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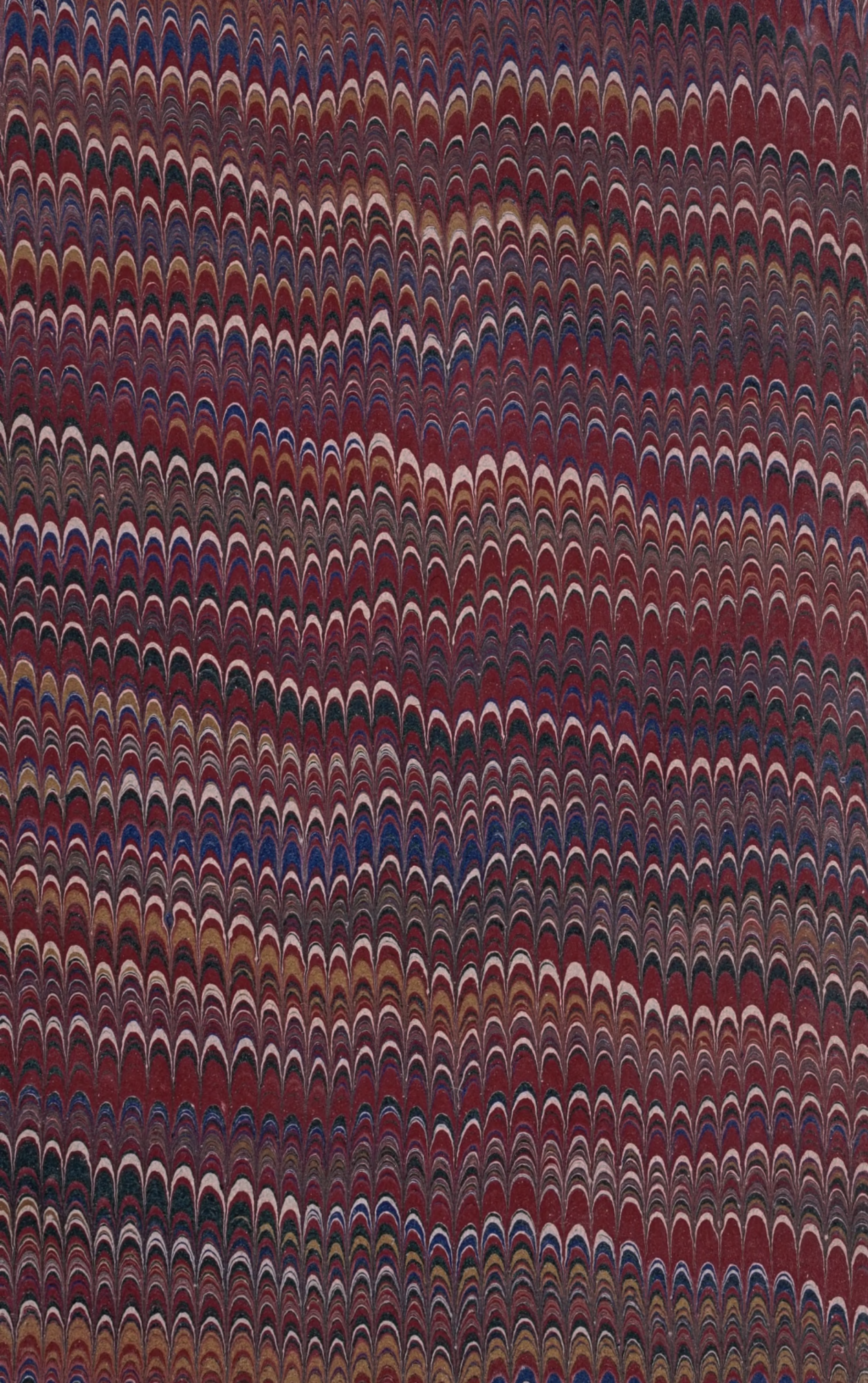
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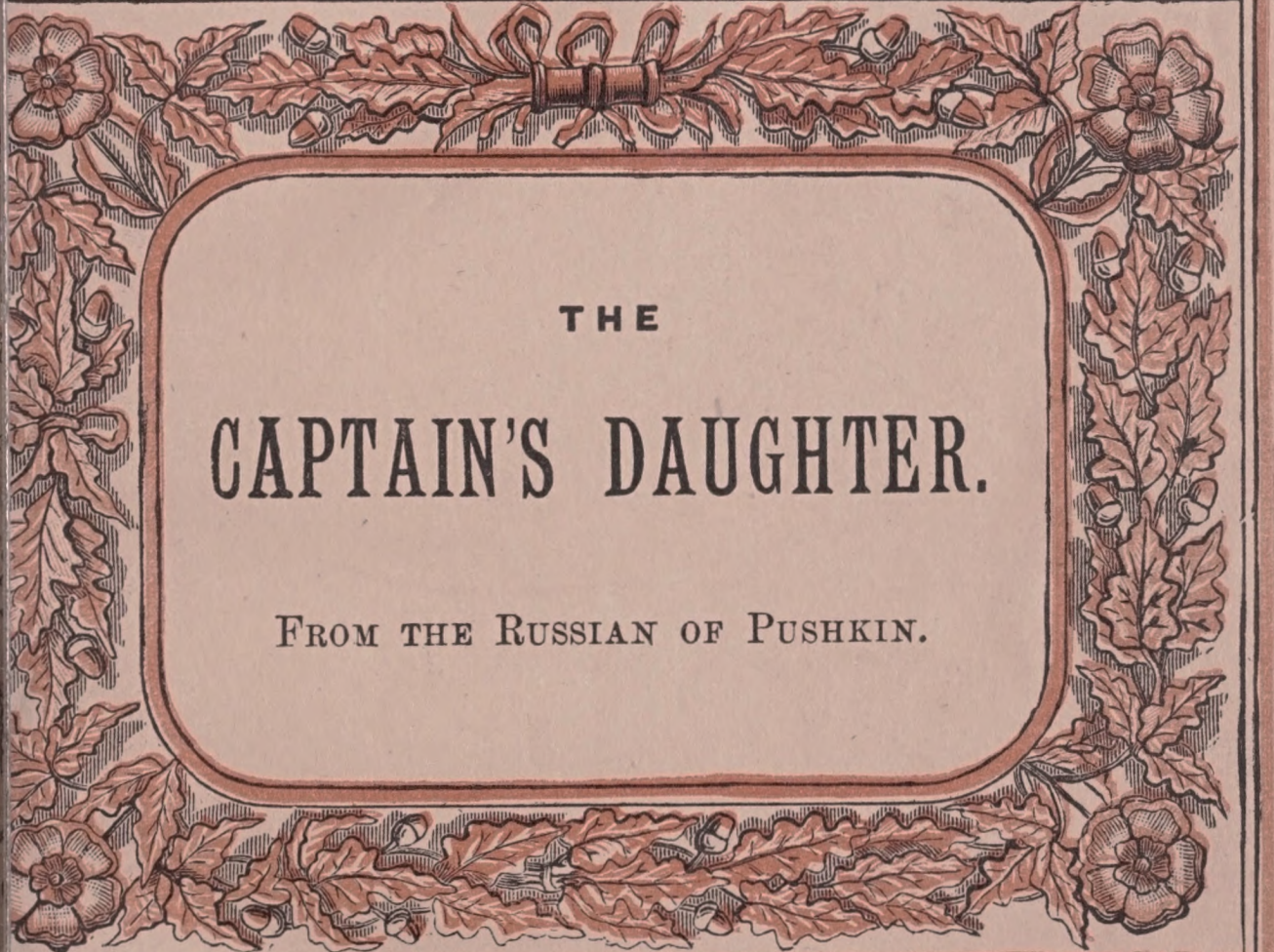
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THE
 CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER.
 FROM THE RUSSIAN OF PUSHKIN.

17 TO 27 VANDEWATER ST
 NEW YORK

George Munro

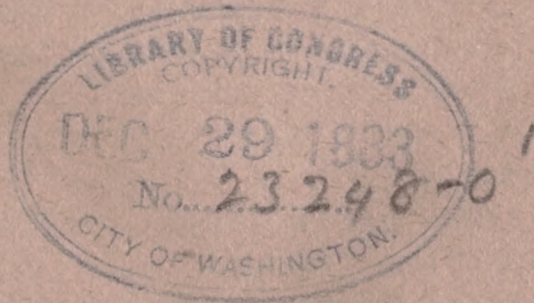
PUBLISHER

THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

Aleksandr Sergeevich
FROM THE RUSSIAN OF PUSHKIN.

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Scandinavia

"Keep thy honor from thy youth."
A By-Word.



NEW YORK:
GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER,
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The Captain's Daughter.

CHAPTER I.

AN ENSIGN IN THE GUARDS.

MY father, Andrew Grinioff, served in his youth under Count Minich, and in the year 17— retired from the army with the rank of lieutenant-major. Since then he lived on his estate near Simbirsk, where he married the daughter of a country gentleman in the neighborhood. My parents had nine children, but all my brothers and sisters died in infancy. I had a commission promised me in the Semenovsky Regiment, thanks to Prince B——, a near relative of ours. I was first to finish my studies. Education at that time was very different to what it is now. At five years of age I was confided to the care of the groom, Šavielitch, who had been promoted to the office of tutor as a reward for his good conduct. Under his tutorship I learnt my Russian alphabet (I was then in my twelfth year), and was a very good judge of a greyhound. At this epoch of my life my father engaged a Frenchman for me, Monsieur Beaupré, who was brought from Moscow with a yearly cargo of wine and Provence oil. His coming occasioned great displeasure to Savielitch, who muttered to himself: “Why, the child, thank goodness, is washed, combed, and fed; what’s the use of spending one’s money on a “Mossoo,” as if there were not enough of one’s own servants.” Beaupré had been a hairdresser in his own country, then a soldier in Prussia, and after that came on to Russia to be an *ootcheetil* (tutor) without in the least understanding the meaning of the word. He was a good-natured fellow, but thoughtless and licentious to a degree. His greatest weakness was his passion for

the fair sex, and this tenderness of heart gained him many kicks and blows, which often made him sigh and groan for days together. Nor was he (to use his own expression) "an enemy to the bottle," which, in plain Russian, meant he liked taking a drop too much. Wine was served at dinner, but as only one glass was allotted to each person, and as it often happened that my tutor's glass was overlooked, Beaupré very soon took to drinking Russian brandy, and even began to prefer it to the wines of his own country, finding it a deal healthier for the stomach. We made friends in no time, and although he was bound by agreement to teach me French, German, and all the sciences, he thought it better to learn to speak Russian of me, and then each of us went about his business. We lived on the best of terms, and I had not the slightest wish for another mentor, but fate shortly parted us in the following manner.

The laundress Palashka, a good-looking girl, one day fell at my mother's feet, tearfully complaining that "Mossoo" had insulted her. My mother at once informed my father of the fact; he made sharp work of it, and immediately sent to fetch the "rascally Frenchman." He was told that "Mossoo" was engaged in giving me a lesson. My father came to my room.

Beaupré was just then enjoying the sleep of innocence; I was very busy. You must know that a map of the world had been brought me from Moscow. It was hanging on the wall, it was of no earthly use, and had for a long while been a source of great temptation to me on account of its size and the excellent quality of its paper. I resolved to make a kite of it, and taking advantage of Beaupré's sleep I commenced operations. My father entered the room just as I was tying a string to the Cape of Good Hope. On witnessing my geographical occupation he pulled my ears, rushed at Beaupré, awoke him most unceremoniously and overwhelmed him with a shower of reproaches. In his confusion Beaupré endeavored to rise, but could not; the unfortunate Frenchman was dead drunk! My father seized him by the collar, kicked him out of the room, and the very same day turned him out of the house, to the inexpressible delight of Savielitch. Thus ended my education.

I continued to lead the life of a child, chasing pigeons

and playing at leap-frog with all the boys in the yard. Meanwhile my sixteenth birthday had come and gone. Then my fate changed. One autumn day my mother was busy making honey preserves in the parlor whilst I sat licking my lips and watching the boiling honeycombs. My father was reading the "Court Calendar," which he received yearly. This book always produced a strange effect on him. He read it with extreme interest, and it stirred up his bile in a wonderful manner. My mother, who knew by heart all his peculiarities and habits, always tried to hide this unlucky book whenever she possibly could, so that it often happened my father did not set eyes on it for months together. But then, if by any chance he *did* find it, he would not let it slip out of his hands for hours. And so my father was reading the "Court Calendar," from time to time shrugging his shoulders and repeating half aloud: "Lieutenant-general! Why he was only a sergeant in my company!" "A knight of both orders of Russia! Why it is not long ago since we——" Suddenly my father hurled the calendar at the sofa and fell into a brown study which boded no good. Presently he turned to my mother:

"How old is Peter, Mrs. Grinioff?"

"Close upon seventeen," answered my mother. "Pet was born the very year that Aunt Nastasie became blind of one eye and——"

"That will do," interrupted my father; "it is time he entered the service. He has had enough running about the maid-servants' rooms, and scrambling up to pigeon-holes."

The idea of parting with me so upset my mother that she dropped the spoon into the pan, and tears trickled down her cheeks.

His words had a very contrary effect on me, and it would be impossible to describe my delight. The thought of entering the army was co-mingled in my mind with dreams of liberty and a life of pleasure in St. Petersburg. I already imagined myself an officer in the Guards, which in my opinion was the height of human happiness. My father neither liked to revoke his decisions nor postpone their accomplishment.

The day for my departure was fixed. On the eve of it

my father stated that he intended to give me a letter to my future chief, and asked for pen and paper.

“Don't forget,” said my mother, “to give my compliments to Prince B——, and tell him to be kind to my Peter.”

“What nonsense!” replied my father with a frown. “What have I to write to Prince B—— for?”

“But you said it was your intention and pleasure to write to Pet's chief.”

“Well, what of that?”

“Why, Pet's chief is Prince B——, since he is enrolled in the Semenovsky Regiment.”

“Enrolled! What do I care about his being enrolled, indeed! Peter is not going to St. Petersburg. What would he learn of discipline in the capital? Spend his money and sow his wild oats. No! let him go into active service, learn to endure hardships, and have a taste of powder; in fact, be a soldier and not an idle fop in the Guards. Where is his passport? Give it me.”

My mother looked for my passport, which she always kept in a box with my christening robe. She presented it to my father with trembling hands. My father read it over attentively, spread it out on the table before him and began writing his letter. I felt very curious. Where was I going to be sent to if not to St. Petersburg? I could not take my eyes off my father's pen, which moved somewhat slowly over the paper. At length he finished writing, sealed up the passport with his letter in the same envelope, took off his spectacles, and beckoning me to approach him, said: “Here's a letter for General Andrew R——, my old friend and comrade. You are going to Orenburg to serve under his command.”

And thus all my dearest hopes were blighted!

I no longer felt rapture at entering the service, but on the contrary considered it a heavy trial. Instead of the gay life of St. Petersburg, I was doomed to bear a dull humdrum existence in an out of the way place. But protesting against it was out of the question. Next day the traveling *keebeetka** drove up to the door. In it were packed my trunk, a strong box containing a tea service and plate, several parcels of white loaves and pies—the

* *Keebeetka*—a kind of tilt-wagon.

last tokens of home indulgence. My parents blessed me, and my father said to me: "Good-by, Peter; serve faithfully him to whom you pledge your oath. Obey your chiefs; don't cringe to them; don't be over-anxious for promotion, but don't refuse it when offered; and bear in mind the saying: 'Take care of your dress whilst it's new, and preserve your honor from your youth.'" My mother, all in tears, begged me to be careful of my health, and commanded Savielitch "to look after the child." I was wrapped in a hareskin coat, and over that a fox fur. I took my place in the keebeetka with Savielitch by my side, and started on my journey weeping bitterly.

I reached Simbirsk the same night, and was obliged to stay there four-and-twenty hours for the purchase of things I wanted. I stopped at the tavern. Savielitch went to the shops early next morning.

Tired of looking out of window into the dirty by-street, I sauntered through the rooms. On entering the billiard-room I perceived a tall gentleman of about thirty-five years of age, with a long black mustache, attired in a dressing-gown, and holding a billiard cue in his hand and a pipe in his mouth. He was playing with the marker, who drunk off a glass of brandy each time he won, and crawled under the billiard-table each time he lost. I watched the game for some time. The longer it lasted the oftener were repeated the divings under the table, until at length the marker remained there for good. The gentleman then spoke a few solemn sentences over him, as though he were uttering a funeral oration, and turning to me he proposed my playing a game. I refused, pleading ignorance. This, to all appearances, he seemed to consider very strange. He cast on me a look of pity, but nevertheless condescended to converse with me, whereby I learnt that his name was John Zourine, that he was a captain in a hussar regiment, and was now in Simbirsk to enlist recruits. He invited me to dine with him, soldier fashion, on whatever luck should send us. I consented with pleasure. We sat down to dinner. Zourine drank a good deal, inviting me to do the same, saying that I must get used to the military service. He told me many anecdotes of army life, which made me roar with laughter, and by the time we rose from table we were very good friends indeed. He now offered to teach

me to play at billiards, which he said was a game every soldier ought to know. During a march, for instance, when you arrive in a small town, how are you to spend your time? Impossible to go on all day thrashing the Jews! There's nothing for it but to go to the tavern and have a game at billiards, and in order to play you must learn. I felt deeply impressed with this truth, and commenced to learn with great diligence. Zourine loudly encouraged me, wondered at my rapid progress, and after a short time proposed playing for money, merely a penny a game; not for the gain, he said, but simply to play for something, as it was the worst possible habit to play for nothing. I willingly consented to this, and Zourine ordered some punch to be brought, persuaded me to take some, repeating that I really *must* get used to the military service. What was the service without punch? I obeyed. Meanwhile our game went on. The oftener I sipped the punch, the more reckless I grew. The balls continually flew overboard. I grew excited, scolded the marker, who was counting all wrong, doubled the stakes, in a word behaved exactly like a boy just out of thrall-dom. The hours flew quickly by. Zourine looked at the clock, put down his cue, and informed me that I had lost a hundred rubles. I muttered some excuse or other. Zourine interrupted me with: "Oh! never mind; I can wait, and meanwhile let us pay a visit to Areenooshka."

What more shall I say? I finished my day as badly as I had begun it. We supped with Areenooshka. Zourine filled my glass repeatedly, each time reminding me that I must get used to the military service. When we rose from supper I could with difficulty stand on my legs. At midnight Zourine escorted me back to the tavern. Savielitch met us on the doorstep, and uttered a cry on seeing the too evident proofs of my zeal for the military service!

"What is the matter with you, dear Master Peter?" he asked in piteous tones. "Where did you manage to get so tipsy? Oh dear! oh dear! was there ever such a sin heard of in my time!"

"Silence, you old fool!" I answered with a hiccough. "You are certainly drunk yourself—go to bed, do."

Next morning I awoke with a headache, recollecting as in a maze yesterday's proceedings and regretting my zeal for the military service. My meditations were cut short

by Savielitch, who entered the room with a cup of tea for me.

“Well, Master Peter,” said he, shaking his head, “you are beginning early to sow your wild oats! And whom do you take after? Not your father or your grandfather, they never were drunkards, and nothing stronger than *kvass** has ever passed your mother’s lips. And who is the cause of it all? That d—d Mossoo Beaupré, always running in to Antipiconia. ‘Madame, brandee, eef you pliss!’ Much good *he* taught you. What was the use of that dog of a tutor—a Frenchman! a heretic?”

I felt ashamed of myself and turned away from him saying: “Leave me, Savielitch, I don’t want any tea.” But it was no easy matter to stop Savielitch’s tongue when it had once launched out. “You see, Master Peter, what the consequences of drinking are: your head feels giddy, you have no appetite. A man who drinks is good for nothing!”

At this moment a boy came in bringing me a note from Captain Zourine, I opened it and read as follows:

“DY DEAR GRINIOFF,—Please send by bearer the hundred rubles you lost yesterday at billiards. I am in great need of money.
Your’s, ready to serve,

JOHN ZOURINE.”

There was nothing to be done but to pay. I put on a most unconcerned air and turning to Savielitch, who had the care of my money, clothes, and actions, I ordered him to hand over a hundred rubles to the boy.

“How! What!” asked the astonished Savielitch.

“I owe it,” I replied as coolly as possible.

“*You owe it!*” continued he, growing more and more astonished. “But, sir, when had you the time to contract this debt? There’s some trickery in this. Do as you please, sir, but I shall not pay the money.”

I thought to myself that if I did not at this decisive moment get the upperhand of this obstinate old man I should never be able later on to shake off his guardianship, so giving him a proud look, I said: “I am your master, and you are my servant; the money is mine, I lost

* *Kvass*—a most refreshing Russian beverage made of flour, malt, and water.

it because I so willed it. I order you to obey me and not to reason about the matter."

Savielitch was so astounded at my words and manner that he clasped his hands and stood rooted to the spot.

"Well, why don't you go?" I shouted angrily.

Savielitch burst into tears.

"Master Peter, my dear young sir!" he tremulously exclaimed; "don't kill me with grief, but listen to the advice of an old man: Write to this scoundrel that you were but jesting, that you have no such sum of money to pay. A hundred rubles! Great heavens! Tell him your parents ordered you always to play for nuts."

"Enough of this nonsense," I interrupted him severely. "Bring me the money immediately or I will dismiss you from my service."

Savielitch threw me a look of profound sorrow and went to fetch the notes.

I felt sorry for the poor old man, but I wanted to subdue him and become a free agent; to prove to him I was no longer a child.

The money was forwarded to Zourine. Savielitch hastened our departure from the "rascally tavern," and soon announced that the horses were ready.

With an uneasy conscience and a mute repentance I left Simbirsk, without bidding good-by to my teacher, and hoping never to meet him again.

CHAPTER II.

THE WANDERER.

MY traveling thoughts were not very pleasant. My loss, according to the value of money in those days, was not a trifling one. I could not but be conscious that my conduct at the Simbirsk tavern had been very foolish, and I felt guilty as regards Savielitch. All this tormented me. The old man sat near the coachman, sullen and silent, with averted face, occasionally giving a grunt. I wished to make my peace with him, but knew not how to begin. At last I said:

"Well, Savielitch, let us make friends and be at peace again. I confess my beetka was going down a narrow

road, or wrongs. I was reckless and wild yesterday and have offended you. I promise to be wiser in future and obey you. Now don't be angry, there's a good fellow."

"Oh! my dear Master Peter," answered he, with a deep sigh, "it's with myself I am angry; I am to blame from the first. How could I leave you in the tavern all by yourself! It is all my fault, all mine, dear Master Peter. How shall I ever meet my master? What will he say when he hears that his child drinks and gambles."

To comfort Savielitch I gave him my word of honor that I would never spend a farthing again without his consent. He gradually grew calmer, but continually shook his head, and muttered to himself: "A hundred rubles! A hundred rubles! This is no trifling matter!"

Dreary wastes, hillocks, and ravines spread on all sides. Snow covered everything. The sun was setting. The keebeetka continued to move over a track marked out by peasants' sledges. Suddenly the postboy began to look about him, and at length taking off his cap, he turned to me, saying:

"Master, will it please your honor to turn back?"

"What for?"

"The weather is not to be trusted; the wind is rising—see how it is sweeping up the snow."

"What does that matter?"

"Look over there."

"I see nothing but the white plain and a clear sky."

"And that—that cloud—over there."

On the horizon I could now discern a small white cloud, which I at first mistook for a distant hillock. The postboy explained to me that this cloud predicted a snow-storm.

I had heard of the terrible snow squalls in these parts, and that sometimes whole lines of sledges were buried beneath the snow. Savielitch was of the postboy's opinion, and advised turning back. But I did not consider the wind very strong, and feeling anxious to reach the next station in good time I gave the order to drive on at a quick pace.

The postboy whipped his horses, but still glanced uneasily toward the east. The horses went well at first, but the wind blew stronger and stronger. The little cloud became a big white mass, rose higher, widened, and soon

spread all over the horizon. Fine snow began to fall and suddenly came down in large flakes. The wind howled, the snow-drift raged. In a few moments the dark sky co-mingled with the sea of snow. Everything had disappeared from view.

“Well, master,” screamed the postboy; “mercy on us! Here’s the snowstorm!”

I looked out of the keebeetka. All was gloom and whirlwind. The wind yelled with such fierceness of expression as if it were inspired. We were buried in snow. The horses moved but slowly and at last stopped altogether.

“What are you stopping for?” I asked impatiently of the postboy.

“What’s the use of going on?” he replied, getting off his seat. “The Lord only knows where we’ve got to as it is. There’s no road to be seen and the mist is impenetrable.”

I began to scold him. Savielitch took his part. “Why not have listened to reason?” said he. “If you had gone back to the inn you would now be drinking your tea and could have rested till morning; the storm would then have passed over and we could have gone on. Besides, what’s the hurry? We are not going to a wedding!”

Savielitch was right, but there was no help for it. The snow was falling thick and fast. Quite a mountain of snow surrounded the keebeetka. The shivering horses stood with heads bent low. The postboy walked round the sledge and arranged the trappings for want of better occupation. Savielitch grumbled. I gazed in every direction, hoping to see some trace of road or dwelling, but could discern nothing but the misty turmoil of the snowdrift. All at once I perceived something black.

“Hi! postboy!” I shouted: “look over there. What can that be?”

The postboy gazed eagerly in the direction indicated.

“Heaven knows, master, what it is,” said he, taking his seat. “It is not a sledge, it’s not a tree, and it appears to move. It must either be a wolf or a man.”

I ordered him to drive toward it. It immediately advanced to meet us. Two minutes later we came up to a man.

“Ho! my good man!” shouted the postboy, “can you tell us where to find the road?”

“The road is here; I am standing on firm ground; but what good comes of it?” answered the wanderer.

“Listen, my good fellow,” I said, “do you know this country? Will you take upon yourself to guide us to some place of shelter for the night?”

“The country is well known to me,” replied the wanderer. “I have walked and driven over it scores of times, thank God. But then you see what weather it is. Nothing easier than to lose one’s way. Better stay where we are until the whirlwind ceases. It may soon clear up, and we can then find our way by the stars.”

His coolness raised my courage. I decided to trust to Providence and spend my night in the plain, when suddenly the wanderer jumped up near the postboy, saying:

“Yes, thank God, there is a dwelling near. Turn to the right, and drive on.”

“And why should I turn to the right?” asked the postboy, with evident displeasure. “It’s all very well for you, the horses are not yours; you risk nothing if we come to grief.”

I thought the postboy was right.

“Yes,” said I, “what makes you think there’s a dwelling near here?”

“Because the wind blows thence, and I can smell smoke, which means there’s a village not far distant.”

His shrewdness amazed me; I told the postboy to drive on. The horses stepped heavily through the deep snow. The keebeetka moved slowly, now rising over a snowhill, now falling into a deep hole, and swaying from one side to the other. It was very like sailing over a rough sea. Savielitch groaned and every now and then was jerked up against me. I let down the apron of the sledge and wrapped myself up in my fur cloak. I soon fell into a doze, lulled to sleep by the tossing about of the keebeetka.

I had a dream that I can never forget, and in which to this day I see something prophetic when I compare it with the strange events of my life.

The reader will excuse me, for most likely he knows by experience how natural it is for man to give way to superstition, notwithstanding all possible contempt for preju-

dice. I was just then in that peculiar state of mind and feeling when reality, giving way to fancy, mixes with it in the visions of first sleep. I imagined that the storm was still raging, and that we were wanderers on the snowy plain. I suddenly perceived some gates in front of us, and we drove into the courtyard of our country house. My first thought was that of fear, lest my father should be angry at my return and consider it an act of willful disobedience. I alighted from the sledge experiencing much uneasiness, when I saw my mother on the doorsteps, looking very sad indeed. "Hush!" she exclaimed, "your father is dying, and wishes to bid you farewell." Awestruck I followed her into the dimly-lighted bedroom. The bed was surrounded by the servants. I approached the bedside. My mother lifted the curtain and said: "Peter has arrived; he heard of your illness and came to receive your blessing." I knelt down and raised my eyes to the sick man's face. Instead of my father I beheld a peasant with a black beard, who looked at me quite gayly. "What means this?" I asked. "This is not my father. Why should I receive a peasant's blessing?"

"Never mind, Pet," replied my mother; "it is your *nuptial father*.* Kiss his hand and ask his blessing." I refused. The peasant jumped off the bed, seized an ax from behind his back and brandished it on all sides. I tried to rush away, but could not; the room was soon filled with corpses. I stumbled over them and slipped in pools of blood. The peasant called out to me in a caressing voice: "Don't be afraid of me, come and receive my blessing." Awe and amazement took possession of me. At this moment I awoke. The horses were at a standstill. Savielitch took my hand, saying:

"We have arrived, Master Peter."

I alighted from the keebeetka. The storm was still raging, though with less violence. It was quite dark. A man met us at the gate, holding a lantern under his cloak, and conducted us to a small but clean and dimly-lighted room. Our host, a Cossack from Yaïtsk, was seemingly a man about sixty, but still hale and hearty. Savielitch brought in my box containing the tea service, and asked

* The man who gives away the bride or bridegroom is in Russia "nuptial father."

for a light to prepare the tea, of which I had never felt in greater need. Our host went out to busy himself with necessary preparations.

“Where is the stranger?” I asked of Savielitch.

“Here I am, your honor,” answered a voice from above.

I looked up at the “under ceiling,”* and beheld a black beard and two glittering eyes.

“Well, my good man, are you not almost frozen?”

“How could I be otherwise, sir? I had a sheepskin coat yesterday, but to tell the truth, I pawned it to the owner of the tavern, as the frost did not promise to be very severe.”

Our host now made his appearance, bearing an urn with boiling water; I offered a cup of tea to the stranger and he came down from his shelf. He was very striking in appearance, about forty years old, of middle height and broad shouldered. His black beard had a few gray hairs in it. His large, sharp eyes wandered restlessly here and there. His face wore a pleasant, jovial, but roguish expression.

“Would your honor mind giving me a glass of wine instead? Tea isn't the sort of drink we Cossacks care about.”

I willingly acceded to his request. Our host took a bottle and glass from the cupboard, went up to the stranger, and looking into his face, said:

“So you are again in these parts. Where did you come from?”

The wanderer winked knowingly and replied:

“I flew into the kitchen-garden, I pecked at the hempseed; an old woman threw a stone at me, but missed her mark. And what are yours about, eh?”

“*Ours!*” answered our host, going on with this allegorical conversation:

“The priest is away and the devils are in the burial-ground.”

“Silence!” said the wanderer. “When rain comes then mushrooms grow, and when the mushrooms grow we

* The Russian peasants' homes have a second ceiling or wide shelf near the top one, to sit or lie on. They usually sleep on these under ceilings.

will find a basket for them. At present put your ax behind your back, for the forester walks abroad. Here's to your health, your honor."

With these words he took the glass, crossed himself, and emptied it at a gulp, then bowing to me returned to his shelf under the ceiling.

I could make nothing out of their pickpocket conversation, and only later I guessed it related to the affairs of the Yaïtsky Army, which had lately been worsted after the rebellion of 1772.

Savielitch had listened with an air of great displeasure; he eyed first the wanderer and then our host with evident suspicion. The inn stood quite by itself amid the steppes, far away from any habitation and looked very much like a den of thieves. But we were compelled to remain the night, going further was not to be thought of. Savielitch's uneasiness greatly amused me. Meanwhile I lay down on a bench and prepared to go to sleep. Savielitch rested against the stove. Our host stretched himself on the floor, and shortly after the hut was one chorus of snores and I fell into a dead sleep.

On waking next morning the storm had ceased. The sun shone brightly. The snow spread like a dazzling shroud over the wide steppes. The horses were ready. I paid the bill, which was so moderate that even Savielitch did not, as was his habit, dispute and bargain about it, and his suspicions of the night before seemed erased from his memory. I called the wanderer, thanked him for the assistance he had given us, and told Savielitch to give him half a ruble for brandy. Savielitch frowned.

"Half a ruble!" said he. "What for? Because we had the kindness to drive him up to the inn, I suppose. Do as you please, sir, but we have no half roubles to spare. If we have to pay for everybody's brandy we shall soon be in a state of starvation ourselves."

I could not argue the point with Savielitch. My money, as I had promised him, was entirely under his control, and yet I felt annoyed not to be able to prove my gratitude to one who had rescued me, if not from danger, at least from a most unpleasant situation.

"Very well," I said coolly. "If you refuse to give him the half ruble, give him something from my trunk—he is too lightly clad. He shall have my hareskin coat."

“Mercy on us, Master Peter!” exclaimed Savielitch. “What does he want with a hareskin coat? The dog will drink it away at the first tavern he comes to.”

“That’s no concern of yours, old man, whether I do or not,” said the wanderer. “His honor gives me a fur off his own back, it is his pleasure, and your duty as a servant is not to dispute but to obey.”

“You have no fear of God in you, you thief!” answered Savielitch angrily. “You see the child has no wisdom and you are glad to take advantage of his simplicity and rob him. What do *you* want with a gentleman’s hareskin coat? You couldn’t even get it on your clumsy shoulders.”

“Please not to reason,” said I to my servant, “but bring the hareskin coat at once.”

“Lord a mercy!” groaned Savielitch. “Almost a new coat! If it was to anybody worthy of it! But to a beggar and a drunkard!——”

Nevertheless the hareskin coat made its appearance. The peasant at once put it on. The coat, out of which I had had the time to grow, was indeed rather too tight for him. He somehow or other contrived to get into it, though the seams gave way. It made Savielitch groan on the spot when he heard the stitches bursting asunder. The wanderer was delighted with my present. He escorted me to the keebeetka and with a low bow said:

“Many thanks your honor! May God reward you for your goodness; I shall never forget it.”

We went our way, and I soon forgot all about the snowstorm, the wanderer, and my hareskin coat,

On arriving in Orenburg I went straight to the general’s. He was a tall man, bent with age. His hair was snow white. His shabby, faded uniform reminded me of the warriors in Empress Anne’s reign. He spoke with a strong German accent. I presented him my father’s letter. Glancing at the signature he looked up quickly, “My kod!” said he; “vass it long ago that Andrew Krinioff vas your atche, and now he hass so vine a yellow for his son! Oh! Time! Time!” He began to read the letter: “My dear Sir, I hope that your Excellency”— (“Why such ceremony? Foui isn’t he ashamed of himself! Etiquette is all ferry well, but one does not write so to an old friend!”)—“Your Excellency has not forgot-

ten"—("Hum!")—"and when the late Field Marshal"—"in the campaign and little Caroline."—"Ho! ho! Bruder! so he still remembers our old freaks!"—"And now to the point. To you I send my imp—" ("Hum!")—"Lead him with a rot of iron."

"What is a rot of iron, young man?" he asked turning to me.

"It means," I replied, putting on a most innocent air, "it means, to be indulgent, not too severe; give as much liberty as possible—that's what is meant by leading with a rod of iron."

"Hum! I see, I see!"—"Don't give him too much liberty." ("Oh! so it seems leading with a rot of iron means something different after all!")—"Joined to this is his passport." ("Where is it? Ah! here!")—"Write to the Semenovsky Regiment."—"Ferry well, ferry well. Everything will pe tone.") "Throwing off ceremony I embrace you like an old friend and comrade."—"Ah! he has come to it at last, &c., &c.)—Well, my tear," said he, finishing the letter and putting away my passport, "everything shall pe tone. You shall pe exchanged into the * * * Regiment, and to lose no time you shall start to-morrow for the Peelogorski Fortress, where you will pe under Captain's Mironoff's command, an honest and koot man. There you will have active service; there you will learn discipline. There is nothing for you to do in Orenburg. Amusement is not koot for young men. To-tay I hope you will come and tine with me,"

"Worse and worse!" thought I to myself. "What was the good of my having a commission in the Guards almost before I was born? What has it brought me to now? To a dull fortress on the borders of the Kirghese Steppes!" I dined with General R—— and his aid-de-camp. A strict German economy prevailed at his table, and I firmly believe that the fear of sometimes seeing an extra guest at his bachelor board was partly the reason of my hurried dismissal to the garrison. Next day I took my leave of the general and started for my new destination.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORTRESS.

THE fortress of Bielogorski was forty miles distant from Orenburg. The road skirted the steep shores of the Yaïka. The river was not yet frozen over, and its leaden-colored waves looked dull and black between its dreary snow-covered banks. Further on, the Kirghese Steppes spread far and wide. I fell into deep and sad thought. A garrison life presented but few attractions to me. I tried to picture to myself what my future chief, Captain Mironoff, would be like, and fancied him a severe, cross old man, knowing nothing beyond his military duties and ready to put me under arrest and on bread and water for the veriest trifle. Meanwhile day waned into twilight. We were driving at a quick pace.

“Are we still far from the fortress?” I inquired of the postboy.

“We are close to it. There it is; you can see it,” answered he.

I looked on all sides, expecting to see menacing bastions, towers, and ramparts, but could perceive nothing but a small village surrounded by a wooden fence. On one side of it stood two or three hayricks, partially covered with snow, and on the other side was a rickety-looking windmill.

“But where is the fortress?” I asked with astonishment.

“Why, there it is,” replied the postboy, pointing to the village, and upon this we drove into it. Near the gates I noticed an old cast-iron cannon. The streets were narrow and tortuous; the huts were low and mostly thatched with straw. I gave the order to drive to the commandant's house, and in a few minutes the keebeetka drew up before a wooden house standing on high ground close to a wooden church. Nobody came out to meet me. I entered the vestibule and opened the door into an ante-room. An old soldier was sitting on a table busily employed in sewing a dark blue patch to the sleeve of a green uniform. I bade him go and announce me.

“Oh, you can go in, my dear sir,” said he; “the masters are at home.”

I entered a clean room, arranged in the old-fashioned style. A cupboard with plate stood in the corner, an officer's diploma framed hung upon the wall, also several cheap pictures representing the capture of Keestreen, the choice of a bride, &c. An old lady, attired in a warm jacket, with a handkerchief tied under her chin, sat near the window. She was busily engaged in winding thread, which a one-eyed old man in officer's uniform held out on his outstretched hands.

“What is your pleasure, sir,” she asked, going on with her work.

I replied that I had come to serve in the fortress, and in duty bound wished to pay my respects to the commandant, Captain Mironoff—saying which I turned to the one-eyed old man, mistaking him for the commandant, but the hostess interrupted my pre-arranged speech.

“The captain is not at home,” she said; “he has gone to pay a visit to Father Gheracim, but I am his wife, so it's all the same, my dear sir, and I hope you will like us. Be seated, sir.” She called a man-servant and told him to fetch an under-officer. The old man's one eye glanced inquisitively at me.

“Allow me to ask,” said he, “in what regiment you have served?” I satisfied his curiosity. “And may I inquire,” continued he, “why you exchanged from the Guards to the garrison?” I replied that such was the will of my chief.

“Could it have been on account of misbehavior to an officer in the Guards?” went on my unwearied questioner.

“Hold your tongue, do!” said the captain's wife. “Don't you see the young man is fatigued from his journey, you are too much for him. Hold your hands straight! And you, my dear sir,” continued she, addressing me, “do not grieve that you have been sent to this out of the way place to be buried alive; you are not the first, nor will you be the last. You will get used to it and in time like it. It is almost five years now since Captain Shvabrin was sent here for murder, for I can call it nothing but murder. Heaven only knows what possessed him. I must tell you that he went a short way out of town with a lieutenant, and they took swords with

them and began sticking them into each other! Shvabrin pierced the lieutenant through the body; all this occurred in the presence of two witnesses into the bargain! Well, it can't be helped; these misfortunes will happen sometimes."

Just then in came the under-officer, a young and finely-built Cossack.

"Maximitch," said the captain's wife, "secure lodgings for this gentleman, and take care they are clean. By the bye, what is your name and surname, my good sir?" she asked, turning to me.

"Peter Grinioff."

"Take Mr. Peter Grinioff to Simeon Koozoff's. The rascal let his horse run into my kitchen-garden. Well, Maximitch, is everything going on right?"

"Yes, thank God, everything is quiet," replied the Cossack, "except that Corporal Prokoroff has been fighting with Oostenia in the bath for a pail of hot water."

"Mr. John Ignatich," exclaimed the captain's wife to the one-eyed old man, "go and find out which of the two, Oostenia or Prokoroff, is to blame. Maximitch will take you to your lodgings, Mr. Grinioff."

I bowed myself out. The under-officer led the way to a hut situated on the banks of the river; near the confines of the fortress. One half of the hut was occupied by Simeon Koozoff's family, the other half was given up to me. It consisted of one clean-looking room, divided into two by a partition wall. Savielitch began putting it to rights. I looked out of the narrow window. A dull waste spread before me. A few huts were scattered here and there. Chickens were wandering through the streets; an old woman holding a trough was standing on the doorsteps calling to some pigs, who answered her with friendly grunts. And this was the place in which I was destined to spend my youth! A feeling of profound grief took possession of me. I turned from the window and went to bed without my supper, in spite of Savielitch's remonstrances. He kept repeating, "Lord a mercy, he won't eat anything! What will my mistress say if the child falls ill?"

Next morning I was barely dressed when the door opened and a young officer entered my room. He was of middle height, with a very plain and bronzed but ex-

pressive face. "Excuse me," said he, speaking French, "that I come without any ceremony to make your acquaintance. I heard of your arrival yesterday, and my wish to see a civilized being was so strong that I could not resist paying you a visit. You will understand this feeling when you have been buried alive here as I have."

I guessed that he was the officer who had fought the duel. We soon made friends. Shvabrin was decidedly clever. His conversation was witty and amusing. He described to me, with much humor, all particulars respecting the commandant's family, the society of the fortress, and details of the country into which fate had brought me.

I was laughing heartily when in came the old soldier I had seen in the commandant's ante-room mending his uniform. He brought me an invitation to dinner from the captain's wife. Shvabrin said he would accompany me.

On approaching the commandant's house we noticed in the square some twenty old soldiers with long pigtails and three-cornered hats, standing all in a row, as if about to be reviewed. Facing them stood the commandant, a tall, vigorous old man, attired in a nankeen dressing-gown, with a night-cap on his head. When he saw us he came up and spoke a few kind words to me and then went back to his soldiers. We stopped to witness the drill, but he begged us to go on to his house, and promised to follow us there very shortly. "You will have nothing of interest to see here," he added.

The captain's wife received us very kindly and without any ceremony whatever; she was as much at her ease with me as if she had known me all her life. The old soldier and the servant girl Palashka were laying the cloth.

"Why, what a long time my captain is to-day over his drill!" said Mrs. Mironoff. "Palashka, go and call master in to dinner. But where is Mary?"

At these words a girl of eighteen, with a bright rosy face and silken hair combed straight behind her ears, which were crimson, entered the room. She did not please me much at first sight. I confess I had been prejudiced against her by Shvabrin, who had described her to me as a perfect idiot. Miss Mary Mironoff sat down in a corner of the room and went on with her sew-

ing. Meanwhile the cabbage soup was served. Palashka was again sent to fetch her master.

“Tell your master the soup is getting cold. The visitors are waiting. There’s no fear of the soldiers running away, he will have plenty of time to scream himself hoarse.”

The captain soon made his appearance, accompanied by the one-eyed old man. “Well, my dear,” said his wife, “the soup has been waiting some time, but I couldn’t get you to come in.”

“You see, my dear,” answered the captain, “I was busy drilling my men.”

“Oh, nonsense!” replied she, “you only say you drill the soldiers; they don’t get on a bit, and you don’t understand anything at all about it. You had much better stay at home and say your prayers. My dear friends, pray be seated.”

Mrs. Mironoff talked without ceasing and overwhelmed me with questions: Who were my parents? Were they alive, and what did their fortune amount to? When I told her that my father had three hundred serfs, she exclaimed: “’Tis no trifle! and so there really are such rich people in the world? As for us we have only one serf, the girl Palashka. Yet, thank God, we manage somehow to exist. Our only anxiety is for Mary. She is at a marriageable age, and what is her dowry? Nothing! Lucky for her if she finds some good man to take her penniless, if not she will have to remain single all her days.”

I glanced at Miss Mary, her face was scarlet, and the tears dropped into her plate. I felt sorry for her, and hastened to change the topic of conversation.

“I have heard,” said I, rather *mal-à-propos*, “that the Bashkirs are preparing to attack your fortress.”

“Where did you hear that?” asked the captain.

“In Orenburg,” I replied.

“Rubbish!” said the commandant. “It’s a long time since we heard anything of the kind. The Bashkirs are afraid of us now, and the Kirghese have had their lesson too. No fear of their showing their noses here, but if they do, I will give it them so hot they will remember it for years to come.”

“Don’t you feel frightened?” I asked of the captain’s wife, “to live in a fortress exposed to such dangers?”

"It's all a matter of habit, my good sir," she replied. "Twenty years ago, when we were first stationed here, I was in mortal dread of these pagans! As soon as I heard their screeches, would you believe it, I felt my flesh creep! But now I am so used to it I shouldn't move, even though I knew the rascals were prowling round the fortress."

"The captain's wife is a most courageous lady," remarked Shvabrin seriously, "the captain can bear witness to that."

"Yes, mind ye," said the captain, "the woman is no coward."

"And Miss Mary," I inquired, "is she as brave as you?"

"Is Mary brave?" said her mother. "No, Mary is very timid. Even now she can't hear the report of a gun without trembling all over; and when two years ago the captain took it into his head to fire off our cannon in honor of my birthday, she nearly took herself off to the next world, poor dear! Since that day, the horrid gun has never been fired again."

We rose from table. The captain and his wife retired to take a nap. I went to Shvabrin's and spent the evening with him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUEL.

SEVERAL weeks passed, and my life in the fortress of Bielogorski seemed to me not only endurable, but even pleasant. I was treated like a relative in the commandant's family. The husband and wife were most estimable people. The captain had risen from the ranks, and was a man without any education, but thoroughly good and honest. His wife had the upper hand of him, which suited his careless temperament very well. She looked after the affairs of the fortress exactly as she did after her household, and managed them as she did her own small house. Miss Mary soon left off being shy with me. We grew more intimate. I found her to be a sensible and kind-hearted girl. Without noticing the fact, by degrees I grew attached to this amiable family, and even to Mr. John, the one-eyed garrison lieutenant, of whom Shvabrin had invented that he was the happy lover of the captain's

wife—an assertion that had not a shade of truth in it, but Shvabrin cared not an atom whether there was or not.

I was promoted in grade. The military service was no burden to me. There were no reviews, no drills, or sentry duties in this blessed fortress. The commandant occasionally drilled the men for his own pleasure, but he had never even succeeded in teaching them which was their right hand and which their left. Shvabrin had a few French books. I began to read, and a taste for literature awoke in me. I devoted my mornings to reading, to translating, and sometimes to writing poetry. I dined almost daily at the commandant's, where I generally remained for the rest of the day. Of an evening Father Gheracim and his wife would occasionally drop in—(she was the greatest gossip of the whole neighborhood). Of course I saw Shvabrin daily, but his society was growing more and more obnoxious to me: his constant sarcasms and jests about the commandant's family displeased me very much, especially his cutting remarks about Mary. There was no other society in the fortress, but I wished for no other.

Notwithstanding the prediction, the Bashkirs did not rebel. Peace reigned in our fortress, but was suddenly disturbed by a private quarrel.

I have already said that I took to literary pursuits. My essays were pretty good for the time, and a few years later were greatly praised. I succeeded in writing a song that pleased me very well. It is a well-known fact that authors, on the plea of asking advice, seek an indulgent auditor. So having copied out my song, I took it to Shvabrin, the sole person in the fortress who could possibly be a judge of poetry. I took my manuscript from my pocket, and read him the following verses:

I.

Thoughts of love I flee and parry,
 Trying to forget the fair;
 And, alas! avoiding Mary,
 Hope to win my freedom's share.

II.

But the eyes that have enchained me
 Are for ever in my thoughts;
 They disturb my mind, and maybe,
 To a wreck my peace have brought.

III.

Mary, take on me compassion,
 When my grief you come to view,
 When you see my sad depression,
 When you learn how I love you.

“What do you think of it?” I asked Shvabrin, expecting praise which I considered my due. To my disgust, Shvabrin, who was usually very lenient, declared that my song was decidedly a bad one. “Why so?” asked I, trying to hide my annoyance.

He took the verses from me and mercilessly commenced analyzing each verse and word, laughing at me in the most sarcastic manner. I could not stand it any longer, and snatching the book from him I said I would never let him see any of my verses again. Shvabrin laughed still more at this threat of mine.

“We shall see how you keep your word,” said he; “poets have as much need of listeners as the commandant has of a drop of old whisky before his dinner! And who, pray, is this Mary, to whom you make such protestations of love and sadness? Can it possibly be Mary Mironoff?”

“That is no business of yours,” I replied frowning, “whoever this Mary is. I do not require either your opinion or your remarks.”

“Oh! a conceited poet and a discreet lover!” went on Shvabrin, trying to irritate me still more. “But do listen to friendly advice; let me tell you that if you wish to succeed with *her* you must use *other* means than verses.”

“What do you mean, sir? I beg you to explain.”

“With pleasure. I mean that if you want Mary Mironoff to give you a rendezvous at twilight, you had better make her a present of jewelry instead of those sugary verses.”

My blood boiled.

“Allow me to ask why you have such an opinion of her?” said I, with great difficulty suppressing my indignation.

“Because,” he replied, with a fiendish expression, “I know from experience her character and ways.”

“You lie, you scoundrel!” I cried, in a fury; “you lie with shameless impudence.”

Shvabrin's face darkened.

“This insult shall not go unpunished,” said he, seizing my arm; “I will have satisfaction.”

“Whenever you please,” I answered, joyfully.

I was ready to tear him in pieces that very moment.

I went immediately to Mr. John, the one-eyed old man and found him with a needle in his hand. The captain's wife had set him to work to string mushrooms that were to be dried for the winter.

“Oh, Mr. Grinioff,” said he on seeing me; “welcome to you. What has brought you? Have you come on business?”

I explained to him in as few words as possible that I had quarreled with Shvabrin, and asked him to be my second. Mr. John listened attentively and opened his one eye very wide.

“You say,” said he, “that you are going to fight with Mr. Shvabrin, and desire me to witness it. Is it so?”

“Exactly.”

“For goodness sake, Mr. Grinioff, don't fight. What does it matter if he has insulted you? Call him names in your turn. He gives you a slap on the cheek and you box his ears once, twice, thrice, and there's an end of it. We will see you reconciled again. But may I ask, is it a good action to kill one's neighbor? Not that it would so much matter if you did kill Mr. Shvabrin. I'm not over fond of him myself, but if he happened to stick you through the body, what would be done then? Who would be the fool, allow me to ask, in that case?”

The old man's reasoning did not shake my resolution. I kept to my determination.

“Well, do as you please! do as you please; but why should I be a witness to your folly? Witness two men fighting, indeed, what's the good of that? I have fought against Swedes and Turks. I've seen plenty of that sort of thing!”

I tried to explain to him the duty of a second in a duel, but Mr. John could not understand it at all.

“As you please,” said he. “If I must meddle in this affair it will be to go straight to the commandant and inform him that a crime is being premeditated in the fortress and ask him to take steps to prevent it.”

I grew alarmed and begged him to say nothing about it. With great difficulty I at last succeeded in making

him promise to keep my secret, and I made up my mind to manage without him. I, as usual, spent my evening at the commandant's. I tried to appear gay and unconcerned in order to avoid suspicions and questions, but I must own that I had none of the self-possession which almost every one who has been in a like position generally boasts of.

That evening I was inclined to be tender and affectionate. Mary was dearer to me than ever. The thought that it was perhaps for the last time I should behold her made her very interesting in my eyes. Shvabrin, too, made his appearance there. I drew him aside and told him the result of my conversation with Mr. John. "What do we want with seconds?" he said dryly; "we can do without them." We arranged to fight behind the hayricks, near the fortress, at six in the morning. We were to all appearance speaking so amicably that Mr. John let the cat out of the bag for very joy. "That's right," said he with an air of relief, "a bad treaty of peace is better than war, and even though not quite honorable it is at least as safe."

"What is that you are talking about?" asked the captain's wife, who was sitting in a corner telling her fortune with cards. "I did not hear aright."

Mr. John, remarking my look of discomfort, and recollecting his promise, grew confused and did not know what to say. Shvabrin hastened to our rescue. "Mr. John," said he, "approves of our reconciliation."

"And whom have you quarreled with?"

"I had rather a serious dispute with Mr. Peter Grinioff for the veriest trifle; a mere *song*, madam, I assure you."

"How did it happen?"

"Very simply; Mr. Grinioff composed some verses for a song which this morning he sang to me; then I commenced singing my favorite one:

Captain's daughter, do not go,
Taking walks at nights, you know,

Discord ensued. At first Mr. Grinioff lost his temper, but at last came to the conclusion that everybody had a right to sing what song he liked. And thus the affair ended."

Shvabrin's composure very nearly drove me wild, but

nobody but myself understood his rude allusions or paid any attention to them. The conversation turned from songs to poetry, and the commandant remarked that poets were nearly all licentious people, and drunkards into the bargain, advising me in a friendly way to give up writing verses, it being a bad habit, prejudicial to military service, and could lead to no good. Shvabrin's presence upset me. I soon took leave of the commandant and his family, went home, took down my sword, examined its point, and went to bed, telling Savielitch to wake me at six next morning.

At the appointed hour I stood behind the hayricks, waiting for Shvabrin. He soon made his appearance. "We may be seen," said he; "we must not loiter." We took off our coats, and unsheathed our swords, when suddenly Mr. John rushed up with five soldiers. He ordered us to follow him to the commandant's presence. Reluctantly we obeyed. The soldiers kept near us, and we walked behind Mr. John, who led us in triumph, stepping out with wonderful importance.

We reached the commandant's house, when Mr. John exultingly exclaimed: "I have brought them!" The captain's wife received us.

"Good heavens, gentlemen! Pray what is the meaning of all this? What next! How dare you think of committing murder in our fortress? Put them under arrest immediately! Give up your swords; give them up, I say! Palashka, carry the swords to the lumber-room. Mr. Grinioff, I did not expect this of you! Are you not ashamed of yourself? 'Tis all very well for Mr. Shvabrin, who was turned out of the Guards for manslaughter; he believes in neither God nor man. But how came you to follow in his steps?"

The captain agreed with his wife, and kept repeating:

"Mrs. Mironoff is quite right. Duels are strictly forbidden by military law."

Meanwhile Palashka had taken possession of our swords, and carried them off to the lumber-room. I laughed outright, but Shvabrin kept his gravity. "Notwithstanding my deep esteem for you, madam," he said coolly, "allow me to say you give yourself unnecessary trouble by subjecting us to your commands. Leave it to the captain; it is *his* business, not yours."

“Well, I’m sure!” exclaimed the captain’s wife; “are not man and wife one in spirit and in body? Have him arrested this moment! Put them on bread and water until they repent!”

The captain did not know what to say. Mary was very pale. After a while the storm blew over. Mr. Mironoff calmed down, and compelled us to make friends; Palashka brought back our swords, and we left the house seemingly reconciled. Mr. John accompanied us.

“Are you not ashamed of yourself,” I said to him, “thus to betray us to the commandant, after you had given me your word of honor not to do so?”

“I swear to you I never said one word about it,” answered he. “The captain’s wife got it all out of me, and gave orders to stop the duel, but, thank God, it has ended so well.”

With this he left us, and Shvabrin and I were alone together.

“Our quarrel cannot end here,” I said to him.

“Of course not,” replied Shvabrin; “you shall pay for the insults heaped on me with your blood; but for a few days we shall probably be watched, therefore we must profess to be on friendly terms. Good-by.” And we parted as if nothing had happened.

I returned to the commandant’s, and as usual sat down near Mary. Her father was not at home, her mother was busy with her household duties. We spoke in an undertone. Mary reproached me for the uneasiness I had caused everybody by my quarrel with Shvabrin.

“I was terrified,” said she, “when I heard you were to fight with swords. How strange men are! For one little offensive word, which they in all probability would forget all about in a week, they were ready not only to sacrifice their own life, but the happiness and welfare of those who—— But I feel sure it was not you who began the quarrel. I know Mr. Shvabrin alone is to blame!”

“What makes you think so, Mary?”

“Because he is so bitter. I don’t like Mr. Shvabrin, he is most distasteful to me, but I would not for worlds that he should dislike me. It would worry me dreadfully!”

“And do you think you are his taste or not?”

Mary stammered and blushed.

“I believe so,” said she; “that is, I think he likes me.”

“What makes you think so?”

“Because he asked me to marry him.”

“He proposed to you. Did he indeed, and when was that?”

“Last year, about a month before your arrival here.”

“And you refused him?”

“As you see. Mr. Shvabrin is a clever man, well off, and of good family; but when I think of marrying him I shudder! Oh, not for worlds!”

Mary's words opened my eyes and explained many things to me. I began to see through the persistent calumnies Shvabrin constantly uttered against her. He had probably noticed our mutual affection and was doing his best to estrange me from her. The words that had given rise to our quarrel now appeared still more abominable to me when, instead of rude mischief, I discovered in them premeditated lies. A desire to punish this impudent slanderer grew still stronger within me, and I impatiently awaited my opportunity.

I had not long to wait. Next day, as I was sitting over a poem, biting my pen in the expectation of a coming rhyme, Shvabrin knocked at my window. I dropped my pen, seized my sword, and joined him.

“Why should we delay it?” said Shvabrin. “Nobody is watching us. Come to the river; nobody will be there to hinder us.”

We went without a word. We walked down a steep path to the very edge of the river and we drew our swords. Shvabrin was the more skillful of the two, but I was stronger and bolder than he, and Monsieur Beaugoré, who had been a soldier, had given me a few lessons in fencing, which I now put into practice. Shvabrin did not expect to find in me so dangerous an adversary. For some time we did not touch each other; at last, seeing that Shvabrin was beginning to give in, I attacked him with more vigor, almost forcing him back into the river. Suddenly I heard my name called in a loud voice. I turned and saw Savielitch running toward us down the steep path. At this very moment something pierced me violently in the breast and I fell back senseless.

CHAPTER V.

LOVE.

WHEN I recovered my senses it was some time before I could collect my thoughts or imagine what was the matter with me. I was lying in bed in a strange room, and feeling exceedingly weak. Savielitch stood before me with a candle in his hand, and some one was carefully removing the bandage from my shoulder and chest. Little by little my thoughts became clear. I remembered the duel, and concluded that I had been wounded. At this instant the door creaked.

“Well, how is he now?” asked a voice in a half-whisper that made me tremble all over.

“Still the same,” said Savielitch with a sigh; “still insensible, and this is the fifth day already!”

I tried to turn round, but could not. “Where am I? Who is here?” I asked with difficulty.

Mary approached my bedside and bent over me. “How do you feel now?” she asked.

“Thank God!” I exclaimed in a feeble voice. “Is it you, Mary? tell me.”

I had no strength to finish my sentence, and was silent.

Savielitch uttered a cry, his face beamed with joy. “He is himself again!” he kept repeating. “Thanks be to thee, Heavenly Father! Well, Master Peter, you have frightened me nicely; this is five days already you have been——”

Mary interrupted him by saying: “Don’t say much to him, Savielitch, he is still so weak.”

She left the room softly and closed the door. My thoughts were as agitated as the waves of the sea. And so I was in the commandant’s house and Mary had often been to see me! I wished to question Savielitch, but the old man shook his head and stopped his ears. I closed my eyes, feeling annoyed, and was soon lost in sleep.

When I awoke I called Savielitch, but instead of him I perceived Mary by my side, and her angel voice greeted my ear. I can never express the feeling of delight that

filled my heart at that moment. I seized her hand and covered it with kisses and tears. She did not withdraw it.

Suddenly her lips touched my cheek; I felt their warm, fresh pressure, and my whole frame seemed on fire.

“Dearest Mary,” said I, “be my wife—consent to make me happy.”

She immediately recovered herself. “For God’s sake,” she said, withdrawing her hand from mine, “you are not yet out of danger, the wound may open again; do take care of yourself, if only for my sake.”

With these words she went away leaving me in an ecstasy of happiness.

“Joy has cured me,” thought I; “she will be my wife—she loves me.” This thought filled my whole being.

From this moment I grew better and stronger. The fortress surgeon was my doctor, there being no other, and, thank God, he had no pretensions to being a learned man. Youth and a strong constitution hastened my recovery.

The commandant’s family nursed me. Mary never left me. Of course I took the first opportunity to renew the conversation which had been so abruptly interrupted. Mary listened to me patiently; she confessed without affectation the love she bore me, adding that her parents would certainly be pleased at the prospect of her happiness. “But,” said she, consider well if your parents will offer any obstacles to our union.”

This set me thinking. I never doubted my mother’s tenderness, but knowing my father’s character and peculiarities, I feared that the story of my love for Mary would have little or no effect on him, that he would treat it as folly; so I frankly told this to Mary, resolving at the same time to write my father as eloquent a letter as possible, asking his blessing. I gave Mary the letter to read; she found it so persuasive and touching that she had no doubt of its success, and entirely gave herself up to the feelings of her tender heart with all the confidence of youth and love.

I made friends with Shvabrin during the first days of my convalescence.

The commandant reproved me for the duel, adding: “I ought to put you under arrest, but you have been punished enough already; as to Shvabrin, he is under

lock and key and carefully guarded; he can think over his sins and repent."

But I was too happy to retain any malignant feelings in my heart, and begged for his release. The commandant at last decided, with his wife's consent, to liberate him. Shvabrin came to see me and expressed profound sorrow for all that had passed between us; he admitted he was very guilty and begged me to forget the past. Being of a forgiving nature I forgave him both our quarrel and the wound he had inflicted on me. In his calumnies I only saw anger caused by wounded pride and rejected love. I magnanimously made excuses for my unfortunate rival.

I was soon quite well and able to return to my own lodgings. I waited with impatience for my father's answer to my letter, hardly daring to hope and trying to drown my sorrowful forebodings. I had not as yet spoken to Mary's parents, but my confession of love for their daughter could hardly surprise them, for neither I nor Mary had tried to hide our feelings, and we felt quite certain beforehand of their consent.

One morning Savielitch entered my room bearing a letter in his hands. I seized it with trembling fingers. The address was in my father's handwriting. This prepared me for something grave, as it was usually my mother who wrote to me, my father merely adding a few words at the end of her letter. It was a long while before I opened it, and I read over and over the solemn inscription:

"To my son, Peter Grinioff,
"Fortress of Bielogorsk,
Government of Orenburg."

I endeavored to guess by the writing what my father's humor was when he wrote the letter. At length I made up my mind to open it; and from the very first lines I saw that the whole affair had gone to the devil. The contents of the letter ran as follows:

"MY SON PETER,—Your letter in which you ask our parental blessing and consent to your union with Mary, the daughter of Captain Mironoff, we received on the 15th of this month, and not only do I refuse to give my blessing, but I consider you deserve a good scolding and severe punishment, as if you were a schoolboy and without regard to your rank of officer. You have proved yourself unworthy of wearing the sword which was given you to fight

for your country, and not to be used to fight in duels with as good-for-nothing a fellow as yourself. Without delay I intend to write to my friend General — and beg him to remove you as far as possible from the fortress of Bielogorsk, when I hope all this love nonsense will soon be knocked out of your head. On hearing of your duel and wound, your poor mother fell ill and is still in bed. What will become of you? I pray God you may reform, although I hardly dare hope for so great a mercy.

“ Your father,

“ A. G.”

The perusal of this letter roused in me mingled feelings; the harsh terms and expressions which my father had not spared, wounded me deeply, and the disdain with which he mentioned Mary appeared to me as much out of place as it was unmerited. The thought of leaving the fortress filled me with grief, but the news of my mother's illness made me saddest of all. I was very angry with Savielitch, feeling quite sure, beyond a doubt, that it was he who had informed my parents of the duel. Pacing to and fro in my narrow room, I stopped short in front of him, and with a menacing look exclaimed:

“ I see that you are not satisfied with my being wounded, and being for a whole month on the brink of the grave, all through your fault, too; but you want to kill my mother into the bargain, I suppose!”

Savielitch was thunderstruck.

“ My dear Mr. Peter,” said he, sobbing, “ what is it you say? I the cause of your being wounded! God knows I ran and tried to save you with my own body from Mr. Shvabrin's sword, but my cursed years prevented my reaching you in time. And what have I done to your mother?”

“ What have you done?” I replied. “ Who asks you to write reports about me, pray? Are you sent with me as a spy?”

“ I write reports about you!” replied Savielitch in tears. “ Good heavens! Master Peter, please read this letter your father has written to me, and you will then see if I have denounced you.”

I read as follows:

“ You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you old rascal, that, notwithstanding my strict orders, you have failed to inform me of my son's doings, and I have heard of his wickedness from strangers. So this is how you fulfill your duty and carry out your master's

wishes! You deserve to be a keeper of swine, you old dog, you, for having concealed the truth from me and for conniving with the young man.

“On the receipt of this I order you to write to me without delay and tell me how he is. I hear he is recovering. Tell me where he was wounded, and if the wound is healed.”

It was evident that Savielitch was not to blame, and that I had needlessly hurt his feelings by my unjust suspicions and reproaches. I begged his pardon, but the poor old man was broken-hearted.

“This is what I have lived for,” repeated he; “these are all the thanks I get as a recompense from my master—a keeper of pigs! and I am the cause of your wound, too! No, Master Peter, it is not I, but that d——d Moosoo who is too blame. It was he who taught you to stick swords into people, and stamp with your foot, as if all that sticking and stamping could protect you from a wicked, designing man. Was it worth while to engage such a man and waste one’s money to have you taught such ways?”

Who, then, could have taken the trouble to inform my father of my actions? The general? But he, to all appearance, did not trouble himself about me, and the commandant would hardly have thought it his duty to report my duel. I was lost in conjecture. My suspicions rested on Shvabrin; he alone could profit by it, the result being my leaving the fortress and the breaking up of my intimacy with the commandant’s family. I went to tell Mary all this; she met me on the doorstep.

“What is the matter with you?” she exclaimed on seeing me. “How pale you are!”

“All is over!” I replied, as I gave her my father’s letter to read.

She turned pale now in her turn. After reading it she returned it with a trembling hand, saying in broken accents:

“It seems it is not my fate to be your wife. Your parents refuse to receive me into their family. God’s will be done in all things! He knows better than we do what is good for us. There is nothing to be done. May you at last be happy!”

“No! I cannot endure this!” I exclaimed, seizing her hand. “I am willing to do anything. Let us go and

throw ourselves at your parents' feet; they are kind, simple folks—not proud and stony-hearted: they at least will give us their blessing. You will be my wife, Mary, and in time I feel sure that my father will soften toward us. My mother will plead for us and he will forgive us.”

“No!” replied Mary, “I will never marry you without the consent and blessing of your parents, for there would be no happiness for us. Let us bow to the will of God, and should you ever meet another whose fate it is to be yours—if you can ever love another—God bless you both; and I——”

Here she broke down completely, overpowered by her emotion, and sobbing violently she left me.

I was about to follow her, but feeling I had no control over myself I returned to my lodgings with a sad and heavy heart. I was buried in profound meditation when all at once Savielitch interrupted my train of thought.

“Here, sir,” said he, “see if I write reports about you to my master, or if I wish to make mischief between father and son.”

I took the letter from him. It was Savielitch's reply to my father's letter. Here it is from beginning to end:

“MASTER ANDREW,—My Lord, I have received your gracious letter, in which you are pleased to be angered with me, your poor slave, saying it is shameful I do not carry out your wishes. I am not an old dog, but your faithful servant. I always obey my master's orders, and have served you faithfully till my hair has grown white. I did not write about Mr. Peter's wound in order not to frighten you needlessly. I hear that my dear mistress was so alarmed when she heard it that she took to her bed. I pray God for her recovery. Mr. Peter was wounded in the right shoulder, beneath the collar-bone. The wound was an inch and a half deep. He was taken to the commandant's house and carefully nursed, and now, thank God, he is quite well. I can write nothing but in his praise. The commandant's wife treats him like her own son. What has happened is no reproach to him; even a horse with four legs stumbles sometimes. If it is your pleasure to send me to feed swine, I can only say that my master must do as he will. After this I bow to you like a slave.

Your faithful servant,

“SAVIELITCH.”

I could hardly refrain from smiling as I read the old man's letter. I was in no mood to write to my father, and Savielitch's letter would be sufficient to appease my dear mother's anxiety. From this time my life was changed. Mary hardly ever spoke to me, and did all she could to

avoid me. By degrees I grew accustomed to a life of solitude in my own lodgings, where I remained all day. The captain's wife scolded me at first for this, but finding me obstinate, she left me in peace. I only saw the captain when on duty. I met Shvabrin rarely and reluctantly, the more so as I noticed on his part a hidden aversion to me which strengthened my suspicions regarding him. Life became unbearable. I fell into a state of gloomy melancholy, which was nourished by solitude and idleness. My love for Mary grew stronger in my loneliness, and every hour increased its bitterness. I lost all taste for literature and reading. My spirits drooped, and I feared that I should become a madman or a libertine, when sudden and unexpected events, that seriously influenced my life, gave to my soul a severe but beneficial shock.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IMPOSTOR POOGATCHOFF.*

BEFORE I begin to describe the strange events of which I was a witness, I must say a few words about the state of the Orenburg province at the end of the year 1773. This wide and rich province was inhabited by a multitude of half-savage people who had but lately recognized the sway of the Russian sovereign, Catherine II. Their constant revolts, their ignorance of laws and civic life, their cruelty and barbarous customs, obliged the government to keep a strict watch over them to hold them in submission.

Fortresses were built in convenient spots, peopled chiefly by Cossacks, the ancient owners of the Yaïtzki shores, but the Yaïtzki Cossacks, who were ordered to secure peace and guard the country, had themselves grown restless of late, and were dangerous subjects to the government. In the year 1772 a revolt had occurred in the chief town; it had arisen from the severe measures taken by the Major-General Traubenberg with a view to bring

* Emelian Poogatchoff, a Don Cossack, assumed to be the Emperor Peter III. who had been murdered in 1762. He headed a rebellion, and was for some time successful in taking fortresses and gathering together an immense army of Cossacks. He was beheaded in Moscow.

the army into due submission. The result was the barbarous murder of Traubenberg, an arbitrary change in the administration, and finally, suppression of the rebellion by means of grape-shot and the most cruel punishment. All this happened shortly before my arrival in the Bielogorski fortress. Everything was quiet, or at last appeared to be so; but the authorities had too easily believed in the repentance of these wily rebels, who secretly nourished revenge and waited patiently for the opportunity of renewing their disturbances.

I return to my tale.

One evening—it was the early part of October, 1773—I was sitting alone in my lodging listening to the autumnal wind and watching the moon through my window and the clouds that ran over it, when a messenger came to summon me to the commandant's presence. I went without delay. There I found Mr. Shvabrin, Mr. John, and a Cossack under-officer. Neither Mrs. Mironoff nor Mary was in the room. The commandant welcomed me with a care-worn face. He locked the doors, asked us all to be seated except the under-officer, who stood near the door; he took a paper from his pocket, saying, "Gentlemen, here is serious news; listen what the General writes." He put on his spectacles and read as follows:

"To the Commandant of the Bielogorski Fortress,

"Captain Mironoff. [Private.]

"This is to give you warning that the deserter from the Donskoi sentry, the Cossack Emelian Poogatchoff, has had the unheard-of audacity to assume the title and pretend to be the late Emperor Peter III. He has gathered together a gang of villains, causing rebellion in the Yaïtzki villages, and has already taken and destroyed several fortresses, committing pillage and murder. Take all necessary steps to capture this said villain and impostor and if possible effect his destruction should he attack the fortress confided to your care."

"Take the necessary steps!" said the commandant, removing his spectacles and folding the paper. "It's easy to talk like that, but the villain appears to be well supported, whilst we have only one hundred and thirty men without counting the Cossacks, who are not to be relied on. No offense to you, Maximitch." The under-officer smiled. "However, we can do nothing, gentlemen, but be on the watch, and order a guard for the night patrol in case of an attack, lock the gates, and lead out the

soldiers. You, Maximitch, keep a close watch over the Cossacks. Let the cannon be looked to and well cleaned. Be careful, above all, to keep all this secret; let nobody in the fortress suspect anything."

Having given us these commands, Captain Mironoff dismissed us. I went out with Shvabrin, talking over what we had just heard.

"How do you think it will end?" I asked him.

"God knows," answered he; "we shall see. There is nothing very serious in it as yet; but if——" Here he grew thoughtful and commenced whistling a French air.

Notwithstanding our circumspection the news of Poo-gatchoff's expected attack went through the fortress. Captain Mironoff, in spite of the high esteem he bore his wife, would never have confided to her a state secret. When he received the general's letter he very cleverly got rid of her by saying that Father Gheracim had received most extraordinary tidings from Orenburg, which he treated as a great mystery. Mrs. Mironoff was instantly seized with a desire to pay a visit to the priest's wife, and the captain persuaded her to take Mary with her, as it would be dull for her at home by herself.

Captain Mironoff, thus left master of his actions, immediately sent for us, but locked the girl Palashka up in the lumber-room to prevent her from listening.

Mrs. Mironoff returned home without having had the good fortune to get any news out of the priest's wife, and discovered that her husband had held a council during her absence and that Palashka had been locked up in the lumber-room the while. She guessed that her husband had deceived her and desired him to explain his behavior, but the captain was prepared for this emergency, and was not a bit confused, and bravely answered: "You see, my dear, the women have taken it into their heads to heat their stoves with straw, and as this might lead to some mishap, I issued orders forbidding them henceforward to use straw and to light their stoves with brushwood."

"What made you lock up Palashka?" asked the captain's wife. "Why did the poor girl have to remain in the lumber-room until our return?"

The captain was not prepared for this question; he grew confused and muttered something that sounded very absurd. Mrs. Mironoff saw through her husband's cun-

ning, but knowing she could get nothing out of him, asked no more questions, and began talking about the salted cucumbers that the priest's wife had a peculiar way of preparing. Mrs. Mironoff passed a sleepless night, and could not imagine what secret her husband was keeping from her.

Next morning, as she was coming home from church, she noticed Mr. John cleaning out the cannon of its rags, stones, splinters, bones, and all kinds of rubbish with which the boys had filled it. "What can these warlike preparations mean?" thought Mrs. Mironoff; "do they expect an attack from the Kirghese? Surely the captain would not keep such nonsense as that from me!" She called to Mr. John, determined on getting the secret out of him and so appease her woman's curiosity. Mrs. Mironoff made a few remarks about household matters to start with, like a counsel beginning the cross-examination by indifferent questions, thus lulling to sleep the defendant's suspicions. After a pause she gave a deep sigh and shaking her head, exclaimed: "Great Heavens, what news! Whatever will become of us all?"

"Oh, ma'am," answered Mr. John, "don't be alarmed; we have men and plenty of powder. I've cleaned out the cannon, and we have every chance of repulsing the traitor Poogatchoff. With God's help, the pig sha'n't eat us up."

"And who is Poogatchoff?" asked the captain's wife.

At this question Mr. John found he had said too much, and bit his lip; but it was too late. Mrs. Mironoff forced him tell all he knew, promising not to repeat it. Mrs. Mironoff kept her word and told nobody except the priest's wife, and that was only because her cow grazed on the wilds and might be stolen by the villains. After a short time every one talked of Poogatchoff. Rumors were various. The captain sent the Cossack under-officer on an expedition to find out what was going on in the neighboring villages. He returned after a few days' absence, saying he had heard from the Bashkirs that some strange forces were gathering together about forty miles distant from the fortress, but he could say nothing positive, as he had been afraid to push on further. Among the Cossacks in the fortress some unusual agitation was noticed to be taking place; they gathered in clusters in the streets, speaking together in low whispers, and dispersed directly

they saw a garrison soldier approaching. Scouts were sent to discover what they were after.

Ulaï, a converted Kalmuck, made an important disclosure to the commandant: he asserted that the Cossack under-officer's report on his return was all a parcel of lies; the cunning fellow had related to his fellow-Cossacks that he had visited the rebels and had been presented to their commander Poogatchoff, whose hand he kissed, and who had questioned him at some length about the fortress.

The commandant had the under-officer arrested immediately and Ulaï took his place. The Cossacks heard this with evident displeasure. They murmured openly, and Mr. John with his own ears heard them say: "Wait a bit, you old garrison rat!"

The commandant intended interrogating his prisoner, but he escaped from the guardhouse by the help no doubt of his accomplices.

Another event increased the commandant's uneasiness. A Bashkir was caught bearing seditious proclamations. On this occasion Captain Mironoff wished to hold another council, and therefore tried to get rid of his wife once more with some plausible excuse or other. But as the captain was the most truthful and straightforward man under the sun, he could find no other expedient than the one he had made use of before.

"Do you know, my dear," said he, "that Father Gheracim has received more news from town, and——"

"Don't tell fibs, Captain Mironoff," interrupted she. "I suppose you intend holding another council all about Emelian Poogatchoff as soon as I am out of hearing, but I am not to be got rid of again, I can tell you!"

The commandant opened his eyes very wide.

"Well, as you seem to know all about it," he said, "you may remain; we will talk before you."

"This is far more sensible of you," answered she. "You have no cunning in you; you cannot deceive me; so send for the officers."

We again assembled. The captain read aloud Poogatchoff's proclamation, which was evidently composed by some half-educated Cossack. The villain proclaimed his immediate intention of surrounding our fortress with his troops, called on the Cossacks to join his army, and advised the chiefs to offer no resistance, threatening them

with death if they refused to obey him as their emperor. All this was written in rude but expressive language, and might have created a dangerous impression on the minds of the common people.

“What a scoundrel!” exclaimed the captain’s wife. “How dare he propose such a thing—that we should go out to meet him, and lay the flag at his feet, son of a dog that he is! Doesn’t he know that we have served for forty years, and know something of war, thank God. Is it possible there have been chiefs who have obeyed the wretch?”

“They say,” added the commandant, “that the traitor has already taken several fortresses.”

“It seems he is strong indeed,” remarked Shvabrin.

“We shall soon find out for ourselves how strong he is,” replied the commandant. “Mrs. Mironoff, give me the key of the outhouse. Mr. John, lead hither the Bashkir, and tell Ulaï to bring the lash.”

“Stop a moment,” said Mrs. Mironoff, rising, “and let me take Mary away from the house; she will hear the screams and be terrified, and I have no taste for torture either; so good-by.”

In days of yore the custom of interrogating prisoners had taken such root in the administration of justice, that the beneficent bill which annulled it was a long time without taking effect. It was believed that the full confession of the prisoner was indispensable to his conviction, a belief that was totally averse to judicial common sense, for if the denial of guilt on the prisoner’s part is not received as proof of his innocence, then his avowal must still less serve as a proof of his guilt. Even nowadays many old judges regret that this ancient custom is abolished. But in those times nobody doubted the necessity of torture, neither the judges nor the sufferers themselves; therefore the commandant’s orders did not astonish or alarm any one.

Mr. John led in the Bashkir, who stepped over the threshold with an effort, for he wore an iron clog. He took off his cap and stood near the door. I looked up at him and shuddered. I shall never forget this man. He appeared to be over seventy, and was without ears and without a nose! His head was bald, a few white hairs stuck out of his chin. He was short, emaciated, and bent

almost double, but his eyes still flashed with unquenched fire.

“Ho!” said the commandant, who saw by the man’s frightful scars that he was one of the rebels who had had their ears and noses cut off in the year 1741. “It seems you are an old wolf and have been caught in our trap before; it’s not the first time I see, you rebel. Come nearer, and say who sent you here.”

The old Bashkir remained silent, and looked at the commandant with an air of total idiocy.

“Why don’t you speak?” continued the captain. “Can’t you say one word of Russian? Ulaï, talk to him in your language. Ask him who sent him as a spy to our fortress.”

Ulaï repeated the commandant’s words in the Tartar language, but the Bashkir continued to stare at him with the same idiotic expression, and spoke not a word.

“By heaven!” said the commandant, “but you *shall* speak. Here, boys, off with his ridiculous striped gown, and let his back be well lashed. Mind, Ulaï, go at it bravely.”

The soldiers began to undress the rebel Bashkir. The miserable man’s face expressed uneasiness. He turned about just like a small animal that is caught by children, and when Ulaï took up the whip, brandishing it in the air, the Bashkir groaned in a feeble supplicating tone, and nodded his head, and opened his mouth, in which was moving, not a tongue, but a short bit of flesh!

When I remember that this happened in my time, and that I have since lived to see the peaceful reign of Alexander I., I cannot but wonder at the rapid progress of civilization. Should my tale ever fall into your hands, young men of Russia, remember that the best and most solid changes are those proceeding from improved laws and customs without any violent measures.

Every one of us was astounded.

“Well,” exclaimed the commandant, “it’s very evident there’s nothing to be got out of him. Ulaï, take the Bashkir back to the outhouse, and we will remain, gentlemen, and talk over a few matters.”

We then discussed our present position, when Mrs. Mironoff suddenly burst in, breathless and agitated.

“What is the matter?” asked the astounded husband.

“Oh, such dreadful news! The fortress of Nijnioziorna has been taken this very morning. A workman has just returned from there. He witnessed the attack, and fortunately escaped. The commandant and officers are all hanged; the soldiers taken prisoners. The villains may be here at any moment.”

This unexpected and sad news greatly astounded me. The commandant of the Nijnioziorna fortress was a nice young fellow, an acquaintance of mine. Two months previously he had passed through our fortress, with his young wife, on their way to Orenburg, and had stopped at the Mironoff's house. Their fortress was about twenty-five miles distant from ours. We might hourly expect Poogatchoff to fall on us. Mary's fate rose up vividly before me, and my heart sank.

“Listen to me, captain,” said I to the commandant. “It is our duty to defend the fortress with our last breath. but we must think above all of the women's safety. Send them to Orenburg, if the roads be still clear, or to one of the more distant and safe fortresses where the villains will not go.”

The captain turned to his wife, saying: “I really think, my dear, it will be wiser for you to go as far away as possible until we settle these rebels.”

“Nonsense!” said she. “And pray where is the fortress that cannon-balls can't reach? And why is ours not a safe one? We have lived in it for twenty years, thank God. We have withstood Bashkirs and Kirghese; I hope we shall settle this rebel Poogatchoff too.”

“Well, my dear, stay here if you like,” replied the captain. “But what shall we do with Mary? It's all very well if we do hold out against them, or if we get help from Orenburg; but if the rebels take the fortress, why then——”

Here Mrs. Mironoff seemed suddenly to realize the horrors of the situation, and was greatly agitated.

“No, Mrs Mironoff,” continued the captain, noticing the effect his words were producing, for the first time in his life perhaps, on his wife. “It's not proper for Mary to remain in such danger. Let us send her to her grandmother's at Orenburg, there are plenty of soldiers and cannon there, and stone ramparts into the bargain. I advise you to accompany her, for although an old woman,

you will see what will befall you should the fortress be taken by assault."

"Yes, let us send Mary away, but do not dream of my leaving you; do not ask me for I can never go. Why should I part from you in my old age to seek a solitary grave amongst strangers? We have lived together; let us die together."

"Right!" said the commandant; "but there's no time to lose; get Mary ready for her journey. She must start early in the morning; we must give her an escort, although we have no men to spare. But where is the child?"

With the priest's wife," answered Mr. Mironoff. "She fainted on hearing the dreadful news. I fear she will fall ill. Great Heavens! what have we come to?"

Mrs. Mironoff went to busy herself with preparations for her daughter's departure. The conversation continued on the same topic, but I took no part in it, and did not even listen. Mary appeared at supper-time, looking pale, and her face was swollen and tear-stained. We supped in silence, and rose from table earlier than usual, wishing the family good-night and going home. But I purposely forgot to take my sword, and went back to fetch it. I had a presentiment that I should find Mary alone, and she did meet me at the door and handed me my sword.

"Good-by, Mr. Grinioff," said she through her tears; "they send me away to Orenburg. Be well and happy. Perhaps, if God wills it, we may yet meet again; if not——"

Here she sobbed aloud. I clasped her to my heart.

"Good-by, my angel," said I; "good-by, my dearest, my own darling girl! Whatever happens to me, don't forget that my last thought and my last prayer will be for you."

Mary lay sobbing on my breast. I kissed her passionately and hastily left the house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ASSAULT.

THAT night I neither undressed nor went to bed. At day-break I intended to go to the gates of the fortress through which Mary had to pass, and wish her good-by

for the last time. I felt a great change within me; the agitation of my soul was somewhat quieted. The sadness of parting was mixed up with indistinct but sweet hopes, and my heart throbbed with an impatient expectation of danger and the feeling of a noble ambition. Night came on quickly. I was just leaving my hut when my door opened, and a corporal presented himself, with the announcement that our Cossacks had left the fortress during the night, taking Ulaï with them, much against his will, and that strange-looking men were prowling round the fortress. The thought that Mary would not be able to start shot through me with a pang. I gave the corporal a few hurried instructions and dashed off to the commandant's house. Day was dawning. As I flew along the street I heard some one calling me; I stopped.

"Where are you going?" asked Mr. John, overtaking me. "The captain is on the ramparts, and sent me to fetch you. Poogatchoff has come."

"Is Mary gone?" I asked, with a beating heart.

"It was too late," said Mr. John; "the road to Orenburg is cut off, the fortress is surrounded; it is a bad lookout, Mr. Grinioff."

We went to the ramparts, a piece of elevated ground formed by nature itself, and was fortified by a wooden inclosure. All the inhabitants of the fortress had already assembled there. The garrison stood armed with guns. The cannon had been placed there on the preceding day. The commandant was walking to and fro before his small troop of soldiers. The proximity of danger was animating the old warrior with extraordinary vigor. Some twenty men or more were riding over the plain, not far distant from the fortress. They looked like Cossacks, but amongst them some Bashkirs might easily be discerned by their fur caps. The commandant walked round his troops, addressing his soldiers thus: "Well, boys, let us think of our good mother the Empress, and prove to the whole world that we are brave men and true to our oath!" The soldiers cheered in loud protestations of their zeal. Shvabrin stood next to me, attentively watching the enemy. The men who rode across the plain, noticing the commotion in the fortress, crowded together, and began speaking to each other. The commandant ordered Mr. John to aim the cannon's mouth at this group of

rebels, whilst he himself lit the fuse. The cannon-ball whizzed and flew over their heads, without wounding them. The riders dispersed and rode away into the far distance. The plain was deserted.

Mrs. Mironoff now appeared on the ramparts, followed by Mary, who did not wish to be left behind.

“Well,” said the captain’s wife, “how is the battle going on, and where is the enemy?”

“The enemy is not far off,” said the captain, “but with God’s help all will yet be well. Are you frightened, Mary?”

“No, papa!” answered Mary; “but it would be more awful to stay at home quite by myself.” She glanced at me as she said this, and made an effort to smile. My hand involuntarily pressed the hilt of my sword, for I remembered that I had received it yesterday evening from her own hands, as though for the purpose of protecting her, my beloved. My heart was burning within me, and I fancied myself her true knight. I longed to prove to her that I was worthy of her confidence, and I awaited the decisive moment with impatience.

At this instant, from behind the heights, which were more than half a mile distant from the fortress, appeared a body of horsemen, and then the plain was covered with a multitude of men, armed with lances, crossbows and quivers. Amongst them, riding a white horse, was a man in a red kaftan, holding a drawn sword in his hand. This was Poogatchoff himself. He halted; his men surrounded him, and we could guess that, obedient to his orders, four men left the crowd, and rode at full speed to the very gates of the fortress. We recognized them as our traitor Cossacks. One of them held a printed proclamation high above his head. Another bore on the point of his lance the head of Ulai, which he shook and threw at us over the barricade. The poor Kalmuck’s head fell at the commandant’s feet. The traitors shouted:

“Don’t fire, but come out and meet the Emperor. The Emperor is here.”

“You shall have it,” shouted the captain in reply. “Fire, boys! fire!”

Our men opened fire. The Cossack who bore the proclamation staggered and fell from his horse. The rest turned back and fled. I glanced toward Mary, who

seemed turned to stone. She was awe-struck at the sight of the gray head of Ulaï, and deafened by the shouts of the rebels. The commandant called to the corporal, ordering him to go and take the proclamation from the dead Cossack's hand. He went into the field and returned, leading by the bridle the dead man's horse. He handed the paper to the commandant, who read it and tore it in pieces. Meanwhile the rebels were ready for action. The balls came whizzing round our heads, and several posts of the barricade fell near us to the ground.

"Mrs. Mironoff," said the commandant, "this is no place for women; take Mary away."

Mrs. Mironoff grew accustomed to the firing, looked toward the plain, where a great commotion was noticeable; then turning to her husband she said:

"Life and death are in God's hands; give Mary your blessing. Mary, go to your father."

Mary, who was pale and trembling, approached her father, and fell at his feet. The old man blessed her thrice, then lifted her up and kissed her, saying in an altered voice:

"Well, Mary, trust in God, and He will not abandon you. If you find a good husband, try and live as I and your mother have lived. And now farewell, my child. Make haste and take her away, my dear." Mary fell on his neck, sobbing.

"Let us also embrace," said the commandant's wife, weeping. "Farewell, my dear husband; forgive me if I have ever caused you pain."

The commandant embraced her, saying:

"Go home quickly, and if you have time, disguise Mary as a peasant girl."

The captain's wife and daughter left the ramparts. I stood gazing after Mary, who looked round and smiled sadly. The commandant now turned his attention to us and the enemy. The rebels flocked round their leader and suddenly dismounted from their horses.

"Stand fast," said the commandant; "there will be an assault."

At this instant frightful yells and screams were heard; the rebels rushed toward the fortress. Our cannon was loaded with grape-shot. The commandant allowed them to approach quite close and then fired again. The shot

struck into the very middle of the crowd; the rebels parted and fell back. Their leader alone remained in front; he brandished his sword and seemed to warm their courage. The screams and yells which had for a moment been silenced, broke out afresh.

“Now, my boys, open the gates and beat the drums! Forward! follow me into the field!”

In an instant the commandant, Mr. John, and I found ourselves on the other side of the ramparts, but our affrighted soldiers did not stir.

“Why don't you come, my men?” shouted the commandant. “Let us die if we must; it is a soldier's duty!”

Just then the rebels made a rush at us, and forced their way into the fortress. The drums ceased to beat, the garrison threw down their guns. I was knocked down, but soon got up again, and entered the fortress with the rebels. The commandant, sword in hand, was standing surrounded by a group of rebels, who ordered him to give up the keys. I hastened to his aid, but several swarthy Cossacks seized and bound me with their sashes, saying the while: “You will be paid out for disobeying the Emperor.” We were dragged through the streets. The inhabitants actually came out to welcome the rebels, bearing bread and salt. The bells were ringing. Suddenly a cry arose in the crowd that the Emperor was waiting to see the prisoners and to receive every one's oath in allegiance. The crowd hurried to the Square; we were also dragged there. Poogatchoff was seated in an arm-chair on the doorstep of the commandant's house. He wore a splendid Cossack coat trimmed with gold braid; a high sable cap with gold tassels was drawn over his glittering eyes. His face seemed familiar to me. His Cossack chiefs surrounded him. Father Gheracim, pale and trembling, stood on the door step, holding a cross in his hand, and seemed silently to implore for mercy on behalf of the poor victims. A gibbet had been hastily erected in the square. At our approach the Bashkirs kept back the crowd, and we were presented to Poogatchoff. The bells ceased ringing; a profound silence ensued.

“Which of them is the commandant,” asked the impostor.

Our under officer designated Captain Mironoff. Poogatchoff looked sternly at the old man and said:

“How dared you resist me, your Emperor!”

The commandant, exhausted from his wounds, gathered his failing strength and replied in a firm voice:

“You are not my Emperor, but a thief and an impostor.”

Poogatchoff frowned heavily and waved his white handkerchief. Several Cossacks seized the poor old man and dragged him to the gibbet. Astride on its cross-beam sat the maimed Bashkir who had been questioned by us the day before. He held a rope in his hand, and a minute later I saw poor Captain Mironoff swinging in the air. Mr. John was then led up to Poogatchoff.

“Take your oath of allegiance to me, your Emperor,” said the latter.

“You are not my Emperor,” said Mr. John, repeating the words of his commandant; “you, my man, are a thief and an impostor!”

Poogatchoff again waved his handkerchief, and the good lieutenant was hanged near his old commander.

It was my turn now. I looked boldly at Poogatchoff, and was prepared to repeat my brave comrade's words. At this moment, to my indescribable amazement, I perceived Shvabrin amidst the rebel gang, with his hair cropped short and in Cossack dress. He drew near Poogatchoff and whispered in his ear.

“Hang him!” said Poogatchoff, without as much as looking at me.

A rope was thrown around my neck; I said a prayer, asking God to forgive my sins, and implored him to save my nearest and dearest. I was dragged beneath the gibbet.

“Don't be frightened! Don't be frightened!” repeated my tormentors, perhaps with a genuine wish to give me courage.

Suddenly I heard a cry:

“Stop! accursed scoundrel, stop!” The hangman stopped. I looked up and saw Savielitch lying at Poogatchoff's feet.

“Oh! my good sir,” said my poor old servant, “how can the child's death profit you? Let him go to his

parents; they will give you a heavy ransom for him, and you can hang me instead, an old man."

Poogatchoff made a sign, and I was immediately released.

"Our sovereign forgives you," they said to me.

I can't say that at the moment I felt glad for my deliverance, but I can't say either that I felt sorry for it. My feelings were much perplexed. I was again taken before the impostor, and forced to kneel to him. Poogatchoff stretched out his sinewy hand to me.

"Kiss his hand! kiss his hand!" I heard whispered around; but I would have preferred the most cruel torture to abject humiliation.

"My dear Master Peter!" whispered Savielitch, standing behind and pushing me, "don't be obstinate! Spit, and kiss the dog; kiss his hand."

But I did not stir. Poogatchoff dropped his hand, saying with a sneer:

"It seems his honor has lost his wits for very joy. Help him to rise."

I was assisted to my feet and set free. I stood awaiting the end of this dreadful comedy. All the inhabitants were sworn in; they approached the impostor one after another, first kissing the crucifix, then kneeling to him. The garrison-soldiers were also present; the regimental tailor, armed with his blunt scissors, was cutting off their pigtails. They shook their heads, and went to kiss the impostor's hand; he pardoned them, and received them into his gang. All this lasted upward of three hours. At last Poogatchoff rose from his arm-chair and descended the steps, accompanied by his chiefs. A white horse with rich trappings was tied up at the door. Two Cossacks assisted him to mount. He announced to Father Gheracim that he would dine with him. At this moment a woman's piercing shriek was heard. Several rebels dragged Mrs. Mironoff from the house, disheveled and stark naked. One of the scoundrels had already dressed himself up in her clothes; others were carrying off featherbeds, trunks, plate, linen, and all kinds of lumber.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed the poor old lady, "have mercy on me! For God's sake, take me to my husband!"

All of a sudden she glanced up at the gibbet, and saw her husband hanging there.

“Villains!” she screamed, quite beside herself with grief, “what have you done? Dear captain, light of my eyes, brave soldier! Prussian bayonets and Turkish bullets have spared you; it is not in fair fight you have lost your life; you have perished by the hand of an escaped convict!”

“Silence the old witch,” said Poogatchoff.

A young Cossack pierced her through the heart with his sword. She fell dead on the doorstep. Poogatchoff rode away, followed by the crowd.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SURPRISE.

“An unexpected guest is worse than a Tartar.”—*An old saying.*

THE square was deserted; I stood rooted to the spot, unable to collect my thoughts, which had been disturbed by such horrible scenes. My uncertainty as to Mary's fate tormented me beyond anything else. Where was she? What had happened to her? Had she found time to hide herself? Was her place of refuge a safe one? Full of these alarming thoughts I entered the commandant's house; everything looked desolate. Chairs, tables, trunks, all were smashed! Everything of value had been stolen. I ran up the narrow staircase leading to the attic, and for the first time found myself in Mary's bedroom. I noticed that the bed had been pulled in pieces by the villains, cupboards broken open, and everything stolen. The lamp was still burning in front of the saint's image. The small mirror hanging between the windows had not been touched. But where was the mistress of this humble virgin retreat? A terrible thought shot through my mind; I pictured her in the hands of the rebels. My heart stopped beating, I burst into a flood of tears, and uttered aloud the name of my beloved. At this instant I heard a slight noise, and Palashka appeared from behind the cupboard, pale and trembling.

“Oh, Mr. Grinioff!” she said, clasping her hands, “what a day this has been! What terrible things have happened!”

“But Mary?” I asked impatiently; “where is Mary?”

“My young lady is alive,” said Palashka; “she is hiding in the priest’s house.”

“At the priest’s!” I exclaimed in terror. “My God! Poogatchoff is there!”

I rushed from the house, and the next moment I found myself in the street, running toward the priest’s house, seeing and feeling nothing. Shouts of laughter and singing were heard from within. Poogatchoff was feasting with his comrades. Palashka ran behind me. I quietly sent her to fetch the priest’s wife, who immediately came into the ante-room with an empty brandy bottle in her hand.

“For God’s sake, tell me where Mary is?” I asked with indescribable emotion.

“She is on my bed, the poor thing, behind the partition wall,” replied the priest’s wife. “Do you know, Mr. Grinioff, she had a very narrow escape just now; but, thank God, it passed off pretty well. The villain had just sat down to dinner when the poor thing, just recovering from her swoon, gave *such* a groan behind the partition. I was half-dead with fright. He heard the groan. ‘Who have you got groaning there, old woman?’ said he. I made a low courtesy to the brute. ‘My niece, your majesty,’ said I; ‘she is ill, and has kept her bed this fortnight.’ ‘And is your niece young?’ ‘She is young, your majesty.’ ‘Well, old woman, let me see her then.’ My heart sank within me, but there was no help for it. ‘Very well, your majesty; but the girl is not able to come before your gracious presence.’ ‘Never mind that, old woman, I will go myself and see her.’ And he actually went behind the screen, and, confound him! what do you think? he drew back the curtains and peered at her with his hawk-like eyes; and that was all, thank God! Would you believe it, my husband and I were already preparing to die like martyrs, and it was such a blessing that the poor dear did not recognize him. What have we come to? Good heavens! Poor Mrs. Mironoff! who would have thought it? And the commandant too, and Mr. John! What did they kill him for? How did you manage to escape? And what do you think of Mr. Shvabrin’s treachery, cutting his hair in that round fashion and feasting there with the rebels? I must say he was in a precious hurry about it. And when I mentioned my sick *niece* he threw such a

look at me that it went through me like so many daggers; but he didn't betray me, thanks to him for that at least."

At this moment noises and shouts of drunken voices were heard. The priest called to his wife that more wine was wanted.

"Go home, Mr. Grinioff," she said, "I have no time to talk to you. The villains are drinking hard. God forbid they should see you now, they are all drunk. Good-by; what will be, will be. Heaven will help us, I trust!"

She left me. Feeling somewhat comforted, I returned to my lodgings. Passing through the square, I saw several Bashkirs crowded round the gibbet, and dragging off the boots from the corpses' feet. With great effort I mastered an outburst of indignation which seized me; but feeling the utter helplessness of interference, I refrained. The scoundrels were running through the whole fortress, sacking the place. Screams and yells from the drunken rebels resounded. I arrived home. Savielitch met me on the threshold.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed on seeing me; "I was afraid the rascals had got hold of you again. Oh, my dear Master Peter, only think! The wretches have robbed us of all we had—dress, linen, plate; nothing is left. But never mind the things. Thank God, they have let you off alive. Did you recognize the rebel chief, Master Peter?"

"No, I didn't; who is he?"

"Don't you know him? Have you forgotten the drunken tramp who got your hareskin coat from you at the inn? Quite a new hareskin into the bargain; and the beast split all the seams when he put it on."

I felt amazed. This man's likeness to Poogatchoff was indeed striking. I now felt assured that he and Poogatchoff were one and the same man, and began to understand why he had shown me so much mercy. I could not help wondering at this extraordinary circumstance: a boy's hareskin coat, given to a tramp, had saved me from the halter, and a drunken tramp, a frequenter of taverns in the steppes, was now taking fortresses and shaking the kingdom!

"Won't you have something to eat?" asked Savielitch, unchangeable and unchanged in his habits. "There is

nothing to be had at home; I will go and seek something for you."

Left alone, I plunged into serious reflection. What was I to do? Remain in the fortress in the villain's power, and follow his rebel gang, was not an act worthy of an officer. Duty bade me go where my services would still be of use to my country under the present trying circumstances; but love spoke strongly in favor of my remaining near Mary, to be her defender and protector, although I foresaw that events would no doubt take another turn very shortly; yet it was impossible not to tremble when I thought of the dangers of her position.

My meditations were interrupted by the arrival of a Cossack, who ran in announcing that the great Emperor summoned me to his presence.

"Where is he?" I asked, preparing to obey the summons.

"In the commandant's house," replied the Cossack. "After dinner our sovereign went to the bath. Well, your honor, everything proves him to be a great personage; he ate up two whole roasted sucking pigs for dinner, and in the bath he steams himself to such a degree that even Koorotchkin could bear it no longer, and gave up his scrubbing-brush to Bickbarff, whilst he refreshed himself by a ducking in cold water. What grand ways the Emperor has! And they say that in the bath he showed them the marks of sovereignty on his chest—a two-headed eagle on one side, and his own likeness on the other."

I did not think it worth while to contradict the Cossack's remarks, and accompanied him to the commandant's house, trying to picture to myself what my interview with Poogatchoff would result in. The reader will easily understand that I did not feel very easy in mind.

Night was near at hand as I reached his house. The gibbet, with its victims, looked ominously dark. The body of the poor captain's wife was still lying on the doorstep, where two Cossacks stood as sentries. The Cossack who accompanied me went in to announce me, and returned immediately, showing me into the very room where the previous evening I had taken such a tender farewell of Mary. An extraordinary spectacle met my gaze: near a table, covered with white cloth, on which stood numerous brandy-bottles and tumblers, sat Poogatch-

off with ten of his chiefs, all attired in colored shirts and having their caps on; their eyes flashed, their faces were inflamed with wine. Neither of the traitors, Shvabrin nor the under-officer, was there.

“Ah, your honor,” said Poogatchoff, perceiving me; “welcome, and pray be seated.”

His companions drew a little nearer together. I sat down in silence at the end of the table. My neighbor, a young Cossack, well built and handsome, poured me out a glass of brandy, which I did not touch. I began to scrutinize the company with curiosity. Poogatchoff occupied the place of honor, his elbow resting on the table, his black-bearded chin supported by his clinched fist. His features were regular, rather pleasant in fact, and had nothing fierce about them. Everybody seemed to be on equal terms, and showed no particular deference to their leader. The conversation turned on the morning's assault, on the success of the rebellion, and on future plans. Each one boastingly gave his opinion and freely contradicted Poogatchoff. It was during this extraordinary council of war they decided to proceed to Orenburg, a daring enterprise, which was very nearly crowned with success! The campaign was fixed for the next day.

“Now, my friends,” said Poogatchoff, “before we retire to sleep let us sing my favorite song. You begin, Tchoomakoff.”

My neighbor began singing in a high key to a most melancholy tune, whilst everybody joined in the chorus:

Do not rustle, you old forest green,
 Do not trouble the youngster's thoughts,
 For to-morrow the youngster goes
 To the judge severe, to the king himself.
 Then the sovereign king will question him:
 “Tell me, youngster, son of peasant bold,
 With whom did you murder and rob for gold,
 And how many comrades more had you?”
 “Now I will tell you, good faithful king,
 The whole truth before you I will bring—
 That I in truth four comrades had:
 My first comrade was the deep, dark night,
 My second a sharply-edged steel knife,
 My third comrade was my noble steed,
 My fourth was my arrow that flew with speed,
 And for messengers they always served.”
 Then our true orthodox king will say:

“Honor to thee, bold peasant's son,
Thou canst both rob and answer well,
I will therefore reward thee, brave young man,
With an edifice high amidst the wide fields,
Which has two long posts and a cross-beam too.”

It is impossible to describe the effect that this popular gallows song, sung by men fated to be hanged, had on me. Their fierce faces, fine voices, the melancholy expression they gave to the words, so expressive in themselves—all this struck me with a kind of poetical awe.

The Cossack chiefs tossed off another glass each, rose from the table, and took leave of Poogatchoff. I wanted to follow them, but Poogatchoff said, “Sit still, I want to speak to you.” We were alone. For several moments the silence was unbroken; Poogatchoff looked at me fixedly, now and then winking his left eye with a wonderful expression of roguery and sarcasm. All at once he burst into a laugh so genuine in its mirth that I too began to laugh without very well knowing why.

“Well, your honor,” said he to me, “confess that you were very much frightened when my men threw the noose round your neck. I am certain that the sky itself looked like a nutshell to you at that moment. Indeed, you would be swinging on the cross-beam now but for your old servant. I knew the old dog directly. Now, your honor little guessed that the man who showed you the way to the inn during the snow-storm was the great Emperor himself.” Here he put on a solemn and mysterious look. “You have offended me deeply,” he continued, “but I have spared you on account of that kind action, because you did me a good turn when I was compelled to evade my enemies. Wait awhile. You shall receive better things at my hands when I get my kingdom back again! Will you promise to serve me faithfully?”

The rascal's question and his audacity amused me so much that I could not help smiling.

“Why do you smile?” he said, with a frown; “don't you believe me to be the great Emperor? Answer me frankly.”

I was confused, being quite unable to acknowledge this impostor as my Emperor. This seemed to me unpardonable cowardice, yet to call him an impostor to his face was simply exposing myself to ruin, and what I had been

prepared to say at the gibbet, in the face of the whole populace, when heated with indignation, now seemed a useless boast. I hesitated. Poogatchoff was gloomily awaiting my answer. At last (and even now I remember that moment with a feeling of satisfaction) duty triumphed over human weakness, and I answered thus:

“Listen, and I will tell you the exact truth. If you consider for one moment, you will see that I could not recognize you as my Emperor; you are a clever man, and would know at once that I am only pretending to do so.”

“Who am I then, in your opinion?”

“God only knows; but whoever you are, you are playing a dangerous game.”

Poogatchoff gave me a sharp glance.

“So you don't believe,” said he, “that I am the Emperor Peter. Very good. But is there then no reward for daring? Did not Grishka Ottrepieff reign in days of yore? Think what you will of me, but do not leave me. What can the rest matter to you? Serve me faithfully, and I will make you a field-marshal and a prince. What do you say to that?”

“No,” I answered firmly; “I am a gentleman born and bred. I swore fidelity to our Empress, and I cannot serve you. If you really want to do me a kindness, let me go to Orenburg.”

Poogatchoff became thoughtful.

“And if I let you go,” said he, “will you promise never to fight against me?”

“How can I promise that?” I replied; “you know very well that I am not free, and if I am ordered to fight against you I shall be compelled to do so. You yourself are a chief now, and exact obedience from your followers. What would you think of me if I were to refuse to serve when my services were needed? My life is in your hands: if you set me free, many thanks to you; if you put me to death, God will be your judge. I have only spoken truth.”

My frankness struck Poogatchoff.

“Be it so,” said he, clapping me on the shoulder; “when I punish I punish, when I pardon I pardon freely. You are free to go where you wish and do what you please. Come and bid me good-by to-morrow; and now go, I feel quite sleepy.”

I left him, and went into the street; the night was frosty

and quiet; the moon and the stars shone brightly, lighting up the square and gallows. In the fortress all was silent and dark; the tavern alone was lit up, and resounded with the yells of the late revelers. I glanced toward the priest's house; the shutters were closed; everything there seemed quiet.

I arrived at my lodgings, and found Savielitch sorrowing at my prolonged absence; the news of my freedom gave him inexpressible joy.

"Thank God!" said he, crossing himself; "we will leave the fortress at dawn of day, and go wherever we like. I have prepared a meal for you; eat, and then lie down in peace till morning."

I followed his advice, and having greatly enjoyed my supper I went to sleep on the bare floor, tired out physically and mentally.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PARTING.

EARLY next morning I woke with the beating of the drum; I went to the place of muster, and Poogatchoff's men were already there.

Yesterday's victims were still hanging there. The mounted Cossacks and foot-soldiers presented arms. Several cannons, among which I noticed ours, were placed on gun carriages. All the inhabitants had assembled to await the impostor's arrival. Near the door of the commandant's house a Cossack held the bridle of a splendid white horse of Kirghese breed. I looked for the body of the captain's wife, which had been removed and covered with a rug. At length Poogatchoff came out; the people all took off their hats, whilst he stood on the steps and saluted. One of his chiefs handed him a bag of coppers, and he threw handfuls to the right and left. The crowd pressed forward to pick them up, and several were injured in the scuffle. Poogatchoff was then surrounded by his favorite chiefs. Shvabrin was amongst them; our eyes met; he read contempt in mine, and turned away with an expression of deep hatred. Poogatchoff, noticing me in the crowd, nodded and beckoned me to approach.

"Listen," said he, "start immediately for Orenburg,

and announce to the governor they may expect me in a week; advise them to receive me with brotherly love and obedience, otherwise they won't escape torture and a cruel death. A pleasant journey to your honor!"

He then turned to the people, and pointing to Shvabrin, said:

"Here, boys, is your new commandant; obey him in everything, and he will be answerable to me for you and the fortress."

I listened to these words with a wild horror. Shvabrin made commandant of the fortress, Mary remained in his power. Good God! what would become of her? Poogatchoff descended the steps; his horse was brought to him. He sprang lightly into the saddle without waiting for the Cossack to assist him.

At this moment I noticed my servant Savielitch step out of the crowd, and approaching Poogatchoff, present him with a piece of paper. I wondered what would follow next.

"What is this?" asked Poogatchoff with an air of importance.

"Be so good as to read it and then you will know," answered Savielitch.

Poogatchoff took the paper, and looked at it some time with a knowing air.

"Why do you write so illegibly?" he said at last; "our sharp eyes cannot decipher this. Where is my secretary of state?"

A young man in a corporal's uniform hastened to obey the summons.

"Read aloud," said the impostor, handing him the paper.

I felt very curious to know what my servant had taken into his head to write to Poogatchoff. The secretary of state commenced to read as follows:

"Two dressing-gowns, one cotton and one silk one—six rubles."

"What does that mean?" said Poogatchoff, frowning.

"Allow him to read on," said Savielitch quietly.

The secretary continued:

"A fine green cloth uniform—seven rubles.

"White trousers—five rubles.

"A dozen linen shirts—ten rubles.

“A strong box with tea-service——”

“What's all that nonsense about?” interrupted Poogatchoff. “What have I got to do with trousers, cuffs, and boxes?”

Savielitch cleared his throat, and began to explain.

“You see, this is an inventory of my master's property stolen by these villains.”

“What villains?” said Poogatchoff, menacingly.

“Beg pardon, 'twas a slip of the tongue,” said Savielitch. “They are no villains, but your men, who rummaged everywhere, and took everything away. Don't be angry; a horse has four legs, yet it stumbles sometimes. Let him finish.”

“Read on,” said Poogatchoff.

“A wadded silk counterpane—fifty rubles.

“A fur cloak—forty rubles.

“A hareskin coat, given to your Majesty at the inn—forty rubles.”

“How now!” shouted Poogatchoff, his eyes darting fire.

I confess I grew frightened for my poor servant. He was on the point of explaining further when Poogatchoff interrupted him:

“How dare you trouble me with such rubbish?” he screamed, snatching the paper and throwing it into Savielitch's face. “Stupid old fool! Robbed indeed! What a misfortune! Old fool that you are, you ought to pray for me every day of your life, that I did not hang you and your master with those rebels. A hareskin! Do you know I will have you flogged alive to make skins of?”

“As you please,” answered Savielitch; “I am only a servant, and I am responsible for my master's things.”

Poogatchoff was evidently in a generous mood. He turned his horse's head, and rode away without saying another word. The gang left the fortress in an orderly manner; the people went as escort some distance beyond the gates. I remained alone with Shvabrin in the square. My servant stood holding the inventory in his hands, and looking at it with an expression of deep commiseration. Noticing that I was on such good terms with Poogatchoff, he thought he would do well to turn the same to good account; but his wise intention proved a failure. I attempt-

ed to scold him for his mistaken zeal, but could not keep from laughing.

“Laugh away, sir,” answered Savielitch, “laugh away. When we are obliged to buy everything anew for our housekeeping, I wonder if you will go on laughing then?”

I hastened to the priest's house to see Mary. The priest's wife met me with the sad news that Mary had been seized with a burning fever during the night. She was quite unconscious and delirious. I was led to her room. The change in her face struck me at once. The poor sick girl did not recognize me. I stood by her bedside for some time, hearing neither the priest nor his wife, who tried, I believe, to console me. Gloomy thoughts agitated my soul; the fate of this poor unprotected orphan left to the mercy of wicked rebels, and my utter powerlessness to assist her, filled me with dread. The thought of Shvabrin filled me with horror. Vested with power by the impostor, as commandant of the fortress where the poor girl remained, the innocent object of his hatred, he might be capable of anything. What was I to do? How could I help her? how rescue her from the villain's hands? One means only was left me; I decided to start immediately for Orenburg, intending to hasten the deliverance of the Bielogorski fortress, and, if possible, to take an active part in it. I took leave of the priest's wife, warmly recommending to her care the dear girl I already looked on as my wife. I took her poor hand in mine, kissing and bathing it with my tears. “Farewell, Mr. Grinioff,” said the priest's wife as she accompanied me to the door; “let us hope we may meet again when better times come. Don't forget us, and write as often as you can. Poor Mary has no one but you to look to now.”

As I passed through the square I stopped for a moment before the gallows, and took off my hat. I then left the fortress on my way to Orenburg, accompanied by Savielitch, who would not desert me.

I was busy with my own thoughts when suddenly I heard the sound of horses' hoofs. I looked round, and saw a Cossack galloping toward me, leading a second horse, and making signs to me from afar. I stopped, and soon recognized our traitor under-officer. As he rode up to me he leapt from his horse and threw me the reins of the one he was leading.

“Here, your honor, our gracious sovereign sends you this horse for a present, and also this fur cloak from his own shoulders (this was tied to the saddle); and besides these he gave me a silver rouble for you; but I have lost it on the way—pray forgive me!”

Savielitch gave him a sidelong glance and muttered:

“Lost it on the way did you? What’s that rattling in your bosom, you rogue?”

“What is rattling in my bosom?” replied the under-officer, in no way abashed. “Lord bless you, old man, it’s the bridle rattled and not money!”

“Very well,” said I, interrupting their dispute, “thank him who sent you to me. Try and find on your way back the money you lost, and keep it for your pains.”

“Many thanks, your honor,” he said as he turned his horse’s head; “I will always pray to God for you.”

With these words he galloped off, pressing his hand to his breast, and in a moment was out of sight.

I put on the sheepskin coat and mounted my horse, making Savielitch sit behind me. “You see, sir,” said the old man, “I did not bow to the scoundrel in vain; he was evidently ashamed of himself. To be sure, a long-legged Bashkir brute and a sheepskin coat are not worth one-half of what the rascal stole from us, or what you yourself have given him; but still they may be of some use. ’Tis well to snatch even a handful of hair off a mad dog’s back.”

CHAPTER X.

THE SIEGE OF ORENBURG.

As we approached Orenburg we perceived a crowd of convicts, with shorn heads and faces disfigured by the executioner’s tongs. They were busily at work on the fortifications, superintended by garrison soldiers. Some of them were wheeling earth to fill a ditch, others were digging with spades; on the ramparts masons were carrying bricks for repairing the town wall. We were stopped by the sentinels at the gates; they asked to see our passports. As soon as the sergeant heard I came from the Bielogorski fortress, he conducted me at once to the governor’s house. I found him in the garden; he was examining some apple-

trees, and with the help of an old gardener was carefully wrapping them round with straw. His face was expressive of calmness, health, and good-nature. He was glad to see me, and began to question me about the dreadful events I had witnessed. I related everything. The old man listened attentively, cutting off the withered branches the while.

“Poor Mironoff!” said he after I had finished my sad tale, “it is a great pity; he was a good officer, and Madame Mironoff was a kind lady and so clever at salting mushrooms! And what has become of Mary, the captain’s daughter? Oh! oh! oh!” remarked the general, “this is bad, very bad indeed; it is quite impossible to trust the villain. What will become of the poor girl?”

I replied that the Bielogorski fortress was not far distant, and that his excellency would probably send out a detachment and rescue the inhabitants without delay. The general shook his head with an air of indecision.

“We shall see, we shall see,” said he; “we shall have plenty of time to talk about this. Pray come and drink tea with me; to-night I hold a counsel of war at my house, you can then give me some concise information concerning this rascal Poogatchoff and his men. In the meantime go and rest yourself.”

I went to the lodging assigned me, where Savielitch was busily arranging everything, and I awaited with impatience the appointed hour. The reader may easily imagine that I did not fail to be present at the council which was to influence my future destiny. When the time came I hastened to the general’s house. I found one of the town functionaries already there, a director of Customs, a fat, red-faced old man, in a long, shiny brocaded coat. He questioned me minutely as to Captain Mironoff’s death, whom he called his friend, often interrupting me by additional inquiries and remarks, which, if they did not prove him to be very learned in military tactics, at least showed his sagacity, shrewdness, and natural wit.

Meanwhile the other guests arrived. When every one was seated and had been served with tea, the general described in very plain and minute terms the state of affairs. “And now, gentlemen,” continued he, “we must decide what plan of action to adopt with regard to these rebels,

whether *offensive* or *defensive*. Each of these courses has its advantages and disadvantages. The offensive holds out greater hopes of more speedily annihilating the enemy, the defensive is more certain and less dangerous; therefore let us vote in the usual way, beginning with the lowest in rank. - Lieutenant," continued he, addressing me, "please give us your opinion."

I rose, and after giving a brief description of Poogatchoff and his army, affirmed that the impostor could not possibly hold out against regular forces.

My opinion was received with evident displeasure by all the dignitaries present. They considered it to be the mere rashness and audacity of extreme youth. A murmur ran through the room, and I distinctly heard the word "Greenhorn" pronounced in a half-whisper. The general turned to me with a smile: "Lieutenant, the first vote in a council of war is generally given in favor of the offensive course. This is in accordance with custom. Now, let us continue with our voting. What is your opinion, collegiate councilor?"

The old gentleman in the glazed brocaded coat drank off his tea, strongly flavored with rum, and replied:

"I think, your excellency, that we should adopt neither the offensive nor the defensive."

"How so, collegiate councilor?" exclaimed the astonished general. "Military tactics offer no other course—either the defensive or the offensive."

"Have recourse to bribery, your excellency."

"Ah, ah! your idea is capital, and a very rational one. Bribery is approved of by military tactics. Most assuredly we will take advantage of your suggestion. We will offer a reward for the rascal's head—say seventy or perhaps one hundred rubles—out of our own privy purse."

"And you may call me an old Kirghese sheep, and not a collegiate councilor, if the rogues do not deliver up their leader, bound hand and foot, into our power."

"We must talk it over," answered the general. "In any case it is still necessary to have recourse to military steps. Gentlemen, give your vote, each in his turn."

Everybody's opinion proved contrary to mine; all spoke of the precarious situation of the troops, of the uncertainty of success, of prudence, and so forth. The unanimous opinion was that it would be more advisable to remain

within shelter of the cannon, behind a strong stone wall, than to attempt to fight in the open plain. At length, after listening to everybody's opinion, the general shook the ashes from his pipe, and made the following remark:

“Gentlemen, I must confess to you that for my part I coincide exactly with the lieutenant, whose plan is founded on recognized rules of military tactics, which nearly always prefer the offensive to the defensive.”

Here he stopped and began to fill his pipe. My vanity triumphed; I looked proudly round at the dignitaries, who whispered to each other with an air of uneasiness and discontent.

“But, my dear sirs,” continued he, puffing out a dense cloud of smoke and heaving a deep sigh, “I dare not take upon myself so heavy a responsibility when there is a question of the safety of the provinces confided to my care by my gracious sovereign the Empress. Therefore I give way to the plurality of votes, which has decided that the most reasonable and safe way is to await the assault within the walls, and repulse the enemy's attacks by artillery, or, if it should prove advisable, by sorties.”

The dignitaries in their turn now threw me a sarcastic glance.

The council ended. I could not help deploring the worthy general's weakness; who, acting against his own convictions, had decided to adopt the advice of incompetent and inexperienced men.

A few days after this remarkable council we received information that Poogatchoff, true to his threat, was approaching Orenburg. From the top of the ramparts I could discern the rebel army. It seemed to me that it had multiplied tenfold since the assault on the Bielogorski fortress, of which I had been a witness. They were now in possession of artillery, captured by Poogatchoff at the various small fortresses he had already subdued. Remembering the decision of the council, I foresaw a long imprisonment within the walls of Orenburg and felt ready to cry with vexation.

I will not relate the assault of Orenburg, as that belongs to history and not to private memoirs. I will only state briefly that the assault, owing to the carelessness of those in command, was the ruin of the inhabitants, who

suffered, in consequence, famine and all kinds of misery. It may easily be imagined that life in Orenburg was insufferable. Everybody dejectedly awaited his fate, and complained of the high price of provisions, which was indeed excessive. The people grew accustomed to the cannon balls, which continually fell into their yards; even the expected assault by Poogatchoff ceased to excite general curiosity. I was very miserable.

Time wore on, and I received no letters from the Bielogorski fortress. All the roads were cut off. This separation from Mary grew insupportable to me. My ignorance of her fate tormented me. The only distraction I had was riding. Thanks to Poogatchoff, I had a good horse, with whom I divided my scanty fare and on whom I rode every day out of town, to exchange shots with Poogatchoff's horsemen. In these skirmishes the villains generally had the best of it, being well fed, well mounted, and half-drunk. The hungry Cossacks of the town were no match for them. Our half-starved infantry would sometimes go into the field, but the deep snow prevented their success. The artillery thundered in vain from the top of the ramparts, or sank and came to a standstill in the field, owing to the pitiful condition of the poor horses. This was the result of our military tactics; and this is what the Orenburg dignitaries called prudence and reason!

One day, when we had somehow contrived to disperse a dense body of rebels, I overtook a Cossack who had slunk away from his comrades. I was about to strike him with my Turkish saber, when he suddenly took off his cap, exclaiming:

“How do you do, lieutenant? How fares it with you?”

I looked up, and recognized in him the traitor under-officer of the Bielogorski fortress. I was delighted to see him.

“How do you do, Maximitch?” said I. “Is it long since you left Bielogorski?”

“Just lately, my good sir. 'Twas but yesterday I came from there. I have a letter for you.”

“Then where is it?” I exclaimed, my face glowing like fire.

“Here it is,” said Maximitch, putting his hand to his

breast. "I promised Palashka you should have it somehow or other."

Upon this he presented me with a folded paper, and then immediately galloped off. I opened it, trembling with emotion, and read the following lines:

"It was God's will to deprive me suddenly of both father and mother. I have neither protectors nor friends upon earth. I appeal to you, knowing that you always wished me well, and are always ready to help every one. I pray God this letter may somehow reach you. Maximitch has promised to take it. He told Palashka that he often sees you in the skirmishes, and that you don't take the slightest care of yourself, and do not remember those who pray for you with many tears. I was ill for a long time, and when I recovered, Mr. Shvabrin, who is commandant here in my dead father's stead, compelled the priest to give me over to him, threatening him with Poogatchoff. I am living in our old house, and am well guarded. Mr. Shvabrin wants to force me to marry him. He says he saved my life, because he did not contradict the falsehood the priest's wife told when she said I was her niece; but death would be far preferable to me than to become the wife of such a man as Shvabrin. He treats me most cruelly, and threatens that if I do not consent he will send me to the impostor's camp, where he hopes I shall meet with the same fate as Elizabeth Harloff. I begged Shvabrin to give me time to consider, and he has promised to wait three days longer. If I don't marry him then, no mercy is to be shown me. Oh, my good Mr. Grinioff! you are my only protector: pity me! Ask the general to send us help, and come yourself if you can. I remain, your poor orphan girl, MARY MIRONOFF."

When I read this letter I was nearly distracted. I flew back to town, mercilessly spurring my horse. On my way I thought first of one plan and then of another for rescuing the poor girl, but to no purpose. I galloped into the town and went straight to the general, rushing headlong into his presence. He was walking up and down the room, smoking his meerschaum pipe. On seeing me he stopped short, struck, I suppose, by my agitation, and inquired with solicitude the cause of my hasty entrance.

"Your excellency," said I, "I appeal to you as I would to my own father; for God's sake do not refuse my request—the happiness of my whole life depends on it."

"What can I do for you, my dear boy?" asked the astonished old man. "Speak!"

"Let me take a detachment of soldiers and fifty Cossacks, and save the Bielogorski fortress!"

The general looked hard at me, thinking, I suppose, I had gone mad, in which surmise he was not far wrong.

“What! save the Bielogorski fortress?”

“Yes! I will answer for success,” I said, warmly.

“Only let me go!”

“No, my boy,” said he, shaking his head; “at such a distance it would be easy for the enemy to cut off communication with the chief strategic point, and win a complete victory over you. This communication once cut off——”

I grew alarmed, seeing him carried away by his military combinations, and hastily interrupted him—

“Captain Mironoff's daughter has sent me a letter praying for help. Shvabrin is trying to force her to marry him!”

“Is it possible? This Shvabrin is a great scoundrel, and if he falls into my hands I will have him tried within twenty-four hours, and he shall be shot on the ramparts. But meanwhile we must be patient.”

“Be patient!” I exclaimed, quite beside myself, “and in the meantime he will marry Mary.”

“Well,” replied the general, “no great harm will come of that. It is safer for her to be Shvabrin's wife just now; he will protect her, and when we have shot him, with God's help she will get another husband. Pretty widows never remain single; at least, I mean to say that a widow can more easily get a husband than a young girl can.”

“I would sooner die,” I screamed in a fury, “than give her up to Shvabrin!”

“Bah! bah! bah!” said the old man. “I see it all now; you are in love with Mary, it seems; that is a different thing altogether. Poor boy! But it is quite impossible to give you a detachment of soldiers; the expedition would be too rash. I cannot take upon myself such a responsibility.”

I bowed my head: my soul filled with despair. Suddenly an idea struck me, and what that was the reader will see in the next chapter, as old-fashioned novelists would say.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REBEL VILLAGE.

I LEFT the general, and hurried to my quarters. Savielitch met me, as usual, with a reproach. "What pleasure can you find, sir, in associating with drunken rogues? Is it a fitting occupation for a gentleman? One day is not always as lucky as another, and some day you may lose your life. Were you fighting with Swedes or Turks that would be a different matter; but it is almost a disgrace to say with whom you do fight."

I interrupted him: "How much money have I in all?"

"Plenty," answered he, looking pleased. "Though the rascals did ransack and thieve I managed to hide some."

With this he pulled out of his pocket a well-filled knitted purse.

"Give me half, and you may keep the rest yourself. I am going to the Bielogorski fortress."

"Master Peter," said the kind old man in a trembling voice, "how can you take such a journey when no road is safe from the rebels? For God's sake, have pity on your parents, if not on yourself. Why do you wish to go? Wait awhile; the Empress will send her army to demolish these rebels, and then you may go all over the world if you like."

But my decision was firmly taken.

"It is too late to argue," said I to the old man; "I must go. Do not grieve, Savielitch; with God's help we may meet again. Do not be too scrupulous or economical—the money is yours; buy all you want and pay three-fold if necessary. If I do not return in three days——"

"What are you talking about, sir?" interrupted Savielitch; "as if I should dream of letting you go alone! If you are determined to go, I will not abandon you, but will follow you on foot, if necessary. As if I could remain behind these stone walls without you. Am I mad? Do as you please, Master Peter, but I won't be left behind."

I knew it was useless to argue with Savielitch, so I

allowed him to get ready for the journey. In half-an-hour I mounted my good steed. Savielitch rode an old lame hack which one of the towns-folk had given him, not being able to keep it any longer. We rode through the town gates and left Orenburg.

It was growing dusk; my way lay through the village of Berda, Poogatchoff's headquarters. The road was lost in the deep snow, but traces of horses' hoofs could be seen across the steppes, and these were daily renewed. I rode at a quick trot; Savielitch could not keep up with me, and shouted repeatedly from a distance, "For God's sake, not so fast, sir; not so fast. My cursed jade can't follow that long-legged devil of yours. What's the hurry? If we were going to a feast it would be different, but there's plenty of time yet to put our necks into a halter. Master Peter!—my dear master!—Master Peter! Lord have mercy! the master's child is sure to get killed!"

In a short time Berda's lights began to glimmer. We approached the ravines forming a natural fortification for the village. Savielitch kept near me, and his lamentations never ceased. I hoped to pass the village without incurring danger, but suddenly I perceived through the twilight, just in front of me, five rebels armed with cudgels. They were the vanguard of Poogatchoff's army. They shouted to us. Notwithstanding the password, I attempted to ride by in silence, but they gathered round me in an instant, and one of them seized my horse's bridle. I drew my sword, struck one man on the head; his cap saved him, but he staggered and let go the bridle. The rest were scared and retreated. I took advantage of this, spurred on my horse, and galloped off. The darkness of the night might have saved me from further danger, when, on turning round, I perceived that Savielitch was no longer with me. What was to be done? I waited a few moments, and feeling assured he had been stopped by the rebels, went back to his rescue.

On nearing the ravine I heard shouts and screams in the distance, and recognized the voice of Savielitch. I quickened my pace, and soon found myself with the rebels again. They rushed at me, and dragged me from my horse. One of them, apparently their leader, declared that he would at once take me to the Emperor, who would decide whether I was to be hanged that night or next

morning. I made no resistance, Savielitch followed my example, and the sentry led us off in triumph.

We passed the ravine and entered the village. All the huts were lit up; shouts and noise resounded. We met a number of people, but no one noticed us through the darkness, and did not recognize in me an Orenburg officer. We were conducted to a hut that stood at the corner of the cross-roads. Several wine-casks and two cannons were placed near the gates.

“This is the palace,” said one of the Cossacks. “I will go and announce your arrival.”

He entered the hut. I glanced at Savielitch; the old man was crossing himself, and praying in a low voice. I had some time to wait; at last the Cossack returned, saying, “His Majesty had ordered him to show the officer in.” I entered the hut, or the “Palace” as the rebels called it; it was lit by two tallow candles, whilst the walls were covered by tinsel paper. As to the rest, the benches, tables, the water-jug hanging from a string, the towel on a nail, the oven-fork in a corner, and the spacious hearth filled with pots and pans—all this was like any other peasant’s hut. Poogatchoff sat beneath the saint’s image. He was dressed in a red kaftan and a high cap, with his arms akimbo, assuming an air of importance. He was surrounded by his rebel chiefs. It was evident that the news of an officer’s arrival from Orenburg had excited great curiosity amongst the rebels, and they had prepared to receive me with looks of triumph. Poogatchoff knew me at a glance. His assumed gravity vanished in a moment.

“Ah, your honor!” said he with alacrity. “How do you do? What has brought you here?”

I replied that I was traveling on business of my own, and that his men stopped me.

“And what kind of business is it?” asked he.

I was at a loss what answer to give. Poogatchoff, believing that I did not care to offer an explanation before witnesses, turned to his comrades and ordered them to leave the room. They all obeyed except two who did not stir.

“Speak freely before these,” said Poogatchoff; “I keep nothing from them.”

I gave a side-glance at the impostor's confidants. One of them, a decrepit, puny old man, with a gray beard, had nothing remarkable about him except a blue ribbon, which he wore across his shoulder over a gray coat. But I shall never forget his companion. He was tall, stout, and squarely-built, and seemed about forty-five. A thick beard, sparkling gray eyes, a nose without any nostrils, and reddish spots on his forehead and cheeks, imparted to his pock-marked face an indescribable look. He wore a red shirt, a Bashkir dressing-gown, and Cossack trousers. The first man, as I afterward discovered, was a deserter, Bieloborsdoff; the second, Sokoloff, a convicted criminal, who had escaped from the mines in Siberia. Notwithstanding the feeling which agitated me, these villains, amongst whom I unexpectedly found myself, worked strongly on my imagination. Poogatchoff recalled me to myself.

“Speak: what brought you from Orenburg?”

A strange thought flashed through my brain; it seemed to me that Providence, in delivering me for a second time into Poogatchoff's power, gave me the opportunity of carrying out my intentions. I resolved to take advantage of this, and without giving myself time to reflect what my experiment might lead to, I said—

“I am on my way to the Bielogorski fortress to rescue an orphan girl who is being persecuted there.”

Poogatchoff's eyes shot fire.

“Which of my men dares to insult an orphan?” he exclaimed, wrathfully. “Though he have seven stars on his brow, he should not escape vengeance. Tell me, who is the offender?”

“Shvabrin is the man,” I replied. “He is keeping prisoner a young girl you saw at the priest's house, and wants her to marry him against her will.”

“I'll give him a lesson!” said Poogatchoff, meaningly. “I'll teach him to persecute; I'll have him hanged!”

“Allow me to put in a word,” said Sokoloff in a hoarse voice. “You were in too great a hurry to make Shvabrin commandant of the fortress, as you are now too hasty in your threat to hang him. You have already offended the Cossacks by naming as their chief an aristocrat; don't now go and frighten the aristocrats by hanging one of them at the first word you hear.”

“They are not worthy of pity or favor,” said the old man with the blue ribbon; “there’s no harm in hanging Shvabrin. It would be as well to question Mr. Officer here as to what brought him to Berda. If he does not acknowledge you as his sovereign, he has no business to look to you for justice; and if he does acknowledge you, why did he stay in Orenburg all this time with your enemies? Don’t you think you had better put him in irons and have him tortured? It strikes me his honor has been sent as spy by the Orenburg commandant.”

The old man’s logic seemed to me rather convincing; a shudder ran through me when I thought into what hands I had fallen. Poogatchoff noticed my agitation.

“Yes, your honor,” said he, winking at me, “methinks my field-marshal is right. What have you to say for yourself?”

His sarcastic tone gave me fresh courage. I said calmly that I was in his power, that he had a right to do with me what he thought proper.

“All right,” said Poogatchoff. “And now tell me all about the state of your town.”

“Thank God,” said I, “all goes well there.”

“All goes well,” repeated Poogatchoff, “and yet the people are all dying of hunger.”

The impostor was speaking the truth; but, bound by my oath, I asserted that the rumor was false—that Orenburg was plentifully supplied with provisions.

“You see,” said the old man with the blue ribbon, “he is lying to your very face. All the deserters from Orenburg report alike. Hunger and death are raging there; they feed on carrion, and think it a dish not to be despised; and yet his honor here asserts they have plenty to live on. If you intend to hang Shvabrin, hang this youngster on the same cross-beam, to excite nobody’s envy.”

The cursed old man’s words seemed to shake Poogatchoff’s resolution; fortunately, however, the two old wretches began quarreling amongst themselves. Sokoloff flatly contradicted the field-marshal.

“Well, well,” said he, “you think of nothing but hanging and killing. What sort of hero are you? To look at you, it’s a wonder your body can contain your soul. You have one foot in the grave, and you think of nothing but

of killing others! Have you not blood enough on your head already?"

"Now, what sort of a saint are you?" replied the field-marshal; "whence comes your soft-heartedness all of a sudden?"

"No doubt," answered Sokoloff, "that I am a sinner too, and this hand and arm" (here he clinched his bony fist, and turning up his sleeve, uncovered his hairy arm) "are guilty of spilling Christian blood. I killed enemies, not guests. I killed on broad highways, in black forests; not at home, on my own hearth."

The little old man turned away muttering between his teeth, "Old ragged nose——"

"What are you muttering there, you old devil?" thundered Sokoloff. "Ragged nose! Repeat it, if you dare. Wait a bit, your turn will come; you will have a taste of the executioner's tongs! Take care, meanwhile, that I don't tear your beard out for you?"

"My lords! generals!" exclaimed Poogatchoff with importance, "leave off quarreling, do! It would be no great misfortune if all the Orenburg dogs were to swing on the same cross-beam; but a sorry one it would be if my chiefs were to tear one another in pieces. Make friends, will you?"

They both remained silent, looking gloomily at one another. I saw that it would be wise to change the conversation, which might end rather unpleasantly for me; so, turning to Poogatchoff, I said gayly: "Ah! I had almost forgotten to thank you for the horse and sheepskin coat you sent me. But for you I should never have reached Orenburg, and might have been frozen to death on the way." My *ruse* succeeded. Poogatchoff grew merry.

"I owed you an old debt," said he, winking and shutting his eyes; "but tell me, what is that young girl to you, whom Shvabrin is persecuting? Do you take any particular interest in her—eh?"

"She is my betrothed," I answered, seeing the agreeable change in his manner, and finding no reason for withholding the truth.

"Your betrothed! Why didn't you say so before? In that case we will have you married, and feast at your wedding."

Then turning to his companions, he added:

“Listen to me, field-marshal. His honor and I are very old friends: let us have supper now. Morning brings more wisdom than evening: to-morrow we will discuss what had better be done with him.”

I would gladly have refused the proffered honor, but there was no help for it. Two young Cossack girls laid the cloth, on which they placed bread, some fish-soup, and several flagons of wine and beer. And thus I once more found myself at the same board with Poogatchoff and his horrible companions. This orgy, at which I was an unwilling guest, lasted far into the night. At length the fumes of the wine began to tell on the revelers. Poogatchoff dozed in his chair; his comrades rose and made signs for me to leave him. Following their instructions the sentry led me to a kind of office, where I found Savielitch, and we were locked in together. My old servant was so amazed at everything that was taking place that he did not even ask me a single question. He lay down in the dark, and kept sighing and groaning. At length this changed into a snore, and I gave myself up to meditation, which kept me awake through the night. Next morning Poogatchoff sent for me. I went into his presence. At the gates stood a *keebeetka*, with three horses harnessed abreast; a crowd had collected round it. I met Poogatchoff in the passage. He was attired for a journey, in a fur cloak and Kirghese cap. His two companions of the previous night attended him, assuming an air of servility which was in direct contradiction to what I had witnessed the previous evening. Poogatchoff welcomed me gayly, and invited me to sit near him in the *keebeetka*. When we were seated Poogatchoff said, “To the Bielogorski fortress!” The order was given to a broad-shouldered Tartar, who, standing erect, drove the *troika*.* My heart beat fast; the horses dashed on, the bells tinkled, the *keebeetka* flew over the snow.

“Stop! stop!” resounded a too well-known voice, and I saw Savielitch running after us. Poogatchoff ordered the post-boy to stop.

“My dear Master Peter,” shouted my servant, “don’t abandon me in my old age, and leave me amid these rasc——”

*A *troika* is a Russian team of three horses.

"Ah, old graybeard!" said Poogatchoff, "here you are again! So fate has thrown us once more together. Get up next the coachman."

"Thank you, your majesty; God grant you may live a hundred years for helping an old man like me. I will always pray for you, and as to the hareskin coat I'll never mention it again."

This unfortunate hareskin might at last seriously enrage Poogatchoff. Fortunately, however, he did not hear, or else disdained to notice the ill-timed remark. We galloped on, the people bowing low as we passed. Poogatchoff nodded right and left. In a few moments we were out of the village, and speeding along the smooth road.

One may easily imagine what I felt at this moment. In a few hours more I should see her whom I had considered lost to me for ever. I pictured our meeting. I thought, too, of the man who was master of my destiny, and who, by a strange combination of events, was mysteriously connected with me. I recalled the cruelty, the bloodthirstiness of him who now offered to deliver my beloved.

Poogatchoff did not know she was the daughter of Captain Mironoff. He might learn the truth; Schvabrin, exasperated, might divulge everything. What would become of Mary in that case? A shudder ran through me, and my hair stood on end. Suddenly my companion cut short my meditations, as, turning to me, he said—

"Why are you buried in thought, your honor?"

"How can I help it?" I replied. "I, a nobleman and an officer, who yesterday fought against you, am to-day driving in the same *keebeetka* with you, and my whole life's happiness depends on you."

"Well," said Poogatchoff, "do you fear the result?"

I replied, that, having received mercy at his hands on a previous occasion, I hoped he would help me again.

"And you are right, by heaven!" said the impostor. "You saw how menacingly my men looked, and they persisted even this morning in declaring you were a spy and ought to be hanged; but I would not heed them," said he, lowering his voice in order that Savielitch and the Tartar should not hear. "You see, I have a good memory; your hareskin coat and glass of wine have not been forgotten. I am not such a bloodsucker as your friends make me out to be."

I recalled the assault of the Bielogorski fortress, but did not think fit to contradict him, so I said nothing.

"What do they say of me in Orenburg?" asked Poogatchoff.

"They say it will be very difficult to get the better of you, and I must admit you deserve your renown."

The impostor's face showed that his ambition was satisfied.

"Yes," he said gayly, "I am a clever general. Did you hear of the battle near Uzeeva? Forty generals were killed, four detachments were taken prisoners. Do you think the King of Prussia would fight against me?"

His audacity and swagger amused me.

"What is your own opinion?" I asked him. "Do you believe you could beat Frederick?"

"Frederick! and why not? I beat your generals who have beaten *him* many a time. Up to now I have been lucky in war. Wait a bit, you'll see stranger things yet when I enter Moscow."

"And do you think you will ever enter Moscow?"

The impostor grew thoughtful, then said in a low voice, "God only knows; my path is narrow; I have too little freedom. My men want to have their own way; they are a roguish lot; I must be on my guard. At the first failure they will save their own necks by giving up my head."

"You see," I said to him, "I think it would be better for you to leave them in time and crave the mercy of the Empress."

Poogatchoff smiled bitterly.

"No," said he, "it is too late for me to repent; no mercy will be shown me; as I have begun, so will I continue. Who knows? perhaps I may succeed. Otrepieff *did* reign in Moscow, after all."

"And do you know his fate? He was thrown out of a window and murdered, then burnt, and a cannon was afterward loaded with his ashes, and discharged."

"Listen," said he, as if inspired. "I will tell you a tale that was told me by an old Kalmuc woman when I was a child. An eagle once said to a raven, 'Tell me, raven, why do you live three hundred years, whilst I live only thirty-three?' 'Because,' replied the raven, 'you drink fresh blood, whilst I feed on carrion.' The eagle thought to himself, 'Well, supposing we both try to eat

the same food.' 'All right,' said the raven. Away flew eagle and raven together. They saw a dead horse, flew down and lighted on it. The raven began to peck and praise his meal; the eagle pecked once, pecked twice, clapped his wing and said, 'No, brother raven, 'tis far preferable to drink once of fresh blood than to live three hundred years on carrion, be the result what it may.'"

"It is very ingenious," I answered, "but to my mind living by murder and theft is equivalent to feeding on carrion."

Poogatchoff looked at me in surprise, but said nothing. We both became silent, buried in thought.

The Tartar commenced singing a melancholy song. Savielitch dozed as he sat in the coachman's box. The *keebeetka* flew over the smooth road. All of a sudden a small village met my view, built on the shores of the Yaïcka, with a wooden inclosure and belfry tower; in another quarter of an hour we drove into the Bielogorski fortress.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ORPHAN GIRL.

THE *keebeetka* stopped in front of the commandant's house. The people recognizing the sound of Poogatchoff's sledge-bells, ran after us in crowds. Shvabrin received the impostor at the door. He wore the Cossack dress, and had let his beard grow. The traitor helped Poogatchoff to alight, expressing his joy and zeal in the most abject manner. On seeing me he grew confused, but soon regained his self-possession, and holding out his hand, said:

"So you too are one of us? It is high time you should be."

I turned from him without speaking. My heart ached when I found myself in the well-known rooms, where the credentials of the late commandant still hung on the wall as a memorial of past times. Poogatchoff seated himself on the sofa on which poor Captain Mironoff used to doze, sent to sleep by his wife's grumbling. Shvabrin brought him some brandy with his own hand, of which he drank off a wine-glassful, and pointing to me, said:

"Give his honor some."

Shvabrin approached me with the tray, but again I turned away from him. He did not seem at his ease; with his usual sagacity, he at once guessed that Poogatchoff was displeased with him. He felt alarmed, and looked distrustfully at me.

Poogatchoff asked about the affairs of the fortress, of the rumors respecting the enemy's army, and so on. Then suddenly broke out:

"Tell me, my good fellow, who the young girl is you are keeping a prisoner here?—Bring her to me."

Shvabrin turned as pale as death.

"Your majesty," said he in a trembling voice—"your majesty, she is not a prisoner: she is ill—lying in bed in the garret."

"Take me to her, then," said Poogatchoff, rising.

There was no possibility of gainsaying him. Shvabrin led him to Mary's room. "I followed them. Shvabrin stopped short on the stairs. "Your majesty," said he, "has a right to exact from me whatever you wish, but do not allow a stranger to enter my wife's bedroom."

I trembled.

"So you are married?" said I to Shvabrin, ready to tear him to pieces.

"Gently!" interrupted Poogatchoff. "This is my affair. As to you," continued he, turning to Shvabrin, "don't try to deceive me; whether she is your wife or not, I will take in whom I please. Follow me, your honor."

At the door Shvabrin stopped once more, saying in broken accents:

"Sire, I warn you that she has brain-fever and this is the third day that she is delirious."

"Open the door!" shouted Poogatchoff.

Shvabrin began feeling his pockets, and said he had forgotten the key.

Poogatchoff kicked the door, which gave way, and we entered.

I gazed, and was horror-struck. On the floor, in a tattered peasant's dress, sat Mary, so pale, thin, and worn; her hair disheveled, her glance despairing. A jug of water with a piece of bread was by her side.

At the sight of me she trembled and uttered a cry. I cannot recollect what happened next.

Poogatchoff scowled at Shvabrin, and said with a bitter smile:

“A nice hospital this!” He then approached Mary, saying, “Tell me, my dear, why does your husband punish you? What have you done?”

“My husband!” she repeated. “He is not my husband; I will never be his wife! I prefer death, and will die, if no one rescues me.”

Poogatchoff looked threateningly at Shvabrin.

“And so you have dared to deceive me?” said he. “Do you know what you deserve, you scoundrel?”

Shvabrin fell on his knees. At this moment contempt deadened in me every other feeling of hatred and anger. I beheld with disgust this man, a gentleman, lying at the feet of a rebel Cossack.

Poogatchoff was softened.

“I forgive you this once,” he said to Shvabrin; “but remember that this outrage will be brought home to you at your next offense.”

He then turned to Mary, and said kindly: “Rise, fair damsel, you are free. I am the Emperor.”

Mary looked up quickly at him, and feeling convinced that the murderer of her parents stood before her, covered her face with her hands and fell senseless on the floor. I rushed to her assistance, when at that moment in came Palashka, my old acquaintance, and began to soothe her young mistress.

“Well, your honor,” said Poogatchoff laughing, “after all, we have delivered your fair one. Don't you think we ought to send for the priest, and make him perform the marriage ceremony for his niece? I will give her away, and Shvabrin will be best man. We will feast and drink, and lock the gates.”

What I dreaded took place. Shvabrin, hearing Poogatchoff's proposal, lost all command over himself. “Your majesty,” he shouted, quite beside himself, “I certainly am to blame, for I told you a lie; but Grinioff is also deceiving you. The young girl is not the priest's niece, but the daughter of the captain who was hanged the day you took the fortress.

Poogatchoff darted a fiery look at me.

“How now?” he asked in amazement.

“Shvabrin speaks the truth,” I answered firmly.

“You had not told me this,” remarked Poogatchoff, his face darkening.

“Consider for a moment,” I replied. “Was it possible to explain this before your soldiers? Had I told them Captain Mironoff's daughter was alive they would have torn her in pieces; nothing could have saved her.”

“That's true,” said Poogatchoff laughing. “My drunken fellows would not have spared the poor girl. The priest's wife did well to dupe them.”

“Hear me,” I went on, seeing his good humor; “I do not know, nor do I wish to know, how I am to address you; but God is my witness that I would willingly lay down my life for you, to repay you all you have done for me; only do not ask me to do what is against my honor and conscience. You are my benefactor. Finish as you have begun; let me and the poor orphan girl go where God may lead us; and, wherever you are, whatever may happen to you, we will pray daily for the salvation of your sinful soul.”

Poogatchoff's hard heart seemed touched.

“Be it as you wish,” said he. “When I punish, I punish; and when I give, I give freely; such is my custom. Take your fair one, go where you please, and may God give you love and happiness.”

Upon this he turned to Shvabrin, ordering him to write me a passport for all the fortresses and gates which were in his power. Shvabrin, quite dumfounded, stood as though petrified. Poogatchoff went to inspect the fortress; Shvabrin accompanied him; I stayed behind under pretext of preparing for my journey.

I ran upstairs. The door was unlocked. I knocked.

“Who is there?” asked Palashka.

I told her my name. Mary's sweet voice was heard from within.

“Wait a little, Mr. Grinioff; I am changing my dress. Go to the priest's; I will be there directly.”

I obeyed, and went to Father Gheracim's. He and his wife ran out to meet me. Savielitch had already informed them of my arrival.

“How do you do, Mr. Grinioff?” said the priest's wife. “God has permitted us to meet again. But do tell me, my good sir, how you managed to be on such friendly terms with Poogatchoff? How comes it that he has not

yet killed you? We may at least be thankful to the wretch for this."

"Hold your tongue, old woman," interrupted the priest. "Don't let out everything you happen to know. There is no wisdom in a multitude of words. My dear Mr. Grinioff, do come in; you are most welcome."

The priest's wife brought out all the good things she had in the house, her chatter never ceasing. She told him that Shvabrin had forced them to give Mary up to him, but that she was in constant communication with them through the medium of Palashka, a sharp girl, who could make most people dance to any tune she liked. It was she who had advised Mary to write to me. I, in my turn, briefly related all that had befallen me. The priest and his wife repeatedly crossed themselves. When they heard that Poogatchoff was acquainted with the deceit they had practiced on him, "God help us!" said the priest's wife. "May all danger be averted from us! As to Shvabrin, there's a wretch for you."

At this moment the door opened, and Mary came in with a smile on her pale face. She no longer wore her peasant's dress, but was, as usual, dressed simply and becomingly. I seized her hand, and for a long time was unable to speak; we were both silent, because our hearts were too full for words. The priest and his wife left us, feeling we did not want them just then.

We talked and talked as if we could never say enough to each other. Mary told me all that had happened to her since the taking of the fortress; described all the horrors of her position, all the misery to which that abominable Shvabrin had subjected her. We also spoke about the happy times now past. We both wept.

At length I began to tell her my plans for the future. It would be impossible to leave her in the fortress, which was in Poogatchoff's power; and quite as impossible to think of Orenburg, suffering as it was all the horrors of a siege. She had not a single relative on earth. I proposed that she should go to my parents. At first she hesitated; my father's well-known disapproval of our marriage frightened her. I quieted her scruples. I knew that my father would consider it a pleasant duty to receive the daughter of a brave officer, who had died for his country.

“Dear Mary,” I said at last, “I look on you as my wife. Strange and wonderful events have united us for ever.”

Mary heard me without any assumed shyness or ingenious excuses; she felt that her fate was linked to mine, but she repeated that she could only be my wife with the consent of my parents. I did not contradict her in this. We embraced fervently and sincerely, and thus everything was settled between us. It was not very long before the under-officer brought me the promised passport, signed with Poogotchoff's illegible scrawl. He summoned me to his presence. I found him ready for his return journey. I cannot express what my feelings were whilst taking leave of this much-dreaded man, who appeared a villain, a monster to every one but me. Why not confess the truth? A strong and strange sympathy attracted me to him at that moment. I heartily wished I could take him from the gang of ruffians whose leader he was, and save him while there was yet time from his inevitable fate. Shvabrin, and those who surrounded us, prevented my speaking out frankly all that oppressed and filled my heart.

We parted in a most friendly way.

Poogatchoff, who had remarked the priest's wife in the crowd, winked knowingly and shook his finger at her, then took his seat in the *keebeetka*, ordered the coachman to drive to Berda, and when the horses started he once more looked out of the *keebeetka*, shouting to me, “Good-bye, your honor! Perhaps we may meet again some day.”

We did meet again, but under what circumstances!

Poogatchoff was gone. For a long while I stood and gazed across the snow-covered steppes over which his *troika* was flying. The crowd dispersed. Shvabrin disappeared. I returned to the priest's house. All was ready for our departure. I would not tarry any longer. Our goods and chattels were packed in the poor commandant's carriage. The postboy soon harnessed the horses, whilst Mary went to take a last farewell of her parent's grave. I wished to accompany her, but she asked me to let her go alone. She returned in a few moments, shedding tears. The carriage drew up to the door; there were three of us to occupy the inside—Mary, myself, and Palashka. Savielitch scrambled on the box.

“Farewell, my dear Miss Mary! Our bright sunshine!

Good-by, Mr. Grinioff," said the good-natured priest's wife. "A safe journey, and may God bless you both!"

We rolled away. At the window of the commandant's house I saw Shvabrin; his face expressed a gloomy animosity. I did not wish to triumph over a fallen enemy, so turned my face away. At length we drove through the gates and left the Bielogorski fortress for ever.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARREST.

FINDING myself so unexpectedly united to the dear girl on whose account I had been that very morning in such anxiety, I could hardly believe my senses, and felt as if what had happened to me was but an empty dream. Mary looked pensively, now at me, now at the road before her, seeming unable to collect her thoughts and realize her position. We were silent. Our hearts were full of dreamy lassitude. Without noticing it, we found ourselves in about two hours' time close to the neighboring fortress, which was also in Poogatchoff's possession. Here we stopped to change horses. I soon guessed, by the alacrity shown in putting fresh horses to the carriage, by the ready officiousness of the bearded Cossack who had been appointed commandant of the place by Poogatchoff, that, thanks to the chattering post-boy who had driven us, we were received like court favorites. We continued our journey. Dusk came on; we approached a small town, where, the bearded commandant assured us, was stationed a strong detachment ready to join the impostor's army.

The sentry stopped us, and to the question, "Who goes there?" the post-boy answered with a shout:

"The Emperor's friend with his young wife."

Suddenly a crowd of hussars surrounded the carriage, using the most abusive and threatening language.

"Get out, you devil's friend!" said a whiskered sergeant to me. "Wait a bit, you'll soon have a nice hot bath with your lady!"

I got out of the *keebeetka*, desiring them to take me to their commander. On seeing an officer the soldiers stop-

ped their abuse. They led me into the major's presence. Savielitch followed me closely, muttering to himself: "The Emperor's friend! Here's a pretty go! Out of one mess into a worse one still. Lord have mercy! How will it end?"

The *keebeetka* followed us at a slow pace.

Five minutes later we came to a small house which was brightly lit up. The sergeant left me with the sentry, whilst he went in to announce me. He returned almost immediately, saying that the major was not at liberty to see me, but had ordered me to be put in prison, but that my wife was to be led into his presence.

"What does he mean?" I screamed in a fury. "Is he mad?"

"I don't know, your honor," answered the sergeant, "but his orders are that you go to prison and that her ladyship be brought to him."

I rushed up the steps—the sentry never thought of stopping me—and I ran straight into a room where five or six hussar officers were playing at faro. The major was banker. What was my astonishment when I recognised in him Mr. John Zourine, who had once taught me how to play at billiards and won a large sum of money from me at the Simbirsk tavern.

"Is it possible?" I exclaimed. "Mr. Zourine, is that you?"

"Bah! bah! It is Mr. Grinioff! How came you here? and where from? Welcome, old fellow! Will you try your luck at cards?"

"Thank you, but first order a lodging to be given me."

"What do you want a lodging for? Stay here with us."

"I cannot; I am not alone."

"Well, then bring your friend with you."

"It is not a man; it is—a lady."

"A lady! Where did you find her—eh, old boy?"

With these words, Zourine whistled in so significant a manner that every one roared, whilst I grew quite confused.

"Well," went on Zourine, "then there's no help for it. You shall have a lodging. It's a pity though—we should have had such a jolly time of it, as in the old days. Hallo,

there! Why don't they bring in Poogatchoff's friend? Is she obstinate? Tell her she has nothing to fear—that the gentleman is a nice one, and does not mean to offend her in any way. Give her a good push!”

“What's the matter?” I said to him. “It is no friend of Poogatchoff's, but Captain Mironoff's daughter. I rescued her from captivity, and am now taking her to my parents.”

“How is this? Then it must be you that they told me of. But what does it all mean?”

“Presently I will explain; but, for God's sake, first reassure the poor girl, whom your hussars have nearly frightened to death.”

Zourine gave the necessary orders without delay, and went himself to apologize to Mary for his involuntary mistake, and ordered the sergeant to procure the best lodging in the town for her. I spent the night with him.

We supped, and when we were left to ourselves I told him the whole of my story. Zourine listened with profound attention, but when I had finished he shook his head, saying:

“It's all very well, old fellow, except for one thing; what the deuce do you want to get married for? Believe me when I assure you that marriage is all nonsense. How in the world will you manage a wife and children? Take my advice and give the young lady up. The road to Simbirsk has been cleared by my soldiers, and is now perfectly safe; send her on to-morrow by herself, and you can remain with my regiment. It is useless for you to return to Orenburg. If you fall into the rebels' power again, it's ten to one you won't get out of it so easily as before. This love affair will be ended, and all will be set right.”

Although I was not quite of his opinion, yet I felt that I was in honor bound to stay in the ranks of the Empress's army. I made up my mind to follow Zourine's advice, and send Mary to my parents, and remain myself with his regiment. Savielitch came to my room; I told him that he must be ready next morning to accompany Miss Mironoff on his journey. At first he was very obstinate.

“What do you mean, sir? How can I leave you? Who is to wait on you? And what will your parents say to this?”

I knew how headstrong he could be, and therefore tried to persuade him by kindness.

"My dear old friend," I said to him, "don't refuse what I ask. I shall not want any attendance, and shall be most anxious if Mary goes without you. In serving her you serve me also, for I am resolved to marry her as soon as circumstances will permit."

At this Savielitch wrung his hands with a look of indescribable amazement.

"Marry!" repeated he. "The boy wants to get married! What will your father say?"

"He will consent, I feel sure of that," I answered; "once they learn to know Mary, they will love her. I rely on you too; my parents have faith in you; you will be our friend, will you not?"

The old man was touched.

"Oh, my dear Master Peter," he replied, "though you are much too young to think of marrying, I must say she is a sweet young lady, and it would be a sin to let such a chance slip through your fingers. Let it be as you wish. I will accompany your angel, and if you will allow your serf to say so, such a bride needs no dowry."

I thanked Savielitch, and went to sleep in Zourine's room. Agitated and feverish, I became talkative. At first Zourine conversed with me willingly, but by degrees his words grew scarce and incoherent, and at last all I got for answer to some questions was a snore and a whistle. I stopped talking and soon followed his example.

The next day I saw Mary and told her of my plans, which she thought wise, and quite agreed with me. Zourine's regiment was to leave the town that very day; there was no time to lose, and I took leave of Mary, giving her a letter to my parents, and confiding her to the care of Savielitch.

"Farewell," she said in a low voice. "God alone knows whether we shall ever meet again, but I shall never forget you, and to the end of my life will love no other."

I could say nothing; we were surrounded by servants, and in their presence I did not wish to give way to the feelings which agitated me. At length we parted, and she was gone. I went back to Zourine, quite sad and silent. He tried to cheer me, and I did my best to forget

my troubles. We spent a noisy day, and in the evening began our march.

It was now the end of February. The winter, which had hindered military operations, was breaking up, and our generals were preparing for a friendly co-operation.

Poogatchoff still held a strong position near Orenburg. Meanwhile different tribes flocked round his standard. At the approach of our army the rebel villages were reduced to submission; gangs fled before us and everything foretold a happy and speedy termination. Shortly after this, Prince Galitzin defeated Poogatchoff, dispersed his mob, liberated Orenburg, and had, it would seem, put a final stroke to the rebellion. Zourine was at this time ordered to pursue a force of rebel Bashkirs, who, however, dispersed before we even caught sight of them. Spring suddenly came on and overtook us in a Tartar village. The snow and ice melting, the rivers overflowed; the roads were impassable. We consoled ourselves during our inaction by thinking we should shortly see the end of this troublesome war, carried on against robbers and barbarians.

But Poogatchoff was not caught; he appeared in Siberia, gathered fresh gangs, and began his misdeeds again. Rumors of his successes went the round once more. We heard the news of the destruction of the Siberian fortresses, and shortly after it was said that the impostor had taken Kasan, and was on his way to Moscow. This alarmed the heads of the army, who had been lulled by the hope that the villain would surrender of his own accord.

I will not describe our march and the end of the war; I will merely mention that the general calamity reached its climax. Administration was paralyzed. Landowners hid in the forests, and the gangs of rebels perpetrated their crimes throughout the country. The commander of each corps pardoned and punished arbitrarily; the state of the country where the scourge reigned was terrible. God save us from ever witnessing again such a senseless and merciless Russian rebellion!

Poogatchoff fled, pursued by General Michleson. Shortly after, we heard of his total defeat, and Zourine received news of the impostor's capture, and with it orders to halt. The war being over, I was allowed at length to go home

to my parents. The thought of embracing them, of seeing Mary, of whom I had no news whatever, sent me into ecstasies of delight; I danced round the room like a child. Zourine laughed, shrugged his shoulders, and said: "You will come to no good; you will marry—and go to the devil."

But a strange feeling poisoned my joy. Thoughts of the villain whose hands were stained with the blood of so many innocent victims, and of the death which certainly awaited him, involuntarily troubled me. "Oh, Poogatchoff!" thought I, with regret, "why were you not killed by a bayonet's thrust, or even shot? You could not have chosen a better end." In vain I tried to forget him; the remembrance of him was inseparable from that of his great goodness in delivering Mary from the power of the odious Shvabrin. Zourine gave me leave of absence. A few days more and I should find myself in the bosom of my family, when suddenly an unexpected storm burst over me. On the day fixed for my departure, just as I was about to start, Zourine entered, holding a paper in his hand and wearing an anxious look. My heart misgave me; I was frightened, without knowing why. He sent my servant out of the room, saying he had something of importance to communicate.

"What is it?" I asked impatiently.

"It is rather a disagreeable affair," he answered, handing me the paper. "Read this; I have just received it."

It was a secret order to each commander, separately, to arrest me wherever I might be found, and to send me, well guarded, to Kasan, to the Commission of Inquiry which had been instituted for the investigation of Poogatchoff's rebellion.

The paper dropped from my hands.

"There's no help for it," said Zourine; "it is my duty to obey the orders. No doubt rumors of your friendly journey with Poogatchoff have somehow got to the ears of the Government. I trust it will lead to no serious consequences, and that you will prove your innocence to the Commissioners. Don't lose heart; and now go."

My conscience was clear; I did not fear the verdict; but the thought that the sweet reunion I had so longed for was delayed, perhaps for months, appalled me. The cart

was ready; Zourine bade me a friendly good-by. I got into the cart. Two hussars sat near me with drawn swords; and we went on our way along the high-road.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRIAL.

I FELT convinced that the cause of all my misfortunes was my absence from Orenburg without leave. I could easily clear myself. Skirmishing, far from being forbidden, was, on the contrary, strongly encouraged. I might be accused of exaggerated zeal, but not of willful disobedience. My friendly intercourse with Poogatchoff could be proved by numbers of witnesses, and must, to say the least, have excited strong suspicion. During my journey I thought over the questions which awaited me. I weighed my answers, and resolved to tell the whole truth, believing this to be the safest way of clearing myself.

I arrived in Kasan, which I found desolate and almost in ashes. Instead of houses, I saw heaps of charred wood, coals, and cinders lying about the streets; burnt walls stood up without roofs or windows. These were the traces Poogatchoff left of his passage! I was taken to the fortress, which had escaped destruction; I was given over to an officer, who ordered a blacksmith to rivet chains on my legs. I was then thrown into prison, and left in a dark, close hole, with nothing but bare walls and a small grated window.

Such a beginning boded no good, but I did not lose hope. I turned to the Consoler of the afflicted, and having tasted the sweetness of prayer sent up from a pure though troubled heart, I fell into a peaceful sleep without distressing myself about what would happen next.

The next morning I was taken before the judge. Two soldiers led me through the yard to the commandant's house, where I was ushered alone into the audience chamber. It was a spacious hall. Two men were sitting at a table covered with papers; an elderly general of cold, severe aspect, and a young, good-looking captain of the

Guards. At another table, near the window, sat a clerk with a pen behind his ear, waiting, no doubt, to take down my depositions. The inquiry began. I was asked my name and rank. The general inquired whether I was the son of Mr. Andrew Grinioff, and on my answering in the affirmative, sternly remarked:

“A great pity that such a good man should have so worthless a son.”

I calmly rejoined that, “Whatever might be brought against me, I hoped to clear myself by an honest confession of the truth.”

My cool manner displeased him.

“You are deep, my man,” said he, frowning, “but we have seen deeper ones than you.”

The young captain then asked:

“Why and when I had entered Poogatchoff's service, and what rank I held under him?”

I indignantly replied that, “Being a gentleman and an officer, I could not enter Poogatchoff's service, or hold any post near his person.”

“How happens it then,” continued my interrogator, “that a gentleman and an officer has been spared by the impostor, whilst all his comrades have been wickedly murdered? How is it that this same gentleman and officer feasts amicably with rebels, even receiving presents from the chief conspirator? What was the reason of this strange friendship, and what were its grounds, if not treason, or, to say the least, a degrading and criminal cowardice?”

I felt deeply insulted by this speech, and began to defend myself warmly. I related how my acquaintance with Poogatchoff had begun during the snowstorm in the steppes; but that I defended the Bielogorski fortress against the villain to the last extremity. I could appeal to my general, who would testify to my zeal during the desperate assault of Orenburg.

The severe-looking old general took an open letter from the table and read as follows:

“In reply to your inquiries with respect to Lieut. Grinioff, who is suspected of being mixed up in the present rebellion, and to have come to an amicable understanding with the villain, contrary to his oath and duty, I have the honor to inform you that the said Lieu-

tenant served in Orenburg from the beginning of October last year, 1773, to the 24th of February of the present year, on which day he left the town without leave, and never since returned. We have heard from deserters that he paid a visit to Poogatchoff, who accompanied him to the Bielogorski fortress, where he had previously been quartered."

Here he stopped reading, and said: "What have you now to say in your defense?"

I tried to continue my explanations as I had begun, and to confess my love for Mary as openly as I had told all the rest, but I suddenly felt a most invincible repugnance to doing so. The thought that if I mentioned her name she might be called as witness, and the idea of mixing her up with the abominable denunciations of scoundrels and confronting her with them—all this so stunned me that I stammered and seemed dumfounded.

My judges, who were apparently beginning to listen to my explanations with some interest, became prejudiced against me when they noticed my confusion. The officer of the Guards then ordered me to be confined with my chief accuser. The general told them to bring in "yesterday's villain."

I turned quickly toward the door, impatiently awaiting my accuser.

In a few moments there was the sound of chains rattling, the door opened, and in came—Shvabrin. I was quite astonished at the change in him. He looked fearfully pale and emaciated. His hair, which had been jet-black, had turned white, his long beard was matted. He repeated his accusations in a weak but resolute voice. He stated that I had been sent by Poogatchoff to Orenburg as a spy; that I rode daily out of the town in order to give information of all that was going on within the walls; that, lastly, I went openly over to the impostor, accompanying him from one fortress to another. I listened to him in silence, and felt glad of one thing—Mary's name had not been once uttered by this abominable wretch. Whether it was that his wounded pride suffered at the thought of her who rejected him with such disdain, or whether there lurked in his heart one spark of the feeling that kept me silent; whatever it was, the name of the commandant's daughter was never mentioned. I resolved to be firm to my resolution, and when

my judges asked me how I could refute Shvabrin's testimony, I replied that I adhered to my previous statement and had nothing further to say in my own defense. The general ordered me to be taken back to prison. We went out together. I looked at Shvabrin calmly, but did not speak a word to him. He smiled fiendishly at me, and lifting up his fetters, passed me with a hurried step. I went back to prison, and was never re-examined by the judge. I was not a witness to what I have still to relate, but I have heard it so often repeated that the veriest details are deeply engraven on my memory and I almost feel I had been an invisible spectator of it all.

* * * * *

Mary had been welcomed by my parents with the sincere cordiality which characterizes all old-fashioned people.

They looked on the opportunity now offered them of protecting a poor orphan girl as a blessing from God. They soon grew attached to her, for it was impossible to know her without loving her. My father ceased to consider my love for her mere nonsense, whilst my mother had but one wish, that her son should marry the captain's charming daughter.

The news of my arrest filled them all with dismay. Mary had related with such simplicity about my strange acquaintance with Poogatchoff that it not only failed to excite any apprehension on my account, but even made them laugh heartily over it. My father would not believe that I could be mixed up in a rebellion whose aim was the overthrow of royalty and the extermination of the nobles.

He questioned Savielitch minutely. My servant did not hide from him that I really had visited Poogatchoff, and that the ruffian seemed to have a liking for me, but swore on his oath that he never heard a word about treason. My parents were reassured, and waited impatiently for favorable news. Mary felt deeply troubled, but kept her own counsel, for she was cautious and retiring to a degree.

Several weeks passed. Suddenly my father received a letter from St. Petersburg from a relation of ours, Prince —

The Prince spoke of me, after a few preliminary sen-

tences, that the suspicions respecting me were unfortunately but too well-founded—that I was condemned to be put to a fearful death in order that I might serve as an example to others. The Empress, however, out of consideration for my father's services and old age, resolved to be merciful to his criminal son, and save him from a felon's death, and transport him for life to Siberia. This unexpected blow nearly killed my father; he lost his usual self-control, and poured out his grief in bitter complaints.

“Oh!” repeated he, almost beside himself, “my son a traitor! Good God! That I should live to know it! The Empress saves him from a felon's death, as if that could lighten my burden of grief. Death in itself is not dreadful; my grandfather died in defense of what he considered a holy cause; my father suffered death with Volinsky; but my son is a traitor, and has joined a gang of robbers! Shame on our name for ever!”

My mother, frightened at his despair, dared not weep in his presence, and tried to cheer him by saying that reports were often untrue, and that the verdicts of mankind were often faulty. But my father refused to be consoled.

Mary suffered more than any one. She felt convinced that I might have cleared myself had I only chosen to do so. She guessed the truth, and looked upon herself as the cause of my misfortune. She hid her sorrow and her tears from all eyes, thinking all the while by what means she could save me. One morning my father was sitting on the sofa turning over the leaves of the Court Calendar, but his thoughts were running far and wide, and the book did not produce its usual effects. He whistled an old military march. My mother sat knitting in silence, and now and then tears dropped on her work.

Suddenly, Mary, who had been sitting near, also at work, announced that she was compelled to go on a journey to St. Petersburg, and asked them to give her the means to go with.

My mother was deeply grieved.

“What do you want to go there for?” she said. “Oh, Mary! is it possible that you too want to abandon us?”

Mary replied that “her future happiness depended on

this journey, that she was going as the daughter of an officer who had died for his Empress and country, to seek the protection and aid of the strong and powerful."

My father hung his head; each word reminded him of his son's supposed crime and was a stinging reproach to him.

"Go, by all means, my dear," said he with a sigh; "we will not stand in the way of your happiness: may God give you a good husband instead of a dishonorable traitor."

He rose and left the room.

Left alone with my mother, Mary partly disclosed her plans. My mother tearfully embraced her and prayed that God might bless her undertaking. She supplied her with all necessaries for her journey, and in a few days Mary started, accompanied by the faithful Palashka and Savielitch, the latter, being separated from me against his will, found comfort in the idea that he was making himself useful to my future wife.

Mary reached Sofia safely, and hearing that the Court was then staying at Tsarske-Selo, resolved to go there. A woman who had entered into conversation with her told her that she was the niece of a man who lighted the stoves in the palace, and initiated her in all the mysteries of Court life. She told her at what hour the Empress took her walk in the morning, when she had breakfast, what noblemen were with her, what she had talked about during yesterday's dinner, and whom she had received in the evening. In a word, Mrs. Ann's conversation was deserving of several pages of historical memoirs, and might have been prized by posterity. Mary listened eagerly. They went together into the palace grounds, where Mrs. Ann told a history about each alley and bridge; after a long walk they returned home and were on the best possible terms.

Early the next morning Mary rose, dressed herself, and went out into the gardens. The morning was lovely. The sun shone on the tops of the lime-trees, on whose leaves the fresh breath of autumn had already spread a yellowish tint. The wide smooth lake glittered; the swans, just awake from their slumbers, swam majestically from under the bushes by the shore. Mary approached a lawn, on which a monument had lately been erected in honor of the victories of Count Roomiantzoff. All at once

a small white dog, of English breed, barked and ran toward her, and at the same moment a woman's pleasant voice was heard:

“Don't be afraid, she will not bite you.”

And Mary perceived a lady sitting on a bench in front of the monument. Mary sat down at the other end of the seat. The lady looked at her attentively, and Mary having thrown a few sidelong glances, managed to examine her from head to foot. She wore a white morning wrapper and a lace cap; she looked about forty; her full rosy face wore a calm, majestic expression, whilst her blue eyes and sweet smile were inexpressibly charming.

The lady was the first to break silence.

“I presume you are a stranger here?” said she.

“Yes; 'twas but yesterday I arrived from the provinces.”

“You came with relatives?”

“No, I came alone.”

“Alone! But you are so young!”

“I have neither father nor mother.”

“I suppose you have come on business of some kind?”

“Yes, exactly; I came to present a petition to the Empress.”

“You are an orphan; I suppose you have complaints to make against injustice and persecution.”

“No, I came to seek mercy, not justice.”

“Allow me to ask who you are?”

“I am the daughter of the late Captain Mironoff.”

“Captain Mironoff! The same who was commandant in one of the Orenburg fortresses?”

“Just so.”

The lady seemed touched.

“Excuse me,” said she, and her voice grew very soft; “excuse me if I meddle in your affairs, but I am often at Court, and may be of help to you, if you will explain to me the nature of your petition.”

Mary rose and thanked her in a respectful manner. Everything in this unknown lady irresistibly attracted her and inspired confidence. Mary took a paper from her pocket and presented it to her unknown friend, who began silently to read it.

At first she read with a look of attention and benevolence, but suddenly a change came over her face—and

Mary, whose eyes followed her every movement, was frightened at the severity of its expression, which before had been so sweet."

"You plead for Grinioff!" said the lady, coldly. "The Empress can never pardon him. He joined the impostor, not from ignorance or credulity, but as an immoral and worthless wretch."

"Oh, it is not true!" answered Mary.

"Not true?" repeated the lady, growing crimson.

"It is false; I swear to you that is false! I know all, and will tell you the truth: it was for my sake only that he exposed himself to the misfortunes that have befallen him, and if he did not clear himself before his judges, it was only because he would not implicate me in this business."

Here she warmly related all that the reader already knows.

The lady listened attentively.

"Where are you lodging?" she then asked, and on hearing that it was at Mrs. Ann's she said with a smile, "Ah, I know; good-by, do not mention this meeting to any one. I hope you will not have long to wait for an answer to your letter."

With this she disappeared down a shaded avenue, whilst Mary went back to Mrs. Ann's full of joyful hope.

Her hostess scolded her for this early autumnal walk, which, to her way of thinking, was very bad for a young girl's health. She brought in the urn and was drinking her first cup of tea, having again commenced her everlasting stories about Court life, when, all at once a royal carriage stopped at the door, and a footman in the Empress's livery came with a message that his royal mistress wished to see Miss Mironoff.

Mrs. Ann was astounded and fussed about a great deal. "Good gracious!" exclaimed she, "the Empress invites you to Court! How in the world did she ever hear of you? And how will you present yourself to Her Majesty, my dear? I am sure you won't even know how to walk as you ought at Court. I had better accompany you; I might at least give you a little advice. And then you cannot go in a traveling dress! I will run and ask a friend of mine to lend you her yellow silk."

The footman assured them that it was the Empress's wish that Miss Mironoff should go as she was. There was no help for it. Mary took her seat in the carriage followed by Mrs. Ann's injunctions and blessings.

Mary had a presentiment that the decision of our fate was at hand; her heart first throbbed with hope, then trembled with fear. In a few moments the carriage stopped at the palace. Mary mounted the staircase with trepidation. The doors flew open before her as she passed through many spacious but empty rooms; the footman led the way. At last, coming to a closed door, he said he would go and announce her arrival, and left her alone.

The thought of seeing the Empress face to face so awed her that it was with difficulty she could stand, her legs almost giving way from excitement. The next moment the doors opened and she stepped into the Empress's boudoir. The Empress was sitting at her toilet table; several people of her suite surrounded her, and respectfully made way for Mary to pass. The Empress turned to her graciously, and Mary recognized in her the lady to whom she had opened her heart but a short time before. The Empress told her to draw nearer, adding with a smile:

“I am glad to be able to grant your petition and keep my promise to you. The matter is ended; I am convinced of the innocence of your betrothed; here is a letter, which please take the trouble to deliver personally into the hands of your future father-in-law.”

Mary took the letter with trembling fingers, and bursting into tears, fell at the Empress's feet, who raised and kissed her. The Empress then said:

“I know you are not rich, but I owe a heavy debt to Captain Mironoff's daughter. Do not trouble about the future, it will be my pleasure to provide for you.”

After lavishing many caresses and kind words on the poor orphan girl, the Empress dismissed her. Mary went back in the same royal carriage. Mrs. Ann, who had awaited her return with impatience, overwhelmed her with questions, to which Mary answered at random. Mrs. Ann, though somewhat annoyed at her bad memory, ascribed it to provincial shyness and generously forgave her.

The same day, without so much as satisfying her curiosity to see St. Petersburg, Mary started on her way back to the country.

Mr. Peter Grinioff's memoirs here come to an end. The family documents tell us that he was liberated from prison at the end of 1774 by the sovereign's order, and that he witnessed the death of Poogatchoff, who recognized him among the crowd and nodded to him one moment before his lifeless and gory head was held up to the people.

Shortly after this, Mary Mironoff was married to Mr. Peter Grinioff. Their descendants are thriving in the Simbirsk government. About 30 versts from — is a village where, in a lordly mansion, may be seen the autograph letter of Catherine the Second, framed under a glass case. It is addressed to Andrew Grinioff, and contains the pardon of his son and many praises of the goodness and intellect of Captain Mironoff's daughter.

THE END.

MARY CECIL HAY'S WORKS.—Continued.

27	Victor and Vanquished.....	20
29	Nora's Love Test.....	10
421	Nora's Love Test (in large type).....	20
275	A Shadow on the Threshold.....	10
363	Reaping the Whirlwind.....	10
384	Back to the Old Home.....	10
415	A Dark Inheritance.....	10
440	The Sorrow of a Secret, and Lady Carmichael's Will.....	10
686	Brenda Yorke.....	10
724	For Her Dear Sake.....	20
852	Missing.....	10
855	Dolf's Big Brother.....	10
930	In the Holidays, and The Name Cut on a Gate.....	10
935	Under Life's Key, and Other Stories.....	20
972	Into the Shade, and Other Stories.....	20
1011	My First Offer.....	10
1014	Told in New England, and Other Tales.....	10
1016	At the Seaside; or, A Sister's Sacrifice.....	10
1220	Dorothy's Venture.....	20
1221	Among the Ruins, and Other Stories.....	10
1431	"A Little Aversion".....	10
1549	Bid Me Discourse.....	10

THOMAS HUGHES' WORKS.

492	Tom Brown's Schooldays at Rugby.....	20
598	The Manliness of Christ.....	10
640	Tom Brown at Oxford.....	20
1041	Rugby—Tennessee.....	10

CHARLES LEVER'S WORKS.

98	Harry Lorrequer.....	20
132	Jack Hinton, the Guardsman.....	20
137	A Rent in a Cloud.....	10
146	Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon (Triple Number).....	30
152	Arthur O'Leary.....	20
168	Con Cregan.....	20
169	St. Patrick's Eve.....	10
174	Kate O'Donoghue.....	20
257	That Boy of Norcott's.....	10
296	Tom Burke of Ours. First half.....	20
296	Tom Burke of Ours. Second half.....	20
319	Davenport Dunn. First half.....	20
319	Davenport Dunn. Second half.....	20
464	Gerald Fitzgerald.....	20
470	The Fortunes of Glencore.....	20
529	Lord Kilgobbin.....	20
546	Maurice Tiernay.....	20
566	A Day's Ride.....	20

CHARLES LEVER'S WORKS.—Continued.

609	Barrington.....	20
633	Sir Jasper Carew, Knight.....	20
657	The Martins of Cro' Martin. Part I.....	20
657	The Martins of Cro' Martin. Part II.....	20
822	Tony Butler.....	20
872	Luttrell of Arran. Part I.....	20
872	Luttrell of Arran. Part II.....	20
951	Paul Gosslett's Confessions.....	10
965	One of Them. First half.....	20
965	One of Them. Second half.....	20
989	Sir Brook Fossbrooke. Part I.....	20
989	Sir Brook Fossbrooke. Part II.....	20
1235	The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly.....	20
1309	The Dodd Family Abroad. First half.....	20
1309	The Dodd Family Abroad. Second half.....	20
1342	Horace Templeton.....	20
1394	Roland Cashel. First half.....	20
1394	Roland Cashel. Second half.....	20
1496	The Daltons; or, Three Roads in Life. First half.....	20
1496	The Daltons; or, Three Roads in Life. Second half.....	20

SAMUEL LOVER'S WORKS.

33	Handy Andy.....	20
66	Rory O'More.....	20
123	Irish Legends.....	10
158	He Would be a Gentleman.....	20
293	Tom Crosbie.....	10

SIR BULWER LYTTON'S WORKS.

6	The Last Days of Pompeii.....	20
587	Zanoni.....	20
689	Pilgrims of the Rhine.....	10
714	Leila; or, The Siege of Grenada.....	10
781	Rienzi, The Last of the Tribunes.....	20
955	Eugene Aram.....	20
979	Ernest Maltravers.....	20
1001	Alice; or, The Mysteries.....	20
1064	The Caxtons.....	20
1089	My Novel. First half.....	20
1089	My Novel. Second half.....	20
1205	Kenelm Chillingly: His Adventures and Opinions.....	20
1316	Pelham; or, The Adventures of a Gentleman.....	20
1454	The Last of the Barons. First half.....	20
1454	The Last of the Barons. Second half.....	20
1529	A Strange Story.....	20
1690	What Will He Do With It? First half.....	20
1690	What Will He Do With It? Second half.....	20

T. B. MACAULAY'S WORKS.

926	The Lays of Ancient Rome, and Other Poems.....	10
976	History of England. Part I.....	20
976	History of England. Part II.....	20
976	History of England. Part III.....	20
976	History of England. Part IV.....	20
976	History of England. Part V.....	20
976	History of England. Part VI.....	20
976	History of England. Part VII.....	20
976	History of England. Part VIII.....	20
976	History of England. Part IX.....	20
976	History of England. Part X.....	20

GEORGE MACDONALD'S WORKS.

455	Paul Faber, Surgeon.....	20
491	Sir Gibbie.....	20
595	The Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood.....	20
606	The Seaboard Parish.....	20
627	Thomas Wingfold, Curate.....	20
643	The Vicar's Daughter.....	20
668	David Elginbrod.....	20
677	St. George and St. Michael.....	20
790	Alec Forbes of Howglen.....	20
887	Malcolm.....	20
922	Mary Marston.....	20
938	Guild Court. A London Story.....	20
948	The Marquis of Lossie.....	20
962	Robert Falconer.....	20
1375	Castle Warlock: A Homely Romance.....	20
1439	Adela Cathcart.....	20
1466	The Gifts of the Child Christ, and Other Tales.....	10
1488	The Princess and Curdie. A Girl's Story.....	10
1498	Weighed and Wanting.....	20

E. MARLITT'S WORKS.

453	The Princess of the Moor.....	20
522	The Countess Gisela.....	20
636	In the Schillingscourt.....	20
866	The Second Wife.....	20
878	In the Counselor's House.....	20
1055	The Bailiff's Maid.....	20
1210	Old Mamselle's Secret.....	20

CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S WORKS.

108	The Sea-King.....	10
122	The Privateersman.....	10
141	Masterman Ready.....	10
147	Rattlin, the Reefer.....	10
150	Mr. Midshipman Easy.....	10
156	The King's Own.....	10

CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S WORKS.—Continued.

159	The Phantom Ship.....	10
163	Frank Mildmay.....	10
170	Newton Forster.....	10
173	Japhet in Search of a Father.....	20
175	The Pacha of Many Tales.....	10
176	Percival Keene.....	10
185	The Little Savage.....	10
192	The Three Cutters.....	10
199	Settlers in Canada.....	10
207	The Children of the New Forest.....	10
266	Jacob Faithful.....	10
273	Snarleygow, the Dog Fiend.....	10
282	Poor Jack.....	10
340	Peter Simple.....	20
898	The Mission; or, Scenes in Africa.....	20
1070	The Poacher.....	20
1116	Valerie.....	20

FLORENCE MARRYAT'S WORKS.

110	The Girls of Feversham.....	10
119	Petronel.....	20
197	"No Intentions".....	20
206	The Poison of Asps.....	10
219	"My Own Child".....	10
305	Her Lord and Master.....	10
323	A Lucky Disappointment.....	10
426	Written in Fire.....	20
533	Ange.....	20
635	A Harvest of Wild Oats.....	20
703	The Root of All Evil.....	20
742	A Star and a Heart.....	10
784	Out of His Reckoning.....	10
820	The Fair-Haired Alda.....	20
897	Love's Conflict.....	20
1038	With Cupid's Eyes.....	20
1067	A Little Stepson.....	10
1086	My Sister the Actress.....	20
1349	Phyllida. A Life Drama.....	20
1654	Facing the Footlights.....	20

MISS MULOCK'S WORKS.

2	John Halifax, Gentleman.....	10
456	John Halifax, Gentleman (large type).....	20
77	Mistress and Maid.....	10
81	Christian's Mistake.....	10
82	My Mother and I.....	10
88	The Two Marriages.....	10
91	The Woman's Kingdom.....	20
101	A Noble Life.....	10
103	A Brave Lady.....	20

MISS MULOCK'S WORKS.—Continued.

121	A Life for a Life.....	20
130	Sermons Out of Church.....	10
135	Agatha's Husband.....	20
142	The Head of the Family.....	20
227	Hannah.....	10
240	The Laurel Bush.....	10
291	Olive.....	20
294	The Ogilvies.....	20
314	Nothing New.....	10
320	A Hero.....	10
330	A Low Marriage.....	10
457	The Last of the Ruthvens, and The Self-Seer.....	10
480	Avillion; or, The Happy Isles.....	10
626	Young Mrs. Jardine.....	10
628	Motherless (Translated by Miss Mulock).....	10
752	The Italian's Daughter.....	10
773	The Two Homes.....	10
804	A Bride's Tragedy.....	10
824	A Legacy.....	20
850	The Half-Caste.....	10
886	Miss Letty's Experiences.....	10
945	Studies from Life.....	10
964	His Little Mother, and Other Tales.....	10
978	A Woman's Thoughts About Women.....	10
1029	Twenty Years Ago. A Book for Girls. (Edited by Miss Mulock).....	10
1177	An Only Sister, Madame Guizot de Witt. (Edited by Miss Mulock).....	10
1261	Plain-Speaking.....	10

MRS. OLIPHANT'S WORKS.

136	Katie Stewart.....	10
210	Young Musgrave.....	20
391	The Primrose Path.....	20
452	An Odd Couple.....	10
475	Heart and Cross.....	10
488	A Beleaguered City.....	10
497	For Love and Life.....	20
511	Squire Arden.....	20
542	The Story of Valentine and His Brother.....	20
596	Caleb Field.....	10
651	Madonna Mary.....	20
665	The Fugitives.....	10
680	The Greatest Heiress in England.....	20
706	Earthbound.....	10
775	The Queen (Illustrated).....	10
785	Orphans.....	10
802	Phoebe, Junior. A Last Chronicle of Carlingford.....	20
875	No. 3 Grove Road.....	10

MRS. OLIPHANT'S WORKS.—Continued.

881	He That Will Not When He May	20
919	May	20
959	Miss Marjoribanks. Part I.	20
959	Miss Marjoribanks. Part II.	20
1004	Harry Joscelyn	20
1017	Carita	20
1049	In Trust	20
1215	Brownlows	20
1319	Lady Jane	10
1396	Whiteladies	20
1407	A Rose in June	10
1449	A Little Pilgrim	10
1547	It Was a Lover and His Lass	20
1662	Salem Chapel	20
1669	The Minister's Wife. First half	20
1669	The Minister's Wife. Second half	20

"OUIDA'S" WORKS.

49	Granville de Vigne; or, Held in Bondage	20
54	Under Two Flags	20
55	In a Winter City	10
56	Strathmore	20
59	Chandos	20
61	Bébée; or, Two Little Wooden Shoes	10
62	Folle-Farine	20
71	Ariadne—The Story of a Dream	20
181	Beatrice Boville	10
211	Randolph Gordon	10
230	Little Grand and the Marchioness	10
241	Tricotrin	20
249	Cecil Castlemaine's Gage	10
279	A Leaf in the Storm, and Other Tales	10
281	Lady Marabout's Troubles	10
334	Puck	20
377	Friendship	20
379	Pascarel	20
386	Signa	20
389	Idalia	20
563	A Hero's Reward	10
676	Umilta	10
699	Moths	20
791	Pipistrello	10
864	Findelkind	10
915	A Village Commune	20
1025	The Little Earl	10
1247	In Maremma	20
1334	Bimbi	10
1586	Frescoes	10
1625	Wanda, Countess von Szalras	20

JAMES PAYN'S WORKS.

138	What He Cost Her	10
299	By Proxy	20
345	Halves	10
358	Less Black Than We're Painted	20
369	Found Dead	10
382	Gwendoline's Harvest	20
401	A Beggar on Horseback	10
406	One of the Family	20
485	At Her Mercy	20
502	Under One Roof (Illustrated)	20
602	Lost Sir Massingberd	10
646	Married Beneath Him	20
687	Fallen Fortunes	20
892	A Confidential Agent	20
981	From Exile	20
1045	The Clyffards of Clyffe	20
1149	A Grape from a Thorn	20
1193	High Spirits	10
1267	For Cash Only	20
1516	Kit: A Memory	20
1524	Carlyon's Year	10
1652	A Woman's Vengeance	20

CHARLES READE'S WORKS.

4	A Woman-Hater	20
19	A Terrible Temptation	10
21	Foul Play	20
24	"It is Never Too Late to Mend"	20
31	Love Me Little, Love Me Long	20
34	A Simpleton	10
41	White Lies	20
78	Griffith Gaunt	20
86	Put Yourself in His Place	20
112	Very Hard Cash	20
203	The Cloister and the Hearth	20
237	The Wandering Heir	10
246	Peg Woffington	10
270	The Jilt	10
371	Christie Johnstone	10
536	Jack of all Trades	10
1204	Clouds and Sunshine	10
1322	The Knightsbridge Mystery	10
1390	Singleheart and Doubleface, A Matter-of-Fact Romance	10

W. CLARK RUSSELL'S WORKS.

848	A Sailor's Sweetheart	20
1034	An Ocean Free Lance	20
1339	The Wreck of the "Grosvenor"	20
1373	My Watch Below; or, Yarns Spun When Off Duty	20
1381	Auld Lang Syne	10
1467	The "Lady Maud": Schooner Yacht	20
1653	A Sea Queen	20

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S WORKS.

39	Ivanhoe.....	20
183	Kenilworth.....	20
196	Heart of Mid-Lothian.....	20
593	The Talisman.....	20
723	Guy Mannering.....	20
857	Waverley.....	20
920	Rob Roy.....	20
1007	Quentin Durward.....	20
1082	Count Robert of Paris.....	20
1275	Old Mortality.....	20
1328	The Antiquary.....	20
1399	The Pirate.....	20
1462	The Betrothed: A Tale of the Crusaders, and The Chronicles of the Canongate.....	20
1598	Redgauntlet. A Tale of the Eighteenth Century.....	20
1701	The Monastery.....	20
1702	The Abbot (Sequel to "The Monastery").....	20

EUGENE SUE'S WORKS.

129	The Wandering Jew. First half.....	20
129	The Wandering Jew. Second half.....	20
205	The Mysteries of Paris. First half.....	20
205	The Mysteries of Paris. Second half.....	20
800	De Rohan; or, The Court Conspirator.....	20
835	Arthur.....	20
1030	The Commander of Malta.....	20
1540	Martin the Foundling; or, The Adventures of a Valet de Chambre. Vol. I.....	20
1540	Martin the Foundling; or, The Adventures of a Valet de Chambre. Vol. II.....	20
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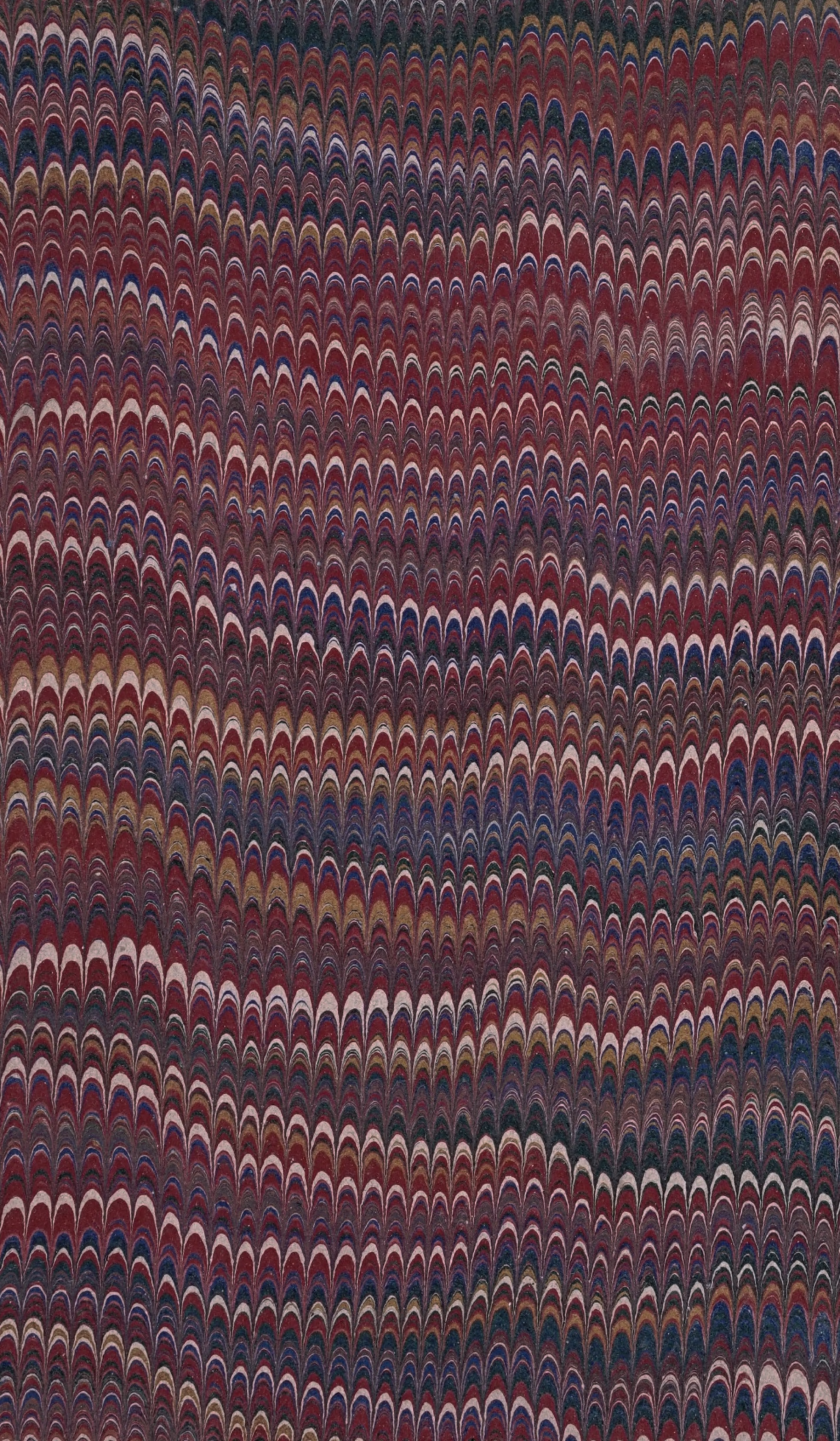
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