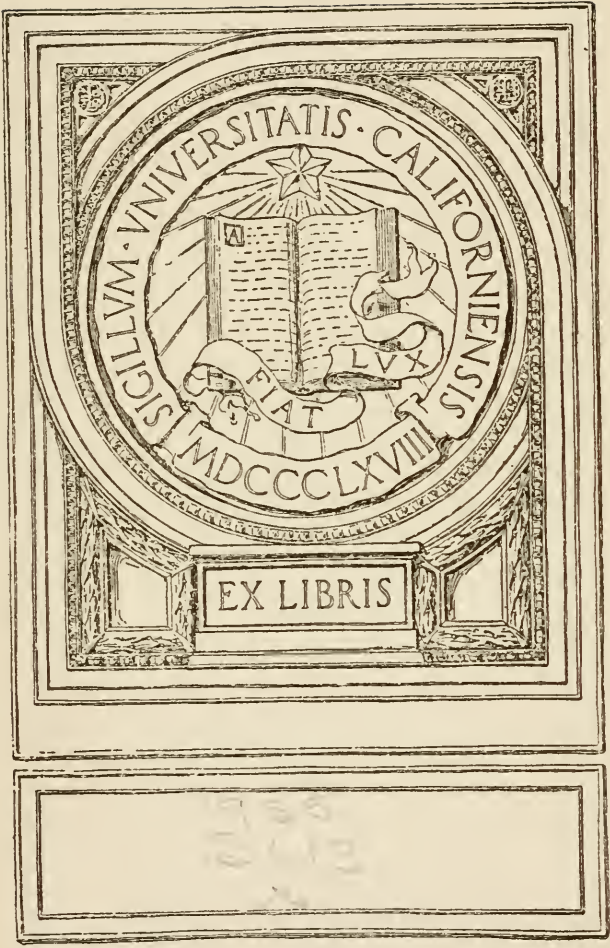


THE
ROMANCE
OF A
FEW DAYS
BY
PUTNAM
WEALE

Handwritten scribbles



EX LIBRIS

730
243



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE
ROMANCE
OF A FEW DAYS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MANCHU AND MUSCOVITE

THE TRUCE IN THE EAST AND ITS AFTERMATH

THE RE-SHAPING OF THE FAR EAST

THE COMING STRUGGLE IN EASTERN ASIA

THE CONFLICT OF COLOUR

INDISCREET LETTERS FROM PEKING

THE FORBIDDEN BOUNDARY

THE HUMAN COBWEB

THE UNKNOWN GOD

THE REVOLT

THE
ROMANCE
OF A FEW DAYS

BY
PUTNAM WEALE

SECOND EDITION

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

No. VIII
August 1913

First Published August 21st 1913
Second Edition September 1913

THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

I

RICHARD FAULCONBRIDGE rose from his comfortable seat and balanced himself with a half-smile of pleasurable anticipation on his good-natured, boyish face.

The train, roaring a deep-noted and persistent warning, had swept majestically round a sharp curve on the high embankment, and was now running straight and unflinchingly for the terminus. As he stood there a little irresolutely, he suddenly realized, with that curious mixed feeling of satisfaction and regret which so often comes at a journey's end, that a pleasant experience was fast ending. His eyes dropped mechanically to the handsome leather cushions, the luxurious fittings, the carpeted floor. It had been so very comfortable that it seemed a pity to leave it all. Then, mechanically, he did the things one usually does. He took off his hat and smoothed his reddish hair; he rolled up a rug; he fidgeted with a suit-case, only to put it down again. It was a nuisance that he had so soon to make a move.

But the outer world called to him; the prospect viewed through the generous coupé window had become singularly engaging; and, suddenly conscious

2 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

that he was missing something interesting, he settled himself again in his seat.

The city, indeed, was at last beside him, and insistently claimed his attention. The distant and confused vision of gilded domes and cupolas had been replaced by an unending procession of fantastic and unusual pinks and greens and blues which decorated the roofs and railings of the picturesque villas as they do nowhere else in the world. Then came a succession of great broad cobble-stoned streets, lined with armies of tall houses that marched away in serried ranks into the very far distance. These were broken ever and anon by barren, bleak-looking squares, which appeared at unexpected places and seemed always to be capped and crowned by the countless golden domes of the Greek Orthodox Church, whose appearance is at once so Oriental and so medieval. Somehow as the young man sat there drinking in the changing scene it suggested to him an immense latent power—a power which it would be wonderful to see asserted. Masked beneath the borrowed Byzantine gaudiness there seemed to lie buried the stern and unalterable resolve of a people whose first ideal had been not a heaven of jewelled and passionless saints, but a Scandinavian Walhalla—that stupendous palace of immortality awaiting the souls of heroes slain in battle. Glistening in the beautiful morning sunlight, full of colour and change, quaint with unexpected contrasts and phantasies, the city suddenly acquired in his eyes all the charm of a romance which is unfolded in a single *coup de maître*. Like Napoleon, who a hundred years before had ridden over the crest of that famous eminence, the Mont du Salut, in the van of his deathless army, he, too, had caught his first glimpses in

THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS 3

the very far distance ; he, too, had been deeply stirred by the vision of great walled Kremlin and the mighty churches and palaces of the Czars ; he, too, had wondered at the meaning of that message. He must try to pierce below the surface ; find out what he could ; see and perhaps understand. Now he was doubly glad he had come to Moscow—Moscow, the mother of Russia ancient and modern. . . .

It was becoming alive, too, very much alive. Pouring down the still somnolent streets were long files of country carts, their characteristic harnessing enhancing one of the chief glories of the country—the handsome horses. As the speed of the train rapidly diminished, he was able to follow the teams with his eyes and to note many details before they were swept into the distance. The sturdy bearded drivers in their blue blouses and top-boots ; the women seated on top of the loads, their heads enveloped in gay kerchiefs ; the bare-footed boys, in gay red shirts, crowned with rude shocks of hair as yellow as ripened corn, running along in mock competition with the train—all these things tended to accentuate a subtle and arresting theatrical note which became more and dominant as the atmosphere of the place pushed itself under his notice. It was a new world—a picturesque world—a very charming world, viewed, of course, from the big window of a comfortable train.

He liked to think that beneath this gay exterior a thousand romances lightly slumbered, ready to spring to life at the magician's touch. That would be in keeping with the outer view. Already he had had a taste of the unknown, and in his loneliness he hungered for more. The previous night, when everybody had been asleep, they had stopped for a long spell at a

4 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

great junction full of waiting trains from Southern Russia. Glad of an opportunity to stretch his legs, he had quickly slipped to the ground and commenced walking the platforms. A tall, graceful woman, with a scarf thrown over her head, was leaning out of a window of the next train; and as he slowly passed and repassed the window he had seen that she was silently observing him. At last she had suddenly leaned towards him with a graceful gesture of the hands and murmured to him—perhaps to come. Always gallant, he had smilingly shaken his head and pointed—with regret—to the carriage which must bear him away in an opposite direction. That vague figure in the night and that soft voice had remained with him all these hours. He was sure that he liked the country—though he had only been in it some twenty hours, that is the time it takes to run from Poland, which is, of course, not Russia at all, but merely Europe.

Presently, as they slid into the station, a long line of blue-shirted, top-booted porters, who had been paraded in anticipation of their arrival, suddenly broke up their semi-military alignment, and gaily precipitating themselves on to the train, began noisily offering their services to all and sundry. He watched these bearded, cheerful fellows at work with the curious sense of contentment within him growing. The half-smile which was always wandering round his lips and looking out of his eyes seemed more evident than usual just then. Here was a land where it was still possible to live *en prince*, far from a maddening democracy.

At the station entrance many uniformed hotel employees stood lined, ready to accommodate him still

further. As the travellers streamed out, the men called aloud the names of their establishments in the old-fashioned way which was common in the capitals of Europe in the days of Louis Philippe and even of Louis Napoleon, but which is now only to be heard in rather out-of-the-way spots where people are still lingering in the nineteenth century, and, indeed, look upon the twentieth somewhat askance.

He listened to the names as if they had been sweet music. Yes—there was an old-world flavour about the names which reminded him of the days of post-chaises and grand tours and those other forgotten elegancies of a forgotten age. It seemed millions of miles removed from that ultra-modernism which has made of a station a place of penance, and reduced the traveller to being a mere waif lost in a wilderness of steel tracks. Yes—he repeated to himself—it was very pleasant. Moscow possessed the grand air still—that old-fashioned courtesy which would greet you with the courtly bow of a Spanish grandee, instead of rudely pushing you aside without so much as asking your leave.

With ever growing satisfaction he watched the animation and listened to the soft language—reluctant to move on. He was trying to define it all to himself more precisely, and he was not entirely succeeding. There was an un-European air which in vain he tried to understand; something rather rococo and yet something very new; as if people of the simpler centuries had been resurrected and harnessed to this very modern world not much farther off than the night before. They seemed curiously anxious to please, curiously soft and obliging, great big children rather than great big men, a very novel people, he thought fit to believe.

6 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

Presently he mounted the hotel conveyance, and as they gathered up speed and flew recklessly along he suddenly realized the joys of being in the land of autocracy *par excellence*—which means a land of go-as-you-please, provided you agree that everything but autocracy is a delusion and a snare. The tall houses and the broad streets gained rather than lost on closer acquaintance; there was a character about them which stamped them with a strong, virile individuality. The squares—particularly the squares—were delightful to him: they were vast open places where a regiment could manœuvre at ease and never collide with unnecessary monuments.

He gazed about him with deepening pleasure. Everything was on a grand scale, a very grand scale—the churches, the houses, the public buildings, the people—especially the people, this race with the soul of the fifteenth century plunged into the struggle of the twentieth. What a revelation, indeed, were these strong, healthy-looking men, these robust, deep-bosomed women! Somehow he felt that he had been deliberately defrauded in the past of the correct view by a conspiracy of misrepresentation. This the land of the knout; this the land of miserable, down-trodden serfs; this the land of exiles and despair? He became increasingly aware that there was not another people in Europe with such a fine physique or such a happy air.

Presently the driver sounded his horn in a long ripple of musical notes, which went up and down the scale as a singer does who is exercising his voice. They had dashed into an immense square, and the great hotel entrance towards which they were speeding suddenly loomed up big and imposing. As they swept down

on it he saw that it was decorated with bowing porters, military-looking *chasseurs*, and picturesque valets de chambre—a whole host summoned as if to tell the stranger what it once was to be a man of ease.

There, at the hotel entrance, he stood for a few moments breathing in the fresh morning air with renewed gusto, whilst they carried in his luggage. He liked this wide, open space—this sense of freedom. In the middle distance an old woman had begun feeding a flock of pigeons which had been introduced in imitation of Venetian St. Mark's. Ever and anon the pigeons rose in long circular flights, and the flutter of their wings made dazzling streaks of colour in the gay sunlight as if a shattered rainbow had fallen lazily to earth. Some passers-by, delighted by this early-morning phantasy, were expending kopecks in purchasing handfuls of Indian corn, which they scattered far and wide on the cobblestones, calling the birds to earth. The pigeons and the picturesque old women and the handfuls of Indian corn somehow fitted in with it all—and made the opening day even more peaceful. There was not a single thing with which the most exacting of men could have found fault.

Richard Faulconbridge heaved a sigh of satisfaction. It had been a charming arrival. It seemed to him more unbelievable than ever that this was the country that was still fighting a great war in a far-away corner of the world, losing men by the ten thousand in grim battles. Of such ugly things there was not a trace, not a sign. To his eyes there was only an air of almost pastoral happiness.

As he stood there drinking in the scene he little knew that ever since his arrival he had been the object of

8 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

the closest scrutiny on the part of an undersized, ugly man, who was sitting hunched up in a wicker chair, with his hat tilted over his eyes, and a pencil between his lips. The wicker chair was so disposed behind a glass door, that though this person could observe everything, it was much harder to observe him. Dressed in the dress of the bourgeoisie of Europe—that is in a sombre, ill-cut suit, with a tie that did not match—this man never took his eyes off the new arrival—not for one instant. He let them travel slowly up and down the tall form, noting with the greatest care not only each physical characteristic, but each characteristic movement as well; that is trying to grasp not only this stranger's peculiar mannerisms, but to find out exactly what prompted them. In a word he was "memorizing" him—memorizing him in such a way that no matter where or how he met him again he would always know him. He had been doing this with all sorts and conditions of men and women for many years, and his gift had become almost incredible. He had indexed in his mind a myriad of travellers who passed to and fro between the chief cities of Russia and the western frontiers, and he had never forgotten a single face. He was of the foreign section—the section that tries to seize hold of the strange web that stretches from Russia to Zurich, and even as far as Chicago and New York—and which is the cleverest section of all the police.

This morning the work had been very easy. The only other foreigner to arrive had been a fat, voluble Frenchman, who had passed in through the folding-doors talking loudly all the time—a person it was not even necessary to study. The undersized, ugly man had recognized him at once, and had smiled con-

temptuously. He was under the care of another department.

But this tall Englishman, with the pleasant face, so placid, so resolute in his manner—why had he come to Moscow? Since that peculiar affair of the passports there had been special orders to watch Englishmen, especially those who seemed quite above suspicion. This man had been staying in Warsaw, a disaffected centre; he had gone to three hotels, so the labels on his luggage had at once disclosed. He had changed hotels twice—why had he done so?

The undersized, ugly man could not understand that. His mind, soured with endless suspicions, liked to believe that he, too, deserved attention. Perhaps he was the bearer of some secret intelligence; perhaps he had some special friend who had sent for him—it was never possible to know just what. In any case it would be well to watch him. That was always good.

It was in that sense that he concluded a preliminary note in his pocket-book a quarter of an hour later.

II

UPSTAIRS Richard Faulconbridge had already commenced settling down. For him there were no ugly mysteries beneath the smiling surface—no bitternesses, no surprises; there was only a new and curiously brilliant pageant of life awaiting his pleasure.

His room pleased him as all the rest had done. It was cheerful; the furniture attractive; the outlook charming. Immediately in front lay the great square bathed in sunlight; he speedily found that he was the happy possessor of a little balcony of his own; and as he stood there, with the pigeons whirling up in sudden circular flights, he felt happier than he had done for many a long day. He began to believe, with the resurgent fervency of youth, that the world is always a good place—if one does not take oneself or one's troubles too seriously. With that odd, unexpected shock which healing wounds are apt to give, he suddenly remembered that it was barely more than a month that he had been plunged in such sombre despair; inclined, in fact, to believe with the ascetics of the Dark Ages that women are made by the devil to ruin men—a doctrine which, though not profound, is often consoling to those who cannot be accused of shallowness. He had passed through romantic adventures before, of course—but generally he had been cautious; which is only another way of saying that

he had loved, resisted, and therefore regretted. Though he had no overmastering belief in the permanency of any passionate attachment between men and women, it had been something of a shock for him to discover that to be spurned is to be deeply stabbed, and that though the salve of time heals everything, pride never can stoically endure a fall. To put it plainly, Richard Faulconbridge had been roughly treated by one for whom he only cherished tendernesses, and with a grim face he had gone away, seeking solace in foreign travel. There was nothing in his story different in any way from what daily happens ; but he liked to think that his case was exceptional and undeserved.

Now half unconsciously, as his spirits rose, he commenced humming a snatch from an opera which had haunted him ever since he had heard it a few evenings before in Warsaw. Encouraged by the quiet around him, he gradually began singing, quite oblivious to his surroundings. He had a rich baritone voice, full of organ-like notes which seemed to make a hymn of every melody ; and now, because the sunshine was so bright, and the great square below so peaceful, and the flight of the pigeons so graceful, and it felt so good to be alive, even in his own ears that poetic refrain became a song of praise. He had been so silent for weeks. . . .

He paused, perforce, as he unlocked a bag, and suddenly a strange expression came over his face. It was hardly coincidence—it was something more striking than that ; he wondered what he should call it. In his surprise he could find no words to give the proper name. For somewhere near by a sweet young voice had commenced the very same refrain, at first quite softly just as he had done, but presently with whole-hearted fervour as if the song entirely pos-

12 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

essed her. And how she sang it, he murmured to himself; with what delicious sweetness! In the freshness of the early morning it sounded to him like the nightingale singing to the rose. Yes—the nightingale; though he was not quite sure whether that sweet-throated songster ever sings like that to the risen day. . . .

He listened breathlessly.

“Un bel di vedremo,
Levarsi un fil de fumo . . .
Sull' estremo confin del mare,
E poi la nave appare. . . .”

There was intoxication in the words just as there was intoxication in the music. They had in them the blue of the Mediterranean—the emerald of an entrancing coastline, the softness of spice-laden winds, the languorous grace of reclining women, who, indeed, must have inspired the wonderful composer. Yes—there was an intoxication——

The voice sang on to the conclusion :

“Vedi? E venuto!
Io non gli scendo incontro, Io no!”

Then suddenly it all had ended, and there was stricken silence.

“Bravo,” he murmured, full of admiration, hoping for more.

The sweet voice had carried so far out into the square that one or two people who were idly feeding the pigeons were still looking up smilingly—with open pleasure in their manner—with hope that it was not all over. He remembered that he had read that this was a land where people always sang when they felt like singing—soldiers on the march, peasants

digging and delving, women spinning and weaving—in truth, a music-loving race. In the train a man with a voice like a trombone had persistently thundered Wagner in utter unconsciousness of those around him.

Faulconbridge stood stock-still at his open window, fearing that if he were seen this ending would be really final. But as the silence continued after some momentary hesitation he went out on his balcony and carefully scanned the windows. He looked to the right, he looked to the left, he looked above, he looked below. Where was she—where? She had gone—he was too late. . . . Alas!

But no. There, at a window on the floor above him, a little to the left, he suddenly caught a fleeting vision of a fresh young face. There was no doubt any longer; it must be she. Yes. . . . For no sooner did she spy him standing gravely there and looking up, than she leant forward and burst out laughing—laughing as if her heart would break—with two hands, indeed, clasped across that little organ as if to prevent such a dire catastrophe.

Slowly he reddened. She was laughing at him. . . . With what object—with what meaning?

He remembered now how he had trailed off in the refrain into an impasse—there was one passage he never got quite right. She had chimed in after him just then—probably to mock him in a double sense: for he knew enough Italian to attach to the words she had sung a subtle meaning. Indeed, it was clear—very clear. She was not coming to meet him—she had sung—which meant, of course, that she fully expected he would come to her if she should happen to want it.

And just then the face which in her amusement she

14 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

had averted was turned straight down towards him, and his heart gave a second great jump.

It was impossible ; it could not be true ; it was an insane thing ! Yet there was the unanswerable evidence of his eyes. The mole on the right cheek, the big calm eyes, the long straight eyebrows, the milk-white skin, the full lips, the poise of the head—everything was complete. She was the living, breathing image of the girl he was trying to forget. . . . The living, breathing image, he repeated to himself, staring fixedly. And then, in a flash, she had disappeared.

He commenced settling down in his room in ominous silence with a heavy frown on his face, wondering exactly what this meant—wondering why this should have come. He was openly bewildered at the strange turn things had taken. He tried to think of the more prosaic side, vainly attempting to banish the memory of that face. Now he felt that, in spite of the fair promise of the day, he had already commenced badly—had somehow made himself absurd. His thoughts were, indeed, a jumble : a dozen contradicting ideas vainly strove for mastery.

Possibly she was still laughing at him—why had she laughed at all ? Was he so absurd ? He could not tell exactly what had happened : or had anything happened at all ? She had looked the merest slip of a girl—with a suggestion of pink bows about her head ; he was sure her hair had been braided down her back. Then he frowned. Young ladies who laughed at men from hotel windows were hardly to be taken very seriously. Perhaps it was a joke. A joke ! Well, to him it looked a poor one. He stared at himself in the glass. Girls were curious things and not

subject to normal judgments; he could not tell what had stirred her risibilities. If she had only not laughed—it would have been easier. And that resemblance—that startling resemblance. . . . From this we may judge that his confusion was real.

At last, still unaccountably downhearted, he sought a gilded cage, and was shot downstairs with electrical swiftness. He passed through the folding glass doors of the café and stood there hesitatingly—wondering what he should do. It was hardly gay here. The hour, though by no means early, found the café presenting as deserted an appearance as the rest of the vast hotel. Where was the sleepy world that inhabited this magnificence?

A mildly interested waiter, seeing his hesitation and measuring his forlornness, indicated to him with a friendly wave of the hand that he might find a more agreeable neighbourhood just out of doors. Turning his eyes in the direction, he saw that a great canvas awning was stretched above the pavement after the manner of Paris; out there the gay sunshine and the palms from the Crimea set in green wooden tubs made a little garden of the grimy asphalt. Yes—he would breakfast there.

He paused an instant to search for a newspaper among the files hanging on a great rack; but the sheet he desired was missing. Once more he had the feeling that things were going against him.

A little disconsolately he went out, sat down, and ordered something to eat. In the square little rubber-tyred carriages, with very big horses and yet bigger drivers, were now quickly arriving and drawing up in a long line in preparation for the business of the day. The drivers, in their curious glazed top-hats and

16 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

their padded long coats of blue cloth, were congregating in knots, and smoking and laughing as they exchanged the gossip of the day. Occasionally one would go up to his horses and speak to them and pet them in a dozen little ways. Faulconbridge watched them with interest—and became more contented as he looked—they were a burly, handsome set of fellows, full of kindness. Yes—this was a pleasant land, in spite of all experiences to the contrary.

His eyes, travelling round the tables under the great awning, marked the few people who were there. It must be a lazy town, in all truth, rising late, staying up late. He remembered the stories he had heard of Russian bacchanalia, the madness of their night life. Nine o'clock, almost ten o'clock, and hardly a soul about. Yes, it was a late town. And just then something caused him to turn right round to a corner made by the projecting wall of the building.

Involuntarily a tell-tale wave of colour once more stained his cheeks. He was somehow certain that he could not be wrong; he had the feeling which only comes with absolute certainty. Yet was it really possible? For not five yards away, ensconced behind a palm, eating something suspiciously like a *pêche Melba*, with the very paper he had wanted half masking her face, was a youthful lady, who drummed on the ground with her foot and moved uneasily in her chair. He was quite certain that it was she—the girl who had sung.

This time his surprise was so complete that he did not trouble to hide it. He determined to solve the riddle.

He could not properly see her face, not even after he had taken the trouble to change his seat, since the

paper now formed an impenetrable screen. Yet as he fitfully glanced at her, wondering if there was some subtle design behind this unexpected reappearance, he had the uncomfortable feeling that she was still laughing at him, silently, mockingly, derisively—laughing as if he had been specially made for her to laugh at. . . . He suddenly remembered the subtle dictum that laughter exists primarily to repress any separatist tendency in society, to punish certain failings of rigidity. Yet just now the generalization gave him scant comfort. This was becoming something less—or more—than a joke: he was determined to fathom it.

He devoured his breakfast with a fierceness new to him; and the attentive waiter, dodging about in the background and trying to anticipate his every want, at last withdrew with an audible sigh and a commiserating shrug of the shoulders. For Mr. Richard Faulconbridge was now far too angry to wish in any way to hide the fact. Why should he be laughed at? He had never been laughed at like that before in his life—on the contrary, he had been taken all too seriously. What was the nature of this hilarity which had been constructed at his expense out of nothing at all? And how was it possible for him in any way to show his resentment; without risking a worse rebuff?

He did not propose being beaten, however, his pride forbade that. So his breakfast completed, for a slow half an hour he sat there in stolid and stubborn silence; then, with sudden resolution, as if he had waited long enough, he rose, and with five long strides he had overlooked the immovable paper screen. The big grey eyes which gazed calmly into his, and the amazing resemblance, almost checked him; but with a curt bow he drove his resolution onwards. He spoke

18 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

in German—the language which everyone to-day understands out of France.

“ Will you permit me to glance at that paper—if you have quite finished with it ? ” he said, trying to appear unconcerned and only feeling absurd.

The big grey eyes, set in the girlish face, did not flinch an instant ; and he was suddenly conscious that he was being coldly assured in the same language that the paper had not yet been finished with.

He brought up his reserves—he was not yet beaten. He waved a pitying hand at the eccentricity which he had been long calmly observing.

“ It must be difficult to read like that, upside down,” he observed, his satirical vein bringing him comfort.

The girl glanced at him, shrugged her shoulders, and then suddenly became almost conversational. She had pretty shoulders and she knew it.

“ People say that nowadays it is the only way to get the right meaning—everything is so inspired.”

Before he knew it he had paused in his desire to crush her. His humorous mouth was struggling with a smile which threatened to overthrow the rest of his face. He knew something about the press—and this idea appealed to him.

He looked at her in growing surprise. Not only was she a humorist, but she found interest in *The Times*. The combination was surely unique.

“ But you must be able to speak English if you read it,” he remarked, a little lamely. He recognized that not only was he not progressing—but that she was manifestly conscious of the advantage which he could not take from her.

“ I can,” she replied curtly, with a resumption of her more distant manner.

THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS 19

“ Let us then speak it,” he said, almost gently, in his mother tongue.

She dropped the sheet suddenly on her table, and now clasped her hands with a strangely graceful movement. He forgot the startling resemblance which he had first discovered in the new discoveries which he was making. He became increasingly aware of the fact that she was something more than merely pretty, and that her assumed haughtiness made her truly delicious. In her cool muslin she was as fresh as a budding rose sparkling in the morning dew.

“ So you want to speak to me ! ” she began very deliberately in English—using short, sharp sentences together with a curious phrasing which made her words all the more attractive. “ And why, may I ask ? You do not like me ; you have been angry with me, I can see that, just because I laughed ! Yes—it is plain to me. Therefore you only want to wheedle me out of my paper—to take my paper from me—just as I was going to commence the article on the Bourse.”

Once again the humour of the situation possessed him, and in spite of the reproof he openly laughed.

“ Pardon me again, I did not know that I was interrupting so important an operation,” he said. “ It is strange to find a speculator so early in the morning—especially here.” He threw a glance, full of amusement, round the *al fresco* restaurant. In truth, it was hardly the neighbourhood for market operations.

But her grave eyes still looked solemnly into his, and he was conscious that the advantage still remained with her.

“ A speculator ? ” she echoed, “ I am no specu-

20 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

lator. I am only following the course of City of Moscow bonds from day to day, because I have been told by men who know that money speaks the truth where journalists lie. You see I am strictly practical. And now I think I will have another *pêche Melba*."

She rattled a spoon against her plate in the Russian manner to attract the attention of a passing waiter ; and when she had dispatched him on her errand she no longer looked up.

Faulconbridge—completely baffled—turned to go, and then stopped short.

"What a thing to eat in the morning," he murmured audaciously.

He was conscious that her eyes had travelled up to his face with slow disdain. Now she studied him for a moment as if he were merely a curious object and not a man. Then her graceful shoulders suddenly signalled indifference again with an instinctive shrug. An ironical smile hovered around her lips. An amusing idea had evidently struck her ; for suddenly she leaned back in her chair with an air of bravado.

"Are you my doctor ?" she inquired. "If you are not my doctor you can hardly know what is good for me and what is bad. It is not given to everyone to decide that." Then coolly watching him redden she slowly added : "I shall send the waiter with the paper in ten minutes."

He was dismissed !

He did not wait, of course, for that interval to elapse, but quickly stalked into the hall and commenced asking the polyglot porter some aimless questions. He was so extraordinarily angry that he did not really know what he asked—nor did he trouble about the answers. He only knew that he had been

beaten out of court by a girl who had previously had the happiness of laughing at him, and who was probably laughing at him still—the whole texture of humiliations being woven out of something less than the lightest gossamer. Bitterly he reproached himself; why had he been so impulsive——?

“Sir?” said the polyglot porter respectfully—trying to put meaning to his muttering.

He collected himself with a start:

“I asked about the Kremlin—the hours it is open?”

The polyglot porter, glad to be relieved, waved his hand. Three guides precipitated themselves.

“The Kremlin Museum, Imperial Palace of the Czars,” began one in English.

“*Si monsieur désire visiter le Palais, le musée,*” said the second in French.

“*Est ist gestattet,*” began the third in German.

“Damn,” muttered Faulconbridge peevishly.

“*Se vole parlare italiano, signore,*” broke in one of them, who was a humorist.

“*Se habla español,*” grinned a comrade.

“Look here,” Faulconbridge remarked severely to the three. “This is all very entertaining, I have no doubt, but I don’t want to go to-day. I only want to know about the hours. To-morrow I shall see——”

With a curt nod he broke away and made for the lifts. As he was rapidly whisked out of sight, the three guides looked at one another blankly.

“Mad?” suggested one.

“No—English,” replied another.

“But——” said the third.

The polyglot porter, having finished writing off by heart the room-numbers on half a hundred letters, suddenly threw down his heavy blue pencil, and

22 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

became conversational—that is, as conversational as his nature permitted.

“Woman,” he remarked, ringing for a hall-boy to take the letters, on an electric bell that sounded like a fire-alarm.

“Ah,” exclaimed the three guides simultaneously.

“Sasha, the Polish girl,” he added condescendingly, as the hall-boy carried off the letters for distribution.

“Sasha,” commented the guide from the Baltic provinces, who was rather phlegmatic.

“Sasha,” abruptly said the Greek with the twisted smile.

“Sasha,” dreamily murmured the Italian guide, who had had a Russian mother.

They would have liked some further details—they would have liked to hear how it was possible for a man who had only entered the hotel an hour or two before to have made such progress with this fascinating person who treated everyone else with such open contempt. He had been seen with her—he had spoken to her—the hall-porter probably knew all the details.

But the hall-porter was already otherwise engaged. The fat Frenchman, who had arrived that same morning, had come up to him only to be accosted by a boy in buttons with a letter in his hand.

“Yes, that is my name, Verdard, Emile Verdard,” he assented. Quickly he tore open the envelope and became deeply interested in its contents. “No answer,” he said at length, “no answer at all.” Then he went on with his conversation with the porter—speaking in a whisper, and gesticulating constantly.

The guides, disappointed in their hopes of extracting further explanations, shrugged their shoulders expressively, and held out their hands much as men do

in a pantomime. It was a mystery, a tantalizing mystery, which, of course, would in time be solved, as are all mysteries in this very little world. Then, after a moment's hesitation, they fell back into their respective corners—waiting, as they passed their lives in waiting, for the flotsam and jetsam of travel to be cast up beside them for them to devour.

In the middle distance the fat Frenchman continued to talk in the same impressive manner as was no doubt only right and proper for a queer man with a queer past to do.

III

MONSIEUR EMILE VERDARD had begun life unromantically—to be frank, as a cook. At the tender age of twelve he had been torn from studies which had never greatly engrossed him and incontinently thrust into a kitchen. There, amidst a great array of brightly polished pots and pans, he had served a rude enough apprenticeship, which had resulted in his finally acquiring a perfect knowledge of what appeared to the late lamented Brillat-Savarin as nothing short of a divine art.

No one will question that there is the nature that makes for cooking just as there is the nature that makes for martyrdom; Emile Verdard appeared to have been marked out by a benignant fate simply and solely for the kitchen. Certain it is that at the age of eighteen he could roast to perfection, and that before he was twenty his sauces began to attract the attention of his patrons. It is only necessary to add that, flushed with pride, he soon began to invent dishes of his own—that is, to give new sauces to old dishes, and to compound very original salads which were universally declared *hors concours*. In a land that is justly famed for its cooks this was something more than praise.

But Verdard had ambitions—one day cooking no longer satisfied his soul. Doubtlessly his was no very unique case; indeed, it may happen often that

cooks are discontented. Do we ever think of the hand which prepared the succulent dish which we so hastily devour as aching for other pursuits? Do we ever picture to ourselves as we eat, how dull must be the drudgery of dish-making? We do not; as trencher-knights we are too busy for that.

In any case, Verdard was not happy; far from it! He was an idealist, an idealogue—that is, he was given overmuch to thinking, and to framing his thoughts in ornate language. If a good cook, why not a good something else? If he excelled in one direction, why should he not equally well excel in some other? That is the way he reasoned—as many have reasoned before him in some ignorance of the philosophers, and so it logically followed that the more he thought the more unhappy he became.

He had a taste for politics, he was quite sure—that is a great taste for intrigue, which is perhaps as kind a way as any of defining a *cloaca maxima*. Like many of his countrymen, he was an indefatigable reader of newspapers; he was always studying situations and socialists; and after as long a course of apprenticeship in the mysteries of politics as he had devoted to the mysteries of cooking, he suddenly announced that he had commenced thinking politically about most things on earth. What's in a name? He might just as well have said mathematically, though there is more excuse for that if Pythagoras is to be believed.

His was a bizarre taste. He liked to take the strange countries of the earth and make all sorts of queer things happen to them—so that he could intervene with what he called his “logical solutions.” He liked to spread out maps and write down figures and estimates, and work out problems by rules which he alone understood.

26 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

He became obsessed with the idea that his was *une carrière manquée*—a life spent in vain. That was what he repeatedly told his friends, who thereupon shrugged their shoulders and began laughing in their sleeves.

Soon he took to reading books in great quantities, all sorts of books, good books and bad books, big books and little books, but specially histories, as well as the personal narratives of actors in those frantic events which we call revolutions. The monumental writings of Monsieur Thiers and Monsieur Taine bored him infinitely, but there were others whom he pronounced enchanting. Lamartine—there, for instance, was a man after his own heart ! He knew *The History of the Girondists* almost by heart, as well as *The History of the Restoration of the Monarchy in France* and *The History of the Revolution of 1848*. He could even recite by heart that famous opening passage which runs : “ I now undertake to write the history of a small party of men who, cast by Providence into the greatest drama of modern times, comprise in themselves the ideas, the passions, the faults, the virtues of their epoch. . . . ”

What fine words indeed ! After reading them Verdard felt that by nature, by destiny, by desire, he was a Girondist, a perfect Girondist—not knowing that has never been a good thing to confess, since it is both too little and too much. Yet that was not his view—the Girondists were for him logical and philosophical—everything that was good and sane. Musing in his shirt-sleeves in the evenings at the back-door of his little house, which opened out on to a kitchen garden gay with cabbages and peas, and from which the sluggish Rhone could be perceived in the distance, it was his constant endeavour to dis-

cover by what chain of tragedies Heaven's Own Elected should have effected so little in the glorious past.

One fine day he made up his mind. Like the famous abbé Sieyès of the great Revolutionary days, he believed that he had exhausted the academic possibilities of politics and political systems, and that it was high time for him to turn his attention to more practical phases of the art. In a word, he believed that he knew everything worth knowing from books. Perhaps this was not so very strange. In the inspiring odour of the kitchen the world must often appear as nothing much more than a giant stew in which cooks and cooked mingle their destinies and yet remain distinct. Verdard was determined to be of the cooks—outside the kitchen as well as within.

Yet how should he begin? To ask the question was to answer it.

He would cut the cord—conspire. . . .

He began by being commonplace—but only for a short while. He attended some foolish meetings, and he heard the ranting of the Camelots du Roi, and others of like kidney, who think that phrases are solvents, and that, if needs be, a few bombs will do the rest. But Verdard was no fool. He was not deluded by the specious arguments he heard so violently advanced. He knew that it was nonsense to dream of a modern revolution without the army's active help—added to which a certain sense of propriety forbade him from thinking that a mere sergeant in the reserve was the person called upon to play a leading part in a foremost European State, though once a little corporal had done a good deal more than that. It was doubtless in other fields—not in France—that he was called

28 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

upon to show himself a man of destiny. But where?

He did not become discouraged—though his imagination was admittedly in danger of failing him. Indeed, between the time of his discharge from active service and his passing into the territorial reserve—a period of ten busy years—he worked so hard that his local fame began suddenly to spread far and wide. But with his ever-increasing girth to remind him that the passage of years infallibly leaves its marks and its disabilities on all of us alike, at length it became abundantly clear to him that unless he acted soon, Nature—that stern mistress—might inflexibly forbid his wandering into more varied fields.

Just then a curious thing happened—he discovered Beaumarchais—Beaumarchais, the great and wonderful Beaumarchais. At once the world became a different world for him. He understood in a flash—as does some great inventor who suddenly finds the solution of a difficulty which has long perplexed him—that the road ahead was at last clear. Briefly, he had simply to copy Beaumarchais—avoiding the errors into which that singular character fell—to become not only great, but the soul of some historic movement.

The soul of some historic movement—how alluring that sounded!

For weeks after his discovery of Beaumarchais he lived in that remarkable man's exploits. He became so familiar with them that sometimes he thought, as he worked in his steamy kitchen with his fat face red from the heat of the flames, of writing a biography to be grandiloquently styled, "Beaumarchais, by Emile Verdard, Imitator." It was only the fear that such a publication would inevitably concentrate the world's

attention on him which prevented him from carrying out his audacious literary plan. Yet he felt he owed it to the genius of his teacher. Had not Beaumarchais and no other man made the success of the American Revolution? Yes—he was soon quite sure of that! Washington, Hamilton, Rochambeau, Lafayette—without Beaumarchais these men were all nothing. Beaumarchais had been the beginner, the pioneer, the arch-plotter, the arch-fiend, if you like. He had lighted the fire; the others had merely fanned it. What man with an open mind could doubt it, after learning the true facts?

A Parisian *pur sang*, full of the inexhaustible verve and dash of his own immortal creation, "Figaro," in his *Le Mariage de Figaro*, Beaumarchais had been successively watchmaker, inventor, harpist to the Court, a promoter of vast business enterprises, a pamphleteer, duellist, adventurer, secret political agent—in short, a man of astounding vitality and resourcefulness. It was this person, Verdard had learnt with so much astonishment, who early made up his mind to avenge his country on England, and to wipe out the shame of the loss of Canada. Two years before France and Spain had decided to act in the waters of the American Continent, Beaumarchais had already declared war. Establishing himself at Le Havre, he had sent to the Americans 30,000 rifles, 200 cannon, 4000 tents, and vast stores of provisions. His fleets were in constant communication with the revolutionary leaders; his generals organized their armies. He had lighted the fire, and how the fire had blazed! Then—somehow—from being everything, from being the soul of the revolution, Beaumarchais had become nothing—absolutely nothing. Yet it was easy to

30 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

understand. Like all pioneers, the successes which he had sown were reaped by others. Poor Beaumarchais. . . .

It disconcerted Verdard greatly, it cannot be here disguised, to reflect on the end of this remarkable man, for he could not forget that he not only had no statues erected to his memory, but that he practically died a beggar. A beggar—that was singularly cruel! His arithmetic must have been at fault, no matter how true his heart may have been—that was the only possible explanation. A man who had been a cook would not make that mistake. Beaumarchais could only be imitated up to a certain point, but not beyond.

One day Verdard walked into his proprietor's office and laid his resignation on his desk. He had finished with cooking, he abruptly said.

He would always remember the scene—the stuffy little room, with its hideous blue papering; the piles of accounts on the table; the sample bottles of wine encumbering the floor; the bushy eyebrows of the proprietor as he stared at him; the green branch of a tree almost touching the window. Indeed, it was a memorable scene—it had been so short, sharp, and dramatic. Expostulations, recriminations, vociferations, all had proved in vain—stolidly Verdard had kept to his one point: that he had decided to give up a profession which has now all too few devoted masters.

“And why?” at last exclaimed the proprietor, rage and despair fighting for mastery in his voice. His *chef* was his greatest asset.

Verdard dissembled:

“Because I am rich—I have two hundred thousand francs——”

“Thanks to me—to your participation in the

profits. Ungrateful man—it is thus that we are always served ! ”

Monsieur Emile Verdard did not trouble to answer this apostrophe ; he merely shrugged his fat shoulders and looked in the direction in which heaven is said to lie. He knew the value of his services.

And because he did that—because he was so calm—a worse fear suddenly possessed the proprietor. He became pale.

“ Swear to me that you do not intend to set up a rival establishment. ”

Verdard smiled contemptuously.

“ Monsieur, ” he said, with a grandiose wave of his podgy hands, assuming an attitude which might have been impressive had his tissues not been so extravagant, “ Monsieur, I would have you know that I am going to allow my destiny to assert itself—have I not said that I have finished with kitchens ? ”

“ You mean ? ”

“ That I am going into politics. ”

“ Unhappy man, ” exclaimed the proprietor, his voice full of a pity artfully simulated, “ you are already lost. ”

“ Monsieur, ” replied the *ci-devant* cook, “ you are mistaken. So far from being lost, I have already won. I have behind me something stronger than any government—the strongest thing in the world, an unconquerable people. Do you know the history of the struggle of the Dutch against the Spanish Empire ? ”

“ Is this man mad ? ” murmured the proprietor, who knew nothing about history, or indeed little about anything save the arithmetic of money-making “ Spanish Empire—Dutch people—what does it mean ? Is he mad ? ”

32 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

“No—he is the very contrary,” replied Verdard in a firm voice. “Wait and see, I say; wait.”

And refusing to explain himself, he withdrew.

That is precisely how he had ended his connection with kitchens.

What he had said was true—that is, as true as are most absolute statements, remembering that truth is as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp, being merely a point of view caught from a certain fugitive angle, and even then only vaguely understood by man's imperfect intelligence. Fate had willed that a few months before he should sit drinking an evening absinthe at a café close to two foreigners. They had been talking to one another in a language of which he did not understand a word—a language full of sibilants and sighs, and yet possessing heavy, hammer-like terminations.

Though he could understand nothing, Verdard had his suspicions; and presently the name of a place gave him the needed clue. At once his mind leaped to a conclusion—the obvious conclusion—they were Russians—revolutionaries. . . . How could he ever have been in doubt?

He showed his immense interest in his alert manner. He was a new man—he was reborn. . . . Presently, unable to contain himself any longer, he rose from his seat and approached them.

“Messieurs,” he said politely, “as I am interested in Russia and know something of her strange politics, will you permit me, without offence, to join you?”

The two strangers, though highly suspicious, had perforce assented. When a man sits down like that there are only two things to do—either to accept him or to insult him. Caution dictated the former; the two strangers had never regretted their complaisance.

It was long past midnight when the three had parted company. The first step had been taken; that memorable night Monsieur Emile Verdard had not slept from sheer excitement and joy.

He had not learnt much, it is true, in the way of absolute information. But he was sufficiently philosophic to know that the quest of the absolute is a somewhat vain quest in this best of worlds, and the little he had extracted had amply satisfied him. His two companions had strenuously denied that they cared about politics—they were nothing but plain Moscow merchants. They had admitted, of course, that common humanity made them solicitous regarding the welfare of their own race, and that it had actually occurred, since the thing was very much *à la mode*, for friends of theirs to join from time to time this or that League. But beyond that they refused to compromise themselves; they had nothing to state.

Strangely enough, however, their business in the provincial town which had so long sheltered the person of the imaginative cook kept them there for week after week; and at the end of a month of fitful intercourse they suddenly admitted Monsieur Verdard to one of their secrets. It is hard to find the precise reason why they should have suddenly become so amiable; perhaps it was that they had really recognized in this fat yet eloquent bourgeois a personality of some potentiality. In any case they told him without further subterfuge that they were buying picric acid, and that they were willing to receive ideas as to how it might be packed in a safe way.

That night Verdard had slept less than ever.

“At last, at last,” he repeated to himself endlessly,

34 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

waking himself up again and again by the sound of his muttering. The road ahead was indeed lighted with a lurid light. Picric acid—wonderful, wonderful! He saw whole populations of people who had disagreed with him in the past blown up—hurled to the very top of the skies by his fearful explosions! What splendid dreams! What a splendid future!

Of course, after that he commenced studying chemistry—he was drawn towards chemistry as a magnet infallibly draws to itself iron filings.

He learnt without great surprise that this curious acid, though exploding with great energy when heated, is very easily prepared, and is employed to dye silk and wool yellow—a legitimate enough article to purchase in the Lyons district. After some brain cudgelling he conceived a safe way of packing a large quantity which even his two ingenious friends proclaimed a masterpiece. Certainly Verdard had a political head.

It is unnecessary to give in any great detail his surprising progress since those early days. His imaginative powers were great—his mind most ingenious—his ideals so purely republican that he could only picture salvation as coming through the medium of high explosives. Associated as business partner with his two friends, who were army contractors as well as liberators, he had personally secured the passage across Europe of a formidable quantity of explosives, some hidden in the most ingenious ways, other lots openly imported under special warrant, not to speak of a traffic in automatic pistols, which was still more lucrative, and at which the frontier custom-houses almost openly connived.

Two years had elapsed since his first novitiate—two

busy and happy years ; not only had he gained experience and satisfied the secret promptings of his heart, but he had made money as well.

It was for this reason that he had been so affable on the express which had borne him into the ancient capital of Muscovy ; he believed, as we often believe when our digestions are good and our purses full, that he was in the hey-day of his success, and that he was beyond danger.

IV

IN a little sitting-room, on the third story of a great apartment-house, a tall man, with a blond beard shot with grey, sat waiting. Before him on a plain deal table lay two open books. One was that part of Kant's work which deals with The Categorical Imperative, the other was Block's *Modern Weapons and Modern War*. Thus juxtaposed they seemed to elucidate the tall man as no words could have done. He was a dreamer.

He had stopped reading now and was gazing out of the window at the blue sky with a far-away look in his eyes. His long, thin, aristocratic hands, which he had folded on the table, showed that he was not only a student, but a gentleman. His clothes betrayed the same characteristics; it was somehow plain to every discerning eye that he would have worn sack-cloth with an air of distinction.

The walls of the room were lined with books; various stools and tables were stacked with them; and in a big arm-chair lay a mass of maps, covered with queer marks, just as they had been carelessly thrown down. In one corner of the room a single handsome painting proclaimed that the occupant not only read and studied, but was a man of means—and of taste—as well.

He sat there looking out of the window at the blue sky as if he loved it. He had been much in the fields

and woods as a younger man, and he worshipped the mysteries of the vaulted deep as if he still held the simple creed that Nature is God.

He sat there, not idly as some men sit when they are doing nothing, but rather as if his contemplation were a prayer—as all true contemplation should be. In truth, he was in communion with great thoughts—with thoughts which inspired him and stirred him to his inmost soul ; and as a ray of sunlight shot in and illumined his head there was that about him which recalled those numberless portraits of the Christ which adorn the Italian galleries.

So motionless did he remain that some chirping sparrows suddenly invaded the window-sill and discoursed noisily to themselves about this strange living thing. The sparrows twittered to themselves and fluttered mightily until they were sure that all was well ; and then, at last, emboldened by all this talk, one or two dropped to the floor and stole a few crumbs which had fallen there. It was singularly peaceful in that room high above the street.

Presently the tall man sighed and sat up ever so little. His ear, long trained to catch faint sounds, had heard footsteps. The first appointment of the day was indeed overdue.

He did not shift his position as he heard a servant open an outer door ; and when a knock came, he called back in the musical voice which so many Russians possess.

A very bulky man came in, bundling forward as if he were being propelled by some hidden machinery. It was no other person than Emile Verdard, hat in hand, and a formidable black portfolio under his arm.

38 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

“ Good morning, Monsieur le Baron,” said he in French, with a deep and respectful bow.

“ Good morning,” said his host, rising and shaking hands with curious indifference. “ Throw those maps off that chair and seat yourself. They are maps connected with my *magnum opus*—the position of Russian agriculture.” He, too, had spoken in French, with the purest of accents.

“ I trust I have not kept you waiting, Monsieur le Baron ? ”

The tall, blond man smiled faintly.

“ No,” he said slowly and reflectively, as if he were carefully considering the matter ; “ I cannot say you have. I have been waiting—for some time—to be precise, for twenty years.”

“ Ah,” exclaimed Verdard, “ ah.”

He liked that reply ; it was so philosophic. Indeed, it enchanted him—it was a *mot* worth remembering, and making his own. Before men of a more practical race it would have possibly fallen flat : Verdard had the signal advantage of being imaginative.

“ I duly received your letter which was lying for me at the hotel, but I only arrived two hours ago from Warsaw,” resumed the fat Frenchman, whose breathing was still a little stertorous from the steep ascent of the stairs.

“ Really,” said the blond man, with a sudden assumption of surprise ; “ how came that ? ”

Verdard made his first effect—he loved doing that. Spreading out his arms, he suddenly closed them across his formidable paunch as if to protect it from danger. Then he shot a rapid glance round the room as an actor might have done.

“There is much suspicion about,” he said very softly for such a big man.

“Ah,” said the blond man, using the same exclamation the other had done previously, “ah.”

He had seated himself during these preliminary remarks. Now he rose once more and walked to the window. He stood there staring down at the street with a new expression overcasting his features. His face suddenly seemed worn—as if his spirit were weary with waiting and bearing the strain of an impending future. For those who endlessly think and contrive, the future is always Damoclean—a keen, razor-like knife to cut down all who are arrogant enough to wish to interfere with fate. Would the knife fall on him?

Behind him Verdard smiled in his satisfaction. He loved to see his words produce such quick effects. He had brought news—from Warsaw. He knew the exact position there beneath the surface—he had much to gossip about. In a minute he would fire his second shot—a very fine second shot, as he thought.

But his satisfaction was short-lived. The blond man turned at last and looked steadily at him.

“Why are you suspected?” he inquired unexpectedly. “What have you been doing? Talking again?”

“Monsieur,” replied his visitor, “I fail to catch your meaning.”

“Then you are dull to-day, my friend; it was only three months ago that you were heard talking overmuch in Paris—the report passed through my hands.”

Verdard’s rubicund face became surcharged with such a ludicrous expression that in spite of himself his host smiled. But he speedily checked himself—for it was a serious matter that this fat, vainglorious fellow

40 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

should so constantly compromise himself with the secret police. He had been useful, very useful in the past ; but if he talked his usefulness became a source of danger, and nothing else.

“ I remember now—I remember now,” interposed the Frenchman indignantly ; “ it was Zemlianski, yes, I am sure, Zemlianski, who has always been jealous of me. I said nothing more than any man may say who has succeeded. In brief, I simply told my story as a story of a man whom once I had known. There were no clues—no clues at all, Zemlianski is a Pole—everybody knows that the Poles——” He stopped just in time as he remembered that his host was of that nationality.

“ What is success ? ” inquired the tall, blond man, not noticing the hiatus, but shooting an instinctive glance at Kant’s work. It was his vice, as is the case with most thinkers, always to prefer the abstract to the concrete.

“ Monsieur,” interjected the Frenchman, as if he did not understand. He was not given to considering such a question—just now—to his mind it smacked of charlatanism. His capacity for appreciating abstractions had miraculously disappeared.

“ I inquired what was success—at what point in life can one truly stop short, and boldly say, ‘ I am successful ’ ? It is an interesting question that has never been properly considered. If, when you say it, you mean that you have arrived at the highest summit, then beyond there must be a decline—the long, dreary slopes which lead down towards the end. A mountain-top cannot be flat—beyond a certain point the path leads downwards. Have you ever reflected that to proclaim yourself successful is to announce your

decline ? It has been the fault of the greatest men to believe that not only have they climbed very high, but that they can keep on going still higher. What a delusion ! Yesterday's victory may be to-morrow's disaster. Monsieur Verdard, learn to hold your tongue—before it is too late."

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders : he was by no means impressed by this man's tirade. It was tiresome to have to listen to a form of eloquence which was tinged with pessimism. Now he began speaking almost pityingly :

"It is the penalty which many pay—the penalty of being misunderstood. I repeat it, I have been falsely accused by a jealous man. That and nothing else. If I were arrested to-morrow, the police would soon be disappointed. Of evidence against me there is not a scrap, I assure you ; I have been very cunning ; with me, everything is covered up and blotted out. Yes, Monsieur le Baron, that is the way I act. Now in Warsaw——"

His host interrupted him with a wave of the hand :

"Let us be calm and fix our attention on the troubled future. I do not wish to hear about Warsaw. Have you those papers I wrote you about ? and what is this new plan of yours ? "

The tall, blond man had again seated himself, and, throwing one leg over the other, prepared to listen attentively.

Verdard, openly relieved at the turn things had now taken, at once became business-like. He had certain accounts to give over and certain statements to make, but these things were merely the unimportant preliminaries. When he had finished, with a very new manner he opened his cigar-case, selected a very big

42 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

cigar, and then, with the aid of a pocket-knife, neatly split it in two. Out of this he drew a roll of rice-paper covered with fine writing, and smoothing this document on his knees, he at length handed it over with self-conscious pride.

It was a document of some importance—of very great importance, in fact. The details were clearly handled—no one could deny it; and his chief read over the paper several times with apparent attention. Briefly it was a plan for the establishment of a factory with the aid of Franco-Belgian capital in the adjoining government of Smolensk—a factory which, while manifestly concerned with the making of certain agricultural machines, would be a secret arsenal.

“It is very clever,” said the blond man at length, handing it back. But at the same time he took a box of matches from his pocket and threw it to his companion. “Very clever indeed. It is a pity you did not begin life differently. But it comes too late. A year ago we could have sanctioned it. Now——”

He made a rapid movement which invited the Frenchman to burn the incriminating document.

“Too late,” repeated the other a little blankly, fumbling with the matches. His fingers had suddenly become clumsy. “Too late—Monsieur—again I do not quite understand.”

The Baron looked at him searchingly.

“We are going to act—almost at once,” he said slowly. “The time for making deliberate preparations is long past. That is all. Do you understand?—we are going to take advantage of this war in Asia and strike hard.”

Verdard gave a sharp exclamation and paled perceptibly—not because he was afraid, but because he

was excited. The interview had not been precisely to his liking from the very beginning. And this was the end—the thing he had come to hear. They were going to act!

