written a year before the author's wedding, and was, indeed, begun before he had even met the young woman who is now his wife and who recently presented a little daughter to him.

A SUBWAY RAILWAY STATION.

One of the Handsome Kiosks Erected at Budapest.

The cut illustrates one of the handsome kiosks erected as stations of the Budapest underground railway. In comparison with these tasteful structures, with their graceful domes and

STATION OF UNDERGROUND ROAD.

crowns shaped cupolas, their miniature towers, stained glass windows and artistic colored tiles, the so-called kiosks at the entrances of the New York subway seem especially banal and unprepossessing. Budapest was the first city to adopt the underground trolley, having enjoyed the use of the great traffic convenience for eight years. The line is only two miles in length, but it is a great improvement over anything yet attempted either in America or in England.

Personality.

Behind nearly every great public man there is an army of secretaries, clerks, inspirers, understudies, wire-pullers. Very often the great man is but the voice; the thought, the proposals, the information, have all been supplied by this unseen cohort of obscure colleagues. One can easily exaggerate the amount of merit that belongs to either the one class or the other of those co-operative laborers. The great man usually gets the better part of the bargain; he alone is large in the public eye, and the public is, of course, too willing to pay court to the

glory it sees, is also only too ready to make little of those whose fortunes are obscure, and who remain without the semblance or the reality of power. But, on the other hand, it is easy to run to the opposite extreme. The public man is too fiercely worked to do the mere drudgery of his position; it is not, and ought not to be expected of him. And, after all, it is his personality that gives life and vigor and impressiveness to the dead bones of facts and arguments which have been prepared for him by the hands of others.

ONE WHO REMEMBERED.

The New Member Could See Why the Old Member Was Popular.

Mrs. Bates joined the club just as Mrs. Ames left it—the very week, indeed, after the Ames went to Arizona. The newcomer was aware that Mrs. Ames had been prominent in the social life of the town, and expected to hear a good deal about her; but she owned to herself a little surprise, at first, at the form of the tributes rendered at this impromptu memorial meeting.

"I wonder if we shall get any birthday letters after this?" the secretary, for one, had said. "Mrs. Ames always remembered when her friends' birthdays came," she explained to the stranger, "and she never failed to send a little note of love and best wishes."

"Do you suppose there's any one of us who could tell the favorite flower of every other member?" the minister's wife asked, with a laugh that yet had a little quiver in it. "I couldn't. I own, but I'm sure our friend could have done it. If ever any one was ill, it was her favorite flower that Mrs. Ames always sent."

"There's no one left who can 'happily' our old folks the way she could," another added. "How much good it used to do mother to call there! Mrs. Ames remembered all her little peculiarities and likings, and never omitted the small attentions that elderly people appreciate, and a half-hour spent with her used to make mother feel cheerful and comfortable for a week or two."

"Mrs. Ames never forgot anything bless her!" the minister's daughter declared, energetically.

Not a word about Mrs. Ames' wealth and beauty, her social pre-eminence or the high position of her family! The stranger wondered a little. But the secretary summed up the whole matter a moment later.

"We loved her because she did remember all the little things—that make so much of life," she said. "I suspect anybody can do a heroic deed, or make a generous sacrifice once in a while; but the people who make this earth worth living on are the people who are always ready to give the 'cup of cold water' naturally and gracefully and with a loving heart."

YOUTH'S COMPANION.

STORY OF THE KOHINOOR.

How the Famous Gem Came to Be Among English Crown Jewels.

In a recent speech in London Lord Curzon of Kedleston, the Viceroy of India, referred to his predecessors in the government of that empire as men who "worked between an earth like iron and a sky like brass, laying the foundations of empire." None worked more valiantly than the great pioneer of material and moral progress, the Marquis of Dalhousie, to whom is mainly due the unity of the Indian Empire. As governor-general Lord Dalhousie introduced the telegraph, built railways, constructed canals, reduced postage, and organized departments of public instruction.

It is to Dalhousie that the English owe their possession of the great Kohinoor diamond, a jewel of famous history. In 1813 Runjeet-Singh, an Indian potentate, extorted it from a political refugee. After the second Sikh war in 1849 Lord Dalhousie confiscated it on account of the heavy debt owed to the East India Company by the Lahore state.

Dalhousie's latest biographer, Sir William Lee-Warner, says that the company imagined it was to become their property, but the governor-general sent it to Queen Victoria. Those were adventurous times, and it was only by great care that the jewel reached its destination. For weeks the governor-general wore it on his person night and day.

The tassels of the armet in which the diamond was set had been cut off to diminish its bulk, and Lady Dalhousie had enclosed the armet with its jewel in a leather bag. This bag was sewed into a cashmere belt lined with chamol, which Lord Dalhousie wore constantly.

Two dogs, Baron and Bender, were chained to the governor-general's bed, so the safety of the jewel was insured while he slept. As an additional precaution, no one save his wife and one near relative knew its whereabouts, and it was finally safely conveyed to Queen Victoria.—Youth's Companion.

Reason for Marrying.

They were talking about a friend of hers who had married a bishop stationed in Kamchatka or Timbaktu or some other heathen land.

"I never could understand why she married him," said the young woman.

"She seemed the last girl on earth to marry a bishop. She cared so much more for having a good time than she did for church work and sewing circles."

"Girls are pretty wise nowadays," said the young man, "and they generally have a good reason for marrying the way they do. A girl friend of mine married a doctor so she could always be well for nothing, and maybe this girl married the bishop so she could be good for nothing."

TRUMPET CALLS.

Ram's Horn Sounds a Warning Note to the Unredeemed.

ATTENTION pays.

Faith makes fit.

Life is all a lesson.

Frost leads to fruits.

No prayer, no praise.

Worship fits for work.

Sorrow is God's stern.

The Father of lights makes the family of light.

Rattle brains always make the most racket.

Pardoning another may cure our own pride.

The first to shout for war are the last to enlist.

A straight sword is better than a crooked cannon.

Many divine appointments look like disappointments.

The steps of greed do not lead to the throne of grace.

The rejection of the messenger does not rescind the message.

Some churches are solid simply because they are frozen stiff.

Satan can always make better use of a saint than of a sinner.

A broom on earth may be better than many an anthem in heaven.

It's a poor bargain when the head grows at the expense of the heart.

The man who never prays except when he petitions never prays at all.

No method of raising money can be right which succeeds in debasing mankind.

An inn is apt to be only a name to its enemies and the only name to its friends.

No matter how great the profits the balance is always on the wrong side if the soul is not enriched.

It is more important to get people doing religious service than it is to get them attending religious services.

God's angels are never apparent lest we should depend on them, nor ever absent lest we should despair without them.

MIX FIGURES OF SPEECH.

Parliamentary Orators Addicted to a Careless Use of Tropes.

British oratory seems to have no distance for mixed figures of speech. Various "bulls" of this sort have often been laid at the door of members of Parliament. Here are some modern instances of parliamentary lapses of this sort:

"Sir, we are told that by this legislation the heart of the country has been shaken to its very foundations."

"Among the many jarring notes heard in this house on military affairs this subject at least must be regarded as an oasis."

"The interests of the employers and employed are the same nine times out of ten—I will even say 90 times out of ten."

"Our tongues are tied, our hands are fettered and we are really beating the air to no purpose."

"I will now repeat what I was about to say when the honorable member interrupted me."

"The West Indies will now have a future which they never had in the past."

"A thorny subject which has long been a bone of contention among us."

"A slumbering volcano which at any moment a spark might set aflame."

"The honorable member would denude us of every rag of the principles which we have been proclaiming from the house-tops."

"Ah! The honorable member opposite shakes his head at that. But he can't shake mine."

Barristers are usually credited with possessing accuracy of speech, but some expressions recently reported indicate that they are capable of a blundering use of words. A member of the bar, in his opening speech for the defense, said:

"Gentlemen of the jury, the case for the crown is a mere skeleton, for, as I shall presently show you, it has neither flesh, blood, nor bones in it."

A well-known member of Parliament informed the house that an "oral agreement" is not worth the paper it is written on.