“I have been suspecting something for a month and more,” he murmured at length, not knowing exactly what to say. “I have seen indications which have frankly puzzled me.” Then he stopped abruptly. They were going to act! *Diable!*

The Baron spoke again:

“Yes, it is coming—the great moment has almost arrived, but what the result will be no one dares to predict.” As if to comfort himself he turned back to the table, picked up the volume, cleared his throat, and began slowly and solemnly reading the beginning of the Warsaw banker’s famous book on modern war much as a priest reads from the Bible:

“In former times bullets, for a great part of their course, flew over the heads of the combatants, and were effective only for an insignificant distance. The modern bullet will strike all it meets for a distance of 660 yards, and after the introduction of the more perfect arms now in course of preparation the effective distance will be as great as 1200 yards. And as it is most improbable that on the field of battle it will not meet with a single human being in such a distance, we may conclude that every bullet will find its victim.” Then he abruptly stopped.

He seemed to have fallen into a reverie, for now he let his chin fall into his collar, and sat absolutely motionless. The sparrows, which had twittered away in alarm during this curious interview, were lulled into confidence again by the unbroken quiet; and

44 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

Monsieur Verdard, with a look of growing perplexity on his face, observed their antics as if they fascinated him. They were going to act, they were going to act. What did he mean by reading him this passage? These Russians—these Russians—always secretive, always mad. . . .

He went on thinking. It was coming—the great moment was coming—and he had known nothing about it. That was what he must fix his attention upon at once. A cheerful prospect in all truth, he muttered. Yet mixed with his surprise there was a growing feeling of irritation that after these years of work he should be such a pawn—such a valueless pawn—that it was only by chance, at the eleventh hour as it were, that he had learnt the news, when the humblest member of the League must have known more. These Russians, these Russians. . . .

It was true, of course, that he belonged to a category not directly concerned with active measures: he was only a sort of licensed purveyor—a privileged contractor who made ample profits because he took ample risks. And yet, as everyone knew, he had a soul above mere profits: he was a man of means who also possessed ideals. It ill-suited his nature to be so casually treated. He thought all these things vaguely—confusedly, angrily, irritably adding to himself in self-pity that, of course, they were suspicious of him because he was a foreigner.

His colour heightened as this view became more and more pronounced. Presently he determined to give vent to feelings which were rooted in something deeper than his reasoning powers. He would make his influence felt—oh yes! And as if by way of notifying his decision he noisily cleared his throat in an ugly manner

more suggestive of his kitchen years than anything else he had done that morning.

The blond man looked up: he knew Verdard through and through.

"Well," he said, almost gruffly, "what is it?"

"Monsieur le Baron," began the *ci-devant* cook with a great attempt at dignity, "though you have reproved me this morning, you will admit, I trust, that my honour is above suspicion."

A pale smile passed like a summer cloud over the face of the Russian. It was as if the question was a very frivolous thing in such times as these.

"Certainly, Monsieur Verdard, certainly," he replied; "I admit that you are a most honest man—though a trifle talkative at times."

The fat man waved his hands deprecatingly.

"One has the faults of one's temperament—it is inevitable. But I pass that by to come to something of greater importance. Briefly, I wish to say that I do not entirely welcome the narrow rôle assigned to me in the past. Now I wish to participate in the active measures which are contemplated—to play my part."

He flushed as he said that—flushed with the pride of an old sergeant who knew his drill-books as well as any man. He had been misunderstood, misjudged—he would rectify it all. You see, he was almost angry.

His host's reply was a little singular, and certainly disconcerting. Without a word he got up, went to a book-case, pressed a spring, and a row of books swung towards him. Then he put his hands in behind and drew out two Mauser revolvers, still in their heavy wooden cases, some packages of cartridges, and finally a little bottle with a red label.

46 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

“ This is what it means for me if it proves unsuccessful. Are you also ready for that—you, who are a foreigner? It is either through the head or by way of the stomach. That is all. Personally I detest Siberia.”

He laughed a little harshly for a man with such a musical voice; and the change did not escape Verdard's sharp ears. This man did not like the idea of death—he loved the blue skies and the voice of Nature too well. . . .

Verdard studied him as he stood there as if he were looking at a stranger. He could not help it; the new situation had disclosed the inevitable gulf between the two.

“ Well? ” added the blond man sharply, as if the silence irritated him.

“ Monsieur, I have been a soldier,” said the ex-cook, with a certain grave simplicity which sat him well. Perhaps just then he was really in earnest; it is hard to judge our fellow-beings correctly.

“ Ah,” exclaimed the blond man, “ then you are not afraid? ” He looked at him really surprised.

“ No.”

“ Very good, very good—I shall see what can be done. Meanwhile you remain at the Gastropol? ”

“ Yes.”

After that they shook hands without another word. There was really nothing else to say.

As the faint echo of Verdard's departing footsteps came through the closed door, the blond man seated himself just as he had been seated before. Now he took from the drawer of the table a faded photograph, and gazed at it long and intently. It was a woman's head, crowned with the finery of forgotten fashions—

a face with great solemn eyes that looked into his speakingly, though they had long been closed and dead. At last, very gently, he put the picture away.

When the sparrows ten minutes later found courage to return, he was gazing at the blue sky with a far-away look in his eyes, his white, refined hands folded on the plain deal table. And under them was Kant's work, opened at the chapters on The Categorical Imperative, lying beside Monsieur Block's Essay on *Modern Weapons and Modern War*.

V

THE skies were just as blue, the square and the grey and white pigeons just as enchanting, when Richard Faulconbridge leaned over his balcony the next morning and listened in vain for some sound of the sweet voice which had so charmed him the day before. Man-like, he had so far forgotten his rebuff that he was once more humming to himself—just because the sun shone so gaily. The devil of adventure stirred in his young blood ; he felt in every vein of his body that he could never again acquit himself so stupidly. An opportunity was all that he needed to repair his mistake—an opportunity to indulge in folly. Yet he did not even frown as he thought of that ; he was entirely occupied with wondering whether what he desired was to be accorded him. It is always like that with men, just as it is with women ; they declare that nothing again shall tempt them, and forthwith they begin anew to flirt with fate. And with that he put on his hat and walked out of his room.

He could not believe that it was entirely chance that made the inevitable happen so quickly ; and so in spite of himself, in spite of his new resolve, his perplexity and suspicion suddenly returned.

Here is what had happened. He had dashed downstairs, using the staircase because motion suited his mood, and at once in the hall, sitting in a chair several sizes too large for her, and busily adjusting a white

veil with feminine unconcern, he had suddenly spied the girl of the day before. It was just as if she were sitting there waiting for him.

Instinctively, he had paused, overcome, as we have said, by his former doubts. In the foreground, in the middle distance, even in the far background of the great hotel hall, he saw that many interested pairs of eyes followed every movement of the long, graceful arms, which seemed to twine themselves round the head in an instinctive embrace, and which lingered here and there as in a posture dance. She had evidently been used to being observed in this manner, he said to himself, nearly all her short life ; it no doubt acutely amused her to be so closely studied. For he was old enough and travelled enough to know that in the great foreign world which we have vaguely baptized the Continent woman is looked upon more as a work of art than a work of Nature, and is therefore treated as such.

As he hesitated, he unwillingly overheard a comment or two of the polyglot world, and internally he writhed.

“ She is growing more beautiful every day,” announced one worthy, gazing at her hungrily. “ Look at her long, graceful lines, the colour of her skin, her eyes.”

His companion shrugged his shoulders.

“ I have not heard of anybody being successful— she is as cold as ice.”

Then Faulconbridge, curiously irritated, had moved quickly on. Could he have seen behind him, he would have noted an ironical smile hovering round the lips of the first speaker, whilst his eyes retained their intense expression. For it was precisely at this moment

that the girl saw the man she had been so patiently waiting for pass by, and as he did so, mechanically raise his hat.

“ Good morning,” she said demurely enough—that is, as demurely as possible, seeing that she had the end of a hatpin still in her mouth.

As he paused in his progress he noticed that she had glanced at him quickly ; then, just as quickly, she had dropped her eyes.

“ Good morning,” he echoed, with iron determination not to be cordial.

He did not move on, however, as undoubtedly he should have done—had his reserve been genuine—had his defence been impregnable ; the truth to tell, wild horses could not have dragged him on—just then. For once again he was absorbed in studying her striking face—noting what he had noted before only to wonder anew. To-day the resemblance seemed more startling than ever ; it was not only in her features, but in her mannerisms as well ; indeed, the startling resemblance was everywhere. As she sat with her head poised forward, her long eyelashes covering her eyes, he could almost have sworn that a miracle had taken place, and that this was one and the same woman.

“ You are very late this morning,” she remarked, suddenly getting the better of her veil, and looking up at him with her grave, sweet eyes. Her manner had in it the vague yet intimate solicitude of an interested friend. “ What have you been doing ? ”

“ Packing.”

The word had fallen from his lips a little ruthlessly, now he took pleasure in noting its effect.

“ Packing ! You are going away ? ”

She spoke too quickly for the guileless rôle she had

assumed ; and now her delicately coloured face seemed suddenly rosy beneath the white veil. Indeed, her long, straight eyebrows were carried up so high in surprise that they almost reached her hair, which to-day was arranged very low on her forehead. As she sat like that, with her lips slightly parted and her hands grasping the arms of the chair, her charm came home to him with added force.

He shook his head—with silent satisfaction. Then he said more conversationally :

“ No, I am not going away. I was only introducing a little order where there has long been disorder. I was a week in Warsaw—a whole week. What a city ! I do not seem to have gone to bed at all.”

She laughed—showing her relief spontaneously as a child might have done.

Her laughter was as music in his ears. He was glad he had stopped to talk to her—he realized that something had been wrong for twenty-four complete hours. He thought to himself that he was a fool, of course, but just then he providentially remembered that fools always love their follies.

Now she drew on her gloves, with swift, easy movements.

“ And you are going to look at that old paper ? I have a good mind to say that I want it first again—only that I am going to the Kremlin, to the dear Kremlin, to gaze on all the wonders of the world, to see poetry and romance and history all heaped together, and to enjoy myself hugely. So you see I have really no time to-day to read the gossip of the Bourse.”

She was looking carefully away now—looking towards the line of folding glass doors through which came glimpses of the great square bathed in sunlight,

52 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

and the sound of laughter and cries and talking, and the gay rattle of carriage-wheels. It was certainly no day for reading.

“The Kremlin—that is where I myself proposed going—later.”

He still spoke with a curious, halting note in his voice, as if he could not decide how much he ought to say—as if he owed it to himself to be more cautious than the day before—to hold back before he openly waved the white flag of surrender.

“Indeed—the Kremlin—who would have thought it! Do you know any Russian history?”

“Not much, I am afraid.”

“Poor man.”

A caressing quality had crept into her voice as she murmured those words—a caressing quality which tickled him much as a feather would have done. He moved uneasily on his feet, and his eyes became brighter.

“I shall take a guide,” he explained, trying to be matter-of-fact, “a guide, of all creatures in the world. It will be delightful—very delightful, I can well imagine, since I know the breed from Seville to Buda-Pesth. The fellow will, of course, tell me everything more or less wrong; and hurry me when I want to loiter; and make me loiter when I wish to hurry. And at the very end he is sure to whisper to me how poor he is, and how hard it is to feed his many children. How prolific must be the race of guides if a quarter of what they claim is true!”

As he ended mechanically he turned and looked for the men who had pestered him the day before; to-day there was not a single one to be seen. Then, as he looked back, he saw her make a sudden movement

and unearth from the depths of the arm-chair a small brown-paper parcel, which she rapidly undid. Now she held it up with a swift gesture.

“ I have a book. Look at it—is it not a pretty book, with pictures in it, and beautiful descriptions in French. Do you know French as well as you know German ? It is rather rare for an Englishman to know anything at all—I mean in the way of languages. Are you angry again ? Well, you see, I am going without a guide, and so I shall be able to read my book as I walk along—alone.”

“ Alone ? ”

She looked up as if in surprise as he repeated the word. He had drawn nearer so that the people near by should no longer overhear them ; and now as he stood immediately over her he looked somewhat big, whilst she looked very slender and young.

“ Why not alone ? ” she echoed. “ I am so often—alone.”

She sighed, and began beating a pensive little tattoo on the ground with her foot. Perhaps it was because the attitude suited her so well that the silence remained so long unbroken.

“ Can I come with you ? ” said Faulconbridge, surrendering unexpectedly. There was a smile on his frank face which suited him well, and suddenly his whole manner became different.

The girl gave a little exclamation of real surprise. Her attitude was no longer nonchalant : perhaps the climax had come almost too easily.

“ Can you come with me ? ” she repeated wonderingly, arching her eyebrows. “ Can you come with me ? ” she said again. “ Now, how did you ever think of that ? ”

She looked at him deeply, searchingly—as if seeking for something which they had not yet approached in any of their talk. A little mockery still lingered in her eyes, but it was only a vestige. Indeed, a new concern—a new intentness—was written on her features, in her manner. It was both curious and arresting.

Faulconbridge, as he stood there for an instant, caught something of the change; carefully noted it, only promptly to forget it. Just then it was sufficient for him to find her yielding.

“It was one of those inspirations which even dull men occasionally may have,” he replied easily. “You must not expect me to give you a long-winded explanation. I do not want to explain anything to-day; let us take everything for granted.”

“Yes,” she cried, suddenly scrambling to her feet, and throwing a jumble of remarks at him in her excitement, “I think I shall let you come. It is always well to have a man, even when one imagines he may be in the way! You see, in the present case, you may even prove useful. If I get tired going up those long, long staircases, you could even carry me. What a sight that would be; how embarrassed you would be; what things you would say! How stupidly I am talking. Come, let us waste no time.”

He was conscious, as they passed down the great hall together, that a buzz of comment accompanied their exit, as if they had been on a high stage and had betrayed by a single action the keynote of their future play. He was conscious also—but this more vaguely—that in the eyes of all these men and women of this very foreign world there had instinctively crept both a gluttonous and a commiserating look—an odd mixture of conflicting emotions. It was as if they could

tell him much if they cared to speak, but that nothing would ever grant him their confidence.

It was a curious feeling—a feeling he had never had before. He could not tell what it was that made him believe that he was destined to encounter something great in the matter of surprises ; something new and yet something very old. He was a fool, no doubt. Of course he was that. Yet that thought gave him no concern—it merely brought with it a feeling of satisfaction, of tingling anticipation.

As they stood expectantly at the entrance, a driver, seeing them there, at once drove up his handsome horses. A word was spoken ; he touched his hat and smiled. Then, almost before they were seated, they had started off at breakneck speed.

To Faulconbridge that rapid progress became symbolical of the future.

VI

HE liked to carry in his head a confused rather than an accurate memory of that long, astounding morning; to see in his mind's eye a suggestion of it all rather than distinct and definite pictures. He had gone to amuse himself—perhaps to flirt—and had come away for ever enchanted with the great, mysterious, magic, splendid Kremlin.

He forgot the sequence of the endless romantic marvels they gazed upon just as he forgot many of the important details. He only remembered, as in a vague and distant vision, the pink embattled walls with which the Tartars had encircled this their citadel; the enormous barren squares within where a myriad tents must once have been pitched; the glitter and incense of churches and chapels and their marvellous and fantastic architecture; the wondrous precious stones in the golden crowns and highly coloured robes of the Czars and Czarinas; the many jewelled swords; the display of medieval weapons and battle-torn flags—the prowess of Pultowa enshrined side by side with the spoil of the Khanates. There were rooms full of these things—endless rooms—scores of rooms.

It was all wonderful and fascinating. He gazed, hardly ever speaking, on the enormous painted sledges of Catherine the Great, which were drawn through the snow with the swiftness of the wind by thirty-six galloping horses, and in which that second Cleopatra

had voluptuously reclined together with her lovers. Near by—as if in illustration of that—stood the priceless presents of Louis the Fourteenth from the Sèvres factories, with their sensuous pictures of Arcadian loves, their more than voluptuous imagery. Then, perhaps, would be the battered drums of Plevna and a scimitar of Suleiman the Magnificent. History, indeed, was heaped here carelessly and yet marvelously—did not the bed and boots of the implacable Napoleon rest by the side of the gore-eaten spear of Ivan the Terrible; the praying-carpet of a lineal descendant of the Prophet, taken from some disrupted pashalic, hang on the wall beside the bows and arrows of the ancient Scythians?

He came on presents which good Queen Bess—that sportive virgin—had sent over the seas to the barbaric state of Muscovy in her efforts to extend the English influence; and then he stood amazed before the jewelled phantasies which the turbaned rulers of Stamboul had donated to their greatest rivals in the rare truces which marked their eternal warfare. Then, as if to show how nearly related all this was to the present—how only the accident of years divided it off from the life of to-day—they passed into vast modern ballrooms, lately erected for the festivities attendant on the coronation of the Czars, overlooking the very square where Peter the Great had slaughtered the Streltzi.

The piled cannon of the Grand Army in the great entrance square took new meaning after that—no wonder the nation had raised a vast and glorious church, filled with jewelled saints, to the memory of the Napoleonic defeat. Muscovy was something more than a holy state—it was a continent, a world, a

universe of its own, on which no marauding hand could possibly be laid.

He found to his surprise that the memory of the great Corsican adventurer was everywhere ; that for these simple-souled Russians the immortal conqueror who had set his hand rudely on all these treasures had been inexorably swept into bottomless ruin by a just and ever-resurgent Czarism. The great square in which the captured cannon of his broken armies were piled—piece upon piece—that alone was a more eloquent summary of the history of a marvellous era than a hundred printed volumes. What a summary indeed !

He found, as he slowly wandered along, on the breeches of these ancient guns, the arms and titles of all the Princes of Europe—those obedient Princes who had done homage at Dresden and then sent their doomed legions across the Beresina. The Kings of Saxony, Bavaria, Prussia, Würtemberg, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Sweden ; the Grand-Dukes of Poland and Parma ; Eugène, Viceroy of Italy ; a dozen Field-Marsals who were Princes of the Empire—all these, and many more, had left their guns behind them. To see that great silent array of bronze and iron was to behold as in a flash of lightning the terrible snow-covered wastes whereon had perished half a million gallant souls. And, presiding over these—placed at the head of the square, with its monstrous cannon-balls beside it—was the “ Czar Pouschka,” the king of cannons—an immense Russian bronze gun, fit for Gargantua to have played with, the proved master of all these captives !

Yes, yes, the Kremlin was great—it was the Russian epic. The barbarism and strength of it all ; it was

the two extremes of Asia drawn together and enshrined in the heart of Slavism. The marauding spirit of Mongol conquerors, mixed with the sensuality of Byzantine Orientalism, seemed, indeed, to be rising like a thick and confusing incense from within these pink Tartar walls and penetrated to the very inmost recesses of the churches. It proclaimed itself a conglomerate, a compound, a concoction, a conglutination, which nobody had ever rightly analysed—which nobody was capable of analysing. It filled the air—it was more than symbolical of the nation, it was the nation itself. Then—swinging round and envisaging it from another point of view—it seemed to him like the god of battles and the God of Prayer explained as one and the same conception—a God worshipped on a half-overtaken altar of Moloch.

It was certainly that—though the definition might seem fantastic, the terms contradictory. From the moment they had stood before the little *chapelle ardente*, planted in the middle of the road before the main Kremlin gateway, where priest and pauper, general and private soldier, widow and bride, with bowed head and reverent manner, bought candles and lighted them to the glory of the Virgin within—from that very first moment this phantasmagoria of contrasts, this confusion of terms, this medley of medleys, had commenced.

A line of motionless and heavy-jowled nuns, clad in dingy black, had stood at the chapel doors. Their feet were encased in heavy men's boots; they had taken their stand on a piece of rough boarding so that this day-long task should not strike the cold through to their marrows. Their collection-boxes rang with the stream of coins pitched in, the dissolute and the

devout vying with one another in the matter of generosity. But it was not so much these things in themselves which struck at the mind of the stranger ; it was rather what they stood for, what had produced them in the past, what would continue to produce them in the future to the very end of the chapter. . . . That line of motionless and heavy-jowled nuns, clad in dingy black, was something more than a weeping charity. In the resigned and melancholy aspect of these women was the story of another Russia—the great Russia of the common herd that mutely suffers and speaks no complaints, the poor beast Russia that is led to the slaughter-house and yet does its duty with the bravery of bulls. To pass after that sight under the famous Red Gate, where every living man must doff his hat, was to be fitly prepared for a view of that over-dominion of the crowned and sacred rulers exhibited in the many relics of half-forgotten times. . . .

The people streaming through these palaces became invested with a new and special significance. The more Faulconbridge studied them, the deeper did his interest and his surprise become. He had the feeling once more—just as he had had on the morning of his arrival—that he had been the victim of a conspiracy of misrepresentation difficult to define.

There was every kind of person ; all possible classes in all possible dresses—a variety such as can no longer be found where the donning of black cloth has given a soul-deadening outer similarity to a highly variegated world. It seemed to him here that a whole nation was defiling before him ; a nation surveying its history with awe ; a nation yet in the making. Each page of that history lay open here, so clearly written that

even the unlettered could read the past and go away and dream of what the future might bring.

A party of blue-eyed, yellow-haired infantrymen pausing in front of some chain-armour at last caught his wondering eyes. One of them had laughingly lifted up a great-coat of mail, and the girl translated his remarks.

"They fought heavy," the soldier had exclaimed, with a dubious shake of his curly head, to the amusement of all around; "we could not fight so heavy now—yet we can crush just as hard."

It was not strange that he almost forgot the girl beside him; he walked along slowly, all eyes and ears, looking and listening—drinking in the strangeness and the newness of it all—utterly absorbed. He was vaguely conscious that once or twice she had gazed at him curiously, as if wondering at his mood, but she, too, remained silent, save when she interjected an explanation or a comment.

Only when they had finished with the palaces and the museums and the churches did they begin to talk; and then their conversation speedily proved as curious as the rest had been. Afterwards he was not sure whether she had been really serious—perhaps her risibilities had been merely seeking a new outlet.

"Have you enjoyed it?" she asked as they came into the open.

"I have never liked anything better in my life," he answered, more seriously than he generally spoke.

"I am glad that you have liked it," was her quick comment. Then she stopped speaking.

He saw that she was deep in some reverie which lent to her girlish face a new and stranger charm. The guide-book, which she had so extolled, lay forgotten

in her hand, as indeed it had lain since they had entered these enchanted grounds. Thrown against this great background—against these monstrous palaces and mighty churches—she appeared different, more sober, more mature.

He looked at her in surprise. The coquetry with which she had greeted him in the early morning had, indeed, most completely vanished; and in its place had come something which he could not so easily define. There was a change—yes, there was a change; though the curve of her cheek was as delicious as ever, it seemed to him to be no longer so soft. Some curious thought had hardened it momentarily—even the mole on her cheek seemed now to stand out defiantly, as if challenging any tender thoughts. Her walk had instinctively caught something of this other attitude; now her feet showed no desire to hasten; they even seemed to drag.

“We are coming to the last thing of all,” she remarked at length, with a quick glance at him as if to disturb his study of her. “This is the old palace—the old medieval palace of Ivan the Terrible. It is full of romance, full of history—but it is all harsher, thrown as it were in another key. We can stand on the very spot where Napoleon watched the burning of Moscow, where my guide-book, in a tragic phrase, says that his life’s ambition went up in flames. Did you see his telescope in the museum—the one he used during many anxious days on this very spot? Those who know say it is not the true one—that he carried his off. Is it often like that in museums, the copy standing for the original?”

He made some vague reply, still following the thread of other thoughts. He wondered what she was and

who she was ; should he muster up courage to ask her frankly ?

She had commenced moving along more briskly. Now she walked as a Spanish woman walks, with that graceful swing of the hips, that inimitable manner which is something more than an expression of race and is perhaps a creed. She continued :

“ Do you know that the only woman who was ever faithful to Napoleon was a Pole ? They weep over Josephine in the sentimental history books, but Josephine always took care to console herself ! Polish women are wonderful women—do you know that even to-day they are conquering Prussia by marrying the men ? Nobody in the world knows how to make love like a Polish woman—not even Hungarians.” She hesitated for a moment. “ I am a Pole,” she added softly.

“ A Pole,” he exclaimed, “ then I understand you better ! I was in Warsaw a whole week—a week which seemed but as a day.”

“ Did you fall in love ? ” she inquired abruptly, looking at him in an odd, suspicious way. “ Tell me truly ; though if you answer ‘ yes,’ I shall probably hate you.”

“ And if I do not answer at all,” he rejoined, much amused.

She shrugged her shoulders.

“ Then perhaps I shall suspect——”

“ A tragedy ? ”

“ No—a comedy.”

“ Which would be the more amusing to you ? ”

She laughed.

“ I could not possibly say until I heard all the details.”

64 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

“ I think I shall remain silent,” he returned.

“ It is perhaps wisest,” she opined, nodding her head. “ What is your name ? I have even forgotten to ask you that.”

“ What a trivial question in these serious surroundings !” Then he told her. . . . “ It is Richard Faulconbridge.”

“ Richard Faulconbridge,” she repeated slowly, giving an oddly foreign intonation to the words. “ Richard Faulconbridge,” she said again ; “ I seem to have heard it before. Richard,” she spoke musingly, “ you are called Richard by your friends ? ”

“ No—Dick.”

Suddenly she stopped in her walk as if a shot had been fired.

“ Dick,” she burst out laughing. “ What a stupid name—for a big man. Oh, why do they call you Dick ? It is so ugly, like Tom and Bill and Bob and Jack. Why do you let them do that ? ”

She laid a friendly hand upon his sleeve and looked pleadingly into his face.

He smiled at her ingenuousness ; at her utter lack of conventionality.

“ I am sorry—but not many people use it. You can forget it if it is so very odious.” He paused, and then went on in a more serious way. “ And what do people call you ? ”

“ You can call me Sasha, if you like,” she said slowly ; “ everybody calls me Sasha, you know—behind my back.”

“ Sasha ? That is a contraction—an abbreviation, is it not ? ” He looked puzzled.

“ Yes—an abbreviation for Alexandra—a name almost as common with us as Mary is with you. But

we do not use names as you do in England, the Christian names are commonly used; for instance, with me——” She stopped and thought for a moment. “It is of no importance—you could call me Sasha if there were any occasion for it, though I have several other names.”

“Several?” His tone had become more puzzled.

“Yes—for professional reasons. I sing songs, you know, for a living, though I have not always done so——”

“After hearing you I wish you always did.”

“Now you seek to flatter me—never do that. You may not believe me, but I do not like it——” She hesitated and went on in a slightly changed manner: “I call myself Alexandra Alexandrovna Salvatini—that is my stage name—I mean Salvatini. Is it not awful? I think I chose it because it was so hideous. Do you like Italians?”

He smiled diplomatically.

“Sometimes.”

“I don’t think I do! They always tell me the same thing. They say: ‘Signorina, you are the most beautiful child in the world; I am dying with love for you.’ As if anybody in the world ever died of love! Yet fifty have said it, and live to repeat it to others.”

“You must be used to it by now,” he suggested.

“The sensation is in any case unpleasant,” she returned. “I would much sooner have had the fifty say, ‘I hate you.’ That is infinitely more masculine. I think I would like a man who hated me, honestly. Besides, being loved by a multitude only appeals to special minds.” She brought the conversation back to their surroundings and pointed ahead. “Do you

mind climbing steps? We have to go up a very narrow staircase. Let me speak to this man."

She approached a custodian and exchanged some rapid remarks with him. Without waste of time the man led them forward. As she gathered up her skirts in her hands she said :

"Now I am going to translate to you every word he says. Be attentive, for he is certain to talk fast."

They were soon buried in the rude medievalism of the old palace of the Czars—a palace resembling a rough feudal baron's castle rather than an emperor's residence. After the bright sunshine and the sweet air without, the contrast was sharp and severe. The strange rooms, indeed, were redolent of an age when man still conceived his home as a mere place of refuge from the inclemencies of the weather ; there was nothing good about this palace ; in it, indeed, there lurked the gloomy suggestion of foul deeds. The narrow barred windows, the small yet massive doors, the lack of air—all contributed to arousing a feeling of uneasiness, of revolt against an age that was mainly cruel.

And yet there was romance, a new kind of romance, a strange and fearful romance. Who could look without an involuntary shiver of fear on the narrow staircase which Ivan the Terrible daily descended, his great bunch of keys tied to his girdle, his mad gleaming eyes seeking for victims, his cruel iron-pronged staff ever ready in his bony hands. . . . Each morning's descent meant execution for some luckless wretches and torture for others. At any moment, too, that cruel iron-pronged staff, as has been wonderfully pictured, might be plunged into the foot of the highest

boyar of the land as he stood in front of his imperial master tremblingly answering his questions.

Soon they had entered the old hall of audience, hung with tarnished embroideries—that strange audience hall on which the women-folk of the palace looked down from hidden galleries as in Eastern land. It was all redolent of forgotten times; it all spoke of a history saturated with revolt and bloody happenings. No wonder that when Napoleon had come hither it was only to be crushed.

And then they passed into the very room in which the world's greatest adventurer had actually lived. And then they looked upon the narrow, garret-like bed on which he had slept; the table on which he had written during the restless hours of his sojourn; the chairs in which he had sat. . . . And at last they went out on to the parapeted roof where he had so endlessly stood, watching the burning of Moscow. From this coign of vantage, with these memories saturating their minds, the vast distances, the gilded cupolas, the embattled walls, became symbolic of the greatest defeat the world has ever known.

“It is wonderful,” murmured Faulconbridge.

She was now standing with her chin pressed against the parapet and her eyes fixed on the cobblestones of the squares which lay so far beneath them. She did not show that she had heard him, for she did not move. She was, indeed, so absorbed in her contemplation that she had forgotten where she was, forgotten the man at her side, forgotten everything. There was a curious, tense look about her face as she gazed over the great city—a look which said that she was looking beyond, looking at something which nobody but she could see.

At last, with one of her abrupt, quick movements, she had turned towards him.

“ Yes—it is wonderful ; of course, it is wonderful. It speaks to me, too, in many ways. . . . And yet these abstractions do not interest me just now. No—I would like something else—something with a flavour less severe.” She paused again. “ I wish to goodness I were in love with ‘someone,’” she murmured wistfully, leaning her elbows again on the parapet and staring into space. “ How romantic that would be for you, for instance, here alone with me overlooking the whole world ! We could then make eternal vows to one another—to be broken as soon as we were out of sight. You would tell me marvellous things, and I would listen to you, believing every word you said.”

He laughed—amused at her inconsequential manner and her change of moods.

“ That would be a lot of good to you, wouldn’t it,” he replied lightly.

She sighed.

“ I don’t know, but I dare say you wouldn’t be a scrap in love with me, even if you followed out what I have suggested. I should shock you every minute. You are surprised by lots of things I do—I can see it in your eyes. You expect things to go so and so, and instead of that they progress in precisely the opposite direction. I know you so well—I was at school in England—that is where I learnt my English. Do you think I talk well ? Oh, dear. Fancy your being in love with me ! It is really amusing. Your ideal is the sort of woman who has never thought about men as—well, as I have. She would be very beautiful, I have no doubt, but she could not possibly resemble me. She would be as cold as the snows, or perhaps

I should say cold as marble. She would be taller, rather thin, and always calm. She would think Dick a beautiful name, and would talk to you about the noble things you must accomplish during a long and hard-working life! What rubbish I am talking. How many times have you been in love?"

"Never," he said abruptly, looking away so that she should not see his eyes.

"Really? I don't believe you. I am sure there is some woman. You were not quick enough, you see, with your answer. You paused, you know, for just the veriest fraction of a second. You see I am quick—very quick! You cannot deceive me. Well—what does it matter if there have been a dozen, so long as it has given you pleasure."

Perhaps her laughter irritated him; for now with sudden brusquerie he turned.

"Have you seen enough of the view," he inquired.

"Enough of the view? Yes—I hate views to-day, just as I hate Ivan the Terrible and all his race of tyrants." She spoke with growing intensity. "Do you know the brute killed his own son with that fearful spear-stick of his I was telling you about? You can see a wonderful picture of it if you like. The Russians are at heart fearful savages—not at all like the Poles, whom they hate and suspect. What madness for Napoleon to have come here among these men who are nothing but savages. . . ." She stopped, and her voice changed. "Yes, I am ready—let us go."

They had no more conversation, but his thoughts gave him ample employment.

"Good-bye," she said to him at the Kremlin gates, looking suddenly at her watch. "It has been a beauti-

70 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

ful outing—quite novel in every way. Good-bye—I have an appointment, and, as usual, I shall be late.”

She had gone before he had time to say anything further to her ; and once again he stood biting his lips because of his stupidity, and his curious lack of success.

VII

THAT same evening, when he was least thinking of any such possibility, when the glamour of the morning lay momentarily obscured in his mind, he met her again. It soon proved as curious a rencounter as the others had been : it served not only to increase his curiosity, and to intensify a certain feeling of resentment against the mystery of her manner, but to make him more subject to her charm than he had ever been before.

He had gone out in the cool, and had wandered so far away lost in thought that on his way back he had taken wrong turning after wrong turning. It was in vain that he had tried to find his bearings ; he took this turning and that turning, only to become more and more confused. Yet unwilling to confess himself fairly beaten by the maze of unfamiliar streets, by the worse than unfamiliar names, he had gone twisting and turning until he had become really tired. Then, at last, just as he was about to give up hope and hail a driver, he had suddenly recognized her. She was dressed in a dark, close-fitting costume, and was hurrying along with her eyes cast down as if totally indifferent to what was passing around her.

“ How wonderful ! ” he exclaimed in real surprise, greeting her as he would have done an old friend. “ What happy chance has sent you to the rescue ? Think of it : I had lost my way utterly and absolutely, when this

72 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

miracle happened and I saw you ! I seem to have been wandering for hours and hours—I was about to admit that never again would I trust myself alone so far afield, at least, without a map. . . . Now suddenly I feel that Moscow is the smallest town in the world since all roads lead to you. . . . Whether you wish it or not, humanity must make you once again be my guide, philosopher, and friend—if only for a few minutes ! ”

He noticed that she had stopped with a great start of surprise at the first sound of his voice. Then she had listened to what he had said, staring at him curiously, more as if she were persuading herself back to the realities of life than really arrested by his words. Now, as he concluded, she summoned up a light laugh.

“ Who would have expected to find you here ? ” she exclaimed. “ I confess you startled me. This is the very last place of all I expected to meet you again—in the streets ! And to think that you should have lost your way. Surely you are not serious—there is the cathedral over there—you can see the great dome clearly. Every child knows it. But I am forgetting—you are less than a child—an unfortunate stranger.”

He made a movement of acquiescence, and completed her sentence for her :

“ Who is nevertheless to have the singular good fortune to be guided to a haven of rest by an evening star. . . . ” Saying which he laughed very quietly.

Though his manner was merely polite, now she seemed to see beneath it something more than that.

“ Is that what you think ? ” she inquired gravely and slowly. “ Is that what you think ? ” she repeated

still more wonderingly, as she considered what he had said. "Who has been teaching you how to pay compliments since last we met?"

He was suddenly conscious that she was looking at him in a very new way—as if a new set of circumstances had given her a new angle of view. He was not sure that it was to his disadvantage—indeed, he believed that somehow he had made up for all past defeats and awkwardnesses.

"Are you going to be good?" he said, keeping to the main point, and refusing to be led aside. He studied her for a moment, as if her face would tell. "Yes, I am sure you will. I have told you what you must be. It is so simple. Listen. I know you to be a philosopher—to be a guide will be no great undertaking, unless you are really in a hurry and have something else to do. So, you see, there only remains the question of friendship."

"Ah," she exclaimed vaguely. "Friendship—the question of friendship—you English are always speaking of that! Friendship—how much and how little it may mean."

She gave a sharp gesture as if to brush the question aside. It was plain to him that her fit of abstraction was returning.

"Of course," he went on more nonchalantly, accepting her mood, and becoming less persistent, "I may be in your way; tell me if I am, and I shall pester you no longer." He paused and resumed as if in self-pity. "And yet I feel just now, I honestly confess, that even if you said good-bye, and tried to drive me off, I should follow you very much like some poor lost dog!"

They had been walking slowly side by side; now

half laughingly, half seriously, he stopped and looked at her inquiringly.

"My business can wait," she said, a little hesitatingly. "I was only walking fast because . . . Well, I can tell you, though you may not believe it. . . . I was running away—yes, running . . . from something which frightened me very much."

She had spoken in curious broken sentences—almost in gasps. As she concluded, he suddenly realized anew, as he was so constantly doing, that in spite of her manner, in spite of all her worldly wisdom, she was very young.

"You were running away from something which greatly frightened you," he repeated wonderingly, not knowing exactly what to say; "running away—here in these safe streets?"

Again he noticed that her hand signalled a nervous protest; it was as if the galvanic battery of her thoughts had given her another shock.

"Safe streets! Well, perhaps—who knows? In this world everything is equally possible or impossible, as we so constantly discover from time to time. . . . In any case, I was running away."

Once more she had stopped—abruptly.

"From whom, may I inquire?" he said, with sudden gravity, determined to pierce this latest mystery.

She looked straight in front of her; then, in not much more than a whisper, she exclaimed:

"From . . . my thoughts."

"Your thoughts," he echoed, now doubly surprised.

He walked in silence for some little time, not pressing on her any foolish commiseration, not venturing any trifling remarks. Only after some minutes did he

add, very softly so it seemed to her : “ I have known that too.”

Immediately he was conscious that she was glancing stealthily at his face with increased friendliness ; he felt that she was turning something over in her mind—a question perhaps, or was it a word of confession ? He wondered what it could be which was making her act to-night so doubly strangely ; he began to think that at last she might give him a clue. Then, before he could get any farther in his bewildered reasoning, he was conscious that she had laid a light hand on his sleeve and was claiming his attention.

Now she spoke quickly and almost defiantly—as if already she were sorry for a passing fit of weakness.

“ So you have known that too ! To think that a man, a great big man, should also be conquered by something so vague, so intangible, so ridiculous, so fleeting, so small as—thoughts ! Is it not wonderfully strange that we all should hold within ourselves that which gives such unmeasured happiness, such untold grief, such distress ; that we should have no weapons to fight against this demon, this dragon, this hideous monster ? Am I not eloquent ? And yet, though I talk so glibly, I don’t understand it at all. Indeed, I am most horribly ignorant—I am purely animal. I feel, but I cannot explain. Perhaps . . . perhaps you have some comforting theory. Won’t you tell me ? ”

“ No,” he said pessimistically, refusing to commit himself. “ If I told you what I thought of my own thoughts—or why they came to me—it would hardly make you smile. Indeed, I think you might be inclined to be more hard on me than you have been at times—already.”

Her sweet profile was turned up towards him, the eyebrows raised.

“Hard on you,” she exclaimed wonderingly, picking up the reproach and forgetting the rest. “Oh! that is not kind—especially just now! Think of it; I took all the trouble to go with you to the Kremlin, to explain all the things; to teach you, to make you enjoy it all—just because I knew you were a helpless stranger. That is what I have done! Was that hard on you? How can you say such things?” She stopped. “Ah,” she said more slowly, in a different voice, “I never thought of that—you see, I am rather simple at times, especially when I am thoughtless. But now when I do that awful thing—when I carefully think—it becomes evident to me that you must have an odd opinion of it all—and especially of my mannerisms. Yes, I remember I talked absurdly. I let my tongue run on because it was so amusing to speak English again—that English which I have always known well and talked so little lately. But you, of course, had a different point of view. . . . I doubt if you could have understood it at all. Oh, no! Of course not. I am quite sure now. . . . Dear me, how strange to look at things from the other side—especially from the very beginning. How I laughed that morning at the window. . . . I thought I would never stop! But if you could only have seen your face—just as I saw it, looking up at me blankly—more astonished than anything I had seen before, wondering who was the little hussy who sang and laughed at you. It seems weeks ago, and yet it was only the day before yesterday. What has happened to make the time seem so different? And at your breakfast. . . . I was determined to provoke you; to make you so angry—to make you vow

terrible things! I think I succeeded. You can scarcely have thought me—well, *donna onesta*. . . . And yet I was not really malicious, even at the beginning; I was really only tired, so dreadfully tired of being serious and alone, when I wished to be light-hearted. . . .”

Again he did not answer at once; he only noted, as many thoughts coursed through his head, that instead of continuing straight on as she might well have done at the corner of the street, she had instinctively turned into the great square where lay the cathedral. In place of the jostling crowds through which they had been threading their way there was now only quiet and peace. It was, indeed, wonderfully quiet and peaceful; there was not a carriage in the whole great square—not a person moving. It was as if everything had been removed so that they two might be alone and mix their destinies.

As they slowly advanced he tried to think logically and sanely; to understand the meaning of her long, rambling, inconsequential speech; to peer beneath the web of words. Somehow he did not succeed. There was something oddly disturbing to him in her near presence—something which confused his thoughts. Perhaps it was her amazing resemblance—he could not say why. She had said that she was so dreadfully tired of being serious and alone—why—why—and what did that mean? He confessed himself baffled. This was a curious world.

Just then he realized that she had begun speaking again.

“You have become oddly silent,” she remarked softly. “Have I said anything wrong again? I was beginning to think that I had met a much nicer man

than I took to the Kremlin in the morning, a man who somehow had become more sympathetic, more responsive, more willing to believe that unconventionality is no crime—more of a friend to me. . . . A minute ago you had so much to say. Now ! ”

She spread out her hands in mock disgust, and glanced at him reprovingly.

“ I was thinking over what you had told me in order to discover if there was any real solution,” he rejoined. “ Listen to my reasoning, though it may sound rather dull. It seems to me quite clear and undisputable, no matter what else may exist, that a woman, and a very young woman at that—does not need to be serious unless she so chooses—that is unalterably plain. Therefore, the matter of remaining alone is only a phantasy, a whim on her part—something added on—a consequence of the first attitude and nothing else. Is not that well argued ? You see, I am talking in the dark—metaphorically as well as physically—and yet I am trying to be logical.”

He smiled at her, but she remained grave.

“ And by that method to account for the female mind ? How innocent, how absurd, how illogical. Yet strangely enough your method has not led you astray. In a word, you are right—absolutely right. I am serious, solemn, dull, worried, eccentric, because I choose to be, and everything else follows from that.”

He stopped in his walk—a little nonplussed—almost exasperated.

“ Well—and why do you then complain ? ” he inquired with English bluntness. “ It is hardly consistent.”

“ Poor man—poor man again ! Are we ever consistent when we are really human ? Is it not our very

inconsistencies that make us flesh and blood? Do you not see that? You have called me a philosopher; you should have understood that I am something more than the ordinary kind. I am of the sophists."

"You are talking for the sake of talking," he objected; "talking because your tongue is quick."

"And you?"

"I am talking with a purpose."

"Which is?"

"To try to understand you better."

Suddenly she began laughing—softly, lightly, in the way which always disturbed him, switching off from solemnness as easily as a bird flits from a tree. She was so much of a woman that the mere thought of her in more melting moods greatly roused him, and made his heart beat a quicker measure.

Her laughter died away only to break out again in half-suppressed peals—as if the idea that he was trying to unravel her were exquisitely amusing.

"I seem to have cured you, judging by your merriment," he ventured at last, a little morosely. From the cathedral, which they were so slowly approaching, came the sound of chanting, deep, muffled, yet inspiring.

"No, no," she cried, still struggling with her feelings. "It is only amusing because it is all so good, so honest, so straightforward, and therefore so hopeless. . . . Oh! I hate talking to you! I cannot tell you half of what I want to—a hundred things come to my lips, and I must swallow them down again and leave them unsaid. What are we to do? Shall I say good-bye? Shall I punish you by forcing you to go back alone into the black night? No! I have it. Let us

go into that church and listen to the music. It is a Saint's Day—the Metropolitan may be there—you will see something worth seeing. And the singing will be beautiful—you, too, love music. . . . Come, after that we must say good-bye."

Seized with this new idea, before he had time to answer, she caught him lightly by the hand and hurried him forward. They mounted the broad stone steps in company with some other late-comers, who were talking and laughing loudly to one another as if they were entering a theatre. Then, as they passed in through the half-open doors, the music suddenly burst out in a majestic chant.

"Listen, listen," he heard her whisper in a voice tremulous with excitement as they squeezed their way forward through the great throng. "It is splendid, is it not? The Russian basses are marvellous, unbelievable. I can sit for hours listening to them singing like this—it makes me dream strange dreams."

In truth, the voices which now chanted the glory of God in slow responses were wonderful voices—voices full of the sullen roar of the sea, or of the distant muttering of great thunder which dies away reluctantly among the little hills. They were massive, deep, tremendous; in them seemed to be hidden the strength of great multitudes of resistless throngs, pressing forward blindly, fearlessly, to some unknown goal. Sometimes the voices burst forth in a mighty roar which leaped up to the very dome in one great leap, and then was flung down from there with a crashing fall. At other times the men sang softly—as softly as men who have mighty lungs can sing. Then the echoes of their sweet chanting would steal gently up to the dome and come back as if by stealth—stealing

round the great nave sadly seeking for something that was lost, touching the heart as the heart is touched by the shedding of tears.

There was mystery in this music—vague, disconcerting, intoxicating mystery which filled the mass of listeners with respect and awe. In the great blaze of candles, with the glittering vestments of the clergy, and the pomp of the high altar dominating the scene, the vast congregation kneeling on the cold marble pavement appeared as something more than merely passionately devout. Men and women alike were crossing themselves endlessly—weeping and praying openly and unashamed—sighing to themselves loudly, begging, pleading, almost swooning, and then suddenly reviving—living proofs that emotionalism and prayer are but sister-names. The intoxicating fumes of the incense floated thicker and thicker in the air—the fuming censers, tossed about by grave boys, became symbolical of the spell with which the atmosphere seemed saturated.

Faulconbridge—erect and motionless—his eyes very bright, his heart still full of other things, drank in the scene as he would have a giant drama.

The majestic voices rolled on in great waves of sound that beat against the walls and were flung back in resounding echoes. They went on and on—as if they would never cease. There was a fascination in this stentorian praise which conquered him little by little only to find him again revolting. He drew in deep breaths as if to fortify himself against the insidious witchery of this atmosphere, of these voices, of this vast fervour. It seemed to him—in spite of the intoxication—all suddenly foreign, strange, uncouth, barbaric ; belonging to something which was so alien

to him that he could do no more than cross the threshold. Who were all these people, these fanatics? What did they want, expect, and dream of from their rhapsodies? What strange passions possessed them? What did it all mean? He could not say. Yet the revolt that was in him became strengthened, and an expression slowly crept across his features which seemed strangely ironical. This ecstasy repelled him—it showed him a great gulf. . . .

Now he looked round at his companion.

Very close to him, almost leaning against him, motionless, breathless, knelt this strange girl. It suddenly seemed to him that she had become more mysterious, more divided from him by impenetrable walls than ever before. He looked at her with growing wonder. At rare intervals he felt her stir ever so slightly, as if the strain were becoming intolerable—as if she herself could not bear to remain so still. Once her lips moved rapidly as if in prayer; and at that he bent down towards her girlish face. Her eyes, fixed on the ground, were not raised to meet his; plainly she had forgotten him in the greater emotion of the hour. The minutes passed away slowly and ponderously, heavy with a meaning which weighed on mind and body alike—crushing the rebellious to obedience. . . .

Yielding to an impulse, at last he tried to speak—to ask her some question.

“Hush,” she promptly whispered softly, lifting a warning finger to her lips. “Wait.” Then she had forgotten him once more.

He had desisted after that and had tried to give himself up again to a study of the great congregation. But now the unnatural tension around him awoke in

him an intense desire to escape into the open air—to breathe a purer atmosphere untainted with something which he recognized as hysterical—which struck wildly at his common sense, which unnerved him and incensed him, and which yet left him cold.

It became increasingly oppressive—acutely oppressive. The air was suffocating—the heat intense. He felt that he could not bear it much longer. His hand, obeying the impulse of his mind, wandered in the gloom until it met her hand. He clasped it, and made an impatient movement as if to go.

“It is almost over,” she breathed in reply; “wait—one minute only.”

There was a last great blare, and then immediately the great noise of a shuffling crowd.

They came out silently into streets that were meaningless for him. The sounds were a vague blur—the traffic a grey smear. Life, indeed, was a pageant of stupid people.

“Well, have I pleased you this evening?” she inquired suddenly, looking at him keenly, completely recovered from her earlier mood. “Has it been better than before?”

He tried to meet her words with banter; he tried to hide what he really thought, but he did not quite succeed.

“It has been better because it has been no worse—which is at best only a negative form of satisfaction.”

“Dear me, how difficult you are to please—what queer fancies you suffer,” she exclaimed, openly disappointed. “I do not like you at all. In the church I thought you were going to get up and rush out suddenly.”

They talked on in this wise, half seriously, half

84 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

mockingly, until they came to the main thoroughfare.

“Good night,” she then said, giving him her hand in her sudden, abrupt way. “Go, good man, return straight home. You have only to follow this street—you see?”

With a laugh she pulled her palm from between his fingers and fled from him—before he could answer.

But at the first corner she stopped—suddenly, wistfully, abruptly—and instinctively looked back.

“I wonder,” she murmured to herself in Polish, “I wonder.” Then she shook her head—and went on.

Richard Faulconbridge, alone, abandoned, walked back to the hotel—this time as if he were treading on clouds, with the earth very far beneath him.

VIII

THEN several days went slowly by—saturnine days of solitude and silence for him—for she had mysteriously disappeared. His plans remained undeveloped; he wandered restlessly from pillar to post. He was bitten with a great desire, which he could not even put into words. . . .

She had disappeared absolutely, completely—that there was no shadow of doubt. He had made some inquiries, but he had only obtained the vaguest answers. She was perhaps still in Moscow; she would doubtless soon return, since her room remained engaged; but what he was told did not inspire him with any great hopes. So he moodily paced the city, wondering why an adventure which had commenced so briskly should end so lamely—wondering why he should care. He was no Solomon to ask himself that.

Of course, she was what she said she was—that he had already decided. He knew her too well—though he did not know her at all—to be deceived by her light raillery concerning the woes of professionals. Nor was it correct to assume that she had been merely willing to while away an idle hour on two occasions for want of something better to do. He had the vague feeling that on each occasion she had been feeling her way, slowly and cautiously, without being able to decide. Somehow he felt convinced that there was meaning behind her sudden disappearance—a subtle

meaning—a double meaning—something that would sooner or later affect him. Each time they had met it had been as if by chance—unexpectedly ; each time they had parted it had been the same abrupt parting that alone meant much.

He could, no doubt, have discovered something about her had he pushed his questioning further ; had he accepted no rebuffs. But he had been made aware by subtle hints that leading questions were not amiably received in this land of political woes and doubtful intrigues, and that if he persisted he would only end by attracting an unpleasant amount of attention to himself. He felt that he was a fool not to be able to unravel the skein unaided ; soon he became really angry with himself. A little aimlessly he kept on putting two and two together, and wondering by what strange arithmetic they so suddenly made zero. We can judge from this that he was unhappy.

He could not believe that it was merely her good looks that had so greatly attracted him, though she was admittedly very good to look upon. Nor was it the strange and startling resemblance which she bore, not only in her features, but in her little mannerisms, to a faithless creature he had left so far behind him. Sometimes he thought it must merely be her calm grey eyes ; he had always loved a woman's eyes. He delighted to look into their limpid colour, to wonder about their secret depths, to build stories about their hopes and fears. Her swift changes in mood and manner, indeed, promised endless surprises—it was wonderful, it was strange. He was sure there was something mysterious, something preordained, about his growing obsession for her, until he suddenly remembered that cruel psychological dictum—that a

man really loves not a particular woman, but a particular type—a type which is of necessity complementary to his own—the chance which throws the two together being the real cement holding them fast. That thought stung him to the quick with an odd mixture of repentance and repining.

Yet, in spite of this, he resolutely thought as it pleased him to think—that is, entirely on the surface. She was very pretty—adorably pretty. How difficult it was to resist her—how charming she was. Lucky, indeed, would be the man who won even a little of her affection. There was no gainsaying the beautiful expression in her eyes. He was tired of passionate amours—he wanted something which would be more delicate, more fraught, if not with the incense of innocence, at least with the desire of something really great. Yes, that was it; at last he had defined it. Then, almost immediately, he began to doubt his reasoning. For was the feeling which drew him towards her anything but a sentimental sensuality—a mood born of that craving for an amorous adventure which steals over the strongest and wisest with an intensity exactly commensurate with their strength and wisdom? He did not know. Yet the idea that he might never look on her again, never hear the music of her voice, never feel the witchery of her eyes, the inspiration of her presence—such an idea was intolerable to him.

He had been sitting thinking these thoughts in the noisy hotel hall—perhaps because he craved company now. He rose in sudden irritation at the impasse which he had met in his reasoning, and wandered to the great main entrance, hoping that the changing scene would change the colour, if not the texture, of

his mind. Resolutely he tried to take an interest in what was going on—determined to banish by an effort of will this constant self-torture.

It was the noonday hour, and the local world—a heterogeneous collection of men and women of all ranks and all ages—seemed very busy circulating in and out of this smartest of hotels. Carriages were dashing up and dashing away, the constant stamp and clatter of heavily shod hoofs on the rough cobblestones adding greatly to the animation. Ever and anon, high above the sound of the many voices, the *chasseur's* shrill whistle rose, bringing more and more galloping horses to the door—horses that stood fretting at their bits as hounds on the leash fret at the restraint, admirable horses, splendid horses such as Russia alone possesses. It was undoubtedly gay.

Faulconbridge's interest in the scene slowly became real in spite of himself. There was a subtle note of excitement in the air which speedily reached him; he felt that something beneath this surface commotion was filling people's minds with troubled thoughts, and making them dream great dreams. He remembered now, with that curious surprise which comes to us when we revive thoughts that have lain temporarily buried under a mass of new experiences, that great and wonderful things had been expected during this distant war—this far-away war which seemed to interest no one here very greatly. A revolution had been spoken of as possible, and even probable. Something mighty, something great, had been called inevitable. Elsewhere the prospect had appeared to him of more than common interest, now that he was on the spot—in the very storm-centre—all seemed to him very quiet. Yet perhaps it might only be the strange calm

which, it is said, is found in the very centre of the dread typhoon. Who knew, who could tell, among this strange people, what the future really held?

He had drawn aside to let a knot of people pass, and as he did so, he accidentally trod on something soft. With a sharp exclamation he turned, mechanically adding a word of apology. He saw that he had stepped on the foot of a small, ugly man, who had given him one quick, sharp look, and then had hardly troubled to do more than curtly incline his head. The man's manner, indeed, was so abrupt—his attention so manifestly centred on something else—that Faulconbridge suddenly felt his interest aroused.

He sauntered a little way along the pavement and came to a halt where he could observe without being overmuch observed. Lighting a cigarette, he assumed an attitude of studied indifference. This might prove amusing.

Then he glanced back. Who was this ugly, shabbily dressed little man—and what brought him to such a neighbourhood? Faulconbridge was rather tickled with the idea that he might really be a spy. For it was abundantly plain that there must be some particular reason for the singular vigilance with which he was studying the eddies of people flung against the great doors of the hotel. The man's eyes were never still; they were here, there, and everywhere; he was like a rat-terrier watching at the entrance of a hole—a rat-terrier who would show no mercy when the moment for striking had arrived. What did it mean?

Nothing happened for many minutes to which the most suspicious of men could have given a sinister significance—not a single thing. In great cities there were always men of this type—of course, nobody

noticed them! But Faulconbridge was of the persistent type. Having made up his mind to discover something, he would not have hesitated to mount guard all day.

As he stood there it gradually became evident to him that this great movement of people was slackening, and that if anything happened it must happen soon. Now he redoubled his vigilance. He judged by the indignant gestures of those coming out of the hotel that late-comers were being turned away—that the restaurants were full to overflowing. He watched a little knot of people move off violently talking; and then, for a reason which he could not explain, his attention became suddenly fixed on a blind man who was being slowly led along by a little girl. The man was a splendid type of his race—tall and as straight as a pine tree; indeed, he was so sturdily built that his strength seemed to belie his wrinkled face, his long white beard, and his gnarled hands. His black top-boots and his peaked black cap gave him an almost military appearance, which was hardly diminished by the big metal alms-box slung round his neck. He might have been the veteran of a dozen campaigns—begging for a living from the people after having often offered his life for the State. It was the natural end. . . .

The tall blind man came along very slowly, the little girl bobbing up and down and inviting all who passed them in a soft voice to assist them. Every now and again some kind-hearted person responded, and a coin would be dropped into the metal box. Then, at that sound, a deep-voiced word of thanks would come from the blind man, and his right hand would instinctively give a military salute.

At length the pair reached the hotel entrance, and evidently judging this the best point of vantage, they stood there a little proudly, awaiting what might be given them, but no longer soliciting alms.

Presently a curious thing happened. A blond man, with a dreamy expression on his face, came briskly out of the hotel. As he passed the pair he made an almost imperceptible sign with his gold-mounted cane. At once the little girl began to beg in a shrill falsetto, and hurried the blind man along after him ; the person they were following stopped at length with an irritable, violent movement, as if he only surrendered reluctantly to this importuning. Then he put a hand into his pocket, drew out something, and going right up to the blind man, carefully slipped his gift into the metal box.

No clink followed.

A queer expression passed like a shadow over the man's face, but almost at once his deep voice was repeating his stereotyped phrase of thanks, and his hand saluted. Before he had finished his speech his mysterious donor had turned on his heels and was rapidly walking away.

Faulconbridge—witness of this scene—was so extraordinarily surprised that he forgot to light the fresh cigarette which he had taken from his case and already placed between his lips. He stood there blankly, almost stupidly. He had noticed the man's eyes—during the fraction of a second.

“That man is not blind,” he murmured to himself—“that man is not blind ; and what is more, he is nothing less than a travelling post office—a travelling post office. . . .”

92 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

He was so surprised that for several minutes he forgot his original object in mounting guard. When he did remember it was to find that he was hardly in time to see the climax—which was this. The alleged blind man, led by the little girl, was hastening straight across the great square, past the fluttering pigeons, past the good woman whose business it was to care for them, past the loiterers who were lazily sunning themselves there. And, sauntering behind the couple, with his hands in his pockets, and his head bent towards the ground, as if he were deep in thought, came the ugly, forbidding little man.

That was all Faulconbridge, his eyes now big with astonishment, saw. In vain he wondered what it all could possibly mean.

That was just what other people were desirous of knowing. The fat Frenchman, Verdard, leaning out of his window to see if Moniseur le Baron's excuse that he could not stay to lunch was really genuine, had at once noticed the strangely assorted couple, and had seen how they had followed the Baron. Then, open-mouthed, he had observed the flutter of white passing into the metal box, as well as the disappearance of the begging couple—followed by the other man. He would have given a thousand francs to have made quite sure about the other man's face, but he was afraid to venture out.

“What the devil does this mean?” he exclaimed to himself. He had come on a reflection of his own perplexed face in the looking-glass, and that reflection arrested his attention in an altogether remarkable manner.

“What the devil am I doing in this galley?” he

added angrily, with a great gesture, becoming almost histrionic in his perturbation.

He felt that in some way he was being trifled with—that things were taking place with which he had no sympathy—that the air was thick with immediate dangers.

Suddenly he made up his mind. Gathering together all sorts of papers of small size, hidden in various ways about his person, he quickly made a little bonfire of them all and put the ashes carefully into an envelope, which he purposed immediately throwing away. Matters were getting oddly complicated; it was best to be prepared for the worst.

That is also what the head porter thought. Though busy as usual, he had left his stand the very instant the man who had set this play in motion had appeared. Going out for an instant on some pretext or other, he, too, had understood in a flash what has been described.

There was a queer smile on his face as he returned and answered the stupid question of some stupid travellers. Then, the moment he was free, he went into the long-distance telephone-box, and imperatively ringing up St. Petersburg, began at once to speak a few sharp, biting sentences.

It was a peculiar thing that the language he used was Yiddish.

IX

FAULCONBRIDGE was still under the spell of these strange developments, when—yielding to an inspiration—that same afternoon he went to feed his mind on the astounding portraiture of Russian greatness contained in the Tretiakoff Gallery. There the magic brushes of the great Verestchagin, and the no less masterful Repin, unrolled before his eyes marvellous scenes of bloodshed and heroism—on enormous canvases which seemed specially designed to unmask the aspirations of an extraordinary race.

As he stood before those great pictures which deal so lucidly with the endless Russian conquering movement into Asia—those endless pictures of the Muscovite in deathless conflict with the Turk and the Turki and many other turbaned men—it seemed to him that here was the complement to the earlier struggles at home, when the giant figures of Ivan the Terrible, and Peter the Great, and Catherine the Greater, not only dominated their peoples and their times, but by their stern and unbending decrees had actually projected their sinister will-power and unalterable resolve down the winding avenues of the future—forcing blind obedience among the countless children of their race during all these later generations. He stood enthralled before battle-scenes, which for brutal energy of portraiture and boldness of colouring are without com-

peers in the European world—those immortal battle-scenes so vividly done that merely by gazing at them their smoke and glamour gradually rise as if by magic from the lifeless canvas and hold the onlooker breathless and spellbound.

Blood and iron—here they were actually flaming up—fired by supreme imaginations. It was always iron and blood and nothing else—it was always in desperate encounters that the artist rose far above the earth and touched the stars. For the gentler scenes faded almost as one looked at them; the banality of quiet life stood suddenly unmasked as hopeless mediocrity; and the imagination, inflamed through the eyes, fanned by the tumult of the heart, remained saturated with the burning impression of those sterner doings.

It was the apotheosis of brute strength—nothing but brute strength—scenes in which the deep-chested, iron-limbed, bearded white man conquered, not because of his virtues, but by reason of his physical force. It was all fierce and violent to a degree not easily set down in words—it was brutally masterly. . . .

Yet it was also something else. At the very bottom it was inspired by something nobler, something more ethereal, something tender and sweet. For it was rich with the idealism springing from a sublime belief in heaven, in the personal God, in the mercy and wrath of the Almighty; it was as rich, therefore, in deep-rooted emotionalism as a Golconda is rich in gold. The tears which fell from the eyes of the victorious soldiery in their hours of triumph were scalding tears such as the Crusaders in ancient days shed at the mere sight of Jerusalem; they were the tears of men who became children in the presence of the Tremendous—who

bowed down their heads and wept because sometimes it is as good for the strong to weep as it is for them to laugh. . . . Never before had Faulconbridge dreamed of such battle-fields ; now their inner significance, their secret meaning, struck into him with the blinding light of a searchlight.

The people, too, who were gazing at these immortal scenes, delighted him here in his new mood just as they had delighted him on that memorable morning in the Kremlin—it was such a very different world from the world of European conventionalities. Long-haired, Christ-like priests, trim soldiers, deep-chested peasants, slim schoolgirls, white-haired widows, townspeople and country-people, rich people and poor people—it was once again a whole nation surveying its history with awestruck eyes ; a richly variegated nation, a nation in the making—a nation with the clay from which it had sprung not yet entirely brushed away. . . . At times, as Faulconbridge studied the moving throng, it almost seemed to him as if the world depicted in the marvellous frescoes of the Paris Pantheon—the people of the fifteenth century and of the tenth century, and perhaps even of the fifth century—had stepped to earth once more and commenced walking here. There was the appearance and the simplicity of the earlier centuries in the dress and manners of these people, in their aspects and attitudes, in their honest blue eyes ; indeed, the world seemed young once more and the irrational and the impossible had become quite possible. . . . In the inspiring neighbourhood of such masterpieces it was easy to think great thoughts ; these unending rooms, glorious with colour, were the supreme realization of a barbaric artistry. So he wandered a little blindly to and fro,

retracing his footsteps whenever the mood moved him—coming back again and again to the things that attracted him, avoiding whatever repelled him. He had found a second epic of the Russian race.

He felt he would never forget the manner in which he surprised her.

He had been standing in the middle of a room with his head thrown back and his hands clasped behind his back, his attention concentrated on an immense tragic canvas of Plevna, when the sound of some quick whispers made him suddenly turn. The colour quickly rose to his cheeks as he realized that it was her—no other person than Sasha—Sasha, with her back turned towards him—Sasha, quickly whispering to a vulgar man with a coal-black beard, who was listening disdainfully and even angrily to what she said, as if she were not only displeasing him, but were actually his inferior.

She here, and with such a man! He could hardly believe his eyes. Instantly and mechanically his mind recurred to the scene in front of the hotel.

Now a wave of something sharper than mere annoyance swept over him as he stood there thunderstruck; there was suggestion about this intimate conversation which somehow hurt him—offended him—made him sorry that he should have so idealized her. . . . Indeed, it was difficult not to think damaging thoughts. He remembered what somebody had once said—that the only beautiful things are the things that do not concern us.

Suddenly he commenced walking away. He would leave the place at once—he would not give her the opportunity of even seeing him. He had been a fool

to build castles in the air ; he should be more calm—less imaginative. Thinking which, he quickened his pace—to rid himself of his obsession, to escape. But almost immediately he had the feeling that it was too late—that she, too, had surprised him, just as he had surprised her, and that without so much as bidding good-bye to her strange companion, she was already following hard on his heels.

For a moment he tried to delude himself that he was reasoning wildly. Then, when at last he was forced to turn at the end of the room, he saw that it was indeed so. The vulgar man with the coal-black beard had mysteriously vanished, and now, almost beside him—was Sasha. . . .

“ Is it you ? ” she said, coming close up to him with both hands held out—in a pretty, begging gesture, instinctive and unstudied. He saw that her big grey eyes did not look so calm to-day ; something had happened which made them less confident. He found himself saying to himself—in spite of his pre-occupation and suspicion—that she possessed the kind of beauty which changes with every changing emotion—as the face of the heavens is changed by the shifting moods of the elements.

He scanned her narrowly. Yes—she was softer to-day ; much softer ; there was no trace of mockery in her look ; indeed, there was discouragement and chagrin—even a suspicion of tears. What could it mean ? Already he was almost sorry he had thought such harsh thoughts.

“ Is it you ? ” she repeated again, as if wondering at his silence.

“ I suppose so,” he said at last, with half-unconscious irony in his manner. He did not wish to be brutal, but

something still repelled him, angered him—something which he did not attempt to understand.

He gazed round the room to see if they could really talk as they might wish without fear of interruption. Yes—it was quite late—the last people had wandered out—nobody else appeared to be coming in. Relieved by the solitude, he began idly wondering what are the forces which so blindly throw people together again and again—as if they were meant for one another—only sowing the seeds of unhappiness by so doing. . . .

“What are you thinking of?” she asked. “You are standing there as if you had been struck dumb! What a curious man you are—even for an Englishman! Well—if you will not talk I suppose I must—I hate silent people—silence means distrust. . . .” She smiled faintly. “I would have written to you days ago telling you that I hoped to meet you again—you know I promised to bring you here, to this very place—only that it has not been wise for me to write—and I had much to do. I wanted to see you—I cannot tell you how much. You are so different from those in whose company I am thrown—do not think that I merely seek to flatter you now. But I have been busy—away from Moscow—and tired—only to-day could I find time to go out.” She stopped abruptly, and now her eyes were riveted almost suspiciously on his face. “What are you thinking of?” she asked once more—this time very sharply.

“Am I thinking?” he replied, with a short laugh. “I feel as though I had forgotten everything.”

“Ah,” she exclaimed, with a sudden gesture as of relief. “Ah,” she repeated again, the colour coming into her cheeks. Then she came very close to him and looked into his face with a new look in her eyes.

“Do you care about me as much as that?” she inquired softly.

He made no answer, but seated himself with an impatient movement on a bench which was just beside them as if he were really tired. It so happened that the picture above them portrayed a savage warrior of Gothic days, mounted on a gigantic horse, with a weeping maid in his arms; and as the girl glanced up she faintly smiled.

“How curious it is,” she murmured, pursuing the line of thought he had unconsciously suggested to her—accepted as a fact something which he had in no wise confessed—“I have never loved anyone, though many have made love to me. But you—you are a man. You are older than I am—you have had more time! There must have been several, though you told me once that you had never loved.” She stopped and became a little defiant—as if somehow she had acquired the right to be that. “I did not believe you, you know, no—not a little bit. Now tell me truly—I want to know. . . .”

He looked at her steadily and a little wistfully—suddenly feeling a strange, overwhelming desire to speak the truth. He did not know why he should have thought that just then; it came on him spontaneously and irresistibly—as the best impulses always come.

“There was one,” he replied slowly, “there was one I loved very much. It was not long ago. . . . But it was not like this. . . . Something quite different. . . . I would tell you about it, only that I have no heart to speak. Men are not like women; they do not like to talk of the past; all they do is to try to forget.” And then he stopped.

She had listened to him with parted lips, as a child

listens to a thrilling tale, perhaps expecting him to continue for a long time until the very end was reached. She had listened in an impersonal way—it seemed to him—as if this were the story of some distant adventure in a world about which she knew nothing. There was something curiously bird-like in her attitude—something new to him.

“Did she die?” she inquired at length, softly, seeing that he had stopped for good, “or was she a married woman? These flirtations with married women never make men happy. I have often heard that—I wonder why people begin them!”

“She is not dead, and she is not married,” said Faulconbridge, a little coldly now; “but I am not likely to see her again—at least, for some years.”

“She has disappeared, and you may never hear from her again. I do not understand.”

Her eyes were, indeed, big with wonder; in spite of himself, man-like, he smiled.

“That is hardly likely. . . . To be precise, I received a letter only this morning. . . .” He stopped again, and looked up with a certain grim humour in his manner. “It was a very womanly letter. . . . In it she said that she was sorry and wanted me to return.”

Unexpectedly—violently—Sasha stamped her foot.

“We need not talk about her any longer,” she cried, as if a sudden pang of jealousy had shot through her; “she doesn’t matter, you have said so yourself. Why do you continue to speak of her? . . . I do not want to hear of her—what a foolish man you are. . . . But tell me—what was she like?”

“She was very pretty,” he answered sadly, “as pretty as any of the pictures that hang on these most

marvellous walls." Saying which he stared at her fixedly.

"Well," she said inquiringly, plainly puzzled by what she thought his shifting mood.

"I suppose I may as well tell you now as at any other time. It is rather strange, and quite unbelievable; one of those things which, because they are quite possible, are so constantly happening. . . . It is best perhaps that you should know it." He watched her closely to see how she would take it. "You yourself are the living, breathing image——"

He was not mistaken, as she understood what he had not even spoken, but only implied: a flame of anger shot up and showed through her eyes.

Slowly she drew a little away, folded her hands, tilted back her head, stiffened her body—as if to show the full measure of her disdain. Then she began to speak clearly, bitingly—in a rather foreign way:

"Well—that is charming—I should doubtless be flattered—it is very nice to play the part of a living, breathing image—to impersonate somebody else—to soothe your broken heart—to solace you. . . . I begin to understand you—to understand you very fully—and the comedy is too simple to give me any delight. . . . Indeed, it is not of a nature to please even a most foolish woman. Because I resemble so closely somebody you have cast off, because I am the living, breathing image, you—you like me! Bah! How very, very flattering, Mister Faulconbridge!"

She paused almost breathless and surveyed him scornfully, as she slowly and bitterly pronounced his name, rolling the r's. Now she stood with her hands on her hips and that look in her eyes he liked so well. Once again there was something Spanish in her pose—

something he would not have missed for all the world just then. She was exactly as she had been when first he had seen her at the window. Now that she was really aroused he felt that the road ahead had suddenly become clear.

“Do not move,” he exclaimed, looking at her admiringly. “Stand like that for hours, if you can. . . . I have never seen anything that I liked better.”

“Really,” she returned scornfully, “how high I stand in your regard! Dear me, you flatter wonderfully to-day! First I am a resemblance, therefore I am pleasing to your eyes! Then I become a *tableau vivant*, which you are good enough to look upon and approve of! I really am puzzled to know what I shall be next so as not to fall as Lucifer fell!”

He met her raillery in a spirit just as unconcerned.

“Have no fear—I shall never cease to think of you as being capable of inspiring things! And as I do not doubt that you are also by nature very just, you will be forced to admit that I am quite appreciative. . . . For, remember, I have only met you five times in all these endless days, and each time has been so unsatisfactory.”

She seized on that last word.

“Unsatisfactory?” she echoed.

“Yes”—he answered gravely enough. “Listen: it is a sad enough chronicle. The first time you laughed at me from a window and made me angry. The second time you crushed me at a breakfast-table. The third time you boldly took me to look at history, as you called it. The fourth time you lured me into a church only to dismiss me. The fifth time——”

He paused.

“The fifth time,” she echoed.

“This is the fifth time,” he said. “I do not yet know what the fifth time is to be—it is too soon to be certain. Perhaps we are going to quarrel.”

Adroitly and unexpectedly, she changed her attitude.

“To quarrel? Why should I quarrel with you? How absurd! It is for you to decide what this fifth time shall be.”

He brushed the subtle compliment aside and pressed the advantage which he at last had gained.

“Why are you never at the hotel?” he began, half laughingly, half serious. “What makes you so mysterious, so elusive, so difficult to understand? You never answer my questions—you forbid me to make inquiries. You say your business is to sing—where do you sing? Listen till I tell you what you are. You are a little shadow—you flit quickly across my path and then are as suddenly gone; indeed, you appear only to disappear. A man cannot reasonably fall in love with a shadow; it would scarcely be human. And yet your shadow seems oddly attractive—at all times. . . .”

He laughed defiantly, and looked around as if to indicate that he was searching for her late companion.

Her manner showed at once that she understood.

“Dear me,” she said impatiently, avoiding the issue, and beating the floor with her foot, “you are not kind at all to me to-day. Perhaps it is that letter you spoke about which makes you so! It is not good for a man to think about two women at once, though a woman can think with enjoyment of a good many more men than that. . . . Heavens! . . . I do not want to talk this way to-day—you have made me. Yet I do

not know why I should. For to-day—to-day I am truly in trouble—in great, distressing trouble.”

She smiled faintly, but instinctively she pressed her hand against her heart.

Instantly his manner changed.

“In trouble,” he echoed gravely; “you in trouble—why?”

“Ah—that is the trouble with my trouble—it is a dead secret, it must remain a dead secret. I cannot say a word—not on my life—not yet. . . . Oh, not yet. . . . And yet I think I would sooner tell you than anyone else. I am sure you are to be trusted.”

“A trouble which must remain a dead secret,” he repeated thoughtfully; “that is strange, for the last time I met you you were like this too—though the attack was then not quite so bad. If it is something which can be mended you should not carry it about like a great burden, never attempting to lay it down.”

“I know,” she said, in a voice which suddenly sounded tearful, “I know. . . . A woman is not made to carry burdens—they are very terrible things. Believe me. A woman is weak—oh! so weak, even when she is strong. . . . I would give anything if I could tell you—you, who are really still a stranger to me—I am tempted sorely—oh, yes! I am tempted so much that . . . I must go. . . . Say good-bye to me. . . . Make me go—good Mr. Faulconbridge!”

She looked at him appealingly, longingly; then suddenly she turned as if to carry out her threat. In the confusion of the moment their hands met—and thus they remained. She tried to twist herself free, but perhaps she did not try very hard since she did not succeed. A priest, who had entered the room, cata-

logue in hand, was slowly approaching, pretending to read from the text. There was no time to lose.

Now she looked long and curiously into his face.

"I wonder how far I could trust you," she said at length, in a much changed voice, as if she were whispering to somebody in the background. "I wonder how far!"

"As far as my strength would bear it," he answered smilingly. "Is the secret so very terrible?"

The priest had come so near that their intimacy was openly threatened.

"Listen," she said, with sudden resolve. "I cannot tell you now—it is quite impossible. But will you come if I send for you—will you help me in a matter of great importance?"

"Yes," he said abruptly.

Suddenly she smiled on him her most bewitching smile.

"Very good, I shall remember your promise. Now"—she freed her hands—"I must really go; but soon, very soon, you will hear from me if I cannot meet you."

He did not attempt to parley with her further—to follow her. He knew that it would have been useless. He must take things as they came. He only noticed that after she had gone, his hands still tingled, because of the pressure of her hands, and that great room seemed very empty. . . .

X

LATER in the hotel he pretended to eat some dinner, whilst he listened to the wild music of an orchestra which was playing with the abandon only Russians and Bohemians can throw into their art. The memory of the girl—the warm pressure of her hands, the look in her eyes, possessed him body and soul. He could not eat because of his thinking.

Around him the tables were crowded with men and women, talking excitedly and toasting one another with unending vigour. There was a curious madness in the air, it seemed to him, because of the turmoil in his mind. There had been another terrible battle in far-away Asia—a fearful battle. In the streets hoarse voices could be heard shouting the special editions which were still coming out, wet from the press, and full of most appalling details. It was rumoured that fifty thousand men had been lost—whole battalions annihilated—obliterated by cruel shrapnel, a truly horrible holocaust. Yet this news affected all these people not as a grief does, but rather as an aphrodisiac. Nobody cared about the war—not a soul. He saw people shrugging their shoulders, and then violently flinging their newspapers to the waiters to be removed—as if they had been tainted things.

They did not care, they did not care, he repeated to himself wonderingly. The note of suspense which he had caught in the morning seemed more evident

to him than ever to-night. Ever and again electric thrills seemed to pass through these many people, which caused their voices to rise like great waves that advance roaringly from the deep and break on rocky seashores with resounding thunder. There were vast reserves of strength, he said to himself, in these men and women which no one as yet had thought of measuring—which perhaps were hardly suspected; and yet which were as clear to him just now as if they had been stated in mathematical terms. Here at last was the brute nation which would not hesitate to attempt anything—no matter how mad the issue might be. . . .

A sense of uneasiness grew in him as he pondered over it all—now he looked round with more than wondering eyes. This feverish atmosphere completed the vague trouble that filled his mind. He felt that something must happen soon—that the tension had reached snapping-point. What would it be? He did not care, he repeated. Yet it seemed to him that he was no longer surveying the scene with the careless eyes of an impartial observer. The invisible power of sympathy was forcing him somehow to take part in the play—this girl, Sasha, was forcing it upon him. Though he could not guess what was behind her curious behaviour, though all their intercourse had been so curious, so bizarre, so aggravating, suddenly he knew that the mystery could not always remain so great.

Just then a curious thing occurred. Two men had stood up and commenced shaking their fists frantically in each other's face, whilst a dozen servants with loud, startled remarks hastened up and tried in vain to calm them. Involuntarily a sharp exclamation fell from Faulconbridge's lips as he realized what had

happened ; one of the two was no other than the self-same black-bearded man whom he had seen that very afternoon with Sasha. . . . Motionless, thunderstruck at this peculiar discovery, he awaited the outcome of this extraordinary scene, with the conviction that it would lead to something new.

The two men had become more frantic. A great unreasoning fury seemed to possess them. There was a depth of passion in their gestures and in their sonorous voices unknown even among Latins—in spite of the servants, it seemed as if they would tear each other to pieces.

The uproar had now risen so high above the general din that general attention was quickly attracted. Magically silence fell on the great room as people stood up to try to see what had occurred—many even mounting on top of their chairs. It had suddenly become like an audience in a theatre—the minds of men and women alike evidently leaping at once to the conclusion that a sensational arrest was being made. The servants had at last managed to seize and pinion the furious pair—uniformed *chasseurs* were running in swiftly ; the whole activities of this vast caravansary were plainly paralysed by the peculiar nature of the contretemps at such an hour as this.

Faulconbridge, standing up as the rest of the company were doing, his heart full of apprehension, looked in vain for somebody who would furnish an explanation. His polyglot waiter had disappeared in the confusion ; there was not a soul in the place he knew or could speak to. It was precisely at this moment that a fat, red-faced man whose eyes were intently fixed upon the struggling group suddenly bumped heavily into him.

Faulconbridge, in turning, recognized him at once. It was the Frenchman who had come to Moscow in the same train with him, and who had been so voluble about his business. Already the man was apologizing profusely, as if afraid of the consequences of his carelessness. Faulconbridge seized the opportunity.

"I think, Monsieur, that we travelled here together on Tuesday," he said in French.

"Certainly, certainly—I remember well." The stranger hesitated for a moment before he added: "My name is Emile Verdard, and I am from Lyons."

"Mine is Faulconbridge, and I am an Englishman."

"A felicity to meet you," said the other, shaking his hand vigorously in the manner which the ingenuous Continental still imagines is very English. "Ah, they have them at last! Ah, the brutes, what a noise they made!" He pointed with his fat hands.

The two protagonists, still violently protesting, were now being led out, cowed by the members who surrounded them.

"The secret police—as usual, late," exclaimed the Frenchman again, with a curious uneasy laugh. Three men, their black felt hats in their hands, had entered the dining-room by another door, and were hastening after the retreating party. One of the three was the same small, ugly man who had acted so singularly in the morning.

The Frenchman had turned his back on the three, immediately he had caught sight of them. Now he was engaged in blowing his nose with a handkerchief, which he spread almost entirely over his face. Faulconbridge, surprised though he was at this manœuvre, had his attention concentrated elsewhere. He, too,

had recognized the ugly little man. . . . Now rapidly yet vainly he tried to connect the scattered links of the long chain which united these many people. It was becoming so curious that he could not refrain from ejaculating something.

“ You spoke ? ” inquired Monsieur Emile Verdard in a muffled voice, his face still half concealed by the handkerchief.

Faulconbridge shook his head ; he had become oddly cautious ; he was determined he would not show what he felt. He swallowed down the question which had almost passed his lips, and affected complete indifference.

“ I said nothing, but since this interesting affair is over, will you not join me and explain what it was all about ? ”

He drew back a chair and invited the Frenchman to take a seat. Everybody was sitting down again, and the storm of voices was rising high once more. The incident was already almost forgotten.

“ My dear sir,” said Monsieur Emile Verdard very sententiously, now that he had regained his calm and that all immediate danger was past, “ in Russia one does not attempt to explain : one observes. If you try to go farther than that you very quickly find that your wits are not as quick as the developments which you attempt to disentangle. Perhaps this scene was a very ordinary dispute about something very small ; perhaps it was the beginning of something very great. In any case, we shall see the lie agreed upon in to-morrow’s papers. You read Russian ? No, you only speak a few words. It is a pity—their papers are very amusing—particularly now during this war. They contradict themselves almost hourly

and are full of terror about their wretched police. May I offer you a cigar ? ”

With that he drew from his pocket the formidable case which so often carried valuable papers. He drew it from his pocket with a certain heartache—with a sudden return of a sentiment which he had tried in vain to annihilate. To-night there was nothing in it save very excellent tobacco from a Havana factory.

XI

MANY curious eyes watched the two, an hour or so later, as they sauntered out for a breath of fresh air. Perhaps it was because the contrast was so marked—Verdard, round, even tub-like in form, with choleric colouring, gleaming eyes, expansive gestures—your true bourgeois disporting himself after a glass of the best ; Faulconbridge, tall, calm, seemingly indifferent—a chip from another block—listening in careful silence to the other’s wordiness.

There was much to listen to—a very great deal. It is true the Frenchman had been very circumspect. He had stopped short every time he was on the point of becoming really interesting ; but his sly looks, his hints, his coughs, his nods, his tremendous gestures, had supplied a world of missing links.

Poor man. He had ached to say a great deal more ! He had ached to tell this rufous Englishman, who merely listened and nodded his head so gravely, the plain truth—that he—Emile Verdard, the man standing beside him—cook by trade and nothing else—had become, thanks to his intriguing powers, one of the chosen instruments of Providence in an unhappy land—that it was due to his underground activity that half the weapons and half the explosives lay at this moment in the secret arsenals of this city—that it was his brains that had supplied the methods. The wine

he had drunk had kindled in him a sense of burning injustice ; here at least was a neutral person who would most certainly willingly acknowledge, if he were told, his correct value. He longed to speak frankly and hear some words of approval just as a woman longs for her lover—and yet he knew that he must restrain himself to the bitter end. That evening it seemed not only an unjust, but a cruel world for him.

And this long inner struggle had cost him dear. The desire to find some outlet for his pent-up emotions had become uncontrollable. He must find an outlet.

“ Let us go somewhere to amuse ourselves,” he exclaimed, after standing near the front door for a few more minutes. “ I know a place where a night is not spent in vain—the very place for us. You consent, of course.” And with that he called loudly to a driver who had driven slowly near.

A string of surprising oaths fell from his lips, because the man did not gallop up fast enough. And then, hardly had they started, before he called to the grinning fellow, who had measured his mood, to use the whip and nothing but the whip.

“ I feel like driving to the devil to-night,” he exclaimed to his companion, mopping his perspiring face, and heaving his shoulders as if seeking for more air.

“ The driver has a mind to oblige you,” rejoined Faulconbridge a little ironically, as they rounded the first corner at full gallop and the four wheels of the carriage fairly jumped from the ground. He had already entered into the spirit of the thing : this suited his mood as well.

“ *Skorei*—fast, faster,” called Verdard ; and the heavily shod hoofs coming down fiercely on the rough

cobblestones threw off clouds of sparks. It was surprising what a number of sparks there were—as if the very streets of Moscow had become inflammable that night. Verdard watched them with staring eyes as if they fascinated him.

“ Nowhere else in the world can one drive like this,” he resumed presently to his companion. “ Nowhere ! It is as refreshing as a cold douche.”

Faulconbridge looked at him keenly as they passed like a flash under a big arc-lamp. The man was trembling with suppressed excitement. It was a curious fate which had brought him into contact with so many mysterious folk : it would not be long before this one showed his hand.

“ Yes, it is refreshing,” he said coolly—wedging his feet more tightly against the carriage.

As they rocked and swayed and jumped he somehow felt that he was being borne along to a destination which would materially influence the rest of his life. It was like that first eventful drive—precisely like it. He remembered how he had thought it then. This was a land of fits and starts. After an idle pause he was being hurled forward again—as fast as horses could gallop over rough roads—to something which was already awaiting him, something which he could not escape—which would swallow him up as ruthlessly as Gargantua is reputed to have done with the five pilgrims, together with their staves, in one enormous salad. He enjoyed the feeling—he enjoyed it so much that he became as eager as the fat, whimsical man at his side to finish with this driving and to pass to the next act.

He looked around him, suddenly remembering that he had not even asked where they were going, and

alive to the fact that once again he might lose himself.

They were making their way very rapidly out of the city now. Long avenues, lined with tall trees, spread away into the distance ; the great closed shops and tall apartment-houses had given place to detached villas and gardens. Occasionally, in the distance, the dim outline of tall chimneys and long, low-lying buildings proclaimed the neighbourhood of factories. The cobblestones of the city had been replaced by a highway rutted by the rains ; and now in the uncertain light of oil-lamps their rate of progress had become a challenge to disaster.

Still the driver drove as madly and as speedily as ever. Incited by what had been so fiercely shouted at him, he was now on his mettle and determined to win more than a meed of praise. Besides, he had done this very often before. Every now and again they overtook carriages going in the same direction, but in a moment they had left them behind much as an express train flashes by an ordinary omnibus. Each time they encountered such a vehicle instinctively their man had shouted a taunt ; and twice, goaded by his words, there had come behind them a sharp clatter of hoofs and a tornado of whipping and cursing. But it was no good. Their driver had caught the spirit of the game. The devil was in him, too, and now he drove with whip and voice as he could have seldom driven before. Literally they flew ; and the distances were annihilated to the unending roar of their wheels.

A blaze of light rose up at last before them much as land rises up before a ship when the sea-fog clears. The powerful driver, throwing himself back in far his seat, with an iron effort controlled the fretting mouths

of his steeds ; then, bending far over to one side, he had swung the team in through a high gateway at a fast hand-gallop. They had arrived ; it had been a masterly exhibition of driving even in a land of horse-masters.

Faulconbridge looked round in growing curiosity.

The scented night now danced with fairy lights, and a sound of sensuous music was wafted to them. He caught the atmosphere of the place almost before there was time to look.

For the carriage had hardly stopped before Verdard sprang to the ground as lightly as a girl would have done. The driver, hat in hand, was pointing laughingly to his smoking horses. Plainly he expected largesse ; he was not disappointed. Verdard, thrusting his hand into his pocket, drew out a ten-rouble note and carelessly flung it to him.

“Come,” he cried gaily to his companion, “we have travelled like the wind, but we have paid like princes ! Look at this.” He pointed ahead.

They were at the entrance to the famous gardens of the Anchorite. A great hall, lit up as brightly as though it had been day, brought them to a fantastic gateway ; and then, passing through a series of folding-doors, they had suddenly issued out on the gardens. The sight spread before them was like a scene from the theatre.

To the right an immense glass-covered restaurant, filled with hundreds of people, pushed itself forward much as if it had been placed there solely for spectacular purposes. Being built high up—as if on a stage—everything that passed within that glass house was visible to the crowds without. The gleam of silver ; the rapidly moving figures of servants ; the unending

popping of corks; the great hum of voices; the music in the air—all these things after the long, dark, frantic drive tended to produce in Faulconbridge a curious sensation of unreality. He studied the scene in astonished silence.

Beneath the restaurant a great promenade, lined with tall trees, was crowded with a heterogeneous mass of humanity moving uneasily to and fro—a mass sometimes stopping short for reasons hard to discover, and then as rapidly moving forward as if in an effort to disperse. Every now and again a big bell rang sharply from some hidden spot, and at once numbers precipitated themselves in the direction of the sound, throwing the promenading crowds into confusion. In a dimmer lighting, under the trees, were placed countless little iron tables which were beginning to fill up rapidly. The music of several bands, distributed in various parts of the grounds, rose shrilly and confusedly in the night air as if protesting that their harmonies could never mix; yet soon even this discord failed to catch the ear. The greater noise of the mobs of people seemed to swallow up everything.

Verdard led the way gaily forward with all the assurance of an old *habitué*.

“It is not yet gay,” he explained almost apologetically, “but you must have patience. At two or three in the morning it livens up, though many do not arrive until four. These Russians are immense—at times. You will see how they understand high living.”

Now he took off his hat in order the better to enjoy the fresh night air. He took off his hat with the air of a man who has come at last to his own—to something that satisfies him. His gestures became larger, more

expansive. In the midst of all this inordinate gaiety he felt as dashing and as brilliant as the hero of Beaumarchais' immortal creation—and just as capable of remarkable exploits. The pleasure of anticipation once more possessed him ; for a few brief moments the ugly shadow of realization had fled.

A bell clanged sharply and quickly for a few seconds, and then ceased as suddenly as it had commenced.

“ Let us see what they have to offer us in the way of performance,” cried Verdard gaily, laying his hand on his companion's sleeve. “ It is very well arranged here. Distributed all round the grounds are little open-air theatres. The bell rings—the people precipitate themselves. If you stand, you pay nothing ; if you sit, it may cost you a rouble, or even ten ! What a pack of people,” he concluded.

A tall, handsome woman had suddenly moved across their path, and now murmured something.

“ *Elle est amoureuse,*” translated Verdard, with a wicked smile ; “ and she does not blush to tell you so. Come on, come on, we have other fish to fry.”

Among the trees they came on a little painted stage on which singers had appeared dressed in some old-time dress of Muscovy. They were singing a preliminary chorus full of strange, wistful harmonies, which sounded more like a chant than a folk-song—which seemed full of great distances and leaden skies and the fatigue of a monotonous existence. Then when they had finished, one of them announced what was to follow.

There was a short interval, during which the crowd talked loudly and indifferently, mixing much laughter with their comments, and shifting uneasily to and fro. It seemed impossible in that electrical atmosphere for

anyone to stand still for a moment—it seemed that perpetual motion was the only tranquillizer.

For some reason Faulconbridge watched with bated breath.

The miniature orchestra, sitting beneath the stage, had now commenced to play again. Then suddenly there was the vociferous applause which greets a well-known favourite.

He was badly placed—he could not see at once what had happened. The thing dawned on him only gradually. The lithe figure of a girl, clad in pink, had bounded on to the stage. With a few graceful acknowledgments she began quickly singing. But as he heard the voice—he violently pushed aside some people who were obstructing his view. He did not even hear their protests, or see their angry looks—his heart was in too great a ferment for that. He felt the colour stain his face in wave after wave of emotion as he realized what had happened.

It was Sasha—Sasha singing here. . . .

He hardly heard or saw her—it all became curiously mixed for him. He was only vaguely conscious that her young voice once again sounded as sweet as a nightingale's song—that clad in her short pink skirt, with pink roses almost covering her bare shoulders and her graceful arms phrasing the melody, she looked like an opening rosebud. She sang as a bird sings ; with no effort at all ; with whole-hearted enjoyment. She was charming to listen to ; and the crowd, with the great delight of a music-loving people, murmured its approval of the graceful melody.

He continued to gaze as in a dream. She was always surprising him—she would always surprise him to the end of the chapter. He had never expected

anything like this. . . . Was it strange that his thoughts became more incoherent than they had ever before ?

It was not until the end of her song—when his own surprise had become more subdued—that he became conscious of another remarkable thing. An extraordinary change had also come over his companion—a change so extraordinary that he, at least, made no effort at dissimulation. Briefly, Verdard was whispering to himself strings of oaths and exclamations ; he was scowling and frowning ; he was wagging his head first to one side and then to the other ; he was rubbing his chin, then mopping his forehead, plainly thunderstruck by the fair apparition on the stage. And just then in the midst of a storm of applause the fair apparition had bounded off.

Faulconbridge turned deliberately and looked steadily into the Frenchman's eyes. He was determined to unravel without further delay a mystery which seemed at every turn to grow greater.

“ What is the matter ? ” he inquired ; “ what is the matter with you ? ”

“ The matter ? ” exclaimed the other, starting and talking rapidly ; “ what do you mean ? I do not understand you. The matter with what ? ”

Faulconbridge gave a short laugh ; he was irritated with the man's clumsiness.

“ You have the appearance of a man who is not only badly surprised, but frightened,” he said bluntly.

“ Surprised . . . surprised ? No, no, it is only my appreciation. She sings well—she is charming, is she not ? Would you have a man not show some appreciation ? How hot it is to-night. . . .”

He mopped his forehead vigorously, removing his hat.

“ You are trifling with me, though I admit that you have the right to do that if it pleases you,” said Faulconbridge coldly. Then he continued—almost menacingly: “ I remember once being in the company of a man who had made one of those mistakes which are so common nowadays—I mean in financial matters. It was at the seaside—near the front door of what he called his cottage—a house of a dozen rooms. Two men approached and told him that he was wanted—urgently, without a moment’s delay. I remember the manner in which his appreciation was shown—it was peculiarly impressive. He mopped his forehead, became hot and angry, turned his back on me, declared it was nothing. You see, the symptoms are familiar to me.”

“ Ah,” said Verdard between his teeth, “ that is what you think ? ”

Faulconbridge made no reply. Why had this man been so strangely affected ? What did it mean ? He could not say. Yet Faulconbridge felt curiously alarmed, strangely apprehensive. He was like a player whose game has become complicated by the appearance of unforeseen cards.

Yet there was a clue of some importance. He must make another effort.

“ Well, do not let us get angry—perhaps it is all a mistake,” he remarked at length, after a long interval, purposely shifting his ground, and thinking that he had been too blunt. “ You see, we associate certain expressions with certain attitudes of mind, but if you have nothing to tell me——”

The Frenchman’s answer was as sudden as it was

unexpected. He made a convulsive movement with his hands: then, mastering himself, he grasped his companion's arm in a friendly way, as if persuading him away.

"We are observed," he whispered quickly and quietly, "and this is no healthy neighbourhood just now. Indeed, it is no time to talk or discuss things. Follow me out of this crowd quickly, quietly. . . . I beg you not to argue. You will understand everything presently."

XII

VERDARD, even as he spoke, had not only taken his companion firmly by the arm, but now, with a few swift, strong movements, which few would have suspected him capable of making, he cleared a way through the dense throng and hastened towards the restaurant with short, quick steps.

His ruddy face was glistening as though it had been dipped in water ; his eyes were singularly bright ; his jaw set firm. He had the air of a man who has escaped a great danger, and who yet may have to face more.

He did not speak—nor did his companion venture to question him. Faulconbridge, indeed—with a flash of intuition—suddenly understood that silence would at last gain for him something which the greatest eloquence might deny. All day he had suspected that the strange mystery which seemed to envelop the town in a mantle of emotions was something very real—something which was worth piercing if he only knew how. At last, some definite knowledge must be given him—he had only to remain silent to hear.

Yet had he been able to pierce his companion's mind, his confidence would not have been so firmly seated. For the changeable Frenchman, even as he hastened along, had begun reproaching himself for his lack of reserve—for his spasm of childish fear. He wondered

endlessly how it must have sounded to his companion to have him bursting out into alarm the way he had done. For who was this man? Why had he been so interested in this girl? What did it all mean? Many troubling questions tumbled through his mind to which he could find no answers. The evening was in some danger of becoming a comedy of errors.

"At last," he exclaimed with satisfaction as they passed into the brilliantly lighted glass restaurant.

Now, with an air of authority, he beckoned to a *maître d'hôtel*, and began exchanging some rapid remarks with him. The man protested that it was impossible to accommodate them—that every table not actually occupied had long been reserved. Then Verdard suddenly became angry, bent forward, whispered and made an abrupt sign in the *lingua franca* of the money-market. Just as a reed bends before the wind, the other now bowed his head, shrugged his shoulders, turned quickly and led them to a small table in a corner. Faulconbridge, obedient to the necessities of the situation, said not a word.

Verdard gave a sharp order, drew an immense handkerchief from his pocket, employed it in a manner more practical than polite, and suddenly began to speak.

"Have you ever been in open danger?" he inquired oddly enough, fixing his keen eyes on the Englishman's face.

"Several times," answered the latter without enthusiasm.

"Has anyone ever tried to kill you?"

"I would put it differently—I would say that I know what it is to be nearly killed."

"Ah," exclaimed Verdard; "ah, you know the feeling! It is very peculiar, is it not?—so peculiar—so

strange—little snakes crawling up one's back and then crawling down again. . . . Brrh. . . . It also resembles—the *mal de mer*."

He allowed the waiter to pour out the sparkling wine. Then he said abruptly :

" We are in danger—you for the good and ample reason that you are with me. It is my danger—you understand, of course, something purely affecting me—but danger is like a black cloud on the sky : it may thicken, as if by a miracle, until there is nothing but blackness and gloom for everyone, including the most innocent. Oh, my poor friend, you are in extraordinary danger, if you only knew." He stopped and pensively sipped his glass.

Faulconbridge lighted a cigarette and inhaled the smoke in that deep way which is said to be bad for the lungs. He had made up his mind that any talking which might be done must come from this man and not from him ; it was essential for the success of his plan that he should henceforth show not the slightest trace of curiosity. He was not in the least bit interested in the fact that Verdard considered himself in personal danger—he could scarcely imagine being profoundly affected by what happened to him. But just as all roads lead to Rome, so in this case did everything lead back to her. . . . He would have to accept whatever he could find.

" Something is going to happen in this city within a few days—perhaps within a few hours," began Verdard again, after satisfying himself that he could not be overheard. He leaned far forward across the table. " Something is going to happen—grave, terrible. I tell you this because I believe you to be a man of honour." His eyes bulged with emotion.

“Thank you for trusting me,” said Faulconbridge, again without enthusiasm.

“I lied to you just now in the gardens,” resumed Verdard in the same intense manner, perhaps encouraged by the other’s calm, “because I did not know whether it would be wise to tell you the truth. Believe me, my position is very difficult—extraordinarily difficult. Even now I may not tell you too much, but at least I need not lie. Certain doubts in my mind have now been dispelled—I need not tell you what they were. But I will tell you one thing: that young *chanteuse* you asked me about belongs to the dangerous organization called the Central Industrial Organization, which is concerned with the uplifting of the Russian people—really a revolutionary organization. But it is not that which troubles me—it is that she is also a spy.”

“You said you had finished lying,” observed Faulconbridge, with some heat. He bit his lip in vexation almost as soon as he had spoken, but it was too late.

“Monsieur,” retorted Verdard. Then he stopped: he was choking with emotion.

There was a moment of silence; the two men measured one another over their glasses; it was difficult to say what might not have happened.

“You are hardly polite, Monsieur,” resumed Verdard after a very long pause, mopping his forehead with his big handkerchief, and looking Faulconbridge silently up and down. Yet the necessity to speak was greater than his anger. “I greatly regret if I am disillusionizing you, but facts are facts. I cannot enter into all the details now, but something happened to me in Warsaw six months ago which told me the truth. My papers

were stolen—I was placed in great danger—I was falsely accused, anything might have happened to me, had not the Embassy intervened. I have the best of reasons for believing that it was that young lady who was responsible for my predicament. It is useless saying more—I pass to something else. As we stood there looking and discussing her, a small man came up behind us. His name is Gavrilloff—he is detested and feared by everybody. He is suspected of many things—he is always about when there is trouble brewing. He is a scoundrel who will do anything to win the approval of his chiefs, whoever they may be. He is a devil—you understand? It was time to move—for though I have nothing to fear, I have tasted the methods of this country once. It is enough for a lifetime. *Mon Dieu*, you are not even listening ! ”

It was true ; Faulconbridge, indeed, appeared lost in thought. He was, in fact, grouping and regrouping what he had just learnt. The mystery, instead of clearing, seemed more profound than ever. It was detestable that she should be so involved with such people—it was hateful that this man should be so familiar with her name. Yet at all costs he must discover something further, something which would tell him the real truth. Otherwise how would it ever be possible for him to meet her again—to speak to her fairly and frankly—to redeem the promise he had made ?

“ I think I know the man, though you have not told me why you should be so afraid of him,” he said aloud, after he had completed these unhappy reflections. “ He has a very heavy jowl—a beard, a scar over his right eye. He habitually wears a yellow tie and his notebook has a red cover. He is so at home at the Gastropol that one might almost suspect him of living

there. In fact he entered the dining-room to-night when that arrest was made. Am I right ? ”

“ The devil ! ” exclaimed Verdard, bulging his eyes once more in his curious mannerism. “ The devil ! You are an observer—a close observer.”

Faulconbridge screwed up his face as if the smoke from his cigarette had suddenly made his eyes smart.

“ Perhaps something in connection with the walking post office brought him here,” he said softly, firing a shot at random.

It went home—judging by the effect it produced. Verdard had turned pale.

“ Who are you ? ” he said roughly. “ Who are you ? . . . There has been enough of this obscurity—of this beating about the bush. Let us understand each other, Monsieur, at once. It has become essential.”

Verdard glared. His mind had leaped automatically to the scene they had both witnessed in the hotel dining-room ; since the mind always turns to the fearful when fear gains control. Would there be a repetition of that scene here ? he asked himself. . . . He clenched his fists, and his great paunch heaved in his agitation.

Faulconbridge enjoyed his consternation for a few seconds ; he had begun to dislike the man, and he was glad that he was being punished in this particular way.

“ My dear fellow,” he remarked a little contemptuously, “ you are in danger of being absurd with your constant suspiciousness. When a man has nothing to do and uses his eyes, even in a country where his ears are of little value, it is astonishing how much may be picked up. Already I know enough to fill a book—a big book, one might almost say ! ” He laughed

softly again, satisfied that at last he had gained a subtle advantage over the other which would remain with him.

But Verdard was now only thinking of his personal safety—he had forgotten everything else. Ugly phantoms seemed to fill the air—the prospect was dreadful. Leaning across the table, he laid a hand on Faulconbridge's sleeve.

“Monsieur,” he said earnestly, almost piteously, “swear to me that you are an honest man and I will believe you. Monsieur, confidence for confidence, you owe it to me—I have placed my safety in your hands. You cannot be so cruel as to torture me in this cursed country of spies and exiles and traitors. You do not know this country, I say.”

“So far as my knowledge goes I am most honest,” rejoined Faulconbridge, as he was bidden.

He smiled ironically as he surveyed the unending stream of doubtful people now promenading in the cold white light of the arc-lamps, this strange world which he did not know: he smiled ironically as he wondered what honesty really meant just here. The flashing eyes of the women gave peculiar point to the babel of voices and to the unending peals of laughter which were swept up in great waves of sound to where they sat. The gardens of the Anchorite were living up to their reputation to-night; the hilarity was growing apace as the small hours approached and angels themselves might have been corrupted. Yes, he was probably super-honest—judged in these surroundings, though he might be counted a miserable sinner in the company of saints.

Meanwhile Verdard watched him in mingled doubt and wonder. This man was beyond him—quite be-

yond him. In all his many peregrinations he had never met this type before—not only could he not understand him, but he could not in the least explain him—which was much more to the point. The curious combination of indifference and interest to which he had been treated did not delight him. It revived in him all sorts of fears.

He sat there tongue-tied. He began to fear that he had committed a tremendous imprudence, not only in being so expansive, but in coming abroad at such a time with such a man. It would certainly end by leading him into some impasse—in committing him to some course of action which he would not dream of taking alone. He began to be something more than vaguely afraid.

“*Tonnerre de Dieu,*” he muttered angrily and inconsequentially, finding but little relief in this medley of thoughts.

He knew that he should apply his mind without delay to the problem of finding the safest way of leaving the gardens which he had so extolled—yet he seemed to have lost his will-power : to be unable to act. This brute of an Englishman, who did not seem to appreciate in the slightest the complexities of the situation, why was he so fascinated by him? Was he drunk with a few glasses of champagne and a few hours of excitement? It was impossible to think coherently in such a din of cursed women’s voices.

He looked at his watch; it was two o’clock—two o’clock in the morning. Who was that cursed little man really watching? If it were nobody but himself he would sit here until daybreak and defeat any devilishness he might have in store by wearing him out. Wretched Russia—it was no place for civilized men.

With yet another oath he put his watch back in his pocket.

Faulconbridge had noted his action ; now he stifled a yawn.

“ I was just wondering if you were thinking of ever going home ? It is curious, but the gaiety of this place begins to depress me. In ten minutes I shall go—I have had enough. Are you coming, too ? ”

He looked thoughtfully at his companion, wondering what had come over him. He would get nothing more out of him just now—he must content himself with what he had already heard. Verdard’s eyes were certainly bloodshot, and his ruddy cheeks appeared in the garish lighting almost as if they had been stained with vermilion.

“ Let us have another bottle,” suggested the man in a dull voice.

“ No,” said Faulconbridge very decidedly. “ No. No. . . . ”

He drew his cigarette-case from his pocket, took out the very last cigarette which remained with elaborate care, then very deliberately lit a match.

He sat watching his hand for a perceptible interval, as if it had assumed a special interest in his eyes, because there was nothing else to claim his attention ; then, with a satisfied smile, he slowly drew in the cigarette-smoke. His hand was still as steady as a rock.

He stood up.

“ Now I am going home,” he said very politely ; “ and it seems to me in the particular circumstances of the night that it would be wise if you came back in my company.”

“ Very good,” assented Verdard, with that curious

vagueness which too much wine brings to some. "It is a good idea—splendid."

He watched his companion throw some notes on the table without understanding precisely what they meant. He wondered why he had been tempted to drink so much. Slowly and awkwardly he followed him out, staring stupidly around.

The hour of worst orgy was rapidly approaching. A gross familiarity had grown up between men and women in this great house of glass—the voices were louder, sharper, rougher. Astounding incidents were the order of the day: the waiters had become openly insolent, whilst the orchestra played as if in mockery of God and man. The conductor, a tall, handsome man with a small black moustache and glittering eyes—famous in the town for his unbroken sangfroid even when day began to dawn—alone retained his iron composure; and as he saw the two strangers, so different in appearance, pass out near by him a ghost of a smile flitted across his pale face. The Russian pace was always too hot for strangers—nobody but Russians could stand it.

"How delightfully fresh," exclaimed Faulconbridge as they came out into the open.

"Ouf," replied Verdard by way of reply, shivering involuntarily. "Let us get a carriage and drive quickly home—as quickly as we came."

Yet that was easier said than done. They tried driver after driver—all were engaged—all blankly refused to stir for any sum. It was too late, they were told: they should never have committed the imprudence of sending away the carriage in which they had come.

"There is nothing for it, then; I suppose we shall have to walk," remarked Faulconbridge at last.

“ Walk—are you mad? It is several miles ! ”

“ Well ? ”

“ It will take hours.”

“ But we cannot stay here—what are we going to do? Nearer the town we may meet something. It will do you good. Come.”

Laughingly he seized the Frenchman by the arm, and a little against his will pulled him along.

“ It is a mad thing,” protested Verdard, and then he walked forward a little unsteadily. What was there to do, when he was pulled along?

But they had hardly left the brilliantly lighted neighbourhood of the gardens when down the roadway a faint tongue of fire spat out, followed by a sharp report—then again and again and again—four times in all. There was a muffled cry, and then silence.

“ Run back, run back,” shouted Verdard, turning at once, and preparing to do as much.

Faulconbridge did not trouble to answer, indeed there was hardly any need, since his back had already done that. For as fast as his great legs could carry him he was rushing down the roadway into the darkness—into the danger.

For a moment Verdard, already in retreat, hesitated. Then, with a fierce military oath, he suddenly and unaccountably turned and blindly followed—as quickly as his great bulk would allow.

XIII

F AULCONBRIDGE ran on without any thought of personal danger—he ran looking eagerly ahead at the dark shadows, merely wondering what he was destined to discover. It was characteristic of the man that although he had spent the evening in an atmosphere curiously suggestive of grim possibilities, although he began to understand that it was nothing less than revolution which was in the air, no sooner did he hear a call to action than he responded as blindly as does a seasoned charger who hears the trumpets sound. A joyousness even swept up in him as he ran—he felt that fierce exultation which some few still feel in a placid age in the face of unknown dangers. So he ran on and on down the road, merely wondering a little why the country should suddenly seem so grim and silent and deserted—and who it was that had discharged firearms, and who had cried so piteously; never thinking at all that he might be putting his own hard head into a lion's den.

It was farther than he had judged—much farther; for he had begun to feel the effects of this sharp exercise, and to question whether he could keep up the pace, when suddenly, a little way off the main road, he saw the dark outline of a motionless carriage. Without a thought of caution he plunged on, and with a few more rapid strides had pulled up panting alongside it.

"Hullo," he exclaimed to the silence around him. "Hullo," he said again. Then he whistled softly to himself as he understood something of the tragedy which had occurred. "Poor devil, poor devil," he muttered pityingly.

One of the three horses harnessed to the carriage was down on the ground, shot through and through—its hind-legs still spasmodically jerking. As he spoke the others, frightened to death, had begun plunging madly once more, vainly attempting to free themselves from the network of the twisted traces and the dead-weight of their fallen comrade.

The driver's box was untenanted—the hood of the carriage was up. Now Faulconbridge sprang on the step, and quickly he looked in—but only to find that this covering hid no passengers. One thing, and one thing only, was unmistakably plain—that every living soul had miraculously vanished.

"This is interesting but obscure," he murmured to himself.

He took off his hat and passed his handkerchief over his forehead. He realized for the first time that his run had made him very hot and tired; and now that it all appeared to have been in vain, he felt inclined to be angry with his spontaneous quixotism.

He tried to reason it out—to account both for what had taken place and for this peculiar silence. It seemed to him that it could only be some common vendetta—a vendetta of a kind which plainly interested nobody—otherwise others would have rushed here also. He began to think he had been a sorry fool for his pains—to regret his precipitancy; then almost immediately, unwilling to confess himself baffled, with strange inconsistency, he angrily wondered whither all the actors

in this grim scene had fled. It was impossible that everybody should have vanished into space without leaving a trace behind them—quite impossible ; and so, now that he had completely recovered his breath, he walked up to the driver's seat, and wrenching out one of the carriage-lamps, turned the light slowly and carefully on to the body of the carriage.

What he saw caused him to frown, and banished his rising annoyance. The ugly dark marks on the white cloth cover were bad enough, but on the floor of the carriage was worse—little pools of blood—as if the victim had been shot to pieces.

“Cursed brutes,” he muttered again, beginning to throw the light on the road. “This has been a clean job—a devil's job.”

Before he had realized what he was doing he found himself going forward, following up slowly, step by step, lamp in hand, the spots of blood on the white road.

He had not gone more than a dozen yards before a sound of heavy footsteps caught his ear.

“Hullo,” came Verdard's voice in a sullen roar, “'ullo, 'ullo.”

“Is that you ?” Faulconbridge called back. He paused for an instant with a smile on his face. “I thought you had gone back for help. Hurry up—there is no time to lose.”

“No time to lose !” The fat Frenchman exploded into oaths as half running, half walking, he staggered up. “It will be nobody's fault if I suffocate—I, who have not run for years. . . . Wait an instant—wait, I say, I am suffocating.”

He was, indeed, panting with the noise of a steam-engine ; panting and then heaving great sighs as if

his heart would break. Every now and again, when he found enough breath to do so, he broke out into fierce military oaths, only to cease in the very middle and to resume his heart-breaking panting. There he stood, with his mouth open and his tongue lolling out, the exaggerated embodiment of physical distress.

The scene was so extraordinarily comical that Faulconbridge could not contain himself. His laughter only died away when he remembered the quest on which he was engaged. Then he turned.

"You will feel better in a minute," he remarked as he went on. "Wait here until you have got your wind again."

For reply the Frenchman suddenly took his hat from his head and threw it violently on the ground as if to give vent to his anger.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "if I do not stop panting soon I feel I shall burst—burst, burst, burst. . . . *Nom de nom de Dieu. . . .*" And saying which he marched to the sloping grass bank of the country road and let himself drop to the ground as if he had been a mere sack of flour. "Cursed brutes, to induce respectable people to run—I shall never run again, I swear, no, not for fifty murders."

He went on mumbling to himself. He had forgotten all his fear and the reason he had rushed hither—he had forgotten everything in the immense distress which had come over him. The sight of the motionless carriage and the plunging horses awakened no curiosity in him—he wished only to refill his depleted lungs. Oh! the pain of his breathing. . . . From the distance Faulconbridge's voice came back once more :

“ If you see or hear anything, shout your loudest—I am following up the trail.”

“ Follow up the devil,” he muttered to himself. “ You come to this country and imagine life is a joke, as it has been for you elsewhere. A joke ! Poor fool ! I will teach you something, my fine gentleman, I promise you, before I have finished. . . . *Mon Dieu*—he is following up a trail—what does he think that means ? ”

Verdard looked at the carriage and the entangled horses.

“ Well, well,” he mumbled aloud once more, because talking seemed to give him relief, “ the usual tragedy. Somebody has been shot for reasons of jealousy, and then the coachman and the murderer cunningly carry off the body. I see it all from here—it has been a case of connivance. And to think that I took the trouble of running nearly one whole kilometer—or was it a thousand ?—in order to see it quickly ! What a fool, what a fool ! ”

He gave a short, derisive laugh, and sat silent. Then at last somewhat comforted, scrambling to his feet, he walked a little unsteadily forward to pick up the hat which he had so unceremoniously discarded.

As he bent down his foot struck against something hard. Instead of recovering his hat, he fumbled about on the ground until he had picked up this other object which suddenly interested him much more. It was too dark to be quite sure what it was, but his sense of touch told him enough to make him hurry up to the remaining carriage-lamp.

He whistled very loudly to himself as his eyes confirmed his suspicions.

“ Ho, ho,” he exclaimed, beginning to examine his

find very carefully. "It was a woman—it was a woman—the eternal woman! There was a woman in the case. Certainly I did not think of that!"

He turned and twisted the gold bracelet-watch in his hands as if trying to extract its secret by this gluttonous curiosity; then, seized with a new idea, he forced open the back of the watch, and peered in. Under a diminutive coat of arms he now managed to decipher a name in Russian, and underneath that—Paris and a date in French. . . . Now he stood with his mouth open, the picture of surprise and alarm.

"Verdard, Verdard," came Faulconbridge's voice, much more distantly than it had sounded before; "Verdard, Verdard, come here. I have found a wounded man."

"Yes, yes, I am coming," the Frenchman managed to answer, though he was so overwhelmed. "I am coming as quickly as I can."

He slipped the bracelet into his pocket and then picked up his hat. When he went forward he did so very slowly and reluctantly—with open fear in his manner.

"Where are you?" he called presently.

"In the bushes up here—follow the light," came the reply not very distinctly. For Faulconbridge was bending over the wounded man he had found, and having stanchd the bleeding as best he could, was listening to the poor man's heart, and wondering whether he was mortally wounded, and who had carried him here, and why he had been so suddenly abandoned. The victim lay very stiffly on his back—his face as pale as death, his blond beard making him appear in the cold white light of the carriage-

lamp even more spectral than he would have been had he been a dark man.

As he heard his companion approach, Faulconbridge shifted the carriage-lamp a little so as to throw the light on the wounds.

“Do you know anything about surgery?” he said, turning on Verdard roughly. He was more than displeased with him for what he thought his callousness—his wholly selfish attitude. He looked at him sternly and reprovingly.

“I knew once how to handle a knife in many ways.” Verdard laughed abruptly as he thought of his kitchen days, and then scratched his chin. “But a wounded man is a little different from a wounded rabbit. Still, there are things that one can do.”

He came up more quickly now. He was just preparing to kneel down beside the fallen man, when he stopped short and gave a half-suppressed cry.

“It is impossible,” he exclaimed again and again. “It is impossible, impossible, impossible. . . .” Then he added in a faltering voice: “It is the Baron Vonnergrot, dying perhaps. Baron Vonnergrot, my friend! Only a few hours ago I saw him at the hotel—I was talking to him, exchanging confidences with him, expecting to meet him soon again, but never, never like this. . . . Who would have suspected it—who would have suspected it? Ah, what does this mean—what does this mean?”

He had dropped to his knees as he talked on madly enough, and now, penknife in hand, he began hastily ripping away the wounded man’s clothing.

Faulconbridge, once more overcome by astonishment, stood there mutely. Now he was trying to remember something—something half buried at the

back of his mind. As the other finished, suddenly it came back to him.

"I have it at last," he exclaimed. "I knew I had seen him before. Yes, I have it, of course! He it is who came out of the hotel and posted a letter in the blind man's letter-box, and then went walking briskly away not knowing that he had been watched. This is the man, and no other."

"Your eyes are too keen," muttered Verdard, who was now hard at work. "We shall have to stop your seeing so much."

"What did you say?" inquired Faulconbridge between his teeth. He had the end of his handkerchief in his mouth and was beginning to tear it into long strips.

"Nothing, save that the bleeding seems better."

"Good, we may yet save him. . . . He is shot, as you will observe, in three places."

"But only one place is of importance, there under the ribs. Now let me feel——"

They worked in silence for a number of minutes, cutting away the shirt and ripping up the clothing, and then beginning to dress the wounds as best they could. They worked as all men work when their pity has been aroused; with something more than the mere tenderness of women—with awe in their manner—because men are simpler and more reverent than women in the presence of the unknown, and never dare to feel confident.

The prostrate man gave no sign of life. He lay there peacefully with his sightless eyes looking up to the merciful Heaven which seemed to have decreed his last hour. With his arms stretched wide apart in one great unmoving gesture, he lay there as if demand-

ing pardon for all his sins, as if supplicating forgiveness for all that of which he might have been guilty whilst his erring footsteps had wandered here below. His blond beard, pointing straight upwards, did not entirely conceal his pale lips, which remained slightly parted as if they had just spoken and were breathlessly awaiting the appointed answer. In the silence of the night, with only the cold stars watching, and a faint breeze mystically rustling the bushes around him, his was an enthralling figure for the philosophic mind.

Suddenly Verdard sighed sentimentally.

“It is a strange fate,” he murmured, “that should make this poor gentleman suffer thus. What has he done to deserve it all?”

“It is the fortune of war,” replied Faulconbridge, less emotionally, because he suspected the truth. “When you play a dangerous game you must expect others to take a hand.”

“Oh, oh, dangerous game,” grumbled Verdard, frowning at him. “You use words you perhaps do not understand. Will you kindly hold this? Good. That is better. It is all that we can do. Now the question arises——” He suddenly turned his head and then stopped short. “Hush—cover the lamp—voices——”

In the distance across the meadow, they saw a dim movement and a flickering light. The movement was manifestly in their direction, for the light was quickly advancing.

“What are we to do?” exclaimed Verdard in a hoarse whisper, clutching hold of his companion’s arm. “We dare not remain.”

“Hold your ground, man. Get up—stand over there. I will meet them.”

He pushed the Frenchman to one side and went forward a few steps—quickly, apprehensively.

There was, indeed, no time for more. For with the rustle of a skirt came a startled cry, and then the truth was out.

“Sasha,” he exclaimed, “Sasha,” recognizing her in an instinctive flash, and yet hardly believing the evidence of his eyes.

He stood there helplessly, as if utterly bewildered by this new blow. It was always her, at every turning of the day and night—always, always. . . .

But she was not heeding him. With a swift movement she had thrown her arms round the man who accompanied her and was calling wildly unknown words to him in Russian. It was not a moment too soon. A heavy bludgeon had been swung up in the air; in another second it would have crashed down on Faulconbridge’s devoted head.

“How wonderful, how wonderful,” she exclaimed as she turned to him. “Yes—it has become something more than chance—it is Destiny, Fate. . . . Though I did not send for you, you have come to my help.” She gave a little sob. “How did you come—how, how is such a thing possible? and is the poor man better?”

She had fallen on her knees beside the prostrate body without waiting for an answer. The loose cloak round her shoulders fell open as she knelt, and now Faulconbridge saw her white shoulders gleaming above the pink of the same costume which she had worn a few hours before when she had leaped so joyously on to the little stage in the gardens of the Anchorite. He looked at her kneeling there as if it were all a dream.

“Ivan, Ivan,” she called commandingly, without lifting her head.

Instinctively Faulconbridge lifted the light a little higher as the person who had accompanied her came forward. He could not repress another exclamation; the actors were, after all, very few. For it was the very self-same man whom he had seen with the metal alms-box in front of the hotel—the man who had begged in the company of the little girl—the blind man. But now—with the dark glasses removed—the eyes looked out keenly enough from a face which, though made dignified and patriarchal by the long white beard, seemed full of energy and suspicion.

Without a word he handed his mistress a small bundle which he had taken from under his blouse.

“But you have already bandaged him—he begins to stir,” she was murmuring. “How did you do it—how did you find him?”

She looked up at the tall Englishman with wondering eyes.

“It was very simple,” he said, watching her hold something to the stricken man’s nostrils. “We heard shots and a distant cry as we came from the Anchorite, and, of course, we ran in this direction.”

“We, you say we,” she interrupted, almost starting to her feet. There was new alarm in her manner—something he did not understand.

“Yes, my friend and I.”

“Your friend—your friend? Where is your friend?”

Faulconbridge turned: he had almost forgotten the Frenchman’s existence.

“Monsieur Verdard, Monsieur Verdard,” he called.

146 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

At the sound of that name the girl rose to her feet as if she had been stung.

"Where is this man?" she asked haughtily. "Where is this person?"

She looked at Faulconbridge threateningly now—with something in her manner which he had never seen before. He remembered suddenly Verdard's strange statements about her; there was, indeed, mystery upon mystery here, making the whole seem unfathomable.

But Verdard had come suddenly forward from behind the bushes where he had been standing. He had heard everything that had passed; and now that the time for concealment had disappeared he boldly assumed a new rôle.

"Good evening, Mademoiselle," he said, with his hat in his hand, and in his politest manner. "Permit me to restore to you the watch which you accidentally dropped in your retreat from the carriage."

With the instinctive bow of a histrionic people he handed her the bracelet. Then with a defiant air he fell back a step or two.

"What is the meaning of this farce?" she asked, just as haughtily, having taken the bracelet with a curt nod of thanks.

"This farce, this farce?" Verdard repeated the words in a way which showed that he was really mystified.

She stamped her foot in her growing chagrin.

"What have you to do with this gentleman? How came you here together? Speak. It was no chance that made you take him to the Anchorite."

She pointed with a swift movement to Faulconbridge.

Verdard, with the proverbial quickness of a frightened man, read into what she said a deeper meaning. Oh! yes—to him it was very plain. She assumed that he had been tampering with this Englishman—therefore she already reserved him for herself by some strange process for some stranger purpose. The way she had spoken before he had appeared proved that. Yes, a hundred times.

It was difficult in two short seconds to make quite sure of a dozen points, but his instinct had never yet played him false. So he began speaking quickly and easily :

“Chance—that blind goddess, Mademoiselle, threw us together. Chance—about which you talked yourself just now. How shall I explain? We met at the hotel in the midst of a great scene in the dining-room of the hotel Gastropol; we drove to the Anchorite in search of—amusement. We had supper in the glass restaurant; we came out to return most peacefully home; we found no carriage; we commenced walking—and then your disaster brought us here. It is a story of few words, as you see.” Having finished he looked at her steadily enough.

“Is that true?” she asked, plainly nonplussed, turning to Faulconbridge.

“Yes,” he said simply.

He was conscious that Verdard in some way had fallen from his high estate, was really nothing but an insignificant pawn in the game proceeding under his eyes—in fact, was a bag of bluff; and that this girl, whom he had roundly accused of being a spy, was something very different. Faulconbridge could not see meaning to it all; but at least the outlines were becoming clearer.

“It would be wise,” he said, suddenly coming back to the essential problem, “if we carried this wounded gentleman without further delay to the carriage and drove him to a surgeon.”

Sasha shook her head. Already she was kneeling beside him again.

“We will take him presently to a house near by, but he must become conscious first. We must not move him until he is better. What is that ? ”

A violent neigh had come from one of the unhurt horses on the road ; and then suddenly both stamped and plunged—only to become motionless again—as if resigned to their fate.

“Poor animals. I wonder what has happened to the rascally driver,” said Faulconbridge.

“He ran—ran immediately he heard the first shot and his horse fell. Coward—he is in Moscow by now ! ” Sasha’s voice thrilled with indignation, but something else claimed her attention.

The wounded man had suddenly stirred, and then faintly moaned.

“Ah,” she exclaimed, bending over him and pressing his hand. “Brother, brother,” she whispered very gently.

“Sister, sister,” he muttered faintly.

“Yes, it is I,” she bent lower and commenced whispering into his ear, her hand smoothing the hair back from his forehead all the while.

Presently she rose very quietly and turned to Faulconbridge.

“I think we can carry him,” she said, “if we go slowly and gently.”

XIV

A LITTLE house, half hidden by tall poplars so closely planted that they stood like serried ranks of soldiery on guard, loomed up darkly before the party as they slowly advanced carrying the stricken man.

At the threshold stood a little girl. Faulconbridge had no difficulty in recognizing her. It was the self-same child who had accompanied the tall, white-bearded man on his strange peregrinations with his metal alms-box slung round his neck. She stood in the blaze of light coming through the open door shading her eyes with one hand; and when she saw that all was well she gave a little cry of joy.

“You are already back, my baby,” called Sasha in her soft voice.

The child gave a laugh which broke into a sob, and then the soft Slavonic syllables raced from her lips:

“Yes; I ran all the way both going and returning—I ran all the way as fast as I could. It was very dark in many places. Twice I fell. . . .”

She put her hands up to her little bosom to show how it still affected her.

“Poor baby,” said Sasha caressingly, telling Faulconbridge what had been said. “But is he coming soon—at once?” she inquired.

“He will be here immediately—as fast as he can walk.” The child held back the door as they carried

150 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

in the wounded man. "I think I see him already. Yes, it is he." She clapped her hands sharply, in a peculiar way, which showed that it was a well-known signal.

"It is the Malny doctor," said Sasha to Faulconbridge in a low voice as they laid their burden on a sofa, and they heard him speak outside. "He is *our* doctor—a curious, faithful man whom you cannot help loving as we all love him. Has it tired you carrying him?"

She looked at Faulconbridge deeply. There was the same expression of pain and trouble in her eyes which he had seen before. Yet now the expression seemed much intensified; there were lines on her white face just as there was deep grief in her heart. A strange metamorphosis was taking place which was changing her almost beyond recognition—something subtle but potent—something which baffled him as much as her earlier inconsistencies had done.

"It was nothing for the two of us," he replied. "I could have carried him alone. He is not a heavy man."

"Yet you are strong," she rejoined thoughtfully. "The lightest man is heavy when he lies like lead—strength is a great thing—a useful thing." Then, before he had time to reply, she turned and went out to begin a rapid conversation with the new arrival, who was slowly taking off a big black muffler which almost entirely enveloped his head.

Faulconbridge, left to himself, looked round the room with keen interest. He had hardly time yet to find his bearings—to make up his mind as to what this strange affray and this stranger meeting might really mean. He did not know whether he should be sorry or happy—whether he should regret a chain of circum-

tances which could not be called entirely fortuitous. Should he retreat before it was too late—or boldly follow up an adventure which promised infinite variety? There was danger about, a vague, tantalizing sense of danger, but that instead of repelling him deepened his desire to probe this thing to the bottom.

The room was as mysterious as the rest had been. It was hardly furnished at all; it had a peculiar air which seemed to proclaim that it was not habitually lived in; indeed, it seemed to him that it was a convenience, much as a station waiting-room is a convenience for those pausing to take breath before some fresh flight. Yes—that must be it; it was a room adapted for meetings, for there were numbers of stools piled in one corner and a very large table. Somebody had brought in a samovar, which was now hissing and bubbling; and by it stood a jug of kvass, made of juniper berries, with a row of glasses.

He looked around for the venerable white-bearded man who had masqueraded with such tragic results as a blind man and a beggar. But he had already disappeared, and so had the little girl; and now, save for Verdard and the two talking together just outside the door, he was alone with the wounded man.

The wounded man—who was this man?

His eyes were now open, and these eyes seemed to be wandering vaguely round the room as if unable to understand what had occurred. Faulconbridge twice took a step forward to speak to him—but each time stopped short. No, he would not do it; it was not his business; it would do no good. Besides, he might not be even understood. Yet he was fairly tortured to know who he was, and why Sasha had been with him—and what she was to him. Yes—that above all

other questions—what was she to him? . . . He would have given much to be able to question her—only that he was determined to show no such curiosity. And so he stood torturing himself with unanswerable questions.

And Monsieur Verdard was doing quite a lot of uneasy thinking, too. Still sombre and offended and very much out of humour with the world, he stood silently in his own corner of the room, observing and remaining unobserved. With French quickness he had already gauged much. Indeed, he smiled frequently and ironically to himself as he noticed Faulconbridge's concern, and the manner in which he tried to hide it, and the signal manner in which he failed. To Verdard it was all as plain as if it had been written down—he had discovered what he already called the Englishman's secret. He was in love with this girl—so much so that he had followed her to Moscow and was only waiting for an opportunity to take her away with him.

Verdard wondered how he could turn that to his own advantage—it was necessary to turn it to his own advantage quickly. For now he realized more clearly than he had ever done before that he—the bold conspirator—had run his course, and that with the Baron wounded—perhaps even dying—hereafter the reckoning would be openly against him. And there was still the settling with this Polish girl.

With fresh interest he silently observed her, wondering if this Englishman were the weak spot in her armour—if Verdard could have been certain of that he would have been happier. When had she met this man? How had she met this man? Who was this man? Ah, those were questions which he would dearly love to have answered! His position in this cursed country was highly unenviable, he muttered.

He watched her fling off with swift hands the lace mantilla round her head, and the cloak from her shoulders.

“In a minute everything will be ready. Talk to one another whilst I am away,” she cried, as she darted off. And as she disappeared the doctor came quietly forward.

“Good evening, sir,” he said in perfect English to Faulconbridge, only bowing very slightly to Verdard. It was evident that the doctor was very much at home in this room, and that everything had been fully explained to him. He came forward in a strangely courteous manner, still holding his little black bag in one hand; the other he held out in a very friendly way.

“I hope you will find this case not so very desperate,” said Faulconbridge, studying him keenly.

The doctor smiled in a kindly manner. He had a full brown beard and wore glasses, and there was that about him which won instant confidence.

“Bullet wounds, bullet wounds. I have seen so many! If they are dangerous their work is quickly accomplished. If, on the other hand, the vital parts are uninjured, they are nothing at all. No—really nothing. I could tell you some strange stories of men shot to pieces who have lived to laugh over their cruel experiences!”

He threw open his little bag, and with a few rapid movements laid out his instruments on the table. Then he took off his own coat, rolled up his sleeves, put on a white apron, and commenced washing his hands in the contents of a large bottle he had brought with him. His manner was somehow that of a surgeon on a field of battle rather than that of a doctor in a very plain little dwelling-house.

“ Now,” he said briskly, “ let me examine our friend. It is necessary to have all the light possible ; sir, will you kindly hold that lamp—very steadily? Thank you.” Then they settled down to the job—the wounded man closing his eyes, and lying as still as death, and never breathing a word.

In less than half an hour the doctor had finished, and was packing up his case.

“ It is nothing,” he said in his gentle way. “ Those bullets were fired from an old-fashioned pocket revolver of no value—a very stupid firearm. He may have a little fever, but the wounds are of no importance—it was the bleeding that caused all the trouble. You see, the human body is tough, and can stand much if you do not bleed too much. Do you know that a man can stand worse wounds than a horse? I have seen men so shot that it seemed cruel to try to make them live. And yet they lived, perhaps because in Russia there is so much to do. So much to do,” he repeated softly, dwelling on the words with dreamy insistence.

Then quickly he turned.

“ You must get your patient upstairs,” he said, still in English, to Sasha, who was standing there deep in thought, “ and he must be left alone in perfect quiet for as long as possible. As for these gentlemen, there is nothing more for them to do.” The doctor looked at Sasha meaningly.

“ It is almost day,” she said at once to Faulconbridge, “ and if you continue down the road which runs straight to the left you will soon meet a carriage. How can I thank you. Now go.”

She held out a hand, let him hold it for an instant,

looked at him meaningly, and then, turning quickly, began giving orders in Russian.

Faulconbridge did not remember until he was outside in the passage-way that Verdard had mysteriously disappeared without so much as saying a word to him. Well, after all that had happened, perhaps that was not so very strange. . . .

Hidden behind the poplars, making his small frame so small that the sharpest eye could scarcely have detected him, absolutely motionless—like a wild animal in his lair—lay Gavriloff, the small, ugly man who was so ubiquitous.

There was a vague, strange smile on his lips, a smile which would have certainly conveyed whole worlds of meaning to anyone who had known in all its detail his curious chequered past, his rapid changes of fortune, his leaps from ignominy to affluence, and then from affluence back to ignominy again. The smile on his face now seemed to say that he had at last seen Fortune suddenly draw so near that he only required to stretch out his hand to grasp her—to hold the jade tight in his hand, and to do with her as he willed. . . . If he managed this thing by himself—if he accounted for all of them, one by one, in the next few days—what might he not claim for reward?

Yet there was more in that smile. It was the smile of a man of evil instincts—a man whose appetite has been aroused and who craves more of the food on which he has cruelly fed himself. It was the smile of a viler Robespierre—that incarnation of so-called mystical exaltation which is the lowest kind of human exaltation; the smile of the cruel devil who only lost his laugh by a stroke of that same implacable knife which

had taken so many other heads from trembling shoulders because of his decrees.

Gavrilloff had shot the poor dreamer—had shot him to kill. Yet now he was more pleased than he would have been had his victim lain stone dead—he was sure from the manner in which the stricken man had been carried that he was no more than severely wounded. He had shot him because he was authorized to perform such acts—whenever he had proofs to satisfy his chiefs, which really meant whenever he could act with such prudence as to cause no public scandal. With him there never was any public scandal; his poor victims were only too glad to lie forgotten. He had planned this particular stroke with audacity and cunning. And he had struck so swiftly that nobody could have done more than suspect who had been the assassin.

He smiled more deeply as he thought of that—it had been beautifully done on the spur of the moment with his trusty old revolver. He had picked off the nearest horse, brought the carriage to a standstill, and then shot his man three times at his case from behind a bush not ten feet away. He had been minded to give the girl one chamber of his revolver as she had flung her arms round her companion, only that he needed her for his other plans. Just now to have disposed of her would have brought small credit—a more pressing occasion would mean greater glory. . . .

They were sorry fools, he said to himself, with his smile deepening, to use girls so much: if he had the direction of a big cause he would not have a single woman mixed up in it. They were too emotional—always giving way to impulse! Fancy, throwing her arms round a living target. . . .

As he lay there with the dawn creeping down upon

him he saw the tall Englishman come out of the house—the Englishman he had so cleverly suspected at the very beginning. He saw him come out and walk slowly, as if he were deep in thought. He passed so close to him that he could have shot him down with the ease with which a hunter picks off a grazing deer that suddenly stands still and exposes his whole flank. It reminded him of a scene years ago in Turkestan—on the rocks—when he had let a Kurd pass by him like that right under the very muzzle of his infantryman's rifle, so that he might capture him and let the camp hang the man and then cut off his head. This man was just as safe—so long as they never lost sight of the girl. That was the key—the girl. . . .

He lay quietly there for some minutes longer to make sure that no fresh developments, which would throw fresh light on these people, would take place. Then, convinced that this act had been played out—that there was nothing more to detain him—he got slowly up, stretched himself, yawned, and slipped away. It was time to sleep. . . .

Day had come—a solemn, peaceful light flooded the green woods ; and the birds, calling to one another in sudden joyful notes, had begun to fly away slowly and heavily in search of food. . . .

XV

IN the little house new developments were in progress—remarkable enough to students of cause and effect.

“Now that everything is in order,” Sasha had exclaimed, no sooner had the door closed on Faulconbridge, “I wish you, dear doctor, to be present at a little interview which has become necessary.”

The doctor was drying his hands on a towel, which did not greatly delight him, to judge by the expression on his face. When he had finished with it he threw it under the table with a gesture of contempt.

“It is a pity that cleanliness is not more generally understood in our beloved country. Dirt, dirt, dirt,” he remarked grumblingly, and yet rather cheerfully. Then he took out his cigarette-case, and lighting another of his eternal cigarettes, inhaled deeply several times. “What has Verdard done this time?” he inquired suddenly and sharply, showing that he had been waiting for this.

The girl flushed with strong emotion, and then, yielding to an uncontrollable impulse, stamped her foot.

“The man is a fool,” she exclaimed hotly. “He is a clumsy fool, too—always doing the wrong thing—always blundering into some one of us on purpose. That is to say, I do not think he is a simple fool, but a malicious fool. Sergei should never have employed

him—even if he has proved useful with these importations across the frontier. Foreigners are always disappointing.”

The doctor shrugged his shoulders with Slavonic expressiveness, and then smiled his singularly sweet smile.

“The human race is much more to be pitied than condemned—if we only knew it. We are not fools because we like being fools, but because it is natural to us. You are too severe, Alexandra Alexandrovna; you are exactly like your poor father. I remember on one occasion he beat a young coachman so badly that it took me two weeks to cure him. And then we found out, when the poor fellow could speak, that it was really the wrong man! How I laughed! I was very young. The years have gone by since then—faster and faster and faster. Dear me, you must not be too much like your poor father, Alexandra Alexandrovna, not too impetuous——” He stopped abruptly and went to the window. “It is already dawn, and the day will be beautiful,” he murmured.

Upstairs Verdard was waiting for them, as they exchanged these remarks, and his mood was not pleasant. He owed no obedience to these people, he angrily said to himself, trying to muster up sufficient resolution to leave the house, and yet restrained by a natural cautiousness—and a growing sense of danger.

He recognized that he had acted clumsily ever since he had accidentally found the gold bracelet lying on the road: he should have gone away with that in his pocket and left the foolish Englishman to make what he could of the business alone. But something had for a few moments got the better of his caution—and he was being well repaid! He was sure it

was the wine he had drunk which had betrayed him ; he had been guilty of follies that night which seemed to him already quite incredible.

Why was this devilish Polish girl in Moscow at this juncture ? He could not imagine—he had no idea. Yet he was sure of one thing : had he but known of her presence he would never have been so expansive with the Baron—volunteering to face danger the way he had done. He would have gone quietly back to the frontier, and waited for instructions after the prescribed plan. He would get the worst of it in any contest with her, he felt sure. She could twist the Baron round her little finger—otherwise he would not have been such a fool as to be caught as he had been in the small hours of the morning on a lonely road. What could the Baron see in this girl ? he wondered. Fancy a man of his talents in the clutches of such a minx ! And she was angry—doubly angry with him now. It therefore followed that she could make things very unpleasant. Ever since he had arrived in Moscow things had gone wrong for him. . . .

Now as he heard footsteps approach he made an effort to collect himself and to feign indifference. He was relieved to find that Sasha had not come alone.

“ I will not sit down,” she said coldly, in answer to his attempt to offer her a chair. “ Our discussion will not last long. It is only necessary for us to understand one another—as quickly as possible.”

The Frenchman bowed in his clumsy way.

“ I think that there should be no difficulty in that,” he remarked smoothly.

Sasha gave a short laugh : even to him her face looked pale and overstrained in the crude light of the dawn which was flooding through the window ; and

because of her costume of pink satin her manner appeared almost theatrical.

“ I do not doubt it—I shall give you no opportunity of misunderstanding me, though I can quite believe that you would like me to think, as in Warsaw, that you are a very innocent person.”

“ Gently, gently,” said the doctor, coming nearer and taking her hand for an instant ; “ let us keep to the point.”

He looked into her face gravely and searchingly as if seeking for some motive for her outbursts. Sasha was becoming irritable—extremely irritable, there was no doubt about that—Sasha, who had always been so gay and light-hearted ever since childhood.

She released her hand with a shrugging movement of the shoulders, and now, looking into the Frenchman’s eyes, she addressed him—straight to the point.

“ Why did you come to Moscow—without orders ? ”

“ Why did I come to Moscow ? ” echoed Verdard, as if he hardly understood. “ Because I had a new scheme, about which I wrote in advance—a scheme which is now wrecked, after I had devoted weeks of work to perfecting all the details. Monsieur le Baron wrecked it wholly and utterly by a simple statement.”

“ You mean ? ”

“ Monsieur le Baron told me in absolute terms that the time for preparations had gone by and that the time for action was fast arriving, and that if I did not like it I had best return to France. I answered that I would take my place with the rest, even though such a low opinion of me seems to prevail—in the firing-line if necessary.”

“ Ah,” exclaimed Sasha and the doctor simul-

taneously. They looked at one another in open surprise. Then the doctor walked slowly to the window. It was apparent that he had become very reflective.

Sasha was the first to regain her first attitude. She had not supposed that anyone would have been so complaisant as to give this man an inkling of the great things that were preparing.

“ Well, admitting what you say is true, I return to my first question. Who authorized you to come to Moscow—who authorized you ? ”

She drew a step nearer, and the expression on her face made her features look sharper, less girlish, indeed almost cruel. There was authority there, the look which is not acquired, but comes from birth.

Verdard eyed her doubtfully: he was rather frightened.

“ No one authorized me,” he confessed finally, with a certain sullenness of manner which was not inviting, “ but I wrote announcing my arrival, and the Baron duly received me.” He was cornered, and like all cornered men, he was prepared to become ugly in any way that suggested itself.

Sasha turned to the doctor.

“ You see, what did I say? The man is a fool,” she said in a low voice, speaking in Polish; “ and of all fools the worst is the one who thinks himself clever. This one will get us into worse trouble yet—unless he is checked at once.”

The doctor had apparently no comment to offer; he merely shrugged his shoulders and continued to look out of the window.

“ You are a babbler, too,” resumed Sasha in French, quite unrelentingly, because women are always unrelenting wherever their lovers are not concerned.

“ You have never yet explained or justified what you did in Warsaw two months ago—when you told some friends that you knew all about me, and that women were not so clever as they thought themselves. You had the impudence to relate the unfortunate affair of the Grand Duke’s letters.”

Verdard made a violent gesture.

“ I swear——” he began.

Sasha held up a contemptuous hand.

“ Spare yourself the trouble ! I received that from three separate sources—and I have seen to it that it has been reported against you. You had no business to know anything about me or my work.”

“ Gorkhoff told me.”

“ Indeed, and what business had you to know Gorkhoff ? ”

“ I met him once by order.”

“ And did the instructions include exchanging confidences ? ”

The doctor suddenly intervened.

“ Alexandra Alexandrovna,” he said in a low voice, “ have done with this man. All this is of no importance now. The present is alone important.”

For a moment her answer remained uncertain. Then, with wonderful inconsistency, she suddenly laughed gaily as if her anger and her impatience had only been feigned.

“ You are right,” she confessed with apparent ingenuousness ; “ the present is alone important, and we have not yet made up our minds as to who shot the Baron. Perhaps our French friend can help us.”

In spite of herself her lip curled a little as she said that.

“ Or Monsieur Faulconbridge, the English friend,”

suggested Verdard, by way of reply, firing a shot at random.

“ Ah, that Englishman,” exclaimed the doctor, suddenly rubbing his hands ; “ and why should he know ? ”

Verdard’s moment had come.

“ He is an observant man, and silent.”

“ Ah,” exclaimed Sasha and the doctor simultaneously, just as they had done once before. But this time their motives were different—quite different. The girl, indeed, appeared suddenly lost in thought. She stood there with her fingers up to her lips and her eyes looking far away.

Verdard pressed the advantage which he felt he had gained.

“ He should be questioned,” he resumed very deliberately, “ because he has the habit of noticing everything, and carefully noting it down—one would almost suppose that his curiosity is due to something very peculiar. At the Anchorite, for instance, it so happened, Mademoiselle, that hardly had you commenced singing before he commenced questioning me closely about you. He wished to know everything—he asked me many questions about you—and I told him nothing, saying that I had never seen you before. When one has the cause at heart it is wise to be superlatively careful. But he penetrated my dissimulation, his manner told me that, and he has been resentful ever since. The English are like that—childish when you lie to them—an absurd race.”

“ You say he heard me sing ? ” put in Sasha, who had listened breathlessly ; and then straightaway she forgot all about the many bones she had to pick with this fat, inquisitive fellow.

Verdard saw the change. It was time to be cunning—well, he would try.

He cleared his throat and assumed a more determined attitude.

“Mademoiselle,” he began again very smoothly, “whilst I am sensible of the fact that I am a poor sinner, it may interest you to know that I still have my uses——”

“Your uses?” repeated Sasha, who was still very distraite.

“Yes, my uses. For instance, I know precisely the precipitating cause of this night’s disaster.”

The doctor, who had been willing to stand almost silent these many minutes, now became extraordinarily interested.

“Explain yourself,” he exclaimed, coming nearer.

“I will tell you the story in twenty words. The Baron had the imprudence to post a paper in front of the hotel—I presume to the Central Committee, since it went into the alms-box. You have only to question the man Ivan. I saw it from my window. If I saw it, others must have seen it.” He paused deliberately so as to give peculiar emphasis to his final words: “I know that at least two persons were made cognizant of this imprudence.”

“Two?” The doctor and Sasha repeated the word simultaneously.

Verdard’s moment of triumph had come.

“One was the spy Gavrilloff, the other this Englishman.”

“Gavrilloff—Gavrilloff?” repeated his listeners in wonderment.

The Frenchman made a violent protesting movement with both his hands.

“Is it necessary to put everything down to this wretched Gavriloff directly there is a tragedy? I would ask one question—who is this Mr. Faulconbridge?”

He looked slowly and meaningly from the doctor to the girl, and then back to the doctor, whose face still expressed the strangest surprise.

Sasha had instantly flushed. Now she turned on the spokesman with something more than her old fire.

“Ah! I knew you were a fool, nothing but a fool! You cannot recognize an honest man—a gentleman—when you see one. Mr. Faulconbridge has certainly nothing to do with this—no more to do with it than I have. How can you say such things?” Then she stopped abruptly, blushing deeply in spite of herself, wondering if she had gone too far.

“Wait a minute,” interrupted the doctor. “Let us understand this matter more clearly. It will be necessary to report all the circumstances at once. Verdard has right on his side. I can include it all in my report. Let me sit down and make some notes.”

He went to a small table and drew up the only chair.

What followed was as much in accordance with the witty laws of comedy as the rest had been.

“I will leave you, then, to make your notes,” broke in Sasha suddenly and impulsively; “but remember, Verdard, that though I forgive you for the past, the future will not find me so relenting. Doctor, you will find me with your patient.”

With that she slipped from the room before there was time to protest—leaving the doctor staring at Verdard and Verdard staring at the doctor.

Yet she was quite indifferent to what they might

both think of her. She was full of a strange new excitement—an excitement which filled her with wonder.

The thing was being thrust upon her from all sides—the idea had at last taken definite shape. She could no longer hold back.

XVI

AFTER such a night, how could a man sleep—how could he hope to take up again the threads of normal life—how could he retain the normal view? The cat was out of the bag at last—and what a cat it was! The world was a world tilted upside down—a mad place, with impossibilities gaily jostling one another like the crowds in the market-places—with everything out of focus—and the figures on the slide dancing an endless *Danse Macabre*.

“What a night, what a night,” murmured Faulconbridge to himself again and again as he tossed and turned, and tried to sleep, and only kept on thinking more and more madly.

Why should he, a complete stranger, have taken part in it all? What had thrust him into the thick of it? He did not know—he could not say. The sequence of extravagances, the web of entanglements, had grown so rapidly that he had almost lost count of them—almost forgotten that they were extravagant—until just now. It was only when he picked them out of their peculiar surroundings, and held them up to the calm light of day, that they seemed so grotesque, so double-faced. And he was in the midst of these things—surrounded, with his retreat cut off. He could not begin to imagine how it would all end; a normal ending was out of the question.

He thought on. No wonder an air of unreality—a

strange theatrical note, had pressed itself so much on his attention from the very first moment of his arrival. It seemed to him that to account for the fierce hilarity, the wild desire to enjoy life, which was everywhere uppermost among this people, there was nothing necessary but these clashing values—this open gambling with the hidden future. Even death here could not be the gloomy, austere, depressing ending it generally was. This people tried to conceive of it as a cheerful thing—a plaything—a possible chance in a lottery—a little accident, but never a dread fatality. There was something fascinating in that way of looking at life : as nothing but a succession of pistol-shots fired at a man as he ran, a long succession of pistol-shots, crackling unendingly. . . No—no, he was confusing again—that was what had happened last night to one man and to no one else. And yet it was what would happen to them all sooner or later—every man and woman of them—since they really desired it.

Even to Sasha !

His heart leaped. Surely it would not be her fate. It was too cruel and brutal. And yet she was made of the same clay—she was chipped from the same block—she must be filled with the same ideas. Of course, she had some reason for acting the way she did with him—she was fighting out some struggle as a preliminary to something else.

He could not help thinking of her that way. Soon the others became grouped round her as a mere setting to a central figure—like the disciples round a great Buddha—with an aureole crowning her—very bright and glittering. The wounded man, with the strangely poetic beard, the philosophic doctor, the tall, white-bearded peasant, the little girl, the fat, shallow French-

man—they were her slaves, just as he was her slave. . . .

Sasha—the name was as sweet to him as the odour of a flower. It was the most charming of diminutives. How soft were the sibilants of this language—they were like the murmur of waters that glide over polished rocks and push gently in front of them broken twigs and fallen leaves to the sound of their unending reverie.

Her eyes, he liked her eyes—they were always looking for something far away—he hated eyes that were for ever centred on the present. Her eyes did not laugh as did her mouth ; they were grave—very grave. Perhaps they contemplated something tragic and fatal—perhaps they already dreamily looked upon something that was hidden from others.

Her hair, he liked her hair. It was not only the colour of it, or the softness of it, or its abundance : it was the way she dressed it. The heavy plaits, twisted round her head in that purely Russian fashion, removed her very far indeed from the world of conventions which he had so far known. She belonged to something which was more intense, more primitive, more spiritual, because it had grown up uninfluenced by decadent civilizations. In spite of her arts and artifices, she was somehow a woodland girl.

And her hands, her arms, and the manner in which she used them. They trembled with budding powers ; they were brimming over with life ; they were made for embraces, not gross, but dear—for something which would inspire the soul just as much as it would enrapture the flesh. He had never seen such hands or such arms.

And she could sing—she had sung to him from the very beginning.

Now she was once again leaning forward laughingly before the footlights, accepting with little gestures of delight the great waves of applause which came from the crowds scattered under the dark trees. The skirt of her pink costume stood out stiffly and severely and seemed to accentuate the graceful lines of her corsage. Her eyes, dancing with excitement, were never quiet a second. Alive with a dozen emotions, they swept the audience, never alighting on a single face, always glancing off with the rapidity of lightning, always moving on. Perhaps they were looking for him, unconsciously, irresistibly. . . . Who could tell, who could tell? Now he heard again the excited comments of his neighbours ; he felt their pressure as they tried to push nearer to the seductive scene. Then, as he, too, pushed forward with his neighbours, an ominous thunder mixed with his tender thoughts. In vain he tried to shut his ears against it, to recover the gentler impression. But the thunder was persistent and would not be denied. In growing irritation, he made a sharp protesting movement to push it away, to stop it, and suddenly—woke up.

Somebody was knocking loudly, as if the business were pressing ; somebody was knocking more and more loudly.

Faulconbridge sprang to his feet, and presently, as he opened the door, he had that odd shock of surprise which so often comes when a past association which has been long haunting the brain is suddenly materialized in the flesh.

It was no other person than the doctor—the Malny doctor as they called him—now very correctly dressed in a black frock-coat, with a silver-mounted stick in his hand, and a flower in his button-hole. He stood

there for a moment, framed in the doorway, as if he were silently considering how he should best excuse himself—best explain, without loss of time, the reason which had brought him hither.

“ Good afternoon,” he said finally, with his charming benevolent smile overflowing his face; “ I must ask your humble pardon for intruding like this—I who am a complete stranger to you—but I have a little matter to discuss, and ”—he hesitated for the veriest fraction of a second—“ I do not like hotel servants as heralds. You understand ? ” Then he smiled again as he stood there with that perfect grace of manner which Russians alone possess in common with Spaniards. Perhaps that Oriental ease was acquired in ages past, when at opposite ends of Europe these two races touched hands with the courtly East.

“ There is no need to apologize,” said Faulconbridge, “ though I confess you took me unawares. I must have slept.”

He looked at his watch, and his face expressed surprise.

“ Yes,” said the doctor, coming forward softly and placing his hat and stick on a chair and gravely nodding to the younger man, “ it is three o’clock in the afternoon and more. Nature, our great universal mother, stretches out her arms to us whenever we are weary—and then we sleep—or die. . . .”

He watched his companion throw back the window curtains with the same thoughtful manner, and when he came back towards him, it was he who waved him to a chair. Some men are like that; they take command of a situation much as a captain takes command of his ship.

“ I have come to ask you,” said the doctor, without

further ado, "to preserve the strictest secrecy about everything that occurred last night. It is quite essential—I can assure you. I have only to bring certain circumstances to your notice, knowing you to be an honourable man—a gentleman—to have you at once understand how important it is for the safety of numbers of people that no word of what happened gets bruited abroad."

He looked up interrogatively—with a world of meaning in his eyes.

"You have my word now," said Faulconbridge gravely.

"Thank you, sir," said the doctor, in his deep, sonorous voice, speaking very slowly.

There was something noble in the manner in which he pronounced the last word. He said it with a grave courtesy rooted in something deeper than polite convention. It was assuredly one gentleman speaking to another.

"The facts concerning last night are very simple," he resumed in his earnest way, after a brief pause, "and I am told that you actually saw the precipitating cause—a paper put into a collection-box." Faulconbridge inclined his head. "Russia is a strange land, and you would probably understand nothing if I simply told you that Baron Vonnergrot, the victim, was shot by a police spy, as we believe, so as to complicate the perfecting of plans which have not yet been quite matured. I therefore must be more explicit and give you some of the background—some of the big web of entanglements which we are trying to brush aside. You know what every reader of newspapers knows, that this great country is full of unrest, is stirring with strange movements; and that our disastrous war in Asia is

servicing to bring to a head issues which have too long lain dormant. About these things I need not tell you—but there are other things which you should know. . . . I must try to be comprehensive.”

He drew a long breath, crossed his legs, folded his hands, and looked out of the window as if he were lost in thought. There was an immense magnetism about the man—the iron which is in all men’s souls was irresistibly drawn to him. Faulconbridge’s eyes never left his face.

At last the doctor spoke—suddenly and bitterly.

“I am a Jew! I see that you look surprised, that you do not completely understand—well, I will enlighten you. The reason why I—a Jew—am here explaining to you the complexities of Russian national life—the meaning of our many sudden tragedies, of which you have seen a curious example—those reasons, I say, are historical. It has been said many times, but I must say it again—the Revolutionary movement in Russia is a Jewish movement—the brains are Jewish, the money is Jewish, the organization is Jewish. This is nothing but what it should be when our history is understood—that is our unhappy history in this land.”

“The Russian Jews are among the most ancient inhabitants of the empire—they were here as soon as the Scythians; for it has been established by many positive proofs that they had settled along the shores of the Black Sea as early as the third century before Christ. Always foremost in commerce and the arts, the economic expansion which followed the conquests of Alexander the Great, all through the regions in touch with the Mediterranean, saw them quickly spread into all the new Greek towns in the Crimea,

as well as into many newly opened centres in Asia. It is a fact, which is now generally accepted, that in Russia they prospered and were respected so much that centuries later many Ugro-Finnish tribes were actually converted to the Mosaic faith, the process only being arrested by the fiendish cruelty of the pagan Slavs." He drew a deep breath, and then went on more slowly: "I will pass that by, however. That is not the point on which I wish you to concentrate your attention. What I wish you to understand is that there were Jews in Russia long before the rise of Christianity, long before the Slavs adopted the Christian teaching, long before the smallest conception of a state had penetrated the minds of these uncouth tribes. We have no records to prove that the brains which planned the building-up of Muscovy were Jewish, though we strongly suspect it, but at least we know that in those unending wars between the Slavonic princes, the Jews always took an active and a leading part. They were found in large numbers in the different camps, taking up arms in the service of this or that prince, aiding and abetting, planning and building, always foremost in war as in peace. Understand me well. Slav and Jew fought side by side, undertook military expeditions, defended the country against foreign invasions. A remarkable thing in the Polish wars was the number of our Jewish soldiers. The Jews in those days enjoyed absolutely equal civil and political rights with their fellow-citizens—rights which were in no wise abated during the period of the Mongol dominion. Thus they were to all intents and purposes Slavs. They had assimilated themselves to such an extent that they spoke the language and bore Slavonic names. How and why was this happy condition changed?"

As the doctor asked this question in his deep, solemn voice, he suddenly uncrossed his legs and stood up. It was as if his curious monologue had become charged with a new and deeper meaning. Now he intended to denounce.

He was no longer looking at his companion as he had previously done. His eyes now gazed out of the window—perhaps at the great blue dome which not only answers every mortal question, but tells us before those questions are even spoken that it is really useless to inquire. . . .

“It was all changed,” he said slowly, “by the accession of the Romanoffs—Germans, nothing but pure Germans. The Romanoffs are the traditional enemies of the Jews; they have shown themselves in their senseless persecutions far worse than the Spaniards in the days following the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula—those gloomy days when the descendants of the Arab conquerors were treated like dogs. This is how our Jewish *débâcle* came about.”

“As you doubtless know, Poland has always contained immense numbers of our people. Under the rule of the Polish kings they enjoyed the fullest liberty; but when the Czars were drawn into the last Polish wars the death-knell of their happiness was sounded. No sooner was Poland finally conquered and annexed in 1772 than our people, though they had thus automatically become Russian subjects, were treated as aliens and slaves. Russia, herself semi-barbarous, was vainly pursuing the phantom of a unity of faith—the former dream of Rome—and the Jews were consequently treated as the enemies of Christ. From that day to this our story has been a simple one. It can be

summed up in one word—*pogrom*—which even you in England know means massacre. We have been accused again and again of the most fantastic crimes, the slaying of babes, sacrilege in churches, of many hideous and senseless things, and for these we have been cruelly massacred. It is for this reason that we must revolt and revolt again until we come to our own. For we are no longer alone; we have found allies. . . . All Poland is with us, and then we have behind us the working classes, the people, the whole of their united strength is on our side. That great body of men that has been ground down by violence is at last awake and is now uniting—the will of the people is aroused. Do you know the great, simple story of this land? When I have told you that I will have finished—and can say good-bye.”

Now he told the story of Russia as if he had witnessed it all—the story of how, in the teeth of enormous difficulties, this hostile land of woods and forests had been slowly conquered. As he spoke you could hear the blows of the heavy axes wielded by vigorous arms. You could see the men draining the morasses as they penetrated further and further into the depths of dense forests, following the course of frozen rivers, subduing the savage country, and laying it out. But the princes, the governors of the people, cut up this land which had been so hardly won, and availing themselves of the strong arms of the people, they waged war among one another only to despoil the people. Then the Tartars came from the steppes, and among all the princes not a single one fought for the freedom of the people; neither honour, nor strength, nor intelligence, was to be found among them. They sold the people to the Tartars—peddled them like cattle to

the Khans, and then purchased, at the price of their peasants' blood, princely power over them. Then, when at length they had cut the throats of the Khans, or had driven them out of the country, there remained nothing but a nation of slaves.

"That is the story of Russia," concluded the doctor; "that is the real story; there is nothing else, nothing at all."

He stood up, and walked to the window, very slowly, as if he were weary and footsore, as if not only in spirit, but in the very flesh, he had travelled that immense road of pain and suffering which he had so eloquently traced in the history of a nation.

He stood there presenting his broad back, his great head sunk between his shoulders, his long, loose arms, to the man he had come to see and win over to an understanding of complexities, as if he had forgotten his object, as if such a paltry matter as a single man had slipped from his mind when he was considering the condition of a deathless race. In that rugged outline, thrown against the daylight, was perhaps the outline of the problem itself—ill-balanced, full of primeval force, silent and noisy by fits and starts, with unfathomed reserves of strength hidden so deep down that, like the springs of life itself, it was impossible properly to discover the why or the wherefore. . . .

He had turned before Faulconbridge had realized it, with his sad, winning smile lighting up his dark bearded face as sunshine lights up a densely wooded countryside.

"And now I come to the end—my own personal tragic end," he said.

"Forty, or perhaps it was fifty years ago, my father, who came from Poland, became interested in this great

problem. Like myself, he was a doctor—a good and learned doctor in the dark days of medicine. He became interested in this problem, I say, because cruelty hurt him ; because cruelty burnt him just as a red-hot iron burns. He could not endure the things he saw about him—the injustices, the gross abuses ; and so it came to pass that he joined a Liberal League in the small provincial town where we then lived.

“ I was so small that I remember few things concerning those days, save that during the night meetings often took place in our house at which the discussions lasted until dawn. But one night a detachment of soldiers under a captain arrived suddenly, and my father was given a paper to read. A generation ago they settled matters more simply than to-day. It appeared that my father had the choice of a due trial, which would certainly end in perpetual banishment to Siberia—as well as in the conviction of all his friends and associates—or instant death. He chose the latter. The captain invited him to follow him to a solitary place—and by his permission, I, the only child, was allowed to accompany him. Without delay we set out. I remember it so well, so well—every detail, every little thing. . . .

“ It was moonlight ; black shadows surrounded us ; and we had soon left the town behind. On and on we went. I can still see the forest silently creeping up to the hills, and above the peaks, the stars, like birds of fire, twinkling between the branches of the trees. Somewhere—it could not have been far from us—a brook was murmuring ; an owl hooted from time to time in the woods ; whilst our footsteps, like the beating of a military measure, rose and fell regularly in the night air.

“ Silently, with never so much as a word or a whisper from our captors, we marched on. All the time my father held me by the hand, and talked to me gently about life, and how it was necessary to be just, and strong, and brave, and resolute, and simple, but concerning himself he never spoke a word. His voice fell on my ears like a prayer which would save my soul whenever it was endangered.

“ Oh, that terrible night !

“ The sun was already rising behind the mountain, the night hiding herself fearfully in the woods, the birds called to one another, tiny clouds stood in rose-hued ranks above our heads, when at last we reached our destination. My father was a tall man, and as if in honour of his height they picked out the tallest tree.

“ ‘ Now,’ said the captain gruffly, ‘ my duty is unpleasant : let me execute it quickly. Say good-bye to your son.’

“ My father clasped me in a last embrace ; then, with a movement of resolution, he pushed me from him, took his stand in the appointed place—and they fired. . . .”

The doctor finished abruptly. All through his story he had added a vividness to his description by quick movements of the hand and head, by his flashing eyes, his Slav fire—so that his auditor could see the scene as he had seen it ; could feel the stillness of the mountains, could hear the whisper of the woods, could see the gloomy band steadily advancing. Now, with a last gesture, he showed how his father had fallen with his face on the wet stones, and how he himself had knelt beside him. It was tremendous.

Involuntarily Faulconbridge gave an exclamation ; then, breathing deeply, he recovered himself and fell

back again in his chair. During the whole long narrative he had never once moved.

The doctor had seated himself. He was quite out of breath, bathed in sweat, and great tears were shining in his mournful eyes.

“It is thirty-two years ago,” he said softly, “thirty-two long years, which have gone by so slowly, but I have never forgotten. I have been to America, I have been to Africa, I have been to Australia, indeed to a round dozen of distant places, but I cannot forget, I cannot forget. How can I forget—oh! tell me *how?* . . . I will always remember—yes, always. And when I tell that story I could weep like a woman—only more terribly scalding tears, bitter tears, terrible tears—only that I am a man, and must try to remember my manhood.”

Now he smiled sweetly, as a woman smiles; and, as if refreshed, once more stood up. Some rays of the afternoon sunlight, striking in through the open window, suddenly alighted on him and made him seem transfigured. It was as if the sun had sought him out, and now that it had found him, promised evermore to light his road.

“And yet they say that we Jews are cowards,” he continued in a more reflective voice. “Cowards! Do you know who have been the life of every liberating movement in Russia?—Jews; who have died on the barricades?—Jews; who have suffered martyrdom by the thousand in the fortresses of St. Peter and St. Paul?—Jews. It is always the Jews—their spirit is never daunted. Women and men, it is all the same—half the women condemned for political offences are our Jewesses. Do you understand, I say? The world might learn from this, were it wiser, our true nature—

we, the descendants of the Maccabees. Yet I know that even among Englishmen—who are liberal, magnanimous, just—there is some feeling, some prejudice against us—against our methods. . . . In spite of our sufferings—our bitter sufferings—you would have us remain silent and never revolt. The wretched race of *tchinovniks* who govern this land have too many friends! What shall I add as a last word to convince you? Ah, yes! I will say it! I learnt it long ago!”

He looked at his companion as if seeing through him into his soul; he looked at him deeply, mournfully, pathetically. . . .

Then he came nearer, and his rare smile was almost spiritual.

He came nearer as a consummate actor on a stage approaches—with no undue haste, with no lack of decorum, with no fretful gestures—with nothing but his own flaming spirit to help his words. Then he began quoting softly, deeply, marvellously. . . .

“‘Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And—if—you—wrong—us, shall—we—not—revenge?’”

He stopped and folded his arms, proudly, slowly. He stood like that for a space as motionless as if he had been carved from rock—a grim figure of a man exalted by an idea. He stood like that so that the silence brooded heavily, and the man who was watching him heard and understood. His great message had

become a solemn, massive thing wafted by magic into the room and standing there rock-like, demanding an answer—accepting no denial.

Then, very quietly, his feet falling so softly on the carpet that they made no sound, this strange visitor had taken up his hat and stick—and without so much as a word, or a nod, or a bow, or a sigh, he had opened the door—and was gone.

Richard Faulconbridge, still motionless, sat staring at the door.

XVII

SASHA had sent the doctor to Faulconbridge. She had heard of the arrest of the black-bearded man—who was an emissary from another centre—and she knew there was now no time to lose.

She had sent the doctor with no definite instructions, only telling him to be eloquent. The doctor knew as little about her and her great secret as Faulconbridge himself—as this man who had suddenly become so doubly essential to her. The doctor had been in her hands a blind instrument of fate—just as the Englishman must be. She had measured him—her Englishman—and the situation which he created, solely by her instinct, and her instinct had not played her false. A method would pay with him which would never have paid in ordinary circumstances. She knew that there was no one who could use indirect arguments with such skill as the strange man of science, who had known her since childhood, and who had been exiled so long in the village of Malny that he had simply become for everyone the Malny doctor; she was sure—even before she learnt what had happened—that the doctor's visit had been a success. He had become a man of one idea—the fixed idea that he must seek vengeance for his father's judicial murder. He was a little mad, and because of that was not held of much account in practical work; but when he

talked his fire and magnetism always worked wonders.

Yet though she was now so coldly determined in her plans, though she believed success was in sight, Sasha was now troubled with many curious, conflicting thoughts. Of course, she was sorry for this Englishman who, because of her great need, must be bent and moulded as she decreed; who must be even offered up as a sacrifice, if necessary. It was sad—and cruel—yet what was she to do? He had become essential to her—ever since the pistol-shots had told her how close the crisis had stolen, and how necessary it was to have strong instruments, and not weak ones, like herself.

He would be an easy man to handle—very easy. She smiled to herself as she thought of his simplicity that day in the Kremlin—the manner in which he had frowned more and more deeply, and at last refused to allow her to continue her calm recital of the dreadful brutalities of Ivan the Terrible. “That is not a fit subject for girls,” he had curtly said—as if he knew everything about them. It was really laughable to think how foolish he had been.

Still he would have uses. She needed a true man, somebody who would stand by her, and help her from a hopeless impasse. Fate could not have picked a better man for her—not if she had prayed passionately to the blind Madonna night and day. He was the very man—the only man—the one man—and because he had crossed her path at the very eleventh hour, when he was most needed, she began to believe that something more than chance had sent him to her.

She twisted to pieces the letter, full of angry remarks about her lack of success—a letter which also

gave details about the arrest. She would show the committee that although the beginning had been delayed, the end would come with dramatic suddenness. Yes—she would show these men who reproached her that she was more than worthy of their trust. She would act as she had promised when she was ready.

Yet the time was short—so short! Now that the enemy had commenced to strike, her turn might suddenly come. Anything might happen—it was impossible to know where the next blow was to fall. She dared not go back to the hotel. She had the feeling that she was being watched by countless eyes.

Poor Sergei, lying there wounded. . . . It would take many weeks for him to get well. They had to accept all such things in silence, to accept these grim sacrifices without uttering a word or striking back a single blow, for fear that counter blows would disturb the main plan.

The main plan—that was the only thing which must be jealously guarded.

Now she commenced thinking how she should begin her part so that she might push quickly through with it. It was necessary to be careful and quick—with this Englishman.

She had purposely avoided him, half because she had not made up her mind, and half because it was necessary for things to mature slowly—his desire for her, for instance. She had been on the point several times of changing her mind; of sending for him and telling him plainly and bluntly what she wanted, but she had refrained—prompted by some subtle intuition that it would be best not to burn her boats until the very last moment. Now she could delay no longer.

There was barely one week more—and remembering that everything must be ready on the eve of the great day, it meant just six days, if so many.

Six days—it was very little in which to accomplish so much—to seduce a man to a really great action. . . .

Her breath came and went more quickly as she framed this thought to herself in all its nakedness; and her delicate cheeks blushed pink. To-day, instead of leaving her indifferent, the idea began to unnerve and frighten her.

She was going to give up all in payment for one single action.

She sighed aloud to herself with the great heart-ache which comes to women in the rare moments when they are honest with their thoughts and follow them to their logical conclusions. She did not want to give her love for a price—the idea had suddenly become hateful to her. She had remained unsullied in spite of the dust of the strange high road along which she had travelled; now she was to become less than the dust. She could not tell why she—a free-thinker in all things—should suddenly feel this way; why she should feel changed, different, alarmed, perplexed. . . . Perhaps she had been really unnerved by the dreadful shooting in the dead of night; it preyed on her mind—perhaps she was really a coward. Excitable at times! Excited now! Who could tell what it meant? Bah!

With an impatient gesture, and an angry exclamation, she rose and went to the door.

“Come, my baby, come,” she called in her tuneful voice, crushing down the tumult in her heart, “I am ready for you.”

188 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

There was a sound of little feet running up the staircase, and then, lightly and gracefully, the child Elizabeth ran into the room.

"I am here," she exclaimed.

Sasha put out her hands.

"Come and sit on my knee, my baby. I wish to tell you something very carefully, and you must remember every word—not one little mistake. It is very important."

She shook a finger laughingly at the child, who now, with lips eagerly parted, was gazing at her obediently as a faithful dog might have done.

"Do I make mistakes?" inquired the child, with wonder in her eyes.

"No, my baby, no. But this time it is very important, and it is about a foreigner who knows no Russian."

"Ah," exclaimed the child, knowingly nodding her head, "I have several times carried messages to them. They are always stupid, and pretend they do not understand, even when I give them paper."

Sasha laughed.

"This time there is no paper to give—there is nothing but a message, a very small message from me." She drew a long breath. "You remember the two strangers who were here last night?"

The child nodded.

"Yes, I know them. The one fat and ugly, the other, who carried the *bárin*, tall and strong. He stood like this"—she made an odd pantomime with her hands to show his careless attitude.

"And if you saw them again, among many, many strangers, would you remember them—and make no mistake?"

"I should remember them, and make no mistake," repeated the child gravely.

"Good. Now listen. The fat man is a bad man. If he saw you he would ask you questions, and try to find out from you things that perhaps you know."

"I would not answer him—not even if he beat me."

"I know, my baby. I only tell you so that you may understand. The tall man who carried the *bárin* is a good man—his questions you could answer, only that he is not Russian, and so he would only speak to you in a strange language."

"Ah," exclaimed the child wisely, nodding her head, "a foreign language—a curious foreign language. I have heard German. How ugly!"

"Now I want you to give him a message from me. . . . You will go to the square to-morrow morning and wait in front of the hotel, making yourself small behind the carriages. You must watch the large door all the time, and when you see the tall foreigner come out, follow him, but far behind."

"I know," exclaimed the child, "I have done it before."

"When you are far from the hotel, when you are sure no one is following, go up to him, and say to him, 'Sasha.' Can you remember to say only that word—and no other?" She repeated it several times in the way she wished it said, and the child repeated it after her.

"I shall not forget," said the child at length.

"There is nothing more," resumed Sasha, after a moment's thought. "You understand, nothing more at all. The tall foreigner will be astonished, perhaps, but as soon as you move away he will follow. He has seen you before, he will not have forgotten you."

“ He will follow me ; yes, I see.”

“ Then you have nothing more to do—but to lead him to the *bárin's* house, up to the *bárin's* room. I shall be there waiting.”

The child clapped her hands.

“ It is simpler than many things I have done—it is really very simple.”

“ Yes, if it goes like that, it is simple enough,” assented Sasha, “ but supposing you see that he is followed—let us say, by the fat man—what would you do ? ”

“ If he is followed by the fat man, what would I do,” repeated the child in a suddenly perplexed voice. “ Then I could not speak, since you have told me that no one must see me.”

“ But it is necessary to speak—it is necessary to bring him to the *bárin's* house.”

“ Then I do not know how to do it,” confessed the child, in a tearful voice. “ The fat man would see me speak.”

“ I will tell you how to do it. Go up to the fat man first, and tell him in Russian that the *bárin* wishes to see him here, at once, in this house. When he hears that, the fat man will get into a carriage and leave you alone to give your true message. Do you understand now ? ”

“ I knew that it was simple,” exclaimed the child once more, clapping her hands. “ I must give the false message first, and the true message afterwards. I will make no mistake. Is that all ? ”

Sasha kissed the child on the forehead and set her on the ground.

“ Yes, it is all, but it is enough if you do it well. Now go.”

She stood there motionless for a long time after the child had left her, with a dreamy look in her eyes. She was thinking—thinking of how strange a sequel to the beginning, when she had heard him sing in the early morning, and she had answered that she would never go to meet him—but that he must come to her.

XVIII

THE ever-resourceful Verdard, having clattered up to the hotel at a great pace, suddenly stopped his carriage and got out before he reached the main entrance. He did not wish watchful eyes to note that the carriage was quite remarkably splashed with mud, and the horses fairly foundered. For that reason he carefully acted as the ostrich acts—as so many people in the world do when they are transparently at fault, and, indeed, are marching under the impending sword.

Still, even this excessive caution appeared to give Verdard to-day scant satisfaction. He paid the fare with none of his customary animation, handing the driver his just due and not one kopeck more. Then, when he had done that, he turned and walked in through the familiar doors as if he were dead tired. He did not even hear the driver's curses.

It was raining. During the whole course of his long drive it had not stopped raining. The rain fell from the leaden skies in no tropical downpour, but just slowly, sadly, continuously, hopelessly—particularly hopelessly in his eyes because that adverb accorded with his mood. The rain and the gloom and his lack of success made the whole world, indeed, seem a very different place from what it had been before. It was a treacherous world—a miserable world, with this fantastic city the very centre of the greatest misery.

Even the best of us think like that—when luck is against us: Verdard was only a commonplace man.

In the great hall, which was usually so crowded and so gay, it looked to him just as cheerless and as deserted as the streets had been, though here the electric lights were brightly blazing. There was not a soul to talk to—not a soul.

“Everything goes wrong,” he muttered to himself for the twentieth time that morning, “everything—everything.”

He seated himself and began beating a nervous tattoo with his feet on the tessellated floor. To-day his red face looked almost pale, as if he were really out of sorts—indeed, acutely suffering. The way the world had lately treated him had certainly not agreed with his digestion, not to speak of his temper. He had driven all over the town in a vain effort to discover his two Russian partners so as to glean from them what he should do in the immediate future. But his two associates were not at their place of business, nor were they at their private houses—nor were they anywhere he could think of—nobody seemed very sure whither they had gone. That alone was an ominous sign; it had never happened before. Verdard could not tell what it meant—but instinctively he did not like it. He thought of the manner in which even the rats are supposed to leave a sinking ship. He did not like it at all, we say.

No—not at all. Indeed, he acutely disliked it—he began to dislike everything about Russia and the Russians. Now he remembered his earlier idealism and laughed suddenly and scornfully to himself—startling a boy in buttons who had just passed close by him. They were unreliable, every one of them; it

was impossible to know where one stood with them from hour to hour, almost from minute to minute. They twisted, they turned; they did this, they did that—who could know what they were going to do next? B-r-r-r, what a people! He would certainly leave by the night express, and telegraph from Berlin to his partners. Yes, that would be a good plan. Now that the Baron was *hors de combat* he could retreat without shame.

He had not begun to get over the shock of the tragic night which he had spent around those wretched gardens of the Anchorite. There were certain things about that experience which would always haunt him. The purely physical distress, the feeling of utter helplessness which had come over him several times during that long-drawn-out evening, simply because of his great bulk, had done more to convince him that it was madness to continue his doubtful vocation than any spoken arguments could possibly have done. It was, no doubt, all very well for the young and the active to conspire, to be heroic; but, alas! He had passed the age of heroism and heroics. He must retreat—get out of it all before it was too late.

Suddenly his feet stopped their irritating measure, and he sat up, as if something had stung him. What a fool he was—here was the very thing lying ready to his hand. Curious it was that he should have forgotten all about him! This Englishman—Faulconbridge—here was a man who could certainly be of use to him. With his assistance he could kill two birds with one stone, perhaps a good many birds, pay off old scores—particularly those he had against that devilish Polish girl.

Now, with an exclamation, he rose, went to the

office, and made some inquiries. The answers he got pleased him so much that when he came back to his seat the settled gloom on his features had almost disappeared. He did not know exactly what he would do, but anyway he would do what he could. He would have something, at least, to cheer him in the train, if he left some darts behind.

His chair was directly opposite the lifts. He sat down ponderously. He was going to wait for the Englishman. He had him safe.

The man he was waiting for was, indeed, upstairs, prey to many conflicting emotions.

Ever since the doctor had left him, Faulconbridge had been buried in thought, going over again and again all he had heard and seen, trying to detach himself from the sensationalism of it all—and entirely failing. He had long known the beauty of solitude and the sweet poison of contemplation ; now they provided him with crowded hours.

Sasha had judged rightly. The doctor had made a tremendous impression on him—an impression which deepened from hour to hour. How could it be otherwise, when his heart had been already filled with so strange a turmoil? The pictures the doctor had painted—with great swift strokes—were like the pictures of the master Verestchagin himself, full of a colouring so vivid as to be almost unreal—burnt in with the fire of inextinguishable emotions. The pictures were animal-like in their strength—brute things, perhaps, because the issues were so brutal. Faulconbridge could not banish from his ears the sound of the doctor's voice, the burning quality of that voice. The doctor had spoken with a dramatic effect which seemed

greater than anything he had heard before, because now the issues concerned him so closely. By his art this artist had merged his words into one whole, and then torn them apart at the climax to show what lay beneath, just as a madman might tear bandages from a wound. His words had been human things, stalking down the ages, having a myriad shapes, confusing, arresting, inspiriting. They made an endless procession, comprising old men leaning on staves, virgins fighting for their virginity, young men fighting for blood, matrons for their babes, with endless little children running to and fro and crying—a strange, impossible procession like the people he saw around him.

For the second night Faulconbridge got no sleep. He turned and tossed and ever and anon stretched up his arms, as half unconsciously he grappled with the words and tore them from their loftiness to earth once more. Something new in him had been awakened—something which he had not dreamed of before.

His mood had cooled that dark, rainy morning to this extent—that the fire had burned down deeper, leaving the surface of the man calm and undisturbed. And so it happened that Verdard, with his shallow judgment of men and things, saw his victim walk out of the gilded cage, which concealed the lifts, looking precisely as he always looked. With a large smile on his face, the Frenchman greeted him effusively.

“I was on the point,” he exclaimed volubly, “of sending up my card, and inquiring whether you would care to visit a gallery or something else with me. I should have seen you before this—only that my business has kept me engaged. It is a terrible day—depressing,

ugly, not at all like what it has been. Yet I have been out through it all, I have only just got back!" He shook his head sadly as if to deplore such stupidity. Then he continued: "The arcades here are worth seeing—there is still an hour or two before lunch, I think—will you come?" He consulted his watch.

Faulconbridge had listened in some surprise. He wondered why this man should be so persistent with his advances, when he had not only received no encouragement, but had been actually humiliated in his presence. He did not suspect him of any malevolence, but he did not like his effusiveness, thinking that it might tend to something else.

"Yes," he replied rather coolly, "I believe the arcades are magnificent, though I have not seen them yet."

"But you must come with me then," protested the Frenchman. "If you are going out, let us inspect the wonderful silverwork of the Slavonski bazaar."

"I am afraid not, to-day," said Faulconbridge evasively. "I have something else to do."

"Ah," exclaimed the Frenchman, "an appointment, perhaps." He chuckled slyly, to show that between men of the world these things are easily understood. An appointment—a very natural thing for a young man to have, though the day was rather young—that was what he meant.

Faulconbridge considered him carefully for a few seconds before he answered. He was inclined to be angry at once with him, and for that reason he wished to be doubly calm. Perhaps it was only the contrast with the Frenchman's massive bulk, but he seemed to have become suddenly taller, and ominously severe.

“ I have no appointment,” he said finally, in a very abrupt way. Somehow he conveyed the impression that after careful reflection he had decided that it was not worth while saying more—not worth while crushing a man whom he did not honour.

Verdard, more occupied with his own interests than with such subtleties, did not notice the finesse. He was now convinced more than ever that not only had Faulconbridge an appointment, but that the appointment was so important that he was determined to give no hint as to what it might be. In these circumstances it was equally necessary for him—Verdard—to dissimulate—so that he should not lose sight of him. So he laughed a little ponderously, not showing any embarrassment at all in the face of the Englishman’s very evident coolness.

“ Since you have no appointment, shall we seat ourselves a minute ? ” he exclaimed.

Without waiting for an answer, he led the way to a secluded corner, where they would have the satisfaction of sitting with their backs against the wall—a welcome precaution in every cosmopolitan hotel.

Faulconbridge, somewhat to his own surprise, followed him, making up his mind as he did so that it would be well to terminate this attempted intimacy as quickly as possible—once for all. He did not see for the moment how it was to be done, but he had no doubt that something would very speedily give him the opportunity he desired.

Suddenly Verdard gave him the right opening. With his uneasy laugh he began saying :

“ What a strange adventure that was two nights ago, was it not ? I have not yet recovered from the effects. Think of it—I had not run at all for fifteen

years! Am I stiff?" he concluded in the French way, using the interrogative as an exclamation.

"I dare say you still feel the effects," assented Faulconbridge. Then he continued very civilly: "Do you mind if I refuse to discuss in any shape or form the events of that evening?"

"Refuse to discuss in any shape or form the events of that evening?" repeated Verdard a little blankly; "but why, my dear Monsieur, why? We were both there—we participated in those events; what is more natural than that we should discuss them in a friendly way?"

"Nevertheless I do not propose to discuss them," said Faulconbridge gravely. "One man alone cannot discuss a question, when the person seated opposite him refuses to do so. Do you understand?" His voice had taken a sharper intonation.

"Ah," exclaimed the other between his teeth, "ah—you speak very decidedly, as you have done with me several times before."

Verdard was getting into a rage, and was trying hard to disguise it to himself. Yet at the same time he was devilishly interested at the turn things had taken. How much he had discovered! It was really surprising. This man had not only an appointment, but was most evidently sworn to silence about the shooting episode. A blind man could have seen it. It was, indeed, so plain that it was hardly worth while noting for future reference.

But how had all this happened—how? Verdard determined to lose no time in finding out.

He suddenly laughed good-humouredly as if he were infinitely amused.

"There is something odd in our conversation, is

there not? Every avenue I open up you close against me—and yet it is impossible for two men to sit silent. . . .”

“It has happened before,” said Faulconbridge, smiling slightly, in spite of himself, because the Frenchman seemed so baffled. Now that he had defined his attitude, he felt more conciliatory.

“Yes,” assented Verdard quite earnestly, “it must have happened many times before. But still I am torn with curiosity to know what that girl is doing, now that her lover is shot.”

Almost before he knew what had happened, Faulconbridge had stood up and turned his back on him.

“*Sapristi*,” exclaimed Verdard under his breath, as he realized that the Englishman had walked slowly and deliberately away. “*Sapristi*,” he repeated again—half frightened with what he had done—yet feeling the rebuff more and more, though it was of a nature more delicate than what he generally received.

Now he got up, too, and putting his fat hands into his pockets deliberately, he walked after this insolent gentleman, muttering angrily all the while. He had forgotten all about his original plans in his growing rage.

He saw Faulconbridge glance at the great hall clock, and then compare the time with his own watch. Then he saw him walk irresolutely up to the desk of the never-idle porter; and then he saw him turn away without speaking, as though once again he had changed his mind. Finally he saw him button his coat, and with a new manner rapidly thread his way through the tide of people that had at last begun to surge into the hotel.

There was no doubt about it—he was going to his appointment ; he was going to walk in spite of the drizzling rain.

With a suppressed exclamation, Verdard turned up the collar of his black waterproof, which he had not taken off, and prepared to follow as quickly as his fat legs would carry him.

The Englishman was in a hurry, too—there was no doubt about that either. For as he came out on the street Verdard saw his tall frame rapidly becoming smaller. It was almost necessary to run in order to keep him in sight ; but presently a block of vehicles in a cross-street made the quarry come to an abrupt halt. Now Verdard caught up sufficiently to be able to follow without difficulty. He could still walk fast, thanks to his army training, which makes French soldiers the most mobile in the world. He would follow this man to the devil to satisfy his great rage.

So he thought, knowing nothing of the new elements which were being even then stirred in that great cauldron called Fate. For the little girl, so carefully instructed the previous day regarding her duties, had been patiently waiting outside the hotel since an early hour—sheltering herself as best she could—pretending to beg every now and again whenever anyone observed her too closely—being driven away only to return.

She had watched with a closeness she had never watched before ; she watched like that because Sasha had told her to do this work—Sasha, whom she loved. She showed a quickness and an intelligence far beyond her years—having been brought up in an atmosphere of strange happenings and sudden flights and rough revenges, which, though deeply mysterious to her, formed part of her natural life, just as the natural

202 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

life of the wild cat is unending warfare. Her big blue eyes, peering keenly out from under the damp, tumbled masses of flaxen hair, were here, there, and everywhere ; she was as alive and alert as a young animal marking down quarry for its elders. Nothing escaped her—not a single thing.

At last her patience was rewarded. She recognized her man the very instant he stood framed in the doorway ; and as he passed out swiftly she darted after him.

But even as she darted she remembered her instructions. No sooner had they gone a sufficient distance from the hotel than she ran across to the opposite side of the street. From this safe distance she continued to follow, her eyes alternately fixed on the tall man and the unending stream of people behind him.

The block on the cross-street gave her the opportunity she needed. Now she ran back a little way and then crossed to the same side as Faulconbridge. In her terror that she might lose him in the thickening noonday crowd, she lost her head a little and bumped into someone. Instinctively, to cover her confusion, she began a whining plea for money, and then stopped before half the customary words were out of her mouth—aghast, almost paralysed by what had happened. It was no other person than the dreaded fat man—the man she had been warned against—so busy looking ahead that he never even glanced down at her.

Suddenly, wonderfully quick for a child, she recovered herself.

“ *Gaspadeen,*” she said boldly, tugging at his coat-tails.

“Get away, get away,” answered Verdard irritably enough, moving on.

The child persisted, now frantic with fear that the very thing she had been warned against was about to happen.

“*Gaspadeen*, you are wanted by the *bárin* at once. I have been sent, *Gaspadeen*.”

That brought Verdard to his senses.

“Who are you? What are you talking about?” he exclaimed in his doubtful Russian. Then he recognized the child, and gave a whistle of surprise. “I am wanted at once—why?”

“Trouble,” said the little girl, hitting by instinct on the greatest compelling force in the world, “trouble; go quickly,” she added.

Then, not waiting for him to answer, she darted on, palpitating with fear lest she should now have lost the other.

XIX

THE sable gentleman, stirring the giant cauldron with his spoon, and ever anxious to throw in yet more innocent victims, was decidedly on her side. In spite of the crowds and the delay, she caught up her tall Englishman within three or four minutes. He had walked straight on—as straight as an arrow flies. Now quite happy in her mind she trotted almost at his heels waiting for a favourable opportunity to speak. It had become comparatively easy, and the child, who had been greatly frightened by her load of responsibility, gave a convulsive sob of relief.

He was walking more slowly now, pausing to look into shop-windows, and arousing resentment among the hurrying throng, anxious to escape the thickening rain, by the manner in which he did not hesitate to stop suddenly if anything arrested his attention. At last he arrived at one of the great new arcades, which had been so warmly commended to his notice, and moved by something more than idle curiosity, he turned into it.

The child, following patiently at his heels, braced herself for the second part of the day's ordeal.

The moment had arrived. In the arcade there were only a few people standing at the entrance waiting for the rain to stop, and with the bunches of wild flowers which she still held clutched in one little hand, she had an excuse to speak.

As he stopped to gaze at some magnificent glass, she pushed the flowers up to him. Then, because he shook his head and his hand mechanically wandered to his pocket, she gave a sudden strange hiss.

“ Hai—Sasha,” she said, looking up at him eagerly, and gesturing with her hands. In her excitement she babbled some words of Russian. Recovering herself, she repeated again and again, “ Sasha, Sasha,” giving a Slavonic hiss to the plain word.

Now with a rapid movement she indicated that he should follow ; with another gesture, finishing on the point of her lips, she begged silence. Her eloquent pantomime gave more point to her message than a host of explanations.

Faulconbridge was overcome with astonishment, and did not seek to hide it. He, too, had recognized the child just as Verdard had recognized her. But being English, he showed himself infinitely more cautious than the Frenchman had been.

What did this mean ? Was this a real message, or some snare ? Who had sent this child ? Questions tumbled rapidly through his mind—and remained totally unanswered and unanswerable. So he stood there merely nodding his head as the child repeated her well-learnt word—nodding, and yet doubting. Then something made him look into the window again, and what he saw gave him the impulse he needed. In a big mirror so disposed that it reflected everything that passed on the other side of the arcade, he suddenly saw a profile, which he instantly recognized. It was the same ugly little man who haunted the hotel, pretending to look somewhere else, but with his ferret-like eyes turned back so that he could follow Faulconbridge’s every movement. “ Wretched little

fellow," muttered Faulconbridge, remembering all his suspicions about him.

Yet it was that which decided him; opposition always kindled him. Now he gave a faint nod of acquiescence, and sauntered after the child with the greatest indifference.

He realized with surprise that his heart had commenced thumping inside him in a strange enough manner. He could almost hear it beating. Something had evidently happened to make her send for him in this curious way, something grave, something ominous. And just at this grave juncture there was that damnable little fellow following on his heels.

He became irritated as he saw how the plot thickened about him. He became angry because he felt strangely helpless—strangely perplexed as to whither this latest development would lead him. Yet now, even in the midst of his embarrassment, his mind began to work hurriedly, seeking for some means to throw the enemy off the scent. He could think of no way at all—absolutely no way; and as he realized that it was impossible for him to communicate with his little guide, a feeling of desperation grew in him.

He could not possibly let the man follow him to his destination; somehow he must be got rid of. Yet how, how, how? he repeated to himself. . . . In vain he cudgelled his brains. He could not turn and knock him down—he could not pick up the little girl and run—he dismissed one impossible thing after another only to find that it was the impossible things that kept recurring to him. He had to act without much more delay—that was the long and short of it.

Well, what?

Suddenly he smiled to himself. It had commenced

raining more heavily, and in spite of his waterproof he began to feel wet. There would soon be not a soul left out of doors. That was just what he wanted. The little girl had now led him out of the busy thoroughfares into quiet streets lined with tall buildings. The tall buildings had the massive doors of those great apartment-houses which are such universal products of Continental life. There was probably a *dvornik*—a concierge—somewhere about in each—and there might be keys in the doors. He knew by experience how lazy such men are. He remembered an incident in Paris. If only he could have luck enough for that. To make sure, he suddenly stopped, went into a doorway, put his hand on the lock, and as rapidly came out.

His smile had deepened—he would try it—when he had got the right distance. It was a most remarkable piece of luck.

For a few paces he went on slowly—as if a curious wave of irresolution had come over him. Then, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, he wheeled on his heels and walked very rapidly back, absolutely disconcerting his pursuer by his manœuvres.

The ugly little man had, indeed, come to a standstill only a few feet from the door. A look of blank amazement was on his face as his quarry boldly approached.

“Now, please,” said Faulconbridge quietly but firmly in English.

With that, almost affably, he seized the little man by the arm, and one, two, three, walked him through the doorway. He held him in his strong grasp with one hand whilst with the other he fumbled with the lock.

What happened proved what audacity will often do.

208 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

His captive, long used to practising such wiles on his own victims, appeared so overwhelmed he could only mutter incoherent words. But as he felt the strength of the other man's fingers, and as he saw the look on his face, an inkling of what was going to happen flashed through his mind. He began struggling violently and protesting loudly. Faulconbridge's fingers tightened on his neck.

"Down you go," he muttered. With that he tripped him up roughly, hit him a stinging blow to disconcert him further, and with a sudden spring leaped out of the doorway. Now he slammed the door to and held it tight, and with a rapid turn of the key, which he had extracted from the other side, he had securely locked the door.

The little girl, her eyes wide open with astonishment and alarm, had run back, and was gazing at him as if spellbound.

"Come," he cried, "we've got to run, and run hard."

Now he seized her by the hand and together they raced swiftly down the street, oblivious to the consequences, oblivious to everything save the desire to escape.

XX

FATE remained decidedly on their side. In ordinary circumstances it would have been too much to hope that such a clumsy manœuvre would have proved successful.

Faulconbridge, as he ran almost lifting the little girl off her feet in his growing excitement, expected every moment to hear police whistles frantically blown—police whistles which would mean a chase, and then an ignominious end in a police station. But though he strained his ears—though his eyes hunted with all possible keenness for danger, nothing occurred to bar their progress in the least. It is true the few people they passed looked back in some astonishment. Once also a window was thrown open and some strange words were shouted down ; but as this was Russia, and times were troublous, nobody attempted actually to interfere.

“ Phew,” he exclaimed at length, pulling up and beginning to walk. “ A half a mile in four minutes or less. I believe we have shaken the gentleman off.”

He opened his coat and tilted his hat back in order to cool his fever of anxiety. Here was a pretty pass indeed, something much worse than a doubtful adventure. It was plain madness. He had roughly handled a man who was manifestly a police spy. Now he remembered what Verdard had said about him. There would have to be a sequel—a nasty sequel. This was

210 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

the maddest thing which had happened yet. And he had been driven to it through no fault of his.

The little girl, still panting hard from her own exertions, nodded her head at him, as he muttered to himself. She was not very interested in his predicament, now that her own task was nearly over. She was completely tired out, very wet, and much bedraggled—all good reasons for silence and a lack of interest. So with her disengaged hand she now pointed down the street and made one, two, three sharp movements—showing that they had only three more turnings to arrive at their destination.

“Good,” said Faulconbridge, understanding her pantomime at once. “Good, the sooner the better.”

And after that, until they reached the doorway which finally received them, no communication passed between them.

There the little girl suddenly babbled again to him in her inexplicable Russian. It was evident that she desired him to hasten upstairs—her hands showed to the very top of the house—and to go silently and quickly. So without a word they set out to climb four stories; and as they ran up the last steps Faulconbridge saw, framed in a dark doorway, her head enveloped in a dark shawl, no other person than Sasha. . . . Here it was that she had been hiding, he said to himself.

There was an expectant smile on her face, but she held a warning finger to her lips. Without a word, rapidly he followed her through the doorway, noticing with fresh surprise that the apartment was furnished quite differently from what the modest neighbourhood had led him to expect. He looked at the books on the long shelves, the carpets, the pictures, with a strange expression on his face.

“I have been waiting all the morning,” she exclaimed, as soon as all the doors had been closed. “All the morning, for ever so many hours. What has happened, what has happened? You look as if something had happened.” She drew a long breath.

He dropped his hat on to a chair, drew off his wet overcoat, and threw another swift glance round the room before he answered. Verdard had not spent an entirely fruitless morning. There was a note of restraint—almost of defiance—in his voice. This was a man’s room—quite unmistakably.

“This little girl will give you the story better than I can,” he said, with strange coldness. “It must be rather commonplace for Russia—though it has been rude enough for me.”

He was conscious that a wondering look had flitted across her face as she noted his manner and listened to his words. Then, with her instinctive shrug of indifference, she accepted the situation, and turned to the little girl. But as the child unfolded her tale with Russian volubility a dozen conflicting emotions struggled to possess her. At last one secured open victory. Suddenly—almost hysterically, it seemed to him—she commenced laughing, laughing so much that she turned and dropped into a chair.

“Oh! What a climax,” she gasped at last. “I cannot help my amusement, though it means danger for us all. Dear me, how amusing! She says you threw a man who was following you through a doorway and jumped on him until he could speak no more. Then you locked him in—and afterwards you ran with her as swiftly as a horse, pulling her along. Is it true, is it true? What a scene it must have been!”

Now she clasped her hands over her bosom in a vain effort to control her mirth.

"You have not told some of the details correctly," replied Faulconbridge, feeling more hurt than ever. "I merely threw the man—I do not jump on people. It is not an English custom."

She had stopped laughing as he spoke. Now she looked at him steadily and defiantly.

"Really," she replied just as coldly. "You are wonderfully superior in your methods—in England. But you must remember that in Russia we are rougher, more natural in our hates and our loves, more emotional, more frank than you are in England, Mister Faulconbridge. You must always remember that."

Then, very deliberately, she turned her back on him again, and completed her questioning of the child. In dignified silence he awaited her next move. It came very soon.

Standing up in her quick way, she came nearer to him.

"I must thank you greatly for what you have done. You have acted very carefully indeed, though the matter can scarcely interest you."

She had spoken with studied politeness, carefully watching to see what he would answer.

He waved her thanks aside—not at all grateful for her praise.

"I doubt whether my help has assisted," he said in sudden gloom. "Indeed, I doubt it very much; on the contrary, I may have made things worse—a great deal worse."

"What do you mean?" she asked quickly.

"You forget that though I threw off this man—though I managed to get to you—the relief is only temporary. He knows me just as I know him."

“ He knows you just as you know him ? ” she interrupted, turning pale.

“ Yes. He is a small, ugly man, with a black beard, a scar over the right eye.”

“ Gavrilloff, Gavrilloff,” she exclaimed, almost in a whisper, not allowing him to proceed any further. “ That man—that man—always that man ! Oh, what have you done—— ? ” Then she stopped, because she dared not tell him that this was the very person whom they suspected of having fired that night—fired to kill. He had beaten Gavrilloff, the spy. . . . What madness this. . . .

“ I did what I could,” answered Faulconbridge a little bitterly. “ You will have understood that I had no other course open to me—unless it was to give up coming to you at all. I decided that I must take the risk—since I had promised to come when you sent for me. I did not really hurt the man. I merely stopped him from following me.” He paused, not knowing exactly how to conclude. “ In any case, I am now here to help you as far as lies within my power.”

His glance remained fixed on her. Now, as he stood silently there, he noticed in some amazement that her fear appeared to have passed.

For several minutes she rested her chin upon her hand and studied him silently—as if not yet convinced of the frankness of his attitude, as if trying to pierce the meaning of his first reserve. Her eyes seemed to search him through and through. Serious and unflinching they wandered all over his face, trying to extract meaning from his seriousness—trying to find that which had made his jaws set so firmly the very moment he had entered the room.

Her quest was in vain, and at length she gave it up.

“For some reason I am inclined to doubt you,” she said in an absent-minded way. “Something has happened to you since I saw you last—something has come into your head which was not there before. What is it?”

“Many things have happened since I last saw you,” he replied evasively. “I have talked to your friend the doctor, for instance.”

“I know, I know,” she exclaimed impatiently; “and yet you are not the same as you were before.” She turned to the little girl. “Go,” she said abruptly in Russian. The child curtsied, and rapidly went out.

Sasha remained quite still until the door had closed. Then she rose and went to the reading-table set at the window. A number of books lay open just as the blond dreamer had left them days before. One she took up idly. Now very lightly she ran a finger across a page and looked at it pensively.

“Already covered with dust in three short days,” she murmured. “It is like that with everything—the brightest page is soon overlaid.” She turned suddenly. “What is the matter with you? Tell me!” she commanded sharply.

Faulconbridge instinctively cleared his throat, as if the ordeal demanded all his ability. He did not know why he should so suddenly see the futility of all arguments; yet the feeling now overcame him that words—explanations—had become out of place. It was far better not to talk at all than to attempt to explain something which was inexplicable.

He looked around in hesitation.

“There is nothing the matter with me,” he replied shortly—making up his mind at the last moment. He would not say a word.

He was conscious that her eyes had hardened as if he were fast arousing her enmity.

"That is not true!" she exclaimed.

He smiled—in spite of his preoccupation. She was always so brusque.

"Then I am tired after my morning's experience—alarmed at what I was forced to do with that wretched little man in order to get here at all—afraid of what the future holds for me, as well as for you. Why can you not accept that?"

"Because it is not true!" she exclaimed again. "There must be something else. You are not the kind of man who becomes afraid. Listen. You were so kind and tender to me before so many ugly things had happened. I believed in you more than in any man I had ever met. You said you were willing to do anything for me—that night my brother was shot."

"Your brother?" he exclaimed, rising from his seat; "your brother?" he repeated almost incredulously, staring at her.

"Yes," she said indifferently, not understanding him yet; "there is no harm in your knowing now, since you know so much, that Baron Vonnergrot is my half-brother."

"Your half-brother?" he repeated almost joyfully; "I would never have guessed it in a thousand years."

His manner had so entirely changed that her quick mind was attracted by his *volte-face*. She looked at him steadily; then suddenly she gave an exclamation.

"Ah!" she exclaimed disdainfully, "I understand you better now."

He coloured slowly as he realized what he had inadvertently done. Yet he had done nothing at all. . . .

He could not think. He remembered only that no matter what their relative positions might be at the opening of each contest, it seemed inevitable that she should always checkmate him after very few moves.

Some minutes ticked away in ominous silence. Sasha stood drumming the ground with her foot, glancing from time to time at this man who was at once so difficult and so easy to handle. She was thinking of the problem ahead of her—thinking of it, and fearing it—yet secretly glad at the turn things had taken.

“I owe you an apology,” said Faulconbridge at length, a little clumsily but quite sincerely, “for having misinterpreted certain facts—will you forgive me and remain my friend?” He held out his hand.

Instantly she became different.

“How foolish we are,” she murmured, “to be engaged in quarrelling when soon we may be separated for ever. Listen to me; I sent for you because I needed you, because you can help me, because you are necessary to me. The doctor has told you so much that there is little for me to add save certain personal details—things which concern me. I sent for you because I can no longer wait—the time for action has come.”

“I suppose there is nothing for it but for the inevitable tragedy to play itself out,” Faulconbridge answered a little wearily, thinking that she would merely repeat what the doctor had already told him, using a slightly different form. “Yet I have no interest in it all—I can have no interest—that is, of course, were it not for you.”

“Yes?” she murmured interrogatively.

There was written on her features something which aroused in him a new concern. He looked at her now with curiosity mixed with apprehension. Her lips remained parted as though she had summoned back words which had been on the point of going beyond recall. There was something peculiarly arresting in her attitude.

Very deliberately she came up to him.

“Your interest in me?” she said softly. “What is your interest to me?”

Suddenly embarrassed—not understanding her—he fenced the question.

“My interest in you?” he echoed. “Well, how shall I put it? You have often told me, in the few short days that I have known you, that my strength does not lie in being subtle.” He paused for a fraction of a second, and then completed what he had to say: “I have for you—a very warm feeling.”

“A very warm feeling?” She had seated herself on the arm of his chair and now looked down at his face. “A very warm feeling?” she repeated softly.

“Yes,” he said a little gruffly, because she stirred in him so with emotion. “That is quite true, though it may seem strange.”

“How much would you do for me?”

“Almost anything, I believe,” he muttered; “you are a little temptress—a syren, Sasha.” For the first time he pronounced her name.

Now she laughed very softly and her arm stole round his neck.

“What cruel names to give me,” she murmured into his ear. “You are never flattering to me. Do you want to kiss me—Dick—as much as I want to kiss you? . . .”

His answer was lost in the confusion of her embrace, and as he felt her soft lips against his he knew that her hour had come.

In truth he was confounded. The blood surged to his head, a storm of passion was in his veins. Yet, though his will-power was rapidly vanishing, though he was overwhelmed with emotion because of her embrace, he still realized through it all that the consequences of any surrender would be so far-reaching, so immense, that it was impossible to imagine the end. He knew that he was a fool, that he had been a fool from the very beginning, and that once again he must begin to pay the inevitable price of folly. He thought all this rapidly, confusedly—struggling to retain his common sense, to fight the insidious poison stealing through him; struggling, and not entirely succeeding.

“Do you want—to love me?” murmured the girl passionately. “I have never loved anyone yet—I swear it. You will be the first—the very first.” She did not wait for him to answer, but only clasped him closer—as he stirred uneasily, breathing quickly in his distress. “You can love me all you want, if you help me in a little thing—a very small thing. Will you promise, Dick?”

She had commenced rubbing her cheek softly against his cheek. Her arms were locked so tightly round his neck that he could not move. Now she slid slowly from the arm of the chair, and as he felt the pressure of her soft body, the man choked with emotion.

“What is it you want of me?” he muttered, in a last effort to remain calm. “Speak quickly; do not delay.”

She continued to rub her cheek against his: in that position it was scarcely necessary for her to whisper.

"I want something, which you, because you are an Englishman, a foreigner, not suspected as we are—can get for me without great difficulty. I have the plan all ready."

"Ah," he exclaimed sharply, as if he had been pricked. He understood better now. That was the price. "You want me to get something for you; go on."

She felt him stiffen beneath her, and because of that she went on more cautiously.

"It will be nothing for you," she murmured; "nothing at all; and by doing so you will save hundreds, perhaps thousands, from a cruel death. . . . Will you help me, Dick?"

"I do not see how I can do what you want better than anyone else," he said slowly, talking to give himself courage, and to ward off the temptation. "I do not see it at all—just yet. You must explain—properly, carefully." He tried to hold her away from him, to look into her eyes, but it was in vain.

For fearing that he had not yet been convinced, instinctively she continued to delay the climax—the telling of the real secret.

"It is so easy for you—it will be a matter of a few minutes," she murmured. "Will you not promise first—now—and then we need not think of the details until later on—when you leave me—this evening or to-morrow?"

"No."

As he spoke the word he lifted her a little in his arms, so that she no longer oppressed him. That

attitude had suddenly become unseemly—he could not tolerate it and retain his manliness.

Her breath was coming and going very quickly now as if he had startled her—as if that single monosyllable had struck terror into her. Once before—but only once—she had met a stubborn man like this, an officer in the Cavalry of the Guards at Warsaw. He had been more dramatic than this man—he had torn open his shirt and offered her his revolver, saying, “Kill me if you will, but do not dishonour me.”

If this Englishman failed her she was lost.

“But, Dick,” she cried in a new tone, “you do not know what a refusal would mean to me. I should have to try myself—my life would be over. My chances of success are so small that they cannot be said to exist. You—you are my last chance.”

Involuntarily Faulconbridge pushed her a little further away, and sat up.

“Explain yourself,” he said almost roughly. “There has been enough of this beating about the bush. I am to blame as much as you. That I know. But enough. You must be frank.”

For a long interval they looked at one another steadily; then at length his resolution proved the stronger, and she gave way.

“Within five days,” she said slowly, “this great thing, for which we have all been waiting, commences. The exact date and hour was decided on weeks ago—everybody behind the scenes knows about it—soldiers, officials, supporters, everybody. It is a tremendous plot, almost openly hatched. But what everybody does not know are the details—the precise details. The government knows that the people will revolt—the

people know that the government will attempt to repress them. Yet neither knows what are the principal measures of the other. It is essential that we should learn the military plan for holding this city—the plan has long been prepared, we have rough details concerning it—but the precise nature is not known to us. At all costs we must know that—at all costs—because then, with the few soldiers who are left, we can be quite sure of success. Do you understand ? ” She paused, breathless from her long speech.

“ I begin to understand,” said Faulconbridge slowly. “ Do not stop.”

Now, mistaking his manner once again, she went on quickly :

“ Our friends have kept us so well informed that we know exactly where the documents we need are to be found. If we could obtain them only for one short hour, it would mean certain victory for us.”

“ It would mean certain victory for you ? ” he echoed incredulously. “ But the documents would be missed, and the commonest simpleton would know that they had been stolen. The whole military plan would be at once changed, and you would have had all your trouble and your danger for nothing. Can you not see that—are you all blind ? ”

The fire of enthusiasm which had once burnt in him, because of the doctor’s words, suddenly died out. He saw, with the Englishman’s inherent common sense, the folly of a movement which could not possess the iron organization—the drilled numbers—which in modern times alone ensure success. He saw in the near distance a tremendous tragedy looming up—a tragedy in which all such as she would be surely engulfed. It was madness, folly for this girl to match

222 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

her strength against such odds. In his eyes the outlook suddenly became hopeless.

He looked at her pityingly. Still, she was not yet beaten.

“Wrongly reasoned,” she had exclaimed triumphantly, “wrongly reasoned, my friend! We will not keep the documents—we will restore them at once. And even if they were missed it would make no difference. It is too late to make any changes of importance; we shall know the disposition of the troops—and their exact numbers. It is impossible to change some things, because of the war which is eating up the resources of the country. Some of our people are officers: they will know at once what changes cannot be made on the spur of the moment.”

“Ah,” exclaimed Faulconbridge, seeing the force of her reasoning, in spite of his distaste for it all.

She saw her advantage and eagerly pressed it.

“That is our chief need now—to take them at a disadvantage—because if we take them at a disadvantage, and hold them at an advantage for a few days, the weakling who lives in Czarskoe Zelo will certainly give way. That we know already—we are sure of that—from sympathizers at the Court. And the documents will mean for us not only victory, but will prevent the spilling of much innocent blood. Humanity demands that we obtain them—if only for an hour.”

Faulconbridge looked at her fixedly. He was thinking of the doctor again; of the great story which he had unfolded. Faulconbridge was thinking that these plotters were both damnably clever and damnably childish.

“Where are the papers?” he inquired abruptly.

She searched his face with her eyes and then looked down so as to hide her own thoughts. An intolerable suspicion had suddenly crossed her mind that he might not be as simple as he seemed. She had already hopelessly compromised herself. What if he should turn on her?

“Why do you want to know?” she answered slowly. “Do you hear my question—why?”

Suddenly she seized and shook his arm as if she wished to force the truth from him. She was filled with open anxiety.

“Why?” he echoed. “Well, I cannot tell you why exactly—since I have made up my mind about nothing yet. I wish to say something to you first.”

Now he took her hand.

“Listen,” he said to her gently, “you are too young and childlike to be involved in such brutal things. I do not pretend to know what this movement means, or what will happen, or how things will go. Clever men are possibly guiding it all—far-seeing men who are bringing every influence to bear to ensure success, and who know exactly what they are facing. But even success will demand the heaviest penalties—and as I look at you I somehow see you sacrificing yourself in a hopeless task. This is no business for a girl. Listen to me, I say.”

He looked at her imploringly.

But already she had drawn her hand from his with a sudden gesture of indignation. This cold Englishman would never understand; he would keep on arguing as if this were an everyday matter subject to everyday laws; what was the use of trying to kindle him? Then, when she had got as far as this in her thinking, suddenly she remembered once more her

urgent need of him, how essential it had become for her to gain his co-operation, now that confederate after confederate was disappearing. Quickly, almost hysterically, she began to talk.

“Why are *you* so blind, so blind?” she exclaimed. Can you not see that the indirect results may be very different from the apparent verdict of the battle-field? You must know that it is not the battle that matters, but the consequences flowing from it. Victory sometimes is really to the vanquished—if they have the courage to drag down the victors with them in their fall, just as a drowning man can pull down with him the strongest swimmer. It is that prospect which helps us—desperate as the outlook may seem. For we have more courage than the others; being more desperate we are more determined. And just because of that we may win even when defeat is upon us.” She paused—breathless from the vehemence with which she had spoken. Then, more slowly, she concluded: “Do you think we do not know everything you have said—do you think we do not understand these things—we who have been working for them all our lives?”

Now she looked at him almost wonderingly, with the amazement which a fatalist feels in the presence of a believer in the potency of free-will. As he realized that the desire to be sacrificed had been reared in her—just as blind obedience is reared in the hearts of the disciples of Loyola—his own heart sank.

A minute passed in silence, during which she intently studied him. Would it be better to draw back—before it was too late? No—that was impossible.

“I am going to tell you everything,” she said abruptly, “because—because I have already told

you so much that a little more cannot matter. Listen, you must have noticed a tall, handsome man in a general's uniform come into the hotel."

"The Grand-Duke?" interrupted Faulconbridge. A look of great surprise had come over his features.

"Yes, the Grand-Duke. He is here officially, though nominally he remains incognito. He will assume command of the town directly a state of siege is proclaimed. It is he who possesses those papers."

The Englishman's face had slowly hardened. He was no longer in doubt.

"And the only thing you require," he said slowly, "is a thief to steal those papers." He paused sufficiently long to give point to his last words. "I thank you very much for the honour you have done me—in selecting me for a task which is doubtless a great and worthy one—but which I formally decline."

Sasha sprang to her feet; something in his eyes goaded her beyond restraint.

"So mine is a singer's love which can be declined with thanks!" she burst out passionately. "Pray, when have I asked you for money?"

He made no reply.

She paced up and down unceasingly.

Then she suddenly came to a stop before him, and faced him in tense silence.

"Look then, fool. Understand what this means for me!"

Without warning, she pulled open her corsage and confronted him.

"You have asked for ill-fortune for me and mine—you will have to share it—you are known to the secret police." She plunged her hand into her corsage, drew out a miniature revolver, showed how it was loaded

with cartridges, then slipped the weapon back into a pocket. "I, on my part, am ready for them—am ready to die."

Faulconbridge was dumb with astonishment.

In spite of the fact that her face was now distorted with anger, it remained beautiful with an odd, uneven kind of beauty. Her eyes still blazed at him, her chin was tilted up, her lips parted so widely as to show her teeth, which now seemed sharp and vulpine. Yet her delicate skin, and the bewitching mole, seemed to belie this sudden outburst of passion, and to tell him that it could not last.

"Speak, fool," she cried wildly. "What are you going to do, now that you have played with fire?"

But Faulconbridge's mouth was dry. He was overwhelmed. He had nothing to say.

His silence seemed to infuriate her. Twice she opened her lips to speak, and twice speech failed her. Twice she lifted her hand as if she would even strike him, and twice her hand dropped. . . .

"Go," she exclaimed at length, in a choking voice, "go—to me you are worthless—do you understand?—a worthless thing. Go."

He rose without haste, and walked silently to the door.

As he closed it, in spite of the seething turmoil in his heart, in spite of his bewilderment, it suddenly struck him with odd force that he was going from her just as strangely as the doctor had gone from him but two short days before.

XXI

SHE had watched him go with a quivering face. She had heard rather than saw him close the door, her eyes so dim with rebellious tears that everything swam before her. Then, when a second sound told her that the outer door had set the seal on this cruel decision, she ran suddenly on the tips of her toes like a playful child into the hall, and stood there stockstill—listening and hoping against hope. In that attitude of suspense, with one hand pressed to her heart, and the other lightly laid against the wall, she made a charming picture. It was as if she had been playing hide-and-seek, and had hidden herself so well that she had unwittingly made an end of the game. . . .

She listened, scarcely breathing, to the sound of those relentless footsteps growing ever fainter—still hoping against hope. Just then she might have stood for those tender lines written in the time of a greater “Terror”:

“ Ah ! S'il est vrai que l'espérance
Au sein des plus affreux tourments
Soit pour nous une jouissance,
Nous jouissons depuis long temps.”

He would have to come back, he must come back, she said to herself again and again. It was not possible that after so much tenderness he could be so cruel. He would relent, oh yes ! he would relent ! Then, as

the inexorable fact was slowly borne on her that he had really gone for good, she ran back into the room, shut and locked the door, and piteously peered down out of the window.

Yes—there he was slowly walking away, as if he were deep in thought. . . . She longed to yield to her gnawing desire to have him back—to call frantically down to him to return before it was too late—to say anything, everything. But she was too proud for that—she must accept and bear her defeat.

And her shame. . . .

She bit her lips quickly and fiercely in a vain effort to conquer the great emotion that was so quickly welling up, the great emotion that would soon swallow up everything in its great tide. She fought the weakness quiveringly for a few more seconds; then, suddenly, without knowing why or how, she surrendered, and dropped into the chair by the plain deal table covered with books.

She wept as she did everything, with her whole heart and soul, as if the world had come to an end and nothing mattered. Her body shook with the shock of her great weeping; it was as if some spirit of evil possessed her and was bent on exhausting all her strength. She sat there, with her fair young arms clasping the plain deal table in a frantic embrace, and her head pressed down between them; whilst her soft brown hair, unloosed by this emotional violence, fell across the books, and completed the picture of youthful despair.

Her plan had broken down completely—it had suddenly become a childish thing, a stupidity, a grotesque conception. He had shown her that it was even worse than all these things. It was a base plan—a very base

plan. In the extremes of emotion, which are so easily touched by passionate natures, everything now cried to her that she had made herself for ever vile. She had been willing to barter herself—she had offered herself for a price. . . . She could not disguise it to herself any longer—she had been willing to make herself vile to save her precious plan. She, who had been so puissant and so pure. What cruel Fate had willed her birth? . . .

Her emotion wore itself out in great floods of tears that were good for her since they washed her clean. The tears coursed down her face and overlaid that poor philosopher's delusion—the Categorical Imperative. They blurred two whole pages of Monsieur Bloch's engaging theories; they even threatened to destroy him entirely with the swift violence with which he had credited modern arms. The girl wept as she had never wept before. And all because a man had refused her.

Refused her—refused her! She kept on repeating the words to herself so that the full extent of this crushing calamity should be impressed on her with all its far-reaching consequences. Cost what it might, she would now have to make the attempt alone—by herself. And if she failed? Well, she would do it and die. . . . Now she felt in the pocket of her skirt for the tiny ivory-mounted revolver which never left her. Taking it up she pressed upon it a fierce, cruel kiss, and as she kissed she was conscious of a hot thirst.

She raised her head, and then fell back in her chair, gazing at the bright, warm sunshine without.

There was much twittering among the audacious little sparrows which were now fluttering round the

230 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

windows, doubtless commenting on this great pother, when elsewhere there was nothing but peace and contentment. The little birds, so friendly and so simple, engaged her attention—and lovingly she stretched out a hand as if to caress them. They carried her thoughts far back to her early girlhood, to her childhood; she remembered with fresh bitterness how happy had been those distant days. The large, commodious country-house on the great Polish plain—the farm animals, the horses in the stables, the dogs—all these things came back to her. She remembered the glamour of harvest-time, with the great fields golden-brown in their ripeness—the peasants in their gay shirts camping at night in rude canvas tents where they had left off working so that not one minute of the daylight hours should be missed. She could even smell the sweet smell of the ripe corn—she could see the swarms of sparrows, which in spite of scarecrows and gun-shots seemed to grow more and more numerous every year, until their impudence was unbounded. Happier little sparrows than these—with the ripe fields to feed upon and the unclouded skies above. . . .

It was a very old, old story. It had all been taken from them: the country-house, the rich fields, the green woods, because her father had become a “Political,” and had been forced to flee suddenly across the German frontier and lose everything for fear of a worse fate. So little had been left them out of their abundance that had it not been for kind relatives they might even for a while have starved. And then her father and mother had died—and, save for her half-brother, she had counted herself alone in the world.

There had been many dreary months after that for her alone in England—months during which she had

vainly besought her brother to allow her to join him. But he had always refused ; he had always given reasons which she could not understand. She knew that there was something behind it all—she had been old enough before her mother and father had been taken from her to pierce in a measure the veil of mystery which they assumed whenever she was present. She had burned to know exactly what it might be that had harmed them all so much, but it was not until years afterwards that fate had become kind to her—delivering her brother's secret into her hands. She discovered it quite by accident ; he had become a far more dangerous man than his father had been before him.

He had been in Paris at the time—coming to see her constantly, though he was often absent for weeks. One afternoon a packet covered in brown paper had been left for him. It was marked “ private ” in one corner, and “ immediate ” in another, and for that reason it excited her unbounded curiosity. Private ? Immediate ? What could that mean ? She was only sixteen and the temptation was irresistible. She fought it for a long time, and then suddenly surrendered. It could not hurt anyone very much if she had one little peep. . . .

She had opened the parcel with infinite care so that nobody could possibly see that it had been tampered with. She had always had quick, clever fingers, and she put all the art she had in them to undo the parcel—without breaking the seals. It required great perseverance, but she at length succeeded. The formidable cover was off !

The contents puzzled her more even than the super-

scription and packing had done—and her labour seemed in vain. It was full of papers covered with writing which looked like gibberish. It was nothing but cipher. She conned over it all in vain for an hour and more. She had just given up all hope of elucidating its meaning, when a servant knocked and informed her that a foreign gentleman, who said he was a compatriot of hers, desired to speak to her urgently, privately. Full of a new feeling of guilt, she hastily hid the parcel and ran quickly downstairs.

In the drawing-room she found a very polite man who addressed her most deferentially in Polish, and who asked her, with hardly any introductory remarks, if in the absence of her brother she could kindly let him have a parcel of papers left there that morning. He had been sent to get them back at once; it had been discovered at the last moment that they had been delivered incomplete; it was of the utmost importance to have them correct. He was particularly anxious about the matter, because he was largely to blame for the mistake.

Sasha had listened attentively—some instinct telling her to beware. So at first she merely remarked:

“Describe the parcel, so that I may look for it.”

Then her caller had described it—incorrectly. At once she had jumped to her own conclusions.

“Certainly I will bring it to you if I can find it. But there are many things lying about.”

With that answer she had rushed upstairs; gathered together some old Russian newspapers; carefully measured and folded them; then tied them up and inserted them in the parcel in place of the cipher

correspondence. Never before had she been so quick and neat with her fingers—the precious correspondence demanded it, this correspondence which she had so providentially discovered. Then she had rushed downstairs again.

“Is this what you require? It was hard to find,” she murmured innocently.

“Precisely. You have relieved me greatly. It is only among one’s compatriots that one finds such intelligence. Allow me to give you a receipt.”

He wrote rapidly, and then with other words of profuse thanks made his departure.

When he had gone, Sasha had run up to her room, flung herself wildly on her bed, and lain there convulsed with laughter. She had laughed half the afternoon. Oh! the rage he would be in! Oh! the oaths he would use! . . . She almost wished she had written something on one of the newspapers to tell him what he really was! Never had she enjoyed such a delicious triumph—it was all the sweeter because she herself had seemed so guilty.

In the evening she became more serious—her brother would come that evening, and she intended to demand payment in full. It would be his secret for hers.

“A parcel came for you this morning,” she began nonchalantly, as soon as they were alone.

At once he became interested.

“A parcel—where is it?—give it to me quickly.”

She waved to him to be more patient.

“I have not finished yet. A man came for the parcel this afternoon—a fellow-countryman, who said it was needed back, as the papers enclosed were not

complete. He described the parcel to me—he said he was your friend. Here is his card.”

“ Well.” Her brother had spoken the word breathlessly. He had become very pale as he had listened to her. Now he stared at the visiting-card as if it were a fetich.

“ I gave the parcel to him ”—she stopped him with an abrupt movement of her quick hands as he rose from his seat like a man in a trance—“ but with Russian newspapers substituted for the cipher correspondence. Was that right ? ”

For one whole minute he had stood staring at her, as if transfixed.

“ With Russian newspapers substituted for the cipher correspondence ? ” he repeated at length, like a man in a dream. “ Sasha, how did you know—how did you know ? Oh, Sasha, tell me. . . . ” He came up to her and clasped her hands, and looked into her eyes deeply, almost menacingly.

She merely shrugged her shoulders to show that she was quite calm and collected.

“ I am no fool, Sergei ! Do you suppose I give things to strangers ? But more than that, do you think your father’s daughter cannot play a game as well as you ? The correspondence is safely locked up in my box—the key is in my pocket, and the devil himself could not wheedle me out of it. Do you think your father’s daughter cannot play a game as well as you ? ” she repeated once more, as if the phrase enchanted her.

“ Ah,” he had exclaimed, sinking into a chair as if the shock of relief had entirely exhausted him, “ we had different mothers, but the same father—yes, the same father—that is indeed true. They nearly caught me this way before. It was the same sort of lucky

chance which saved me. And now you wish to know what it is—what it all means? ”

Then he had told her, plainly, simply. It was the old cause, the great cause, the impossible cause, the cause of liberty by way of revolution. He had talked to her splendidly, as we all talk when we put great dreams into drunken words—sketching out the future as if there were no God to decide precisely what that is to be. Revolution, war, liberty, fraternity—how stupid they all are, and how dearly we love them, as if they were all members of the same family, related to us by the closest of close blood-ties! And yet they are all follies, ideals, which to be realized, even in part, entail endless suffering. . . .

He had talked long and late, and the upshot was that he was to secure her entry into his society. That, he had said, was essential. It was an agricultural society officially recognized and sanctioned. “It is always by means of societies and associations and clubs that we organize ourselves and proceed to work—to save people from drunkenness to blow up governments, to launch new religions, even, it is said, to promote the waning popularity of babies. . . .”

And so the half-fledged schoolgirl had become a little revolutionary in the heart of the gayest capital in the world. Yet that was the least remarkable part of it all. Half the actors in Europe’s frantic scenes pass their apprenticeship almost under the shadow of the great Triumphal Arch erected to the God of Battles.

She had been carefully prepared to play a part. It is always necessary to do that even when there is no very serious object in view. In due course, she had

blossomed forth as a *café chantant* singer—an innocent enough occupation which has often been affected by fair *intrigantes* for purposes other than revolt. She had a charming young voice, as clear and as sweet as a silver bell ; and when her mood was gay she was of the type to make the oldest roués go mad, being the picture of innocence. Innocence—innocence, what a spur you are to jaded appetites !

Her occupation was only a mask, a cloak, of course. Yet it gave her a *raison d'être* ; a standing which allowed her to come and go ; to appear and disappear with all the apparent thoughtlessness of a very young woman who cares nothing for the sacredness of contracts. And so she had soon become familiar with many of the great Russian towns—she knew them well, and they knew her.

And she showed herself very useful. Not only was she a clever messenger, but a clever instrument as well. She had not done anything very great, it is true, but she had lived in an atmosphere of political intrigue which fascinated her—she heard men of culture and fashion talk as casually of assassinations as though they were the merest bagatelles. She became familiar with the insidious language of our latter-day Jesuitism, which not only lays down that the end justifies the means, but boldly pours the vials of wrath and contempt on all who are not prepared to admit the validity of such arguments. The cause, the great cause—that is everything. . . . No matter whether that cause be, as we have suggested, of a nature almost indiscreet.

It was frantic work—in which the slums sided with science, and youth and beauty and intelligence mixed with stupid brutes—scowling at fat commercialism

and insolent nobility as if that alone were a noble game. And so for a year and more she had worked in trifling ways until she had been suddenly chosen for something great.

That had brought her from Warsaw this summer. Perhaps it was because she enjoyed such wonderful luck in all she touched that had led to her being chosen for this last piece of fatal work. She had been quick enough in Warsaw to light upon a mass of political correspondence which was successfully spirited away. Conspirators of all kinds and of all times are proverbially superstitious; they believe in luck and in omens and in all sorts of other things which other men have discarded. Her friends said she had been extraordinarily lucky in seizing an opportunity. It was supposed that with the help which was given her in countless directions she would hit upon some means of carrying out a still bolder *coup*—the method left entirely to her discretion.

But here in Moscow everything had failed. She had been so closely watched that the smallest false move would have been enough to compromise her for ever. She had been driven step by step to an impossible position which had ended in this last terrible and humiliating morning.

And now she must sacrifice herself. March straight into the lion's den. After she had been warned to keep away. . . .

Her eyes, swollen from their weeping, suddenly became steely-blue, like the blade of a sword, as the resolution in her heart leaped up. She would show them the metal of a Polish girl, no matter what it cost.

Now with determination reflected in every move-

ment, she ran into the adjoining room, quickly bathed her eyes, put on hat and veil, locked all the doors, and came into the hall.

Two minutes later she was in the street—walking quickly, with her eyes fixed on the ground.

She was going into retreat, to lull suspicions, and then, at the least expected moment, she would strike.

XXII

ALL the world knows the insatiable inquisitiveness of the gallic mind—the manner in which everything is of interest simply because what is nobody's business is held to be everybody's.

Now Verdard was something more than merely inquisitive. He itched for news and for startling developments just as a dog full of fleas itches ; his desire to satisfy his curiosity amounted to a veritable passion.

So that morning, as soon as he had received the curious summons brought him by the little girl, he jumped into a droshky and shouted his orders. It was easy to see from his manner that he was a man of importance ; and it pleased him greatly to see with what alacrity the driver fell in with this conception. The man whipped up his horses as if much depended on their speed.

In all truth Verdard was in a hurry. Yet though he was so anxious to find out what had occurred to demand his presence so urgently, he remained unhappy in his heart of hearts. He could no longer disguise to himself that the grand rôle he wished to play had not been assigned to him, and that the hope he had so long cherished that his name would become as familiar to newspaper readers as that of actresses and tenors was not likely to be realized. Indeed, he felt that he was in serious danger of remaining a

nobody until the end of his days, that was almost worse than anything else he could conceive.

He ground his teeth savagely as he thought of it. He saw himself a *restaurateur* once more in an obscure provincial town; bowing and smiling to everyone so that his clientele might spread his reputation for excessive amiability; forced to interest himself in cooking as an escape from his troubling thoughts; doing everyday things with an everyday manner; in a word, tumbled from his high estate. He had been tired to death of it all long before he had given it up; he had thirsted for wider fields. And now! . . . To fall from the clouds back to solid earth is to dreamers worse than a descent to Avernus.

He had been a pretty conspirator indeed—he thought to himself in growing scorn! He had been utilized in the most commonplace ways, without any more romance attaching to it all than that enjoyed by petty smugglers who by means of false declarations and clever packing have long used Belgium as their happy hunting-ground. It had been a *saloperie* from start to finish, with the menace always staring him in the face, if anything went wrong, of having to pass endless months in a vile prison. He began even to despise the money he had made through it all.

As he sat there, rolling from side to side with the sharp movements of the carriage, a man of intelligence would have been hard put in deciding what was actually the matter with him. At one moment he looked merely choleric; the very next he was inclined to be tearful; a minute later a wave of hope had passed over him, and craning his head forward, he seemed to be attempting to pierce the secrets of the future.

It was with an exclamation of relief that he finally arrived at his destination. Rapidly stepping to the ground, he paid for his conveyance in his usual open-handed manner. Then, grasping firmly in his hand the black commercial-traveller's bag which he always carried by day as a sort of certificate of his *bona fides*, he rapidly walked up to the discreet little house sheltered behind the line of poplars, and rang the door-bell.

A surprise awaited him on the very threshold. The doctor had been sitting in a deep arm-chair, sipping tea, and reading the newspaper *Moskovskaya Vedomosty*, waiting because he had an appointment here. As the bell clanged loudly, he muttered something irritably about people who always come too early. Still, he got up and quietly opened the door.

Both men were astounded by the meeting, but the Frenchman showed it more than the doctor.

"Oh! oh!" he exclaimed, looking at the Russian doubtfully, "so you are still here, my good friend. I can therefore only suppose that the poor Baron progresses but slowly."

The doctor did not smile; he was sorely perplexed, but he managed to conceal it. He had been expecting another man—in fact, a messenger who was to tell him a piece of very important news. In the name of Heaven, what did this mean?

"I am attending to my patient and securing that nothing retards his rapid recovery," he assented coolly enough, rubbing his chin with the palm of his hand, as if it were itching. "He is improving marvellously—in a few days he will be able to walk. Yes, I am sure of that." He paused and looked at his unexpected visitor with curious eyes. "By the by, what

is the matter with you, my dear Monsieur Verdard? To my professional eyes you look a trifle indisposed."

"I have been sent for by Monsieur le Baron," said Verdard sourly and uncivilly, "and my physical condition is not sufficiently serious to engage the attention of a doctor. Will you give me permission to go up to your patient?"

The doctor did not answer at once. He wished to gain time and understand what might lie behind the Frenchman's coming so far out of the city when the Baron was now many miles away—in fact, across the frontier. The big portfolio which Verdard was carrying gave him an excuse.

"What have you in that bag?" he inquired, as his companion set it down. "It looks formidable."

"It contains presents for people who wish to trade with me."

"*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,*" quoted the doctor, with a facetious smile. "Do you know Latin?"

"No."

"Well, that means that the Greeks were not above suspicion even when they brought gifts."

"Oh!" said Verdard, not knowing whether to be angry or to laugh.

The doctor suddenly relieved him of the necessity of deciding.

"My friend," he said very seriously, "it is high time we understood each other more completely. I do not know what you are doing here to-day, but I must find out. Come into this room, where we can talk without fear of interruption."

Verdard followed him into the room reluctantly. He suddenly felt that something disconcerting was about to happen.

The doctor carefully closed the door, but did not sit down. For a moment he stood facing his man in silence. When he spoke he did so suddenly and gruffly.

“What do you want with the Baron? Tell me—without subterfuge this time.”

Verdard shrugged his shoulders, as if annoyed at such persistent stupidity.

“Your question is incorrectly framed: you should have inquired what the Baron wants of me.”

“What he wants of you?” repeated the doctor, now looking openly puzzled. “He certainly wants nothing of you. To be precise, he is in Austria by now.” He consulted his watch. “Yes, he must have crossed the frontier hours ago; in fact, he may have reached Switzerland.”

The Frenchman suddenly struck his hands together ferociously.

“Trapped—I suspected it. Trapped, trapped, trapped.” He stood there repeating the word madly and glaring like an enraged bull.

“Explain yourself,” exclaimed the doctor.

There was a new interest in his manner; his eyes had become much brighter behind their glasses.

In short, excited sentences Verdard related what had happened. He spoke with the air of a man who is both cornered and afraid. The doctor also listened as one whose safety is at stake, but who would certainly never show any such perturbation. He had not understood this man's sudden appearance; but now that the reason was clear, he, too, was filled with strange unrest.

“This is a mysterious thing—a very mysterious thing. Who could have sent that child, who?”

244 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

He stood there twisting a button of his waistcoat and rapidly thinking. He stood there, in his strange ways—with his great head sunk between his shoulders and his loosely knitted body slightly swaying to and fro as if he were balancing himself just as he was balancing all possible pros and cons.

Suddenly his eyes brightened again. As if to hide that he took off his glasses and busily wiped them with a big handkerchief. He was convinced that Sasha was behind this; he remembered her grudge against the man.

“I cannot think of anything which gives me a clue,” he murmured. “I can think of nothing save that this house seems to have become singularly unhealthy.” He thought a bit longer and then concluded in a firm voice: “Monsieur Verdard, I venture to give you a piece of urgent advice—leave Moscow as soon as you can pack up and find a train to carry you away. As a medical man I have no hesitation in declaring that the local climate is totally unsuited for you. Now—we had better part quickly—good-bye.”

Verdard walked out of the house without a single word. Ominously silent, he took his departure, still convinced that somebody had made a fool of him merely to get him out of the way, which was quite correct. He did not dream of anything else—his injured vanity completely absorbed him, which was quite a mistake.

As he walked, with his head hanging down and his eyes on the ground, he did not observe that he was being closely shadowed by two powerful-looking men, dressed in the top-boots and loose black shirts of the

lower classes, who had seen him drive up and had been waiting for him to come out.

The two men slowly followed, turning round repeatedly to see that they in turn were not being watched. It was a peaceful morning—very cool and fresh after the rain, which had just stopped. The woods looked charming in the distance, and the grass in some meadows near by was green and luscious. It would have made an ideal spot for one of those *fêtes-champêtres* which Greuze has so successfully immortalized on his speaking canvases. And instead of that there was to be one of those sinister little scenes so common in Russia.

There was something brutally fascinating in the way the three men now moved idly along the deserted country road—the fat man who was being tracked, and the strong men who were about to pounce upon him. Before he had appeared they had mechanically tightened their leather belts as if it might be necessary to use force, to hurt him a little. Yet there was no reason for haste or flurry—the scene had something about it of the inevitableness of fate.

A couple of hundred yards away from the solitary house, the road curved a bit, and was heavily masked by some tall trees. Here it was that the two men decided to act.

“*Stoi,*” they called roughly, coming up and laying heavy hands on the Frenchman’s shoulder. “*Stoi.*”

The colour slowly left Verdard’s face as he realized what had happened.

He babbled a stream of vain inquiries and protests ; he demanded all sorts of things. The two powerful fellows did not even trouble to answer, though they smiled a little ironically as, in a fit of despair, he

opened his traveller's bag and showed them his commercial samples. That had been done before—possibly one hundred thousand times or a million. There was only one fact of importance just now for him to understand, that he was under arrest.

The doctor had gone upstairs after his visitor had taken his departure; and more from habit than from any other motive he had idly watched him from a window. He was thinking of Sasha and wondering what motive she had in sending this man on a wild-goose chase; was it mere idle amusement, or something more serious? It was hardly the time to play the fool.

Then suddenly he stopped his thinking and his whole manner changed. With a few rapid strides he went across the room and came back with a pair of field-glasses. Adjusting them carefully, he followed the scene on the road with breathless interest. The glasses were so excellent that he saw every detail down to the very end—even the last despairing opening of the black bag—that black bag which had made him speak of the Greeks. . . .

When there was nothing more to see, he swiftly left the window and sought the stairs.

“They have begun throwing out the nets,” he muttered, with a wild look in his eyes. “We have no time to lose—not a moment. It cannot have been Sasha who sent him.”

Quickly he wrote something on a piece of paper and left it in a conspicuous place.

A minute later he had seized his hat, opened a little back-door, and vanished down a small country path, which ran almost entirely concealed by the clumps of sentinel trees, far away into the woods.

XXIII

THE very next morning bright sunshine had returned ; floods of sunshine, splendid sunshine. Once more the skies were of an Italian blue, with only a few vague powder-puffs of clouds floating in the far distance. The pigeons and the old woman who tended them came back to the great square, and the idlers bought and scattered bountiful handfuls of Indian corn as if to make up for the neglect of the previous day. The rainbow flights of the birds, and their constant cooing, gave to the barren space a touch of romance which fitted in with the vista of golden cupolas and Byzantine architecture and distant wooded hills. With the coming of fair weather everybody seemed on the move ; hundreds of carriages passed and repassed in every direction ; the old zest for living had returned.

Faulconbridge, gazing out of his window, and drinking in the gaiety of it all, wondered how much of the previous day had been really true. It could not be true, he exclaimed to himself again and again, in that vain effort to find consolation by that dogged denial which we always affect on the morrow of our disasters. That he had finished with her, that he would never see Sasha again, seemed both incredible and cruel. In the bright morning sunlight the folly of her mad proposal was doubly clear to him ; that she could have believed for one instant in the success of it all he

deemed impossible. Did she think that he could become a common thief, even at the price she had named? . . . That had been a mad climax to a mad acquaintance.

Yet though the whole memory hurt him so, though he was direly distressed, by one of those fantastic mental contradictions, at the same time he was fascinated by it. Indeed, from hour to hour the fascination seemed to grow. It was so far removed from his normal experience to find a woman boldly offering to barter herself for political papers that he did not know how to measure it. It was so unreal as to be strangely alluring—he could play with the memory as if it were merely phantasy; and then he could still feel the clinging softness of her body as she pressed against him and pleaded with him; he could still see her eyes and the passion which lighted them; he could still hear the music of her voice, and feel the immeasurable disdain with which she had dismissed him.

He did not trouble about the rest; what was the use of thinking of that? He knew that soldiers would blast down with artillery barricades and houses when the fateful moment had arrived—firing until there was nothing left. He knew that the people could not hope to win. Popular movements had always been great gambles; here no element of luck could possibly make up for the immense elements of weakness which were glaringly evident even to him.

Moodily he turned away from his window and the gay sunlight; in the darker room this inevitable end seemed now to rise up before him like a gloomy spectre.

He wished the whole thing had not seemed so sense-

less, so criminal. Then he might have tried to assert himself. Viewing the matter from his detached standpoint, soon one thing and only one thing became evident to him—that he must try to prevent the girl from making her mad attempt. But what could he do? What possible plan was there? He dropped into a chair and, fixing his eyes on the pattern of the wall-paper, vainly tried to think out something good and sound.

How long he had sat like that he did not know. But at last he was vaguely conscious in the midst of his concentration, that following a brief knock, a black-coated waiter had entered the room with a salver in his hand. The man's white face seemed to float nearer as he advanced noiselessly over the thick carpet—performing his duty with the detachment and ease of a perfect automaton. It was curious how very noiselessly he performed his office.

Mechanically Faulconbridge—trying hard to remain in his brown study—put out his hand for the letter which he supposed was there, and found—a card. Once again he vaguely noted, as he fumbled to pick up the piece of pasteboard from the smooth metal surface, that the waiter's eyes were now fixed on him in a new way—as if something had changed him from a person merely known by his room-number into somebody invested with particular significance. Faulconbridge was irritated by the man's stare—he was so irritated that he only controlled himself with an effort.

It took him a few seconds to realize that the problem engaging him had suddenly been complicated in an astounding and dangerous manner; that, in fact, so far from being in a position to contrive means for the

safety of others, the time had come when he must busy himself about his own neck. To be precise, though the card he held in his hand was in Russian, underneath the strange script was written clearly enough in English: "Over-Police-Inspector—Central Administration."

There could be no possible mistake regarding what that meant.

"The gentleman is coming up," announced the waiter suddenly, in his German-English, having stared his fill. Then the man turned on his heels—abruptly and somewhat pitilessly.

Faulconbridge stood up with unexpected rapidity.

For before the waiter reached the door, the police officer had opened it; and now, with a look of indifference on his face, he was already calmly surveying the man to whom he had done the unusual kindness of sending in a card.

For an instant—whilst the waiter disappeared—the two men stood opposite one another, not speaking a word. Each was measuring the other.

The gentleman of the Central Administration, dressed almost precisely as an army officer, had dealt with many men in his time. Now a half-smile of appreciation stole across his bearded face as he understood his victim's indifferent attitude. He secretly liked men who dealt with him firmly, because that was his own method; and so now he gave a ceremonious bow before he advanced any nearer. Then, with a swift and somewhat unexpected movement, he drew a well-worn leather letter-case from the breast of his tunic. Opening it abruptly, he began reading from a paper in tolerable English, marked, however, by the soft purring Slavonic accent and a curious twisting of the gutturals of commonplace words:

“Meester Richard Faulconbridge, Englishman, thirty years old—born in London of British parents, no profession or business, Protestant religion, travelling in Poland, Russia, Siberia, and Turkey. Stayed in Warsaw for one week, changing hotels three times—the Warsaw report late, not yet received—came to Moscow nine days ago.” He stopped abruptly, scratched his chin, and then looked up in a puzzled way. “Meester Faulconbridge, please tell me, sir, why you changed hotels three times in Warsaw in one week. How much trouble—three times in one week!”

An expression of grim amusement flitted across Faulconbridge’s face.

“They were too many visitors in the Warsaw hotels.”

The police officer looked puzzled.

“Too many visitors?” he repeated blankly.

“Yes—in the bedrooms—particularly in the beds.”

The police officer suddenly understood, and appeared much amused.

“Ha, ha,” he laughed. “That is very good, very good, and I think true. In Russia we call them Germans, and in Germany they call them Russians, and they pass the frontier without passports to annoy the Englishman, and made him change hotels!”

He laughed a little longer; then his seriousness returned, and he read on:

“On arrival in Moscow, reported by our hotel agents to show suspicious movements—seen in company——” Once more he stopped abruptly his *viva voce* translation and conned his notes with his eyebrows raised.

He evidently made up his mind that the rest had better be suppressed, for in the same rapid way, he

unexpectedly restored the notebook to his breast-pocket and stood at ease.

"I am sorry for you, Meester Faulconbridge, because you are a nice man," he resumed in his soft, drawling English, "but our operations have commenced; yesterday nearly one thousand arrests. What you call sweeping operations, yes? I read it in the English papers many times during your war about the gold mines in South Africa when I was in the Censor's office, reading newspapers, and blacking so many English papers every day! Our sweeping operations have been very big. It is what we do in Russia very often—we sweep up all the curious things so as to prevent explosions. So to-day we look everywhere, and Meester Faulconbridge of London, no business or profession, comes into the basket too."

He gazed at his tall victim without a trace of malice, and now, having finished the official part of his business, he drew forth the inevitable cigarette-case and offered its contents. There was always time for that.

Faulconbridge coolly thanked him.

"You will greatly oblige me by telling me at once," he said, "whether I can be technically described as under arrest or not?"

The police officer inhaled deeply and thoughtfully, and then slowly expelled the smoke of his little cigarette through his nostrils. He was not in the slightest impressed by the question.

"Technically you cannot be described—you are ordered to accompany me to the Central Administration for inquiry. That is the position. Perhaps you will know very soon about the future. Please lock up your boxes and I will seal them."

"I am ready to go, now. I do not propose to lock anything," said Faulconbridge rather angrily.

The police officer was not offended.

"Englishmen are always calm," he said, mysteriously smiling, "especially when they are of no profession or business. Well, I will seal, without locking."

Now from another pocket he drew papers and seals, and rapidly sealed everything in the room. Then, indicating that he was ready, he preceded Faulconbridge to the door, saw him out, turned the key, placed it in his pocket, and sealed the door.

Without speaking they sought the lift. A group of hotel-servants had breathlessly watched their exit. It was easy to see from the expression on their faces that what had occurred was a familiar occurrence—just now. In this abrupt and unexpected fashion Faulconbridge left the hotel.

The Central Administration was one of those vast, gloomy buildings which seem specially designed to inform unhappy humanity that the quality of mercy is not to be sought within such portals. Built of solid masonry—with all the windows iron-barred and closely shut—with no sign of life anywhere in the sombre streets around—a not unsuitable motto over the entrance would have been those celebrated words inscribed over Purgatory.

Faulconbridge—satisfied though he was that he had no reason for real alarm—felt a strange, unaccustomed thrill as he entered the gateway in company with the police officer. For the first time in his life he realized what must be the feelings of unhappy wretches who

are really guilty, and who must pass to their doom unnoticed and unknown.

His heart had, indeed, become colder. There was a terrible silence in the place, an unearthly quiet, suggestive of the tomb. The police stationed in the inner courtyards stood motionless and expressionless, as if close and constant association with this unfeeling monster of brickwork had turned them to stone. Not a single one of them showed the slightest interest ; save for a mechanical salute nobody moved a muscle.

The police officer had caught the official air of the place. In the drive hither he had made some attempt at conversation ; now he had become as sullen as the gloomy building. Entering one wing which lay across a secluded cobbled courtyard, he silently led the way down endless corridors, lined with doors that were covered with signs. Occasionally they passed someone hurrying along with bundles of papers ; but the briefest nod was the only sign of recognition exchanged.

At last a flight of stone steps led to a more imposing office-entrance. Outside the folding-doors stood a door-keeper in a black tunic and carefully polished top-boots ; and no sooner did he see them than he flung open the doors and stood respectfully aside.

With a slight bow the police officer led the way in, removing his cap as he did so.

“ You have arrived at your destination. In a few minutes the chief of my section will see you personally, and your preliminary examination will commence. You will wait here.” Then something caught his eye ; he drew himself up and stiffly stood to attention.

Faulconbridge, surprised for a moment, could not

account for the change ; then he saw what had happened.

The room in which they were standing was nothing but a plainly furnished ante-room, with only a few well-worn chairs set against the walls, but through an open door there was to be seen a luxury of appointment which was at odd variance with the barren exterior of these police barracks. Handsome carpets, several marble busts, pictures, and rich curtains, met the eyes, but these were only noted to be forgotten. For standing in one corner of the room, near the windows, were three men in military uniform, engaged in close conversation. They had turned instinctively as they heard the sound of footsteps, and now their faces lay in his direction, Faulconbridge suddenly recognized the tall, spare, handsome man, whose cold blue eyes sought the meaning of this interruption.

It was no other person than the Grand-Duke.

In spite of himself, for the first time Faulconbridge showed that he was startled : a flood of colour surged across his face. He had been utterly unprepared for such a development ; could it be possible that every detail concerning what happened everywhere was known to the secret agents of this country, as fantastic story-books so often alleged ? It was incredible. Yet now a vision of what this might mean, not only for himself, but for others, overwhelmed him.

He made a great effort, and at length mastered himself. By his side the police superintendent remained like a man turned to stone. The heels of his black top-boots were glued together, and his arms were rigid beside him. And so the two stood and waited.

The three personages finished their conversation at

their leisure, speaking in the deep resonant undertones of a land of strong lungs. At last the younger of the three fell back a step or two, saluted stiffly, and rapidly came out of the room. As he passed Faulconbridge he shot a look of curiosity at him—as if momentarily interested in his fate. In the other room the remaining official had begun talking again in a low, deferential voice. His manner was that of a man infinitely subservient.

The Grand-Duke suddenly interrupted the flow of words with a characteristic Slavonic movement: it was as if he would beat the air downward with his open hand. He did it several times as if to insist on his point.

“*Nichevo*,” he then remarked quite loud. Making an abrupt sign towards the ante-room, he asked some questions, which were rapidly answered. There was a call.

The police inspector saluted and turned.

“Please go in,” he said in a low voice.

Faulconbridge went forward slowly and seriously, bowing to the Prince as he came to a halt. For a moment the Grand-Duke studied him carefully; then he dropped his eyes to some papers which had been tendered him, and rapidly read. At last he shrugged his shoulders, threw the papers on to the desk, and turned.

“Mr. Faulconbridge, I believe,” he said in perfect English.

“Yes—your Highness—that is my name.”

The shadow of a smile passed over the Prince’s face at the form of address which had been used. He hesitated for a moment, evidently dwelling on the incongruousness of the situation.

“How did you know who I was?” he inquired at length, with an air of curiosity.

“I have seen you before, sir, both here and in England.”

“You have a good memory for faces.”

Faulconbridge bowed slightly.

“I do not easily forget, sir.”

They were standing close to each other now—two tall men looking into each other’s eyes. The Englishman was perhaps a shade shorter, but he was of a heavier build, and this emphasized the slight difference between the two.

The Grand-Duke looked him up and down appreciatively several times before he spoke again.

“It would be a pity for a fine fellow like yourself to get into trouble over a lot of wretched fanatics,” he remarked at length, sternly watching him with his cold blue eyes. “I gather from these papers that you have been acting like a fool. I have taken it on myself to speak to you, because I like England and Englishmen. It is extremely lucky for you, I have no hesitation in saying, that I happen to be here—in this room—at the present moment.” He paused for a minute to allow the meaning of his words to sink in. “Mr. Faulconbridge, leave Moscow within three days, and the police will bother you no more. Mr. Faulconbridge, speak to nobody but to people about whom you know everything during these three days. You came here for pleasure? Well, then, do not court disgrace. Next time you cannot count on being so fortunate. You will get—the usual treatment. You understand?” He never took his eyes for an instant from the strong yet boyish face that was so close to his.

“ I shall leave within the time you have stated, sir,” said Faulconbridge briefly.

The Grand-Duke was evidently turning something else over in his mind. The police officials stood watching him without a sign of life. The Grand-Duke looked away to the window and then back several times in an undecided way ; he toyed with a button of his uniform as if he could not make up his mind.

Suddenly he shrugged his shoulders.

“ Very good. That is all. I will not ask you a single question. You may go. You may remember some day that we Russians can be generous too. The police will release effects. Good day.”

Then he turned on his heel curtly. Faulconbridge, free to do as he pleased, walked in solemn silence back to the hotel.

XXIV

HE put his things in order the next day. It was over—it was finished. The story had come to an abrupt end just when he had tasted the romance—just when he was nursing the climax. He would have to leave within the stated time whether he liked it or not—he would not see the upshot of what had suddenly become an enthralling drama. Men are always foolish where women are concerned. He should have been thankful for his providential escape—instead of that he was only gloomy.

He wandered about like a lost dog, always retracing his steps and coming back to spots which were now strangely familiar to him. Of course, had he been sensible, he would have left without an hour's delay—gone anywhere so long as the change was complete. But that was out of the question; he would have sooner faced anything than the immediate loneliness of this undesired departure.

So he mooned about the enthralling Kremlin, passing and repassing the great Spaski Gate, which pierces the medieval wall; he wandered round the imposing white bell-tower of Ivan the Terrible, with its giant bell tumbled from aloft and reposing on terra firma; he stopped many times before the great bronze monster called the "Czar Pouschka"—the king of cannons—and wondered whether that medieval thun-

derer was symbolic of the future—of the invincibility of this iron rule. . . . Then, filled with sad reverie, he returned once more to that great array of piled guns which the Napoleonic defeat had given the country, and morosely studied the coats of arms and the crowns on those old-time muzzle-loaders. All the kingdoms and principalities of Europe—all the nations which had been enslaved by that marvellous conqueror had sent their men to die in the snows of this pitiless northern country which always conquered. He said that to himself again and again. Here was testimony which would last to the end of time, these Dutch guns, Swedish guns, Spanish guns, Polish guns, Prussian guns, Austrian guns, Saxon guns, Bavarian guns—not to speak of the multitude of weapons abandoned by the soldiery of a score of minor Italian and German states—states which the passage of time has blotted out. Since his brief interview with the Grand-Duke this silent testimony spoke to him more eloquently than before.

He did not want to leave it all, he doggedly argued to himself; he wished to stay. He became such a persistent visitor to these scenes that the sellers of post cards near the gaudy Byzantine Cathedral of St. Basil imagined that he must be an architect desirous of copying its Turkish towers and minarets, or perhaps a souvenir-hunter who wished a souvenir torn from its very walls—as American tourists sometimes demanded. It was hard to decide what he was.

He was as lonely as a lost dog—and every bit as homeless. He conceived a particular detestation for the brand-new flashy hotel, and wondered if a change of abode would make suspicion centre upon him again. "What is she doing now?" he thought, picturing to

himself the woman alone, in the corner of a narrow room, hiding from arrest. "It is best for me to forget her," he decided.

But he could not forget her; she stood before him, provoking now intense pity, now irritation and even anger. And her image was as clear and the thoughts of her were as painful as if he were carrying her about with him in his breast.

She would be caught in the act, of course, and he would never even hear of her again. She had said that she would seek refuge in Switzerland if she succeeded. If she succeeded indeed! Perhaps they would even let her succeed up to a certain point, and then shoot her down. That was what would happen. Somebody had once told him that that was a common method; not only did it save time and trouble, but it struck terror into the less courageous of those composing these desperate organizations.

As he thought of such things his blood boiled, and he hated what he had done in a dull, unreasoning way. If he had only had the common sense to prevaricate with her he might have saved her from herself. He should have understood that at once, and promised anything. Why had he not done that?

Yet, somehow, in the face of her offer, that had been impossible. . . . She had indeed made it so that no subterfuge, no possible line of retreat was open to him once he had succumbed to her embraces. It had been marvellously clever on her part, though marvellously crude. . . .

He coloured again and again with suppressed emotion as he remembered how sweet had been the close physical contact with one who had been so much in his thoughts—how soft and yielding and girlish she had

seemed. Perhaps if she had not arranged it so cleverly—if she had allowed chance to work in her favour—if she had not so evidently wished to tie him in advance, he might have succumbed to the temptation. . . .

Even now he trembled to think of what that would have meant. . . .

Then he thought of that blinding flash of anger which had overwhelmed her when he had at last spoken clearly. Though her face had become distorted with anger, it had been beautiful in a new way with an odd, uneven kind of beauty. It had seemed broader than ever at the forehead, so broad that it shaped too abruptly into her pointed chin. Her eyes, always so tranquil and clear, had magically changed; and in them the lowering hatred of her expression had been concentrated, suddenly, frantically. Yes—for a few minutes she had hated him with a tremendous hate. His mouth had become dry; he had been overwhelmed. He could not tolerate the idea that she hated him. And yet he liked that memory better than the first—it was more wholesome, more convincing, more natural.

The second day was much worse than the first—he must have walked fifteen hours instead of ten. He could not sit still—that had become for him an utter impossibility. He was filled with all sorts of feelings—feelings that tortured him—feelings that made him question the sanity of his every action. Particularly that day did he have the feeling that he had been an arrant fool—but with that was mixed the feeling of impending doom.

He did not know why, but the air seemed heavy with suspense as it does before some great tropical storm. Those who have been through similar times know well how coming events do truly cast their

shadows before. It is as if the electricity of human passions becomes so intense as to charge the whole atmosphere and make men tremble without knowing why. Once again there was bad news from everywhere—from the bourses, from the produce exchanges, from the provinces, where famine was expected; and most of all, bad news from this distant campaign in Asia, which seemed to symbolize more than all the rest the spirit of evil and disaster which had been for so long threatening the country. He gathered from the confused accounts which appeared in German newspapers that another disaster—or a series of disasters—had occurred on the battlefield; but everything was blurred and contradictory, and the censorship was now so strict that it was impossible to say what was true and what was merely the official lie.

He could no longer obtain any English newspapers—the postal service had apparently broken down, or else the censors had openly placed their ban on pernicious publications which made so much of Russia's dilemma. He thought several times that day of going and representing his case to the proper authorities—finding out whether he could really be expelled from the country by simple mandate, by autocratic behest. Then he remembered, with a bitter smile at his ingenuousness, that this was the land which he had found so charming at first contact just because it was autocratic—just because the individual counted for nothing and the even tenor of national life summed up all. They could do what they liked with him—that was plain—even to the extent of transporting him to Siberia for a term of years without any trial at all. It was on record that it had taken countless months of persistent diplomacy to secure the release of a man who

had been seized with as little real reason for suspicion as he afforded. Poor, unhappy people of the land.

Now he wandered in the great unpaved streets where endless lines of wooden booths displayed, as in a fair, cheap household necessities. These thoroughfares were always crowded with the real Russian people, tall men, often wearing fur caps in spite of the warm weather, deep-bosomed women with wide-open blue eyes and expansive gestures, and hosts of tousle-headed children. The pavements were littered with rubbish ; an abundance of horseflesh harnessed to all kinds of carts was thrusting about through these restless masses of odorous humanity—life swarmed here almost as it does in Eastern countries, where babies are tumbled out into the world in great layers as if to fertilize the soil as dung fertilizes it. . . .

The third day came finally—the day he would have to go. He looked out on the fresh morning from his window on the square with an odd heart-sinking.

Never had the historic city seemed so charming—the day was perfect with not a cloud in the sky. The gilded domes of the Greek Orthodox churches, glittering in the sunlight, sent up flashes of fire like the flashes of a burnished sword waved by a swordsman exultant of his strength. The swiftly moving carriages crossing and recrossing the great open space seemed charged with special significance in his eyes. How many bore messengers half frantic with hopes and fears ? There was something arrestingly dramatic in this strange conspiracy of silence which veiled a great powder-magazine with a diaphanous veil of simulated indifference. Everybody knew that beneath it all something tremendous was fast developing—everybody, or

nearly everybody, must know it, since it was not only in the air, but quite openly talked about. Public arrests were a common sight—like the sudden arrest he himself had witnessed in this very hotel-restaurant : people saw a man suddenly stopped in the streets, sharply questioned, and then led off with the resignation of despair written on his features. People saw it, paused a moment in their hurrying progress with perhaps an awestruck expression, then moved on again with that strangely fatalistic Slavonic shoulder-shrugging, as if to say that what is must be, and that all repining is useless and out of place.

The explosion was almost within sight, it would come in two days, three days, four days—who could say when ?—and he had to leave.

He gave notice that he was going away that evening, and made the necessary inquiries about trains. The tall porter in the hall, eyeing him curiously the while, gave him the details. One was going in the afternoon, and one precisely at midnight. Faulconbridge chose the second one without a minute's hesitation, and gave instructions regarding his luggage. When he had arranged that he had nothing more to do but to be at the station a few minutes before midnight.

Some placards in red caught his attention, and he asked for an explanation. The porter, evidently desirous of talking, gave voluble explanations. An operatic performance, a very special performance, was being given that very evening by special permission in aid of the widows and orphans of the victims of the war. A world-famous *basso* had been stopping here for a few days, and had signified his willingness to perform. His name was sufficient to fill any opera-house—it was to be one of Tschaikowsky's more obscure operas—but

splendid, perfectly splendid. It had a famous scene in it, which was as savage as a nightmare. Nobody should miss it—it would be over by eleven o'clock.

Faulconbridge quickly assented and bought a ticket. This would just suit his mood—he would drive straight from the theatre to the station as fast as he could. It would be a fit ending. . . .

His mental unrest grew throughout the day—everything was becoming more and more strange and unnatural to him: his enforced solitude in the midst of the great crowds somehow greatly affected him. The fat Frenchman even would have been a source of consolation to him, much as he detested the man's coarse speech, his plebeian mannerisms, and the cruel and false way in which he had stabbed at the girl. But he, too, had apparently vanished into space—Faulconbridge had gone so far as to make inquiries at the hotel office, but a sudden reticence was apparent which he could only explain on the grounds that something strange had also happened to him.

He made a complete circuit of the town twice during the day in his unending walking, and he had the feeling that in spite of the Grand-Duke's assurances he was being constantly followed. He did not trouble to confirm his suspicions as he would certainly have done a few days before—what was the use now? He saw—or thought he saw—the small, ugly man whom he had so roughly handled, several times during the course of that day, but the man was evidently not anxious to be observed, and each time had quickly disappeared.

Evening came finally—though the hours had been so leaden-footed—a heavy, close evening with no breeze to sweep away the accumulated heat of the day. The

theatre would be stifling he was sure—he almost hesitated about going. But his ticket had been bought, and the prospect of a dramatic ending to a dramatic sojourn finally conquered him.

He dined in solemn silence by the plashing waters of the fountain set in the middle of the great hotel-restaurant. It was refreshingly cool where he sat, and as the sound of gay voices grew, his spirits were sensibly revived. After all, he argued to himself, it had been a unique experience ; it would give him something to remember in after years. He had done nothing he could be really sorry for. And if this girl, who had appealed to him so romantically, who had seemed so sweet and charming, disappeared for ever from his life, it would doubtless be only in accordance with the eternal fitness of things.

“ Yes,” he said to himself, as we always do when we are arguing in that vicious circle called self-comforting, “ perhaps it has been all for the best.”

And just then something made him turn. In the confusion which overcame him he upset his glass, tried to pick it up, and as a consequence sent it most disastrously crashing to the ground.

It was unbelievable madness—it could not be true, he thought piteously, since he had just decided that the very opposite was all for the best. Yet there, not ten yards away, in a simple muslin dress, unrelieved by any colour save for a bunch of red roses pinned to her bosom, with a big hat shading her face, sat Sasha, in company of two unknown men.

Faulconbridge, amazed beyond words, remained as if transfixed. She had come back to discomfort him. . . .

At the sound of the crashing glass she had slightly

started. Then it seemed to him, as her eyes flashed to his table, that the ghost of a smile passed round her red lips.

To hide his emotion he called to his waiter and settled his bill. Then for a few uncounted minutes he sat there motionless as a stone image, with the piece of paper which the man had tendered him crumpled between his fingers. He had forgotten quite magically all his previous reasoning. The mere sight of the girl had been enough for that. . . .

What did it mean, this bold, insane coming to the lion's den?

He made up his mind that he could not sit there indefinitely like that. It was necessary to move; to do something; to shake off the growing spell. He must not give way. Now, convinced once more against his inclination of the necessity to be firm, he suddenly rose and pushed his chair noisily against the table—to prove to himself the strength of his resolution. Very slowly and deliberately he turned and walked out. As he passed her for an instant she lifted her calm grey eyes and looked into his. Then, almost immediately, the long lashes fluttered down upon her cheeks.

Without a sign of recognition he passed on.

THE opera-house was only a stone's throw from the hotel—he walked there deep in thought. The street was full of people going in the same direction, some gay, others grave—but all hurrying so that they should secure their places in ample time. Scraps of conversation reached him spoken in half the languages of Europe. Everybody was talking of the great singer who was providing such an unexpected attraction at this season of the year. All the cosmopolitans in the city had turned out in force, determined to enjoy themselves and to forget the anxieties of the hour. It was plain that the opera-house would be packed from floor to ceiling.

It was still quite light. The sun, though it had long since set, had left a faint ethereal tint of pink on the sky—as if it had kissed the heavens good-bye in such a warm, enduring embrace that the colour of that emotion remained behind, attesting to all who could understand such things the vast depths of nature's affections.

It had suddenly become for Faulconbridge a charming evening—a strangely delightful evening. He felt indignant that he should have so lately thought the air hot and sultry, the town perhaps unhealthy. Life and emotions were warm—even hot ; why then complain of the sultry hours of summer, when these must always be pregnant with a significance which cold

winter days can never possess? Foolish he had been—yes, really foolish for three whole days. Now he suddenly wished that it might become even hotter; as hot as red wine makes red blood course through the veins. For was not Sasha coursing through him? That was enough to excuse everything.

He lingered on the steps of the opera-house looking at the earth and the heaven which is above the earth, and perhaps even at the things which are above heaven itself. He wished to see it all once more before night fell whilst his eyes were still so bright. Oh, beautiful world to live in when there is hope—and sad, torturing world when there is nothing but despair! And what a world of curious, strange contrasts—of virgin whites mixed with mourners' blacks! It had seemed but one brief half-hour before that he was in an unknown land journeying to unknown shores disconsolate, distempered—condemned not to enjoy the passions of those bathed in the sunshine of hope, but to welter in the gloom of the disillusioned. Now all was magically changed—all was tinted with that eternal colour of youth which we so naïvely call hope. The unfamiliar people had become familiar again; a strange new friendship had sprung up again between this Russian world and himself. All that he had been imagining to himself during scores of fretful hours had been nothing but evil dreams—suddenly swept away. . . .

Yes, he thought these simple thoughts because for him they made up the emotion of the hour; and as he thought them he breathed deeply in a new-born satisfaction.

He had made up his mind. He forgot his promise to leave, the fate which would menace him if he

stayed ; he forgot everything but the charm of her face. He would go back to her before the opera was over—whilst there was still time to make a change of plans. He would convince her—by main force if necessary—that it was madness for her to sacrifice herself in a lost cause. He would tell her what had passed at the police administration between him and this very man she wished to rob ; he would dwell on the magnanimity of the Grand-Duke, and the necessity to avoid a crime. Somehow he felt that it would be easy to win her over to his way of thinking immediately he saw her : he was convinced he would find her oddly changed.

A hush had already fallen on the audience when at length he took his place. The orchestra, as if impatient to begin, had commenced playing the opening prelude, and the rich, wild music of the greatest of Russian composers—who died an old man, burnt-up by the fire of his own ardour whilst he was still young—now rose to charm the ears of a people who worship harmonies. There was in these introductory passages the picture of a people groping for light and safety in the midst of vast untamed distances fringed with endless forests of pine and birch—the picture of a people passionate yet stern, appreciative of colour and form, yet able to endure utter formlessness and blankness, a people loving tears perhaps as much as laughter—in a word, the picture of a great people in the making.

The audience sat breathless and spellbound. Men and women watched this voluptuous painting in silent concentration, only showing their intense force by the curious sighs and whispers which floated in the air, gentle sighs and whispers like the voice of the

night wind which creeps through the ripe corn and stirs the sleeping grain of life. These sighs and whispers, escaping from the bosom of the great audience and flitting along beneath the master-melody, seemed to Faulconbridge like unloosed spirits sent out to meet the lost brothers and sisters who were calling and wailing in the music, and claiming help. It was marvellous and enchaining. He sat spellbound like the rest.

Suddenly a mysterious phrase, stealing forward like a snake, broke through the storm of sound. Sharp, piercing notes were raised from time to time as if in protest—but the snake continued to steal forward. A curious shiver in the music—accompanying this curious motif—now filled the audience with shudders, but the voluptuous phrase continued to wind its way in and out of the harmony, insinuating, languid, yet aggressive—implacable—a creature both of heaven and hell.

Then a veritable battle commenced. The sullen roar of brass announced the conflict, which the hissing of the snake had precluded. A tumult of sound both deep and high-pitched followed, but the mysterious phrase, reinforced and triumphant, grew in volume until at last the scattered sound suddenly united and melted into a great song of songs which swept up, sublime and perfect, full of the intoxication of love.

Faulconbridge was overcome. His eyes, half unknown to himself, had filled with tears because the emotion in the music harmonized so well with the emotion in his heart. As the volume of sound rose and fell, and the master-painter swiftly painted, unconsciously his mind was prepared for the scenes which were to follow, and their message made clear.

Now, as the music swelled to a last great crescendo of sound, with the brass roaring and roaring, and the strings singing and singing as if possessed, Faulconbridge suddenly grasped the arms of his stall to steady himself.

The great volume of sound flung itself up against the rich gilt ceiling as if vainly seeking to escape, and then fell back languidly across the warm breasts of the women and the glistening faces of the men, enveloping everything within its puissant folds. Then, before the confused ear was ready to confess it, the tumult had died gently away, curiously, suddenly, yet slowly—as the wind dies down when the storm is done. The curtain had already risen—the play commenced.

He did not take note of much at first; he was still under the spell of the fantastic opening. But at length a thrill passed along the packed opera-house and the audience began frantically acclaiming its idol who had quietly appeared. Then, as if weary with this excess of emotion, men and women sank back in their seats to enjoy the great savage scene through which the solitary voice of the *basso* wanders like the power of evil. Faulconbridge, still deep in his reverie, saw only dimly, as through a mist of giant cliffs, a distant cataract, dense black forests lowering on the horizon, and above it all the voice of that incomparable singer, like distant thunder, angrily muttering and upbraiding, chiding the Fates because of their stern decrees.

Presently the voice drew nearer. Now it rose stronger and more exultantly—suddenly it had become immense and was frantically telling the story of an impending drama. The singer's iron lungs were being used to their fullest power—vying with the very

orchestra and sending forth glorious organ-like notes. Every line in the man's body—every gesture depicted masterly savagery ; and as the climax came nearer and nearer the audience could contain itself no longer. It rose at him, madly shouting his name as if it had been the name of a god. Then, as, never pausing, he completed the phrase, there was a sudden frantic woman's shriek, followed by another and yet another, and then muffled reports of one, two, three explosions.

Something terrible had happened in the opera-house.

For a brief second there was suspense ; then pandemonium broke loose.

Everybody began shouting and screaming—there was blind panic. In the distance there was some dull thudding as if artillery had come into action ; but almost immediately that was blotted out by the storm in the theatre. The hysterical cries from the women, the excited shouts from the men, had now melted into one great confused uproar. The orchestra had ceased playing ; the singers had stopped where they stood ; and from the glare of footlights on the stage were peering anxiously into the darkened house.

The shouts and cries redoubled, spoken in a dozen languages :

“ What has happened ? ”

“ Lights, lights ! ”

“ Is there a fire ? ”

“ Murder, murder ! ”

“ Fire, fire—let us get out ! ”

Then again senseless cries and weeping, and a growing stampede.

In the midst of the hubbub, the curtain fell with a crash, and the lights in the auditorium were turned

on. Faulconbridge, engaged in holding back a frantic man who was madly trying to throw him out of the way, became suddenly aware that grey-coated infantrymen were streaming in through the entrances, beating back the struggling people with the butts of their rifles. The officers at their head, with drawn swords, were shouting insanely, but what they said he had no means of knowing.

Now, in the strangest way possible, he suddenly became aware of the proximity of people whose faces were oddly familiar to him. A guide from the hotel was only a few places from him. Beside him was a gaunt American dame whose questions he had overheard in the hotel hall that very morning, and which, in spite of his preoccupation, had greatly amused him. A party of Germans who had slowly walked all the way to the theatre just behind him loudly discussing the merits and demerits of modern composers, were piled in a frightened heap at one of the aisles. Then something else made him turn. Not three yards away—as cold and calm as if he had been turned to stone, save for the fierce light in his eyes, which were fixed on the distance, was the man they had called the Malny doctor—oddly changed by the shaving of his beard, but still recognizable.

A great lurch in the crowd suddenly brought the guide with his charge clutching to him almost on top of Faulconbridge. He heard the sharp voice of the American dame hysterically repeating :

“ I arrived here this morning by the Saint Petersburg express, because I was assured by Cook that Moscow was one of the safest cities in the world. Now tell me just what does this mean, what does this mean ? ”

The guide, almost beside himself, was trying vainly to shake her off, and swearing in half a dozen languages. In a sudden collapse he recognized Faulconbridge and implored his help.

"The woman, he go mad, the woman, he could go mad," he repeated again and again.

And behind his back always came the same formula as if in extenuation.

"I was assured by Cook that Moscow was one of the safest cities in the world. . . ."

Faulconbridge, in desperation, exerted his strength and threw the man, who was still clutching him, across a seat. This was worse than anything he had dreamed of.

"Can we get out, or can we not?" he shouted at the guide.

The man babbled back a medley of stupidities which perhaps contained sense.

"Not move, not move! The army he coming, perhaps to shoot. It is a *pogrom*, perhaps. I understand nothing."

Faulconbridge, determined to act, suddenly vaulted over the line of seats, beat back the struggling press, and at length managed to reach the Malny doctor. He seized him by the arm in his strong grasp and shook him.

The doctor gave no sign of recognition. In his eyes there was only the same despairing light.

"You, sir, what is it?" questioned Faulconbridge. "Can we get out? . . ."

The doctor did not answer at first—he had been turned to stone save for those strange eyes which were turned on his questioner in their agony in an almost dog-like manner.

“What has happened?” he repeated at length in English, in a hoarse whisper, showing that he knew who was addressing him, “nothing but that Czarism is at bay and will crush its enemies before they have time to rise.”

He gave a harsh laugh and folded his arms. Nobody would be allowed out of the theatre—until they had been searched and questioned. This time the net would drag him in.

Faulconbridge, baffled once more, paused irresolutely. In spite of the confusion, order was being slowly restored. The soldiers, constantly reinforced from without, were still pushing their way in through every entrance and cowering men and women to silence by their brutalities. Everybody who showed the slightest sign of resisting was struck and beaten back with the rifle-butts—Czarism was not only at bay, but actively aggressive. Evidently some plan lay behind all this. There was not a moment to be lost—for those who meant to get out.

Faulconbridge gave an exclamation at his stupidity, and turned to the mute doctor once more.

“Listen,” he said in a low, clear voice. “Follow me. Climb over the seats quickly. We will try it—cost what it may. You will see what I mean. Follow.”

Without waiting for an answer, he vaulted back over the first line of seats, forced an opening to the next line, went over in the same manner, and in spite of the cries and blows which his passage aroused, gradually wormed his way through until he was right against the high wooden barrier which walled in the orchestra. The doctor, though less powerful, had somehow managed to follow; now panting with his

efforts, and as pale as death, he clutched Faulconbridge by the arm to show that he was there.

Fortunately for them the confusion had suddenly increased. Faulconbridge, sweeping the scene with his eyes, judged that they could spring over the partition without being stopped. Something had gone wrong with the lighting in one corner of the house, and from that darkened wing now came a stream of shrill cries as the soldiers, fearing that foul play menaced them here, pricked back the throng with their bayonets. Everybody had turned instinctively in that direction. It was now or never.

“Come on,” exclaimed Faulconbridge in his quick, energetic voice.

He threw a leg over, glanced round once to make certain, then with a rapid movement dropped to the ground amongst the overturned musicians' chairs and the abandoned instruments. As the doctor's legs came over Faulconbridge caught him by the waist and set him on the ground. Then, without a second's delay, the two rushed into the narrow hole of an entrance under the stage. In an instant they had left the tumult and confusion behind them, and were in the midst of the strange litter of the subterranean passages.

A remarkable change had come over the doctor. Hope had suddenly taken fresh root in his breast, a new energy was infused in his motions. Now he picked his way rapidly through the litter on the ground as if he knew the way. Instinctively he had taken the lead out of the other man's hands.

“You have saved my life,” he exclaimed in his deep voice, turning and pausing for a moment to adjust his glasses, which were dangling at the end of their black

braid. "But the most difficult part is still ahead. Let us be cautious, very cautious. I think I can find my way here."

Now he walked rapidly through the wilderness which opened up in every direction. Half the lights were out. Scaffolding, ropes, pulleys, queer models, dummies, all the fantasia of a great opera-house was scattered around them; but of a living soul there was no trace. Everyone had fled, suddenly, incontinently—the musicians, the singers off the stage, the supers, the mechanics, the dressers, the very door-keepers.

"Hush," exclaimed Faulconbridge, springing on his companion and drawing him back. His ears had picked up a faint patter in the distance, followed by what seemed like a muffled cough.

The two men, scarcely breathing, stood in the shadow of a great piece of boarded canvas representing a portion of a castle. Faulconbridge had clenched his fists; but the doctor's hand was on his hip-pocket.

Suddenly he gave a half-suppressed laugh and then a soft whistle.

"It's only a dog, a little pet dog left behind," he exclaimed. "Here — come here, you poor little beast."

The little animal gave a bark of delight as it caught sight of human beings and ran up madly wagging its tail and jumping as if possessed. It had been terrified by this deserted world.

Convinced now that they had the place to themselves, without further delay the two fugitives made their way boldly through interminable corridors that twisted out to the back of the immense building. At last they gained a door—and were on the street. The

supreme moment had arrived—could they dare to risk themselves in the open ?

The answer came almost before they were prepared for it. A steady tramp in the deserted thoroughfare met their ears, and then the street lamps were shining on long lines of bayonets that sent up glittering flashes. Already the city was being occupied in force by the soldiery—every barracks was emptying out its floods of men.

The infantry marched nearer, silent, impressive. There were a lot of them, several companies at least.

The doctor gave a groan.

“ Too late, too late, my friend, in spite of all your help,” he murmured. “ Like rats in a trap we are caught. Do you see, do you see ? They are coming from every direction. . . . When they are ready they will open the traps and the cats will devour us.”

He fell against the door in mute despair.

The dog was barking violently in an ecstasy of alarm at the approaching array. Faulconbridge, his hand on the handle of the door, paused irresolute, not knowing what to do. A strange sensation of dread was present in his mind, resembling those passing fears which occasionally assail us, only to vanish and be forgotten ; but which subsequent events prove to have been the winged messengers of impending disaster. So he stood there twisting the handle of the door—a prey to the liveliest despondency.

Suddenly another remarkable thing happened ; there was the sound of a distant explosion and immediately the street became pitch-black. Every light, every single light in the town had apparently been extinguished.

The doctor gave an exclamation of joy—almost a shout.

“All is not lost,” he called recklessly. “The plans are working, in spite of the surprise. Moscow is in darkness, in complete darkness, the lighting is destroyed. Come, come!”

He seized Faulconbridge by the shoulder, and together they ran out. They ran noisily, without any caution at all. It was their only chance.

Behind them, at the theatre door, the dog gave a whimper of dismay, and then commenced madly barking. But Faulconbridge had no longer any ears for such inconsequential things. His mind was concentrated on the problem of the girl, and how he should solve it.

XXVI

AND she—what was Sasha doing ?
Less than five minutes after this man who had rejected her had walked so coldly and so seriously away, she had suddenly pushed back her own chair, and risen from the table in the middle of an unfinished course.

Her two companions, both remarkable enough men, since both were staking their lives for an impossible ideal, accepted her sudden loss of appetite with shrugs of indifference. They followed her at once—though they could have eaten more. After all, it is only your easy-minded conventional man who is inclined to be indignant should dinner come to an end in the middle. These two were of that type which may be called old-young ; their youthful features had been made grim by overmuch thinking ; their hair was powdered with grey as if with the gunpowder of endless explosions. They were leaders—mob leaders, and their work was about to begin.

In the hall the three quietly separated with a few vague words of regret. They were all playing parts, and such things as made men and women really concrete were mere abstractions to them just then. Each had a separate part to play and no time to lose. It was something more than foolhardiness which had brought them to such a public place on the eve of great events : their information was perfect, and they

knew that at this particular juncture they were safer in the full glare of open publicity than in private houses.

For a few minutes, after her companions had left her, Sasha appeared at a loss what to do. She looked about idly and then sauntered to the great folding-doors at the entrance and peered out. There were several men standing there—almost unmistakably *en vedette*. Who they were only practised eyes could discern, but even a dullard might have understood that they were standing waiting for something great. Apparently satisfied with their appearance, Sasha now came back, and her movements were more brisk. She was proceeding towards the lifts.

The hotel seemed singularly empty at that hour; the few people who were about, after some momentary indecision, gravitated slowly towards the gilded rails enclosing the lifts in the wake of this attractive girl. After they were all safely caged a fat man of the commercial type went so far as to jostle her rather impudently in his attempt to attract her attention. She never showed by so much as a frown that she was aware of his existence: she stood looking at the always novel sight of the building flicking past the chink in the doors as they rapidly flew upwards.

She got out on her floor in the same calm manner, and then she began sauntering to her room—where she had not been for a number of days—as if she were in no particular hurry. Her eyes, however, played their part less well than the rest of her person; an attentive observer would have speedily noticed that they were here, there, and everywhere—in fact, examining every crack and corner of the corridor she was passing along, as if she feared some surprise.

She thrust her key into her door and rattled it in the lock in a peculiar way. Immediately across the corridor a head was thrust out and gave a quick nod. After which the head as rapidly disappeared.

A gentle smile passed across the girl's face like a ray of sunshine shot down through a rift in the clouds on a dark day ; then, just as the clouds close up and make all gloomy once more, so did the light fade from her features.

She went into her room very slowly, only closing the door as if the effort were distasteful to her, as if she would like to avoid that decisive action. But no sooner was the door shut than a quick change once more came. She went to her dressing-table and studied it intently. At once, in spite of her self-control, she gave a sharp exclamation, and then stood stock-still. Laid conspicuously in the form of a cross right in the very centre of the table were two ribbons, one red, the other blue ; but so that no significance could be attached to them, a little heap of safety-pins was spilled carelessly across them.

The girl stood gazing at this cruciform arrangement with an intense look in her eyes ; then, apparently satisfied, she took off her hat, busied herself for a few moments with her hair and a powder-puff, and at last dropped into a chair. It was only a woman who could have done that—with the cross she had to bear in sight.

“ The road is open,” she murmured to herself in Polish, clasping her delicate hands tightly together. “ Red that the watch has been maintained, blue that everything below remains unchanged. . . .”

She looked at her watch. It was a quarter to nine—only a quarter to nine ! How leaden-footed were the

hours. She gave a petulant movement as she thought of it ; then she slowly covered her face with her hands. She would have to wait at least half an hour—to be certain that the servants were all away—at supper. Well, what was half an hour? . . . She would have time to think. . . .

She dropped her hands, and now her wide-open eyes, suddenly narrowing as if she were suffering acutely, gave her face an altered expression. They made her look what she really was in spite of her young years—an oldish woman—with too great a burden placed upon her. There are peasants who look like that, but not many others. Her mouth, perhaps following the lead given by her eyes, pursed up strangely too, and now as she sat there with deep lines on her face she was no longer the idol of *café chantants* and romantic young men and old-fashioned roués. The change was remarkable and arresting.

She sat quite motionless for a number of minutes, staring at the future which was so rapidly marching towards her. She sat there alone with her thoughts—never moving so much as a hair's-breadth. But at last she relaxed herself, and a vague smile travelled across her features.

“Ah! If it could have been,” she murmured in her mother tongue.

Now she stretched out her arms with a yearning movement. Her eyes became wet and her cheeks were caressed by her long bedewed lashes.

Suddenly her arms dropped—quite limply beside her. “No,” she exclaimed softly; “no!” she added more violently, “no weakness. It must be.”

Yet she gave a half-suppressed sob.

"I do not want to die. No, no, no. Life is too good and sweet."

For a moment an expression of fear passed over her face. Then, with a sharp movement, she stood up.

"Alexandra Alexandrovna, do your duty," she apostrophized herself proudly in the way her brother had done when she had told him her dilemma.

She went swiftly across the room, unlocked a drawer, took out a little flask, and hastily drank some of the contents. It must have been strong, for almost immediately it brought two bright spots of colour on her cheeks. She made a little grimace, as if the taste were not to her liking; but after a short pause once more she drank to give her nerves fresh courage.

Then she consulted her watch.

"It is almost time," she murmured.

Gathering up the ribbons which had been so strangely arranged, she rapidly pinned them together with safety-pins—which weighted them as well as held them together. Then she threw open the long French window and gently tiptoed to her balcony, where she had once sung to Richard Faulconbridge.

It was a peaceful night. There was no moon. The great square only appeared distinct immediately below her—where the glare of the hotel lights was strong, spreading across the cobblestones in ever-diminishing strength until it met the light of a line of lamp-posts. Beyond it seemed very dark—a confused mist encircled by a grey sky. But in the distance she could see another patch of brilliant lighting. It was the opera-house—lighted as if in festive mood.

She stood looking down carefully for quite five minutes before she acted. Then, evidently satisfied, she let go the bunch of ribbon and watched it flutter

to the ground. Hardly had it arrived on terra firma than she turned and re-entered the room.

Now, without a second's delay, she approached the door, listened carefully to make sure that the corridor was empty, and then noiselessly turned the handle and went out.

Her movements became as swift as a bird's and every bit as noiseless. Her feet darted over the carpet as lightly as a dancer showing off her paces. She gained the first turning of the corridor with almost unbelievable rapidity, peered round, and then went on. Twice she repeated this performance, and then she was standing at the head of the servants' staircase, scarcely ever used, as she knew. She went down it quietly and swiftly—passing two floors just as an eager child runs to get speedily out of doors.

Fortune had smiled on her ; she had met not a soul.

Now the moment of ordeal had come. Not pausing, she ran on the points of her toes down the corridor, glancing sharply at the numbers as she passed them. This was the floor of the *appartements de luxe*. . . .

She had arrived. Quick as thought her slender fingers took a curious slip of a key from her pocket, and with one swift turn she had unlocked the door. Not pausing an instant, she turned the handle, peered in, and then switched on the light, closing the door as she did so.

The handsome sitting-room was empty—quite empty—there was not the slightest doubt about that. The severe antique tone of the furniture contrasted strangely with the mode of the rest of the building and struck her attention. Here there was nothing but plush—plush curtains, plush sofas, plush arm-chairs—all that old-fashioned abomination which

is now fortunately moribund. There was only one light piece of furniture in the room—the writing-table. In strange contrast to the rest it was Louis XV. It was put in the very ugliest place of all—beside the heavy plush curtains.

She absorbed every detail with marvellous rapidity—recognizing the details from the elaborate descriptions which had been furnished her. Under the writing-table were the dispatch-boxes—it was the second dispatch-box—the red one. On the points of her toes she ran across the room, bent down, pushed back the first box, took hold of the second by the strap, and was about to rise when an iron grip seized her from behind.

A half-suppressed shriek rose to her lips, and then she gave a great moan of despair. Now, like a wild thing that has been cunningly trapped, she wrestled to tear herself free—wrestled so hard that she cruelly bruised her tender flesh. She could not even see who had caught her and held her prisoner.

All was in vain. The cruel hands held her very expertly, as in a vice, with her head down—at last, abandoning her struggles, she fell half-choking to the ground, and there was a sharp click. He had put the bracelets on her, and the weapon which she had so long carried as a last refuge had become utterly useless.

“Well, my little dove,” said her captor coolly, leaving her where she had fallen and coming round and calmly seating himself in front of her, “it was not so easy as it looked, eh? You come stealing into people’s rooms, and think that the people are all such pretty fools as to leave their rooms open to other people’s keys with nothing to protect their valuables!

But we were ready for you, ha, ha! And then we catch you, as simply as we catch a miserable mouse in a common little trap!"

He laughed in a deep, curious way, watching her struggle up from the ground, and then lean half-fainting against the wall.

"Coward," she said through her clinched teeth.

The man, a big, burly fellow dressed in a loose tunic caught round his waist by a leather belt, laughed unconcerned.

"Coward? *Hai*—so I, who have medals, am a coward; and why, please? Cannot people protect their own property any more? That for your miserable nihilists and revolutionaries and spies and thieves!" He snapped his fingers at her contemptuously. "I have been waiting for you for a week, I tell you—a whole week—and now I have caught you, *doorack*—fool."

He pushed out a great top-booted foot to show the measure of his disdain; and then he leered at her as if he were infinitely amused.

"And yet you are a coward," returned the girl in a low, passionate voice, recovering herself. "Had I been a man and not a woman you would have been beaten—beaten in spite of your tricks—you big, ugly, low peasant. You hound of a peasant. Even though you hide behind curtains, and spring out and trap women like a coward, and then sit laughing at them, you will get your punishment; only wait and see—low, ugly peasant! . . ."

Now standing away from the wall she faced him defiantly, an ecstasy of rage blazing from her eyes; sorely bruising her soft wrists on the cruel steel, as she vainly twisted and pulled.

290 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

A wave of dark colour had flooded the man's face. Her words had lashed him as a whip lashes, and now he rose clumsily to his feet.

"Here," he said, putting out a heavy hand, "you will ask leave to speak, and when you speak it will be well to be civil, or I will hold your tongue for you."

He assumed a menacing attitude, but Sasha only gave a disdainful laugh.

"Low, ugly peasants have no business to command or to instruct people. Keep away from me. . . ."

She shrank back as he sought to grasp her. But though she retreated as far as she could, the wall soon denied her much relief, and in spite of her twistings and turnings he had finally seized her firmly by the shoulders.

"Well," he said, giving her a rough shake, "well, how is it now, my little dove? . . ."

Once more he leered into her face, putting himself so close that his mouth almost touched hers, and his breath offended her nostrils.

She twisted frantically this way and that, seeking to escape him, but he checked her in his strong grasp as easily as if she had been a child.

"You see it is useless," he finally remarked. "Oh, quite useless! I have you as safely as if you were in a box all tied up, all warm and ready for me, ha." His face assumed a different expression—the devil in the man had been aroused by all this handling of her. "And why should we be so unpleasant to one another when we are quite alone and private? Confess, I am not a bad-looking fellow. Young I am, and strong—just right for such a darling as you"—he put his arm round her neck. "Now I have you firm—you see."

"Leave me alone," she gasped, almost fainting from fear.

"With such a chance as this—with all so quiet and peaceful?" His voice came more thickly now, and it was hard to understand his words, though his meaning was plain.

"Leave me," she gasped again.

"Never," he muttered.

Suddenly she shrieked again and again.

"Ivan, Ivan," she called wildly, as if she had lost her control; "Ivan, Ivan, Ivan. . . ."

For a moment—but only for a moment—there was breathless silence. Then quietly and mysteriously the door into the corridor had opened and there stepped into the room no other person than the tall, white-bearded man—hatless, without his black spectacles, his blue eyes now flashing like the steel of a sharpened sword. At last he proclaimed boldly to all the world that he was not blind; that it was a mask—a fraud. . . .

Sternly, silently, he came forward, facing the amazement of the other with calm disdain.

"I am here, Alexandra Alexandrovna," he said, taking a hunter's knife out of a sheath under his belt. "I am ready, Alexandra Alexandrovna—I have been waiting down there in the street below, and now I have come."

He watched, as a hunter watches, the burly fellow who, like a trapped animal, was flicking his small pig's eyes this way and that—seeking for a way to safety. The man had dropped away from the girl, as a man drops a burning cinder.

A moment passed in terrible silence. Leaning pantingly against the wall, her lips slightly parted, her great eyes never flickering, Sasha watched the two.

She saw that her captor was edging round ; she saw him moving artfully as a coward moves, perhaps he was nearing a bell. Once again the floor reeled below her feet.

“ Strike, Ivan,” she whispered hoarsely, “ strike.”

The sham blind man edged carefully nearer—not hastening in spite of her words. Confused expressions tumbled from the other man’s mouth. His ruddy colour had completely faded, and now his face looked pasty, ghastly. For behind the sham blind man, towering above him like a spectre, his eyes saw another figure. Its name was Death. . . .

Suddenly he gave a hoarse, defiant shout, bent down, pulled a knife from his boot, and rushed heavily forward.

A terrible duel commenced.

Now they fought—savagely, desperately, silently, fearfully. Each held far in front of him—as if it had been a shield—the unarmed left arm—to be transfixed, perhaps, but to save heart and neck. Glitter. . . . Stab. . . . Red blood streams. . . . Groans. . . . Sasha watches as if in a dream. Ivan is the more cunning, as an old bear-hunter should be—the other stronger because of his youth. They fight with growing desperation—the scene swims before her eyes.

Both are wounded, badly, sorely. She realizes it vaguely, curiously, because the film over her eyes will not allow her to see clearly. Now they fling curious, disjointed, irrelevant words at one another which sound childish. Protests, peevish complaints reach her . . . as if in their death-agony men want to cry and become children again, cared for by stronger beings. . . . Dear God—what a scene !

Suddenly her Ivan sinks on his knees. Is it a trick—

or the end? . . . Sasha, watching with a terrible anguish in her heart, cannot decide. The broad back of her captor is turned towards her, and now, manacled as she is, with all her force she leaps at it.

"Ivan," she screams, as she rolls to the ground, closing her eyes, fainting in front of the man, who stabs at her savagely.

She opened her eyes at last, surprised at the quiet—at the great peaceful, surprising quiet.

Everything was quiet—very quiet.

What had happened? Where was she? With an effort, handicapped as she was, she struggled to her knees—feeling something wet on her neck, on her bosom. Ivan is sitting on the ground very close to her, wiping his knife on his tunic and talking to himself unendingly in a strange whisper. The other man, on his back, is staring up fixedly at the ceiling. There was in the room a brooding silence: the silence of long nights, of gloomy forests, of endless, sandy deserts. It was terrible. . . .

"Ivan, Ivan," she whispered, feeling strangely weak. She stretched out her hand tenderly, almost fearfully, to the old man. "*Batushka*," she murmured.

"My child," said the old man vaguely, "my child."

"Ivan," she said again, "are you hurt, Ivan?"

The old man held up his hand and seemed to be swallowing down some secret anguish with the grave and solemn resignation that is characteristic of men who have stood the ordeal of blood and fire on the battlefield.

"Peace," he said, "it is nothing."

294 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

He sheathed his knife, and with an effort staggered to his feet. . . .

“ If I could find the place,” he muttered, “ it would be well. But this bleeding—what is it ? ”

For a moment she had a vision of him standing above her—colossal, awe inspiring, with his long white beard and his undaunted eyes, now vaguely troubled.

Then she remembered no more.

XXVII

MEANWHILE like two shadows the doctor and Faulconbridge had glided forward, as silent as two forest beasts that flee from the presence of man. As they ran, quite close behind them they could hear the mass of grey-coated infantry noisily murmuring and protesting against the infamy of fighting phantoms in the dark. Then the two fugitives turned a corner and the medley of voices was blotted out.

The doctor led the way—with Faulconbridge glued to his heels. Both men were prey to fearful anxiety; both understood the necessity of not wasting a minute. Their wonderful luck could not last.

Yet though every street and almost every lane of this city was familiar to the doctor, the darkness and the dread of surprise made him falter again and again. It was necessary to be cautious, too—to avoid the great thoroughfares; and now, as he selected narrow streets, he found that only a huge detour would allow them to gain the great square in safety. Pickets of infantry—hastily scattered as soon as the first alarm had sounded, were already advancing cautiously in spite of the Cimmerian blackness; and the sound of their heavy tread and the occasional clash of steel warned the two men that danger lurked everywhere.

For Faulconbridge it was an extraordinary experience. Some sixth sense, indeed, seemed to give

the doctor quick notice whenever such dangers suddenly grew out of the night ; but twice even his strange foresight was hardly sufficient to push aside the menace of death. Rough voices rang out at them, and as no answer came back the blackness spat tongues of fire, and vicious bullets hissed past their heads.

Again and again the doctor, with his hoarse whisper of warning, doubled back—always seeking for an outlet which would bring them to the oasis of the great square, always headed off by some fresh danger. Soon they settled down to it with that infinite capacity for adjustment which the human mind possesses ; and yet it was destined to leave an indelible mark on both.

Strange things happened on that night of nights—mad things such as are always thrown up by mad events. Voices of panic-struck wayfarers, hearing them rush past, suddenly implored help—as if help were a coin to be thrown to the needy by the charitable—the voices implored help in every shade of tone. To Faulconbridge it was like an undisciplined shipwreck—with a mad *sauve qui peut*. Once a man with his head down, as if avoiding a thunderstorm of rain and lightning, had rushed out from a doorway and flung his arms tightly round Faulconbridge's waist, and held him fast, weeping bitterly the while. It took the efforts of both of them to tear him off and drive him back. The night became an endless nightmare—a phantasmagoria—pregnant with peculiar meaning, because of the sound of firing which now rumbled unendingly in the distance like summer thunder. . . .

Suddenly the doctor stopped short in his running and gave a tremendous sigh. He stood listening intently for a few seconds, and then gave a soft laugh of relief. Around them—at last dead silence.

“Well, well, we have shaken them off for the time being—escaped from their traps, which are all on the other side, you see,” he exclaimed. “But we have run half round Moscow, I believe—this is a residential quarter, too far off to be important. . . .” He stood peering this way and that, trying to pick meaning from the wall of darkness. “In any case, I have lost my way, and the devil alone knows exactly where we are. But we have got out of the traps round the heart of Moscow—which connects with the workmen’s quarter. It is something to be thankful for. Listen, listen.”

The rumble in the air seemed to have drawn nearer now. It was so distinct that it now appeared to come only from one direction. The grim monster—authority—was winning once more: counter-surprises were being thrown against the surprises of the evening.

The doctor listened intently, and then both men simultaneously located the point of the compass.

“I have it, I have it,” exclaimed the doctor; “we are almost on the banks of the Moskowa—the workmen’s quarter lies over there, you see—where the sounds come from, artillery is being used—they are trying to drive them all in. . . . You notice the sounds are spreading gradually over there. They are working by torchlight—the darkness means nothing to them. The Russian army has one great quality, it can improvise! There is no time to be lost! From the hotel there may be a road out—in the morning—if morning ever comes. Quickly now.”

He had started off again before there was time to answer him. They ran level with one another now, more easily, more fleetly—the excitement in the air having crept strangely into their blood, as it always

does with men when the first shock of the unexpected has disappeared.

Yet at each street corner the doctor repeated his peculiar tactics. Mechanically he slowed down, put out a hand to restrain his companion, and then cautiously went round on tiptoes with his arms stretched out far in front of him, as a blind man would have done. He did this as he did everything, with strange method, with strange persistence. At last he came to a complete standstill, giving a sharp exclamation as if he had been struck.

“Look,” he said in his deep voice.

A lurid light had come on the sky. It was low down on the horizon—so low down as to show that a great distance separated them from this latest catastrophe. The glow rose and fell as if it were fanned by some giant bellows; but, though it fell just as it rose, each second added to its size. A great conflagration had been started—it was evident that it was fast spreading.

The doctor was the first to speak.

“Another counter-blow,” he groaned. “Those must be the new agricultural factories—eight thousand men employed—one of our great centres. You see, they strike before we are ready to strike—they precipitate the conflict so as to crush quickly. . . . It is the old, old policy—they shoot and burn as if we were savages on the steppes.”

“Let us go on,” exclaimed Faulconbridge, urging him forward. The futility of this mad enterprise of revolution had so unnerved him that his energy had almost evaporated. He felt limp and overwhelmed.

“Yes,” said the doctor in his deep voice, “let us go on. We must learn the fate of others. . . .”

Once more they resumed their progress. Now they had reached the neighbourhood of the great barracks near the Kremlin, and along the open spaces they saw the flare of torches dancing like will-o'-the-wisps in the black night. In spite of the sudden destruction of the lighting of the town, in spite of the general confusion, the army was slowly but methodically, clumsily but carefully, carrying out some set plan. Moscow would awake to find a state of siege complete and real.

Some torches, set on the ends of poles, flickered near. They shed a ghoulish light, in which the dark shadows cast by a squad of motionless soldiery danced like demons.

"Here we are—at the entrance to the square," whispered the doctor. "Are you prepared to risk it? We must dash along in the open now and they may fire."

"Yes, yes," assented Faulconbridge; "I will lead."

Bracing himself anew, he had commenced running almost before he was aware of it. The action seemed oddly familiar to him, and now he remembered with strange feelings that less than a week before he had done much the same thing.

But there was scant time for thought: already loud shouts rang in his ears.

"Quick," he exclaimed, looking back over his shoulder at the doctor, and going on still faster himself.

But the shouts had redoubled, and there was a sound of heavy feet. He saw shadows ahead—in a moment his passage would be cut off.

With a muttered oath, he half stopped, looked back for the doctor, whom he could no longer see, and

then swerved away to the right. It was every man for himself with a vengeance.

"*Stoi, Stoi,*" called the rough voices, and his running feet gave back a contemptuous answer. Then flames of fire spat at him, and the jarring bark of the rifles was in his ears.

Instinctively he bent lower as he heard the nickle-headed bullets hiss about him. His breath was coming shorter now, but his strength was intact.

He ran on—wondering what was happening—wondering that he should come through it all unscathed. His mind, occupied with the problem of his own safety, no longer troubled about his companion. He ran on and on and on. Then, with an odd shock of surprise, he realized that he had reached the hotel, and was stumbling against the great tubs of palms which lined the pavement. . . . He paused and took breath.

There was some light in the hotel—candle-light, it seemed to him. How strange it was to get back to a fashionable place after such experiences ; strange but yet natural. . . . His heart thumped tumultuously both from his running and from the thought that at last the problem which had so long troubled him must be solved. He was glad that the end had come—it was not possible to endure such suspense indefinitely. . . .

He kept his wits, though his thoughts were so rebellious. He knew that his own safety was gravely compromised, and that he must be circumspect. He wondered at the quiet in the hotel. He could not believe that everyone had fled here—yet the silence within the building was pregnant with meaning. In

growing perplexity—not daring yet to go in—he turned and looked back.

The immense square in front of him gave no answer to the mystery. It lay quite silent too. The points of light, marking where the torches were stuck in the ground, seemed very far off—miles away. The pickets, who had fired at him, might have been dead for all the signs of life they now gave. They were posted there, waiting blindly for what the night might bring them, obeying orders.

Faulconbridge, baffled at every turn, slowly and cautiously approached the hotel entrance.

He became aware of a tall figure of a man moving cautiously in the dim candle-light of the interior. The figure moved out toward the door, and seeing him came to an abrupt halt.

“Ho, there,” called Faulconbridge briskly.

He had recognized the hotel-porter in spite of the metamorphosis. The man had doffed his gorgeous uniform and his magnificent cap, and was now clad in the loose blue shirt, the black trousers, and the high top-boots of the proletariat.

“Who is that?” replied the man suspiciously in English. He did not approach. His whole attitude was strictly defensive.

Faulconbridge explained :

“If you haven’t forgotten your numbers in the excitement of the evening, mine may mean something to you—I am 316, Faulconbridge by name, an Englishman ; do you remember ? ”

The porter had approached nearer.

“What are you doing out there ? ”

“I have been engaged in the difficult work of coming in.”

“Where have you been?”

“At the theatre. Do you remember your recommendation?”

“Ah—yes, I remember.”

The porter stood sunk in thought. It was plain that something prevented him from being communicative. Manifestly he was very much on his guard—alarmed—suspicious of everything.

“Did you hear those shots?” he began cautiously again.

Faulconbridge smiled grimly.

“Yes, since they were fired at me. . . .”

“At you? Then you had luck. There were some others, half an hour ago. And after them no one arrived.” He slowly wagged his head and folded his arms, as if that action rounded off his meaning better than any words. “There is danger everywhere out of your own room—it is best to be hidden until the storm is over,” he said abruptly.

“I am waiting for the gentleman called the Malny doctor,” replied Faulconbridge doggedly. “I shall wait here until I know there is no further use in waiting—as happened half an hour ago.”

“The doctor; you have been with the Malny doctor?” stammered the porter in amazement. “It is incredible—incredible.”

He peered anxiously into the gloom, wondering what new miracle was to come on this night of impossibilities—wondering what it all meant. Still suspicious, still fearing this stranger, he did not dare to do more than to exclaim. For the Malny doctor was badly wanted—both by his friends and his enemies, but most of all he had been wanted all the long evening by his friends who had failed to give him warning.

“ Yes,” resumed Faulconbridge, still casting about for some means to bring up the topic uppermost in his mind, “ we were in the theatre together less than an hour ago. A bomb exploded—I do not even know where or how—there was horrible confusion—we managed to break through. As far as this square we kept close together, but when they fired we parted company and ran for our lives.”

“ It is a black, bad night,” muttered the porter, who had listened to him in the same peculiar awestruck way, “ and daylight will not be here for many hours.” He paused and rubbed his chin doubtfully. “ At any other time I would risk it and go out into the square and search for him. But what is the use now? If they have got him it is settled. . . .” He turned suddenly and slipped a hand under his tunic. His quick ears had caught a sound. “ Hist—what is that? ”

There was dead silence. Then the deep voice Faulconbridge would have recognized among a thousand others began laughing gently. It was his lost friend coming out of the shadows slowly and cautiously.

“ Ha, ha, my friend,” he chuckled, “ I am not lost yet, as you see! But they made me go a long way round; a long way round, for I am not fleet of foot.” He began mopping his forehead and the back of his neck, and then he saw the porter. “ Get me something to drink, Petroff, for the love of God. Yet stay—first tell me what has happened here.”

Faulconbridge followed the two indoors—hardly able to restrain himself. He had told the doctor enough for him to guess the rest.

Already the doctor was deep in a whispered conversation with the porter. What the porter was

telling him was evidently filling him with surprise, for he emitted a soft whistle from time to time, and kept on nodding his head.

At length the porter had finished, and the doctor turned.

"I can understand nothing," he said to Faulconbridge in a low voice; "our young friend is not in the hotel, is not in her room—he has sent up several times—he swears that she has not gone out. The porter is quite reliable—he is entirely in our hands. They have been watching the doors very closely for days, and up to the time of the alarm she did not pass out. Of course, she may have hidden and waited until the uproar was over—there were some arrests by the police before the agents left the hotel. I do not know what to do—I cannot suggest a plan."

He stood there pondering deeply, his chin sunk on his chest; and beside him the tall polyglot porter, in his peasant's boots, watched and waited.

A door in some far-away part of the building slammed suddenly, and everyone started. Faulconbridge was unable to contain himself any longer.

"How many people are there in the hotel?" he inquired.

Instantly the porter became more business-like.

"Not more than fifty, perhaps less. Scores left this afternoon."

"Have you a corrected list of engaged rooms?"

"Yes." The man drew a sheet of paper from his tunic.

"The distribution is by floors," said Faulconbridge, studying it. He knew exactly what he was going to do, but he was determined to conceal it.

The porter nodded.

“ Well, there is only one thing to do, search all the rooms for this young lady.”

“ It is impossible,” objected the porter ; “ you will find nothing but locked doors : you will get nothing but oaths and shrieks for your trouble.”

“ That is of no importance to us,” said Faulconbridge ; “ we are going to search the hotel. We will begin with the first floor and we will end with the attics. Are you agreed, doctor ? ”

The doctor looked up grimly : he saw what he was driving at.

“ We will begin with the first floor and end with the attics,” he repeated.

Now, without another word, they marched upstairs.

XXVIII

A FUNEREAL silence reigned on the first floor—the silence of a death-like respectability encased in overmuch plush and gilt. Every window was tight shut ; the air felt close and heavy ; and now the solitary light of the porter's lantern, as it flickered forward, seemed to their excited minds to be showing them into another and more ominous world than the vague terror in the streets below.

Before they had taken many steps Faulconbridge and the doctor came to a standstill—for no reason that they could find. They came to a standstill, we say, and looking back they saw that the porter as he walked along had begun attentively studying his list. A strange look was on his face, and every now and again he murmured something unintelligible to himself.

“ Well ? ” said Faulconbridge interrogatively, gazing in growing astonishment at the man. His behaviour had been curious from the beginning : now it was something more than odd.

The porter cleared his throat as if he were making a great effort.

“ There is nobody on this wing of the first floor—from numbers 1 to 10 are specially retained. Let us pass to the right wing without loss of time.”

And having said that abruptly he made as if he would go on.

“ Wait a minute,” said Faulconbridge, quite unconvinced, laying hold of his arm ; “ I want to understand better about the left wing before we go to the right. I want to understand why we are omitting the left wing. The plan we decided upon was to search the hotel floor by floor. I do not propose to change it.”

“ That is good sense, that is good sense,” agreed the doctor rather irritably ; “ I think this gentleman is quite right. Why should we omit the left wing when it may be that very wing which will prove the interesting one to us ? ”

The doctor looked at the porter, and the porter looked meaningly at the doctor, who had suddenly become so obtuse. Then, because the doctor refused to understand his glances, the porter commenced shrugging his shoulders in the expressive Russian way. The doctor quite understood his reasons for avoiding the wing ; but he did not understand the porter’s sudden silence.

“ Well, since everybody more or less knows it,” began the porter unexpectedly, “ there is no harm in saying it aloud to-night. The Grand-Duke——”

“ The Grand-Duke ? ” interrupted Faulconbridge sharply at the very mention of his name. “ The Grand-Duke—those are the Grand-Duke’s rooms ? ” He made as if he would hasten forward, but now the doctor seized him by the arm and forcibly restrained him.

“ Mr. Faulconbridge,” he remarked a little hesitatingly, at last coming to the porter’s aid in obedience to an imperceptible nod, “ there may be guards in the room. Have you thought of that ? ”

“ Well ? ” For the first time fear clutched at his heart-strings.

“That would mean trouble.”

“I say well again?” As he spoke an ominous chill overwhelmed him.

“We do not want to run our heads into stone walls—on a night like this. . . . Our intrusion may have most serious consequences. We must be reasonable.”

“I am going to those rooms at once—without a moment’s delay,” replied Faulconbridge. He shook off the doctor’s hand angrily. Yet he paused—fearing that a false step on his part might delay the final solution.

“Pardon me, sir,” said the porter, again intervening in a very remarkable manner because the doctor’s help had been unavailing. “That is not the whole reason why we should not enter the Grand-Duke’s rooms. There is something else which prevents it—which makes it superfluous.”

Faulconbridge gave a sharp start as if he had been stabbed.

“I do not understand you,” he said slowly.

Now the porter looked round nervously as if he had become apprehensive of the very shadows, and beckoned him nearer.

“Hush, hush,” he said; “I will tell you, since nothing else will stop you—the Grand-Duke is dead—massacred—and I shall be made to pay bitterly for this by the Palace Okhrana.”

Almost before he had finished the doctor had taken him by the arms and was shaking him wildly. Excitement blazed from his eyes—his whole body had stiffened. He was another man—the Malny madman. Now the words raced from his mouth:

“He is dead—and this is the first I hear of it! He is dead, and you did not inform me the moment

you saw me! He is dead, and you stand there like that! Fool—do you know how much this means?”

The porter was unabashed.

“I did not tell you,” he said doggedly, “because the news came to me privately—my little son brought it to me. It is concealed—it is a dead secret. It was at nine o’clock on the Petrowka—a bomb blew him and his carriage to pieces. The Grand-Duke was not in uniform, he was coming back here. . . . That is all I know.”

The doctor had fallen into another of his strange brown studies even before the man had finished. His massive head was now almost resting on his long, awkward arms, which he had crossed in a peculiar mannerism high on his chest. He was plunged so deeply in thought that he had lost all count of his whereabouts. There was something so arresting in his attitude that Faulconbridge, torn by thoughts which seemed both possible and impossible, dared not break the silence, or go on. Something more tragic than mere surprise lay at the bottom of the doctor’s demeanour.

Presently the doctor raised his head and gave a deep sigh.

“Ah, my friend,” he said mournfully, fixing his strange eyes on Faulconbridge, “we Russians can never be great, can never succeed so long as we do not understand co-operation, loyalty, sanity, in the way that you English do. With us it is every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. How many illustrations of that have I not received in my life! We still believe that the spirit can do in five minutes what system cannot do in five centuries! We are mad, utterly mad. Mr. Faulconbridge, I cannot explain

it all to you. I can only say that this unhappy conspirator who has blown another to pieces, has made our success once again impossible, by acting too soon. The tragedy of too soon! More mournful, more sinister than the words too late are these two words, always found in the lexicon of fools. Let us go on—let us go on—we will at least carry out our plan, though it is useless now.”

With a sudden movement the party advanced again. This time they entered the first of the long corridors which swept round the immense building.

The porter inserted his pass-key into the lock of the first room and turned vainly again and again.

“ Bolted,” he said laconically.

He walked on to the next room. He walked more quickly this time, as if he wanted to finish with the farce. It would be the same with the whole series of ten rooms, he was sure. Once more he inserted his pass-key. He twisted and turned it with the same ill-success.

“ Bolted,” he said again, moving on.

“ There are eight more doors,” said the doctor mournfully; “ you have time to get tired.”

The porter bent down to the third lock with the air of a man who is disgusted by a stupid performance. He gripped the handle, and turned it with his lips parted as if ready to speak the same word. But suddenly his whole attitude changed—he had stiffened as a dog who scents quarry.

“ Ah,” he exclaimed in a suppressed voice. He turned and motioned for strict silence. Very cautiously the porter pushed the door wide open. Behind him the other two peered in. In the room was silence and formlessness.

“Let me go forward with the lantern,” muttered the doctor in his hoarse whisper. “You, Mr. Faulconbridge, be ready to protect me.” But even as he swung the light aloft he gave a curious guttural exclamation.

“On the ground—a man—motionless.”

With one accord they rushed in. It was the custodian whom the man Ivan had stabbed to death in his terrible duel.

The doctor had dropped to his knees and his hands had commenced their customary office. But almost at once he desisted.

“It is no use,” he murmured, with a wistful shrug of his shoulders. “He is dead—quite dead. And yet it has not been more than an hour since he died; perhaps not so long. . . . He is warm—almost hot. . . . What does this mean—what does this mean? . . .”

He tiptoed across the room as if in the presence of death it would be unseemly to tread more heavily. With a significant look on his face he pointed to the writing-table, to the tumbled dispatch-boxes, to an overturned chair.

“It is quite plain,” he began—but what he was about to say was for ever lost in the cry of amazement which had burst from the porter. He had picked up a knife, a long, blood-stained knife.

“Murder,” he exclaimed, “or else——”

He did not finish, but stared blankly at the doctor and the Englishman. They had broken from him as he spoke, and were now madly trying the doors. Both had reached the same conclusion. To their excited eyes the vast reception-room seemed to have nothing but doors—locked doors—doors which led nowhere. Yet it could not be so—there must be one

which would give up the secret. It was Faulconbridge who found the right one.

"Here, the light here," he called, and even as he called there was the murmur of other voices.

"Sasha," he exclaimed, and then he picked out the form of the white-bearded man beside her.

Yes—it was they.

They were sitting on the ground side by side behind a screen, which had been somehow thrown down in their struggles to hide themselves. The old man's head had fallen on the girl's shoulders; his eyes were closed; his great booted feet were stretched stiffly out as if he were past hope; his arms collapsed beside him. In the dim, religious light shed by the porter's lantern, the scene became a painting by Rembrandt.

"Doctor, doctor, is it you—is it you?" cried the girl in a broken voice, struggling to her knees. "Your services are badly required by this heroic man."

"Yes, yes," answered the doctor, quickly kneeling beside him, and lifting his head and speaking to him gently.

The old man groaned and pointed to his side.

"It is the will of God," he whispered feebly.

Now for the first time they saw the dark marks on her torn dress and the steel on her wrists and the anguish in her eyes.

"Oh, what is this—oh, what is this?" cried Faulconbridge, supporting her and trying vainly to liberate her hands, and running his fingers across the rents in her dress where the dark stains were.

Then the porter, who perhaps had been a turn-key once, came to his aid; and bending down, soon had unlocked the light steel gyves. As she felt her hands at last free, Sasha gave a broken cry.

“Free again, free again. I am only cut a little, not really wounded,” she repeated again and again in a strange whisper to Faulconbridge. “I knew it could not be true that I would be abandoned. There were many to look for me, and when all failed there was still you.”

“Yes—there was me,” he answered gently, still trying to see if what she said were true and her wounds not grave. “You told me in that first song that it would be so; that I would come to you—and now I have come.”

She was half crying, half laughing now.

“But you refused me, you did not want me, you drove me away.”

“No, no,” he answered, holding her close. “That is all past, and now we must learn to forget.”

“We must learn to forget,” she whispered back. Then time and words disappeared for them, and they only knew the sweetness of their reawakening.

At last, behind them, the doctor spoke.

“We have finished; all has been done for this poor man that is possible. We must find a means of retreating the moment we can. This chapter is ending horribly. Look.”

He had approached the window where they two were standing, their hands clasped, their hearts entwined; but at them the doctor did not look. Instead, he flung aside the curtains and threw the window back.

A vague, indefinite murmur was wafted into the room—a murmur punctured by dull reports and bursts of rattling musketry. It was the distant roar and confusion of mobs hurried by soldiery. From this elevation the red glow on the skyline seemed to have drawn

314 THE ROMANCE OF A FEW DAYS

nearer—it shed an angry, sinister light which oppressed the hearts of these onlookers with the oppression of disaster. Neither Sasha nor Faulconbridge spoke.

“The people have risen,” murmured the doctor, as if to himself. “They have risen and commenced fighting like wild, savage beasts. We cannot possibly reach them; an iron ring already surrounds them—ah, God, that it should have come too soon! Somebody has blundered, but they are doing their best—their best, which is their worst—and some are paying the last price.”

It was true—some were paying their last price there in the distance, in the darkness; Gavriloff, the spy, among others.

Could they have seen what was even then occurring, pity and terror would have claimed them. The crowd had discovered him and caught him as he was running away—after he had ferreted and denounced up to the very last moment. They had discovered him, and, like a wretched cornered rat, he had frantically fought, only to be worsted. They had carried him from the room into which he had rushed—in a last mad attempt to flee—to a window, so that the crowd might see him and rejoice at the vengeance which was being wreaked.

He had stood there dazed at first—unable to understand what the sea of faces below him in the street meant, unable to grasp the meaning of this tragedy in which he was the central figure.

Then, as the darkness of the night was dispelled, all the faces converged towards him into one single great face, with a fearful questioning expression, sum-

moning him to deliver up his secrets. In those hundreds of eyes he saw the glow of an unquenchable fire—a fire which would consume him. His life, in its loneliness and under the band of terror which hemmed him round, had been one long, silent tragedy. It was to have a noisy ending.

He had shrieked once and then remained as if frozen. His eyes had sunk deep into their sockets as though they were vainly seeking to retreat into hiding from this hideous scene. His mouth opened now only to shout soundless cries which yet echoed with the noise of thunder in his soul—he clenched his fists to strangle the invisible devils who had come to join the devils in front of him. The ugly clothing of the bourgeoisie of Europe—the hideous tie round the ill-fitting collar—made a detestable setting for his frozen state—one would have liked to tear his soiled and ugly clothing from him so that at least he might die naked and unshamed.

The crowd howled louder and louder :

“Death to him—let us trample upon him, kill him with our hands. Death to the spy—Gavrilloff.”

The cries went up to heaven—savagely, lustfully, like to midnight roaring of wild animals gathered together in the depths of some impenetrable forest to celebrate a saturnalia of meat-eating. There was no pity in those voices—it was the hoarse blaring of a powerful animalism rejoicing in animal actions.

Gavrilloff was as good as dead—the act of killing had become a mere trivial detail. He never moved again, just as he never spoke again.

Suddenly it was over. Somebody fired a shot from an automatic pistol, which struck him straight in the heart—closely followed by another, and yet another.

Then he pitched forward, and was instantly blotted out under the savage feet of the savage crowd.

A thousand miles away a man with a blond beard and a dreamer's face—a face still pale from pain and sickness—sat poring over newspapers, seeking to learn whether any hint of the great and glorious struggle which was coming had crept abroad. At last, comforted by the absence of all news, gently he had fallen asleep, dreaming in his poor heart that the struggle which was already lost must soon fill the world with amazement and glory.

A SELECTION OF BOOKS
 PUBLISHED BY METHUEN
 AND CO. LTD., LONDON
 36 ESSEX STREET
 W.C.

CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
General Literature	2	Little Quarto Shakespeare	20
Ancient Cities	13	Miniature Library	20
Antiquary's Books	13	New Library of Medicine	21
Arden Shakespeare	14	New Library of Music	21
Classics of Art	14	Oxford Biographies	21
'Complete' Series	25	Four Plays.	21
Connoisseur's Library	15	States of Italy	21
Handbooks of English Church History	16	Westminster Commentaries	22
Handbooks of Theology	16	'Young' Series	22
'Home Life' Series	16	Shilling Library	22
Illustrated Pocket Library of Plain and Coloured Books	16	Books for Travellers	23
Leaders of Religion	17	Some Books on Art	23
Library of Devotion	17	Some Books on Italy	24
Little Books on Art	18	Fiction	25
Little Galleries	18	Two-Shilling Novels	30
Little Guides	18	Books for Boys and Girls	30
Little Library	19	Shilling Novels	31
		Sevenpenny Novels	31

JULY 1913

A SELECTION OF
MESSRS. METHUEN'S
PUBLICATIONS

IN this Catalogue the order is according to authors. An asterisk denotes that the book is in the press.

Colonial Editions are published of all Messrs. METHUEN'S Novels issued at a price above 2s. 6d., and similar editions are published of some works of General Literature. Colonial Editions are only for circulation in the British Colonies and India.

All books marked net are not subject to discount, and cannot be bought at less than the published price. Books not marked net are subject to the discount which the bookseller allows.

Messrs. METHUEN'S books are kept in stock by all good booksellers. If there is any difficulty in seeing copies, Messrs. Methuen will be very glad to have early information, and specimen copies of any books will be sent on receipt of the published price *plus* postage for net books, and of the published price for ordinary books.

This Catalogue contains only a selection of the more important books published by Messrs. Methuen. A complete and illustrated catalogue of their publications may be obtained on application.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Andrewes (Lancelot). PRECES PRIVATAE. Translated and edited, with Notes, by F. E. BRIGHTMAN. <i>Cr. 8vo. 6s.</i></p> <p>Aristotle. THE ETHICS. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by JOHN BURNET. <i>Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>Atkinson (C. T.). A HISTORY OF GERMAN, 1715-1815. <i>Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>Atkinson (T. D.). ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE. Illustrated. <i>Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>A GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE. Illustrated. <i>Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>ENGLISH AND WELSH CATHEDRALS. Illustrated. <i>Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>Bain (F. W.). A DIGIT OF THE MOON: A HINDOO LOVE STORY. <i>Tenth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>THE DESCENT OF THE SUN: A CYCLE OF BIRTH. <i>Fifth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>A HEIFER OF THE DAWN. <i>Seventh Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.</i></p> | <p>IN THE GREAT GOD'S HAIR. <i>Fifth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>A DRAUGHT OF THE BLUE. <i>Fifth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>AN ESSENCE OF THE DUSK. <i>Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>AN INCARNATION OF THE SNOW. <i>Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>A MINE OF FAULTS. <i>Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>THE ASHES OF A GOD. <i>Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>BUBBLES OF THE FOAM. <i>Fcap. 4to. 5s. net. Also Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>Balfour (Graham). THE LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. Illustrated. <i>Eleventh Edition. In one Volume. Cr. 8vo. Buckram, 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.</i></p> <p>Baring (Hon. Maurice). A YEAR IN RUSSIA. <i>Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.</i></p> <p>LANDMARKS IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE. <i>Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.</i></p> <p>RUSSIAN ESSAYS AND STORIES. <i>Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.</i></p> <p>THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE. <i>Demy 8vo. 15s. net.</i></p> |
|--|--|

- Baring-Gould (S.). THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Royal 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- THE TRAGEDY OF THE CÆSARS: A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERS OF THE CÆSARS OF THE JULIAN AND CLAUDIAN HOUSES. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition. Royal 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- THE VICAR OF MORWENSTOW. With a Portrait. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- OLD COUNTRY LIFE. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition. Large Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- A BOOK OF CORNWALL. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- A BOOK OF DARTMOOR. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- A BOOK OF DEVON. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Baring-Gould (S.) and Sheppard (H. Fleetwood). A GARLAND OF COUNTRY SONG. English Folk Songs with their Traditional Melodies. *Demy 4to. 6s.*
- SONGS OF THE WEST. Folk Songs of Devon and Cornwall. Collected from the Mouths of the People. New and Revised Edition, under the musical editorship of CECIL J. SHARP. *Large Imperial 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Barker (E.). THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Bastable (G. F.). THE COMMERCE OF NATIONS. *Sixth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
- Beckford (Peter). THOUGHTS ON HUNTING. Edited by J. OTHO PAGET. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 6s.*
- Belloc (H.). PARIS. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- HILLS AND THE SEA. *Fourth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- ON NOTHING AND KINDRED SUBJECTS. *Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- ON EVERYTHING. *Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- ON SOMETHING. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- FIRST AND LAST. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- THIS AND THAT AND THE OTHER. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- MARIE ANTOINETTE. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- THE PYRENEES. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Bennett (W. H.). A PRIMER OF THE BIBLE. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
- Bennett (W. H.) and Adeney (W. F.). A BIBLICAL INTRODUCTION. With a concise Bibliography. *Sixth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 7s. 6d. Also in Two Volumes. Cr. 8vo. Each 3s. 6d. net.*
- Benson (Archbishop). GOD'S BOARD. Communion Addresses. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- *Berriman (Algernon E.). AVIATION. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Bicknell (Ethel E.). PARIS AND HER TREASURES. Illustrated. *Fcap. 8vo. Round corners. 5s. net.*
- Blake (William). ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF JOB. With a General Introduction by LAURENCE BINYON. Illustrated. *Quarto. 21s. net.*
- Bloemfontein (Bishop of). ARA CÆLI: AN ESSAY IN MYSTICAL THEOLOGY. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- FAITH AND EXPERIENCE. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Bowden (E. M.). THE IMITATION OF BUDDHA. Quotations from Buddhist Literature for each Day in the Year. *Sixth Edition. Cr. 16mo. 2s. 6d.*
- Brabant (F. G.). RAMBLES IN SUSSEX. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Bradley (A. G.). ROUND ABOUT WILTSHIRE. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE ROMANCE OF NORTHUMBRLAND. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Braid (James). ADVANCED GOLF. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Brodrick (Mary) and Morton (A. Anderson). A CONCISE DICTIONARY OF EGYPTIAN ARCHÆOLOGY. A Handbook for Students and Travellers. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Browning (Robert). PARACELSUS. Edited with an Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography by MARGARET L. LEE and KATHARINE B. LOCOCK. *Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Buckton (A. M.). EAGER HEART: A CHRISTMAS MYSTERY-PLAY. *Eleventh Edition. Cr. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- Bull (Paul). GOD AND OUR SOLDIERS. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Burns (Robert). THE POEMS AND SONGS. Edited by ANDREW LANG and W. A. CRAIGIE. With Portrait. *Third Edition. Wide Demy 8vo. 6s.*

- Calman (W. T.).** THE LIFE OF CRUSTACEA. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo.* 6s.
- Carlyle (Thomas).** THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. Edited by C. R. L. FLETCHER. *Three Volumes. Cr. 8vo.* 18s.
- THE LETTERS AND SPEECHES OF OLIVER CROMWELL.** With an Introduction by C. H. FIRTH, and Notes and Appendices by S. C. LOMAS. *Three Volumes. Demy 8vo.* 18s. net.
- Celano (Brother Thomas of).** THE LIVES OF S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. Translated by A. G. FERRERS HOWELL. With a Frontispiece. *Cr. 8vo.* 5s. net.
- Chambers (Mrs. Lambert).** LAWN TENNIS FOR LADIES. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo.* 2s. 6d. net.
- Chesser (Elizabeth Sloan).** PERFECT HEALTH FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN. *Cr. 8vo.* 3s. 6d. net.
- Chesterfield (Lord).** THE LETTERS OF THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD TO HIS SON. Edited, with an Introduction by C. STRACHEY, and Notes by A. CALTHROP. *Two Volumes. Cr. 8vo.* 12s.
- Chesterton (G. K.).** CHARLES DICKENS. With two Portraits in Photogravure. *Eighth Edition. Cr. 8vo.* 6s.
- ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.** *Seventh Edition. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s.
- TREMENDOUS TRIFLES.** *Fifth Edition. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s.
- ALARMS AND DISCURSIONS.** *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s.
- THE BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE.** *Fourth Edition. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s.
- A MISCELLANY OF MEN.** *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s.
- Clausen (George).** SIX LECTURES ON PAINTING. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Large Post 8vo.* 3s. 6d. net.
- AIMS AND IDEALS IN ART.** Eight Lectures delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy of Arts. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Large Post 8vo.* 5s. net.
- Clutton-Brock (A.).** SHELLEY: THE MAN AND THE POET. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo.* 7s. 6d. net.
- Cobb (W. F.).** THE BOOK OF PSALMS. With an Introduction and Notes. *Demy 8vo.* 10s. 6d. net.
- Conrad (Joseph).** THE MIRROR OF THE SEA: Memories and Impressions. *Fourth Edition. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s.
- Coolidge (W. A. B.).** THE ALPS: IN NATURE AND HISTORY. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo.* 7s. 6d. net.
- Correyon (H.).** ALPINE FLORA. Translated and enlarged by E. W. CLAYFORTH. Illustrated. *Square Demy 8vo.* 16s. net.
- Coulton (G. G.).** CHAUCER AND HIS ENGLAND. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo.* 10s. 6d. net.
- Cowper (William).** THE POEMS. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by J. C. BAILEY. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo.* 10s. 6d. net.
- Cox (J. C.).** RAMBLES IN SURREY. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo.* 6s.
- RAMBLES IN KENT.** Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo.* 6s.
- Crowley (H. Ralph).** THE HYGIENE OF SCHOOL LIFE. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo.* 3s. 6d. net.
- Davis (H. W. C.).** ENGLAND UNDER THE NORMANS AND ANGEVINS: 1066-1272. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo.* 10s. 6d. net.
- Dawbarn (Charles).** FRANCE AND THE FRENCH. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo.* 10s. 6d. net.
- Dearmer (Mabel).** A CHILD'S LIFE OF CHRIST. Illustrated. *Large Cr. 8vo.* 6s.
- Deffand (Madame du).** LETTRES DE LA MARQUISE DU DEFFAND A HORACE WALPOLE. Edited, with Introduction, Notes, and Index, by Mrs. PAGET TOYNBEE. *In Three Volumes. Demy 8vo.* £3 3s. net.
- Dickinson (G. L.).** THE GREEK VIEW OF LIFE. *Eighth Edition. Cr. 8vo.* 2s. 6d. net.
- Ditchfield (P. H.).** THE PARISH CLERK. *Fcap. 8vo.* 1s. net.
- THE OLD-TIME PARSON.** Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo.* 7s. 6d. net.
- THE OLD ENGLISH COUNTRY SQUIRE.** Illustrated. *Demy 8vo.* 10s. 6d. net.
- Ditchfield (P. H.) and Roe (Fred).** VANISHING ENGLAND. The Book by P. H. DITCHFIELD. Illustrated by FRED ROE. *Second Edition. Wide Demy 8vo.* 15s. net.
- Douglas (Hugh A.).** VENICE ON FOOT. With the Itinerary of the Grand Canal. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Round corners. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s. net.
- VENICE AND HER TREASURES.** Illustrated. *Round corners. Fcap. 8vo.* 5s. net.

- Dowden (J.).** FURTHER STUDIES IN THE PRAYER BOOK. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Driver (S. R.).** SERMONS ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Dumas (Alexandre).** THE CRIMES OF THE BORGHIAS AND OTHERS. With an Introduction by R. S. GARNETT. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE CRIMES OF URBAIN GRANDIER AND OTHERS.** Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE CRIMES OF THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS AND OTHERS.** Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE CRIMES OF ALI PASHA AND OTHERS.** Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- MY PETS.** Newly translated by A. R. ALLINSON. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Duncan (F. M.).** OUR INSECT FRIENDS AND FOES. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Dunn-Pattison (R. P.).** NAPOLEON'S MARSHALS. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*
- THE BLACK PRINCE.** Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Durham (The Earl of).** THE REPORT ON CANADA. With an Introductory Note. *Demy 8vo. 4s. 6d. net.*
- Dutt (W. A.).** THE NORFOLK BROADS. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Egerton (H. E.).** A SHORT HISTORY OF BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Evans (Herbert A.).** CASTLES OF ENGLAND AND WALES. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*
- Exeter (Bishop of).** REGNUM DEI. (The Bampton Lectures of 1901.) *A Cheaper Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Ewald (Carl).** MY LITTLE BOY. Translated by ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS. Illustrated. *Pcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- Fairbrother (W. H.).** THE PHILOSOPHY OF T. H. GREEN. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Foulkes (Charles).** THE ARMOURER AND HIS CRAFT. Illustrated. *Royal 4to. £2 2s. net.*
- Firth (C. H.).** CROMWELL'S ARMY. A History of the English Soldier during the Civil Wars, the Commonwealth, and the Protectorate. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Fisher (H. A. L.).** THE REPUBLICAN TRADITION IN EUROPE. *Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.*
- FitzGerald (Edward).** THE RUBAIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM. Printed from the Fifth and last Edition. With a Commentary by H. M. BATSON, and a Biographical Introduction by E. D. ROSS. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Flux (A. W.).** ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Fraser (E.).** THE SOLDIERS WHOM WELLINGTON LED. Deeds of Daring, Chivalry, and Renown. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Fraser (J. F.).** ROUND THE WORLD ON A WHEEL. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Galton (Sir Francis).** MEMORIES OF MY LIFE. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Gibbins (H. de B.).** INDUSTRY IN ENGLAND: HISTORICAL OUTLINES. With Maps and Plans. *Seventh Edition, Revised. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d.*
- THE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND.** With 5 Maps and a Plan. *Nineteenth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s.*
- ENGLISH SOCIAL REFORMERS.** *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
- Gibbon (Edward).** THE MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF EDWARD GIBBON. Edited by G. BIRKBECK HILL. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.** Edited, with Notes, Appendices, and Maps, by J. B. BURV. Illustrated. *In Seven Volumes. Demy 8vo. Each 10s. 6d. net. Also in Seven Volumes. Cr. 8vo. 6s. each.*
- Glover (T. R.).** THE CONFLICT OF RELIGIONS IN THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE. *Fourth Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- VIRGIL.** *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- *THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION AND ITS VERIFICATION.** (The Angus Lecture for 1912.) *Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*

- Godley (A. D.).** LYRA FRIVOLA. *Fourth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
VERSES TO ORDER. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
SECOND STRINGS. *Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
- Gostling (Frances M.).** THE BRETONS AT HOME. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- AUVERGNE AND ITS PEOPLE.** Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Gray (Arthur).** CAMBRIDGE. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Grahame (Kenneth).** THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Granger (Frank).** HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY: A TEXT-BOOK OF POLITICS. *Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Grew (Edwin Sharpe).** THE GROWTH OF A PLANET. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Griffin (W. Hall) and Minchin (H. C.).** THE LIFE OF ROBERT BROWNING. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*
- Halg (K. G.).** HEALTH THROUGH DIET. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Hale (J. R.).** FAMOUS SEA FIGHTS: FROM SALAMIS TO TSU-SHIMA. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.*
- Hall (H. R.).** THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE NEAR EAST FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- Hannay (D.).** A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ROYAL NAVY. Vol. I., 1217-1688. Vol. II., 1689-1815. *Demy 8vo. Each 7s. 6d.*
- Hare (B.).** THE GOLFING SWING. *Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- Harper (Charles G.).** THE AUTOCAR ROAD-BOOK. With Maps. *In Four Volumes. Cr. 8vo. Each 7s. 6d. net.*
 Vol. I.—SOUTH OF THE THAMES.
 Vol. II.—NORTH AND SOUTH WALES AND WEST MIDLANDS.
 Vol. III.—EAST ANGLIA AND EAST MIDLANDS.
 *Vol. IV.—THE NORTH OF ENGLAND AND SOUTH OF SCOTLAND.
- Harris (Frank).** THE WOMEN OF SHAKESPEARE. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Haszall (Arthur).** THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Headley (F. W.).** DARWINISM AND MODERN SOCIALISM. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Henderson (M. Sturge).** GEORGE MEREDITH: NOVELIST, POET, REFORMER. With a Portrait. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Henley (W. E.).** ENGLISH LYRICS: CHAUCER TO POE. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.*
- Hill (George Francis).** ONE HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF SCULPTURE. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Hind (C. Lewis).** DAYS IN CORNWALL. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Hobhouse (L. T.).** THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Hobson (J. A.).** INTERNATIONAL TRADE: AN APPLICATION OF ECONOMIC THEORY. *Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.*
- PROBLEMS OF POVERTY: AN INQUIRY INTO THE INDUSTRIAL CONDITION OF THE POOR.** *Eighth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
- THE PROBLEM OF THE UNEMPLOYED: AN INQUIRY AND AN ECONOMIC POLICY.** *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.*
- GOLD, PRICES AND WAGES.** *Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Hodgson (Mrs. W.).** HOW TO IDENTIFY OLD CHINESE PORCELAIN. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Post 8vo. 6s.*
- Holdich (Sir T. H.).** THE INDIAN BORDERLAND, 1830-1900. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Holdsworth (W. S.).** A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LAW. *In Four Volumes. Vols. I., II., III. Demy 8vo. Each 10s. 6d. net.*
- Holland (Glyve).** TYROL AND ITS PEOPLE. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- THE BELGIANS AT HOME.** Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Horsburgh (E. L. S.).** LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT; AND FLORENCE IN HER GOLDEN AGE. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- WATERLOO: A NARRATIVE AND A CRITICISM.** With Plans. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s.*

- THE LIFE OF SAVONAROLA. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Hesie (Alexander). MANCHURIA. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Hudson (W. H.). A SHEPHERD'S LIFE: IMPRESSIONS OF THE SOUTH WILTSHIRE DOWNS. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Humphreys (John H.). PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Hutchinson (Horace G.). THE NEW FOREST. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Hutton (Edward). THE CITIES OF SPAIN. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE CITIES OF UMBRIA. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE CITIES OF LOMBARDY. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- FLORENCE AND NORTHERN TUSCANY WITH GENOA. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- VENICE AND VENETIA. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- ROME. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- COUNTRY WALKS ABOUT FLORENCE. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- IN UNKNOWN TUSCANY, With Notes by WILLIAM HEYWOOD. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- A BOOK OF THE WYE. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Ibsen (Henrik). BRAND. A Dramatic Poem, translated by WILLIAM WILSON. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Inge (W. R.). CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM. (The Bampton Lectures of 1899.) *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Innes (A. D.). A HISTORY OF THE BRITISH IN INDIA. With Maps and Plans. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- ENGLAND UNDER THE TUDORS. With Maps. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Innes (Mary). SCHOOLS OF PAINTING. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Jenks (E.). AN OUTLINE OF ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT. *Second Edition. Revised by R. C. K. ENSOR. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.*
- A SHORT HISTORY OF ENGLISH LAW: FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE END OF THE YEAR 1911. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Jerningham (Charles Edward). THE MAXIMS OF MARMADUKE. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s.*
- Jevons (F. B.). PERSONALITY. *Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.*
- Johnston (Sir H. H.). BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 4to. 12s. net.*
- THE NEGRO IN THE NEW WORLD. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 21s. net.*
- Julian (Lady) of Norwich. REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE. Edited by GRACE WARRACK. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Keats (John). THE POEMS. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by E. de SELINCOURT. With a Frontispiece in Photogravure. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Keble (John). THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. With an Introduction and Notes by W. LOCK. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Kempis (Thomas à). THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. From the Latin, with an Introduction by DEAN FARRAR. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Kipling (Rudyard). BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS. 114th Thousand. *Thirty-fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 4s. 6d. net; Leather, 5s. net.*
- THE SEVEN SEAS. 94th Thousand. *Twenty-first Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 4s. 6d. net; Leather, 5s. net.*
- THE FIVE NATIONS. 78th Thousand. *Eleventh Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 4s. 6d. net; Leather, 5s. net.*
- DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES. *Twenty-third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 4s. 6d. net; Leather, 5s. net.*
- Lamb (Charles and Mary). THE COMPLETE WORKS. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by E. V. LUCAS. *A New and Revised Edition in Six Volumes. With Frontispiece. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. each.* The volumes are:—
 I. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE. II. ELIA AND THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA. III. BOOKS FOR CHILDREN. IV. PLAYS AND POEMS. V. and VI. LETTERS.

- Lankester (Sir Ray).** SCIENCE FROM AN EASY CHAIR. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Le Braz (Anatole).** THE LAND OF PARDONS. Translated by FRANCES M. GOSTLING. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Lee (Gerald Stanley).** INSPIRED MILLIONAIRES. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.
- ***CROWDS.** Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Lock (Walter).** ST. PAUL, THE MASTER BUILDER. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LIFE. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Lodge (Sir Oliver).** THE SUBSTANCE OF FAITH, ALLIED WITH SCIENCE: A CATECHISM FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS. *Eleventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 2s. net.
- MAN AND THE UNIVERSE: A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE ADVANCE IN SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE UPON OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIANITY. *Ninth Edition.* Demy 8vo. 5s. net. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.
- THE SURVIVAL OF MAN: A STUDY IN UNRECOGNISED HUMAN FACULTY. *Fifth Edition.* Wide Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- REASON AND BELIEF. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.
- MODERN PROBLEMS. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Lorimer (George Horace).** LETTERS FROM A SELF-MADE MERCHANT TO HIS SON. Illustrated. *Twenty-fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.
- OLD GORGON GRAHAM. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. *Also Cr. 8vo. 2s. net.
- Lucas (E. Y.).** THE LIFE OF CHARLES LAMB. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition.* Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.
- A WANDERER IN HOLLAND. Illustrated. *Fourteenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A WANDERER IN LONDON. Illustrated. *Fourteenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A WANDERER IN PARIS. Illustrated. *Tenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- A WANDERER IN FLORENCE. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE OPEN ROAD: A LITTLE BOOK FOR WAYFARERS. *Nineteenth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s. India Paper, 7s. 6d.
- THE FRIENDLY TOWN: A LITTLE BOOK FOR THE URBANE. *Seventh Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- FIRESIDE AND SUNSHINE. *Seventh Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- CHARACTER AND COMEDY. *Sixth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- THE GENTLEST ART: A CHOICE OF LETTERS BY ENTERTAINING HANDS. *Seventh Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- THE SECOND POST. *Third Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- HER INFINITE VARIETY: A FEMININE PORTRAIT GALLERY. *Sixth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- GOOD COMPANY: A RALLY OF MEN. *Second Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- ONE DAY AND ANOTHER. *Fifth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- OLD LAMPS FOR NEW. *Fourth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- LISTENER'S LURE: AN OBLIQUE NARRATION. *Ninth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- OVER BEMERTON'S: AN EASY-GOING CHRONICLE. *Tenth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- MR. INGLESIDE. *Ninth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- THE BRITISH SCHOOL: AN ANECDOTAL GUIDE TO THE BRITISH PAINTERS AND PAINTINGS IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.
See also Lamb (Charles).
- Lydekker (R.) and Others.** REPTILES, AMPHIBIA, FISHES, AND LOWER CHORDATA. Edited by J. C. CUNNINGHAM. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Lydekker (R.).** THE OX AND ITS KINDRED. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Macaulay (Lord).** CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS. Edited by F. C. MONTAGUE. *Three Volumes.* Cr. 8vo. 18s.
- McCabe (Joseph).** THE DECAY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME. *Third Edition.* Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.
- THE EMPRESSES OF ROME. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.
- MacCarthy (Desmond) and Russell (Agatha).** LADY JOHN RUSSELL: A MEMOIR. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- McCullagh (Francis).** THE FALL OF ABD-UL-HAMID. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- McDougall (William).** AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- BODY AND MIND: A HISTORY AND A DEFENCE OF ANIMISM. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.

- '**Mdlle. Mori**' (Author of). ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA AND HER TIMES. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Maeterlinck (Maurice).** THE BLUE BIRD: A FAIRY PLAY IN SIX ACTS. Translated by ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS. *Fcap. 8vo. Deckle Edges. 3s. 6d. net. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.* An Edition, illustrated in colour by F. CAVLEY ROBINSON, is also published. *Cr. 4to. Gilt top. 21s. net.* Of the above book Thirty-three Editions in all have been issued.
- MARY MAGDALENE: A PLAY IN THREE ACTS. Translated by ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS. *Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo. Deckle Edges. 3s. 6d. net. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- DEATH. Translated by ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS. *Fourth Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Mahaffy (J. P.).** A HISTORY OF EGYPT UNDER THE PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Maitland (F. W.).** ROMAN CANON LAW IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. *Royal 8vo. 7s. 6d.*
- Harett (R. R.).** THE THRESHOLD OF RELIGION. *Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Marriott (Charles).** A SPANISH HOLIDAY. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- THE ROMANCE OF THE RHINE. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Marriott (J. A. R.).** THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LUCIUS CARY, VISCOUNT FALKLAND. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- ENGLAND SINCE WATERLOO. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Masefield (John).** SEA LIFE IN NELSON'S TIME. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- A SAILOR'S GARLAND. Selected and Edited. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Masterman (C. F. G.).** TENNYSON AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- Mayne (Ethel Colburn).** BYRON. Illustrated. *In Two Volumes. Demy 8vo. 21s. net.*
- Medley (D. J.).** ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF ENGLISH CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY. *Cr. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Methuen (A. M. S.).** ENGLAND'S RUIN: DISCUSSED IN FOURTEEN LETTERS TO A PROTECTIONIST. *Ninth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3d. net.*
- Miles (Eustace).** LIFE AFTER LIFE; OR, THE THEORY OF REINCARNATION. *Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.*
- THE POWER OF CONCENTRATION: HOW TO ACQUIRE IT. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.*
- Millais (J. G.).** THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS. Illustrated. *New Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Milne (J. G.).** A HISTORY OF EGYPT UNDER ROMAN RULE. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Moffat (Mary M.).** QUEEN LOUISA OF PRUSSIA. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- MARIA THERESA. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Money (L. G. Chiozza).** RICHES AND POVERTY. *New and Revised Issue. Cr. 8vo. 1s. net.*
- MONEY'S FISCAL DICTIONARY, 1910. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 5s. net.*
- THINGS THAT MATTER: PAPERS ON SUBJECTS WHICH ARE, OR OUGHT TO BE, UNDER DISCUSSION. *Demy 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Montague (G. E.).** DRAMATIC VALUES. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s.*
- Moorhouse (E. Hallam).** NELSON'S LADY HAMILTON. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Morgan (G. Lloyd).** INSTINCT AND EXPERIENCE. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Nevill (Lady Dorothy).** MY OWN TIMES. Edited by her Son. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- Norway (A. H.).** NAPLES: PAST AND PRESENT. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- O'Donnell (Elliot).** WERWOLVES. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Oman (C. W. C.).** A HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE MIDDLE AGES. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- ENGLAND BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST. With Maps. *Third Edition, Revised. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*

- Oxford (M. N.). A HANDBOOK OF NURSING. *Sixth Edition, Revised.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.
- Pakas (W. G. C.). THE SCIENCE OF HYGIENE. Illustrated. *Second and Cheaper Edition.* Revised by A. T. NANKIVELL. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Parker (Eric). A BOOK OF THE ZOO. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Pears (Sir Edwin). TURKEY AND ITS PEOPLE. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.
- Petrie (W. M. Flinders.) A HISTORY OF EGYPT. Illustrated. *In Six Volumes.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. each.
- VOL. I. FROM THE 1ST TO THE XVTH DYNASTY. *Seventh Edition.*
- VOL. II. THE XVIIITH AND XVIIIITH DYNASTIES. *Fourth Edition.*
- VOL. III. XIXTH TO XXXTH DYNASTIES.
- VOL. IV. EGYPT UNDER THE PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY. J. P. MAHAFFY.
- VOL V. EGYPT UNDER ROMAN RULE. J. G. MILNE.
- VOL. VI. EGYPT IN THE MIDDLE AGES. STANLEY LANE-POOLE.
- RELIGION AND CONSCIENCE IN ANCIENT EGYPT. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- SYRIA AND EGYPT, FROM THE TELL EL AMARNA LETTERS. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- EGYPTIAN TALES. Translated from the Papyri. First Series, 1vth to xiiith Dynasty. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- EGYPTIAN TALES. Translated from the Papyri. Second Series, xviiiith to xixth Dynasty. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- EGYPTIAN DECORATIVE ART. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- Phelps (Ruth S.). SKIES ITALIAN: A LITTLE BREVIARY FOR TRAVELLERS IN ITALY. *Fcap* 8vo. *Leather*, 5s. net.
- Pollard (Alfred W.). SHAKESPEARE FOLIOS AND QUARTOS. A Study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare's Plays, 1594-1685. Illustrated. *Folio*. 21s. net.
- Porter (G. R.). THE PROGRESS OF THE NATION. A New Edition. Edited by F. W. HIRST. Demy 8vo. 21s. net.
- Power (J. O'Connor). THE MAKING OF AN ORATOR. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Price (Eleanor G.). CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Price (L. L.). A SHORT HISTORY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY IN ENGLAND FROM ADAM SMITH TO ARNOLD TOYNBEE. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- Pycraft (W. P.). A HISTORY OF BIRDS. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Rawlings (Gertrude B.). COINS AND HOW TO KNOW THEM. Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Regan (C. Tait). THE FRESHWATER FISHES OF THE BRITISH ISLES. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Reid (Archdall). THE LAWS OF HEREDITY. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 21s. net.
- Robertson (C. Grant). SELECT STATUTES, CASES, AND DOCUMENTS, 1660-1832. *Second and Enlarged Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- ENGLAND UNDER THE HANOVERIANS. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Roe (Fred). OLD OAK FURNITURE. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Ross (F. W. Forbes). CANCER: THE PROBLEM OF ITS GENESIS AND TREATMENT. Demy 8vo. 5s. net.
- Ryan (P. F. W.). STUART LIFE AND MANNERS: A SOCIAL HISTORY. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- * Ryley (A. Beresford). OLD PASTE. Illustrated. *Royal* 8vo. £2 2s. net.
- St. Francis of Assisi. THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF THE GLORIOUS MESSER, AND OF HIS FRIARS. Done into English, with Notes by WILLIAM HEYWOOD. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 5s. net.
- 'Saki' (H. H. Monro). REGINALD. *Third Edition.* *Fcap*. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.
- REGINALD IN RUSSIA. *Fcap*. 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.
- Sandeman (G. A. C.). METTERNICH. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Schidrowitz (Phillp). RUBBER. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Schloesser (H. H.). TRADE UNIONISM. Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

- Selous (Edmund).** TOMMY SMITH'S ANIMALS. Illustrated. *Twelfth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- TOMMY SMITH'S OTHER ANIMALS.** Illustrated. *Sixth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- JACK'S INSECTS.** Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Shakespeare (William).**
THE FOUR FOLIOS, 1623; 1632; 1664; 1685. Each £4 4s. net, or a complete set, £12 12s. net.
- THE POEMS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.** With an Introduction and Notes by GEORGE WYNDHAM. Demy 8vo. Buckram, 10s. 6d.
- Shelley (Percy Bysshe).** THE POEMS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. With an Introduction by A. CLUTTON-BROCK and notes by C. D. LOCOCK. *Two Volumes.* Demy 8vo. 21s. net.
- Sladen (Douglas).** SICILY. The New Winter Resort. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Smith (Adam).** THE WEALTH OF NATIONS. Edited by EDWIN CANNAN. *Two Volumes.* Demy 8vo. 21s. net.
- Smith (G. F. Herbert).** GEM-STONES AND THEIR DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.
- Snell (F. J.).** A BOOK OF EXMOOR. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE CUSTOMS OF OLD ENGLAND.** Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- 'Stancilffe.'** GOLF DO'S AND DONT'S. *Fifth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.
- Stevenson (R. L.).** THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. Edited by Sir SIDNEY COLVIN. *A New and Enlarged Edition in four volumes. Third Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. Each 5s. Leather, each 5s. net.
- Stevenson (M. I.).** FROM SARANAC TO THE MARQUESAS AND BEYOND. Being Letters written by Mrs. M. I. STEVENSON during 1837-88. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.
- LETTERS FROM SAMOA, 1891-95.** Edited and arranged by M. C. BALFOUR. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.
- Storr (Vernon F.).** DEVELOPMENT AND DIVINE PURPOSE. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Streatfeld (R. A.).** MODERN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.
- Swanton (E. W.).** FUNGI AND HOW TO KNOW THEM. Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.
- BRITISH PLANT-GALLS.** Cr. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.
- Symes (J. E.).** THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 2s. 6d.
- Tabor (Margaret E.).** THE SAINTS IN ART. Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.
- Taylor (A. E.).** ELEMENTS OF METAPHYSICS. *Second Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Taylor (Mrs. Basil) (Harriet Osgood).** JAPANESE GARDENS. Illustrated. Cr. 4to. 21s. net.
- Thibaudeau (A. G.).** BONAPARTE AND THE CONSULATE. Translated and Edited by G. K. FORTESCUE. Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Thomas (Edward).** MAURICE MAE TERLINCK. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Thompson (Francis).** SELECTED POEMS OF FRANCIS THOMPSON. With a Biographical Note by WILFRID MEYNELL. With a Portrait in Photogravure *Twentieth Thousand.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Tilleston (Mary W.).** DAILY STRENGTH FOR DAILY NEEDS. *Twentieth Edition.* Medium 16mo. 2s. 6d. net. Also an edition in superior binding, 6s.
- THE STRONGHOLD OF HOPE.** Medium 16mo. 2s. 6d. net.
- Toynbee (Paget).** DANTE ALIGHIERI. HIS LIFE AND WORKS. With 16 Illustrations. *Fourth and Enlarged Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.
- Trevelyan (G. M.).** ENGLAND UNDER THE STUARTS. With Maps and Plans. *Fifth Edition.* Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.
- Triggs (H. Inigo).** TOWN PLANNING: PAST, PRESENT, AND POSSIBLE. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Wide Royal 8vo. 15s. net.
- Turner (Sir Alfred E.).** SIXTY YEARS OF A SOLDIER'S LIFE. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.
- Underhill (Evelyn).** MYSTICISM. A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness. *Fourth Edition.* Demy 8vo. 15s. net.
- Underwood (F. M.).** UNITED ITALY. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.

- Urwick (E. J.).** A PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL PROGRESS. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Yardon (Harry).** HOW TO PLAY GOLF. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Vaughan (Herbert M.).** THE NAPLES RIVIERA. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- FLORENCE AND HER TREASURES.** Illustrated. *Fcap. 8vo. Round Corners. 5s. net.*
- Vernon (Hon. W. Warren).** READINGS ON THE INFERNO OF DANTE. With an Introduction by the Rev. Dr. MOORE. *Two Volumes. Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 15s. net.*
- READINGS ON THE PURGATORIO OF DANTE.** With an Introduction by the late DEAN CHURCH. *Two Volumes. Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 15s. net.*
- READINGS ON THE PARADISO OF DANTE.** With an Introduction by the BISHOP OF RIPON. *Two Volumes. Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 15s. net.*
- Vickers (Kenneth H.).** ENGLAND IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Wade (G. W. and J. H.).** RAMBLES IN SOMERSET. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Waddell (L. A.).** LHASA AND ITS MYSTERIES. With a Record of the Expedition of 1903-1904. Illustrated. *Third and Cheaper Edition. Medium 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Wagner (Richard).** RICHARD WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMAS. Interpretations, embodying Wagner's own explanations. By ALICE LEIGHTON CLEATHER and BASIL CRUMP. *Fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. each.*
- THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG.** *Fifth Edition.*
- LOHENGRIN AND PARSIFAL.** *Second Edition, rewritten and enlarged.*
- TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.**
- TANNHÄUSER AND THE MASTERSINGERS OF NUREMBERG.**
- Waterhouse (Elizabeth).** WITH THE SIMPLE-HEARTED. Little Homilies to Women in Country Places. *Third Edition. Small Pott 8vo. 2s. net.*
- THE HOUSE BY THE CHERRY TREE.** A Second Series of Little Homilies to Women in Country Places. *Small Pott 8vo. 2s. net.*
- COMPANIONS OF THE WAY.** Being Selections for Morning and Evening Reading. Chosen and arranged by ELIZABETH WATERHOUSE. *Large Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- THOUGHTS OF A TERTIARY.** *Small Pott 8vo. 1s. net.*
- VERSES.** *Fcap. 8vo. 2s. net.*
- Waters (W. G.).** ITALIAN SCULPTORS AND SMITHS. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Watt (Francis).** EDINBURGH AND THE LOTHIANS. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- Wedmore (Sir Frederick).** MEMORIES. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Weigall (Arthur E. P.).** A GUIDE TO THE ANTIQUITIES OF UPPER EGYPT: FROM ABYDOS TO THE SUDAN FRONTIER. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- Wells (J.).** OXFORD AND OXFORD LIFE. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- A SHORT HISTORY OF ROME.** *Twelfth Edition. With 3 Maps. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Whitten (Wilfred).** A LONDONER'S LONDON. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- Wilde (Oscar).** THE WORKS OF OSCAR WILDE. *In Twelve Volumes. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net each volume.*
- I. LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME AND THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H. II. THE DUCHESS OF PADUA. III. POEMS. IV. LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN. V. A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE. VI. AN IDEAL HUSBAND. VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST. VIII. A HOUSE OF POMEGRANATES. IX. INTENTIONS. X. DE PROFUNDIS AND PRISON LETTERS. XI. ESSAYS. XII. SALOMÉ, A FLORENTINE TRAGEDY, and LA SAINTE COURTISANE.
- Williams (H. Noel).** A ROSE OF SAVOY: MARIE ADÉLAÏDE OF SAVOY, DUCHESS OF BOURGOGNE, MOTHER OF LOUIS XV. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- THE FASCINATING DUC DE RICHELIEU: LOUIS FRANÇOIS ARMAND DU PLESSIS (1696-1788).** Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- A PRINCESS OF ADVENTURE: MARIE CAROLINE, DUCHESS OF BERRY (1798-1870).** Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- THE LOVE AFFAIRS OF THE CONDÉS (1530-1740).** Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*

Wood (Sir Evelyn). FROM MIDSHIPMAN TO FIELD-MARSHAL. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net. Also Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net.*

THE REVOLT IN HINDUSTAN (1857-59). Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*

Wood (W. Birkbeck) and Edmonds (Col. J. E.). A HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE UNITED STATES (1861-65). With an Introduction by SPENSER WILKINSON. With 24 Maps and Plans. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*

Wordsworth (W.). THE POEMS. With an Introduction and Notes by NOWELL C. SMITH. *In Three Volumes. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*

Yeats (W. B.). A BOOK OF IRISH VERSE. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*

PART II.—A SELECTION OF SERIES

Ancient Cities

General Editor, B. C. A. WINDLE

Cr. 8vo. 4s. 6d. net each volume

With Illustrations by E. H. NEW, and other Artists

BRISTOL. Alfred Harvey.

CANTERBURY. J. C. Cox.

CHESTER. B. C. A. Windle.

DUBLIN. S. A. O. Fitzpatrick.

EDINBURGH. M. G. Williamson.

LINCOLN. E. Mansel Sympton.

SHREWSBURY. T. Auden.

WELLS and GLASTONBURY. T. S. Holmes.

The Antiquary's Books

General Editor, J. CHARLES COX

Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net each volume

With Numerous Illustrations

ANCIENT PAINTED GLASS IN ENGLAND, THE. Philip Nelson.

ARCHÆOLOGY AND FALSE ANTIQUITIES. R. Munro.

BELLS OF ENGLAND, THE. Canon J. J. Raven. *Second Edition.*

BRASSES OF ENGLAND, THE. Herbert W. Macklin. *Third Edition.*

CELTIC ART IN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN TIMES. J. Romilly Allen. *Second Edition.*

CASTLES AND WALLED TOWNS OF ENGLAND, THE. A. Harvey.

DOMESDAY INQUEST, THE. Adolphus Ballard.

ENGLISH CHURCH FURNITURE. J. C. Cox and A. Harvey. *Second Edition.*

ENGLISH COSTUME. From Prehistoric Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century. George Clinch.

ENGLISH MONASTIC LIFE. Abbot Gasquet. *Fourth Edition.*

ENGLISH SEALS. J. Harvey Bloom.

FOLK-LORE AS AN HISTORICAL SCIENCE. Sir G. L. Gomme.

The Antiquary's Books—continued

- | | |
|--|---|
| GILDS AND COMPANIES OF LONDON, THE.
George Urwin. | PARISH LIFE IN MÆDIEVAL ENGLAND
Abbot Gasquet. <i>Third Edition.</i> |
| MANOR AND MANORIAL RECORDS, THE.
Nathaniel J. Hone. <i>Second Edition.</i> | PARISH REGISTERS OF ENGLAND, THE.
J. C. Cox. |
| MÆDIEVAL HOSPITALS OF ENGLAND, THE.
Rotha Mary Clay. | REMAINS OF THE PREHISTORIC AGE IN
ENGLAND. B. C. A. Windle. <i>Second
Edition.</i> |
| OLD CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS. J. C.
Cox. | ROMAN ERA IN BRITAIN, THE. J. Ward. |
| OLD ENGLISH INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC.
F. W. Galpin. <i>Second Edition.</i> | ROMANO-BRITISH BUILDINGS AND EARTH-
WORKS. J. Ward. |
| OLD ENGLISH LIBRARIES. James Hutt. | ROYAL FORESTS OF ENGLAND, THE. J. C.
Cox. |
| OLD SERVICE BOOKS OF THE ENGLISH
CHURCH. Christopher Wordsworth, and
Henry Littlehales. <i>Second Edition.</i> | SHRINES OF BRITISH SAINTS. J. C. Wall. |

The Arden Shakespeare.*Demy 8vo. 2s. 6d. net each volume*

An edition of Shakespeare in Single Plays; each edited with a full Introduction, Textual Notes, and a Commentary at the foot of the page

- | | |
|--|---|
| ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. | MACBETH. |
| ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA. <i>Second Edition.</i> | MEASURE FOR MEASURE. |
| AS YOU LIKE IT. | MERCHANT OF VENICE, THE. <i>Second Edition.</i> |
| CYMBELINE. | MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, THE. |
| COMEDY OF ERRORS, THE. | MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, A. |
| HAMLET. <i>Third Edition.</i> | OTHELLO. |
| JULIUS CAESAR. | PERICLES. |
| *KING HENRY IV. PT. I. | ROMEO AND JULIET. |
| KING HENRY V. | TAMING OF THE SHREW, THE. |
| KING HENRY VI. PT. I. | TEMPEST, THE. |
| KING HENRY VI. PT. II. | TIMON OF ATHENS. |
| KING HENRY VI. PT. III. | TITUS ANDRONICUS. |
| KING LEAR. | TROILUS AND CRESSIDA. |
| KING RICHARD II. | TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, THE. |
| KING RICHARD III. | TWELFTH NIGHT. |
| LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN, THE. | VENUS AND ADONIS. |
| LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST. | WINTER'S TALE, THE. |

Classics of Art

Edited by DR. J. H. W. LAING

With numerous Illustrations. Wide Royal 8vo

- | | |
|--|--|
| THE ART OF THE GREEKS. H. B. Walters.
12s. 6d. net. | DONATELLO. Maud Cruttwell. 15s. net. |
| THE ART OF THE ROMANS. H. B. Walters.
15s. net. | FLORENTINE SCULPTORS OF THE RENAISSANCE. Wilhelm Bode. Translated by
Jessie Haynes. 12s. 6d. net. |
| CHARDIN. H. E. A. Furst. 12s. 6d. net. | GEORGE ROMNEY. Arthur B. Chamberlain.
12s. 6d. net. |

Classics of Art—*continued*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>GHIRLANDAIO. Gerald S. Davies. <i>Second Edition</i>. 10s. 6d.</p> <p>MICHELANGELO. Gerald S. Davies. 12s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>RUBENS. Edward Dillon. 25s. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>RAPHAEL. A. P. Oppé. 12s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>REMBRANDT'S ETCHINGS. A. M. Hind.</p> | <p>SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE. Sir Walter Armstrong. 21s. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>TITIAN. Charles Ricketts. 15s. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>TINTORETTO. Evelyn March Phillipps. 15s. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>TURNER'S SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS. A. J. Finberg. 12s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>VELAZQUEZ. A. de Beruete. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> |
|--|--|

The 'Complete' Series.

Fully Illustrated. Demy 8vo

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>THE COMPLETE ASSOCIATION FOOTBALLER. B. S. Evers and C. E. Hughes-Davies. 5s. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE BILLIARD PLAYER. Charles Roberts. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE COOK. Lillian Whitting. 7s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE CRICKETER. Albert E. Knight. 7s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE FOXHUNTER. Charles Richardson. 12s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE GOLFER. Harry Vardon. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Thirteenth Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE HOCKEY-PLAYER. Eustace E. White. 5s. <i>net</i>. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE HORSEMAN. W. Scarth Dixon. <i>Second Edition</i>. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE LAWN TENNIS PLAYER. A. Wallis Myers. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Third Edition, Revised</i>.</p> | <p>THE COMPLETE MOTORIST. Filson Young. 12s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>New Edition (Seventh)</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE MOUNTAINEER. G. D. Abraham. 15s. <i>net</i>. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE OARSMAN. R. C. Lehmann. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE PHOTOGRAPHER. R. Child Bayley. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Fourth Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE RUGBY FOOTBALLER, ON THE NEW ZEALAND SYSTEM. D. Gallaher and W. J. Stead. 10s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE SHOT. G. T. Teasdale-Buckell. 12s. 6d. <i>net</i>. <i>Third Edition</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE SWIMMER. F. Sachs. 7s. 6d. <i>net</i>.</p> <p>THE COMPLETE YACHTSMAN. B. Heckstall-Smith and E. du Boulay. <i>Second Edition</i>. 15s. <i>net</i>.</p> |
|--|--|

The Connoisseur's Library

With numerous Illustrations. Wide Royal 8vo. 25s. net each volume

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>ENGLISH FURNITURE. F. S. Robinson.</p> <p>ENGLISH COLOURED BOOKS. Martin Hardie.</p> <p>ETCHINGS. Sir F. Wedmore. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>EUROPEAN ENAMELS. Henry H. Cunyng-hame.</p> <p>GLASS. Edward Dillon.</p> <p>GOLDSMITHS' AND SILVERSMITHS' WORK. Nelson Dawson. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS. J. A. Herbert. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> | <p>IVORIES. Alfred Maskell.</p> <p>JEWELLERY. H. Clifford Smith. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> <p>MEZZOTINTS. Cyril Davenport.</p> <p>MINIATURES. Dudley Heath.</p> <p>PORCELAIN. Edward Dillon.</p> <p>FINE BOOKS. A. W. Pollard.</p> <p>SEALS. Walter de Gray Birch.</p> <p>WOOD SCULPTURE. Alfred Maskell. <i>Second Edition</i>.</p> |
|--|---|

Handbooks of English Church History

Edited by J. H. BURN. *Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net each volume*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH. J. H. Maude.</p> <p>THE SAXON CHURCH AND THE NORMAN CONQUEST. C. T. Crutwell.</p> <p>THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND THE PAPACY. A. C. Jennings.</p> | <p>THE REFORMATION PERIOD. Henry Gee.</p> <p>THE STRUGGLE WITH PURITANISM. Bruce Blaxland.</p> <p>THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. Alfred Plummer.</p> |
|--|--|

Handbooks of Theology

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION. R. L. Outley. <i>Fifth Edition, Revised. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d.</i></p> <p>A HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. J. F. Bethune-Baker. <i>Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d.</i></p> <p>AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF RELIGION. F. B. Jevons. <i>Fifth Edition. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d.</i></p> | <p>AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE CREEDS. A. E. Burd. <i>Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d.</i></p> <p>THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA. Alfred Caldecott. <i>Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d.</i></p> <p>THE XXXIX ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. Edited by E. C. S. Gibson. <i>Seventh Edition. Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d.</i></p> |
|--|--|

The 'Home Life' Series

Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 6s. to 10s. 6d. net

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>HOME LIFE IN AMERICA. Katherine G. Busbey. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> <p>HOME LIFE IN FRANCE. Miss Betham-Edwards. <i>Sixth Edition.</i></p> <p>HOME LIFE IN GERMANY. Mrs. A. Sidgwick. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> <p>HOME LIFE IN HOLLAND. D. S. Meldrum. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> | <p>HOME LIFE IN ITALY. Lina Duff Gordon. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> <p>HOME LIFE IN NORWAY. H. K. Daniels. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> <p>HOME LIFE IN RUSSIA. A. S. Rappoport.</p> <p>HOME LIFE IN SPAIN. S. L. Bensusan. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> |
|--|--|

The Illustrated Pocket Library of Plain and Coloured Books

Fcap. 8vo. 3s. 6d. net each volume

WITH COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOHN MYTTON, ESQ. Nimrod. <i>Fifth Edition.</i></p> <p>THE LIFE OF A SPORTSMAN. Nimrod.</p> <p>HANDLEY CROSS. R. S. Surtees. <i>Fourth Edition.</i></p> <p>MR. SPONGE'S SPORTING TOUR. R. S. Surtees. <i>Second Edition.</i></p> <p>JORROCK'S LAUNTS AND JOLLITIES. R. S. Surtees. <i>Third Edition.</i></p> <p>ASK MAMMA. R. S. Surtees.</p> | <p>THE ANALYSIS OF THE HUNTING FIELD. R. S. Surtees.</p> <p>THE TOUR OF DR. SYNTAX IN SEARCH OF THE PICTURESQUE. William Combe.</p> <p>THE TOUR OF DR. SYNTAX IN SEARCH OF CONSOLATION. William Combe.</p> <p>THE THIRD TOUR OF DR. SYNTAX IN SEARCH OF A WIFE. William Combe.</p> <p>LIFE IN LONDON. Pierce Egan.</p> |
|--|--|

WITH PLAIN ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>THE GRAVE: A Poem. Robert Blair.</p> | <p>ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF JOB. Invented and Engraved by William Blake.</p> |
|---|--|

Leaders of Religion

Edited by H. C. BEECHING. *With Portraits**Crown 8vo. 2s. net each volume*

CARDINAL NEWMAN. R. H. Hutton.

JOHN WESLEY. J. H. Overton.

BISHOP WILBERFORCE. G. W. Daniell.

CARDINAL MANNING. A. W. Hutton.

CHARLES SIMON. H. C. G. Moule.

JOHN KNOX. F. MacCunn. *Second Edition.*

JOHN HOWE. R. F. Horton.

THOMAS KEN. F. A. Clarke.

GEORGE FOX, THE QUAKER. T. Hodgkin.
Third Edition.

JOHN KEBLE. Walter Lock.

THOMAS CHALMERS. Mrs. Oliphant. *Second Edition.*LANCELOT ANDREWES. R. L. Outley. *Second Edition.*

AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY. E. L. Cutts.

WILLIAM LAUD. W. H. Hutton. *Fourth Edition.*

JOHN DONNE. Augustus Jessop.

THOMAS CRANMER. A. J. Mason.

LATIMER. R. M. Carlyle and A. J. Carlyle.

BISHOP BUTLER. W. A. Spooner.

The Library of Devotion

With Introductions and (where necessary) Notes

*Small Post 8vo, cloth, 2s.; leather, 2s. 6d. net each volume*THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE.
*Eighth Edition.*THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. *Sixth Edition.*THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. *Fifth Edition.*LYRA INNOCENTIUM. *Third Edition.*THE TEMPLE. *Second Edition.*A BOOK OF DEVOTIONS. *Second Edition.*A SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT AND HOLY LIFE. *Fifth Edition.*

A GUIDE TO ETERNITY.

THE INNER WAY. *Second Edition.*

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

THE PSALMS OF DAVID.

LYRICA APOSTOLICA.

THE SONG OF SONGS.

THE THOUGHTS OF PASCAL. *Second Edition.*

A MANUAL OF CONSOLATION FROM THE SAINTS AND FATHERS.

DEVOTIONS FROM THE APOCRYPHAL.

THE SPIRITUAL COMBAT.

THE DEVOTIONS OF ST. ANSELM.

BISHOP WILSON'S SACRA PRIVATA.

GRACE ABOUNDING TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS.

LYRA SACRA. A Book of Sacred Verse.
Second Edition.

A DAY BOOK FROM THE SAINTS AND FATHERS.

A LITTLE BOOK OF HEAVENLY WISDOM. A Selection from the English Mystics.

LIGHT, LIFE, and LOVE. A Selection from the German Mystics.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE.

THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF THE GLORIOUS MESSIAH ST. FRANCIS AND HIS FRIARS.

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY.

THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE. *Second Edition.*

DEVOTIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK AND THE GREAT FESTIVALS.

PRICES PRIVATAE.

HOMAGE MYSTICAE. A Day Book from the Writings of Mystics and Many Nations.

Little Books on Art

With many Illustrations. Demy 16mo. 2s. 6d. net each volume

Each volume consists of about 200 pages, and contains from 30 to 40 Illustrations including a Frontispiece in Photogravure

- | | |
|--|--|
| ALBRECHT DÜRER. L. J. Allen. | GREUSE AND BOUCHER. E. F. Pollard. |
| ARTS OF JAPAN, THE. E. Dillon. <i>Third Edition.</i> | HOLBEIN. Mrs. G. Fortescue. |
| BOOKPLATES. E. Almack. | ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS. J. W. Bradley. |
| BOTTICELLI. Mary L. Bendor. | JEWELLERY. C. Davenport. <i>Second Edition.</i> |
| BURNE-JONES. F. de Lisle. | JOHN HOPPNER. H. P. K. Skipton. |
| CELLINI. R. H. H. Cust. | SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. J. Sims. <i>Second Edition.</i> |
| CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM. Mrs. H. Jenner. | MILLET. N. Pearson. <i>Second Edition.</i> |
| CHRIST IN ART. Mrs. H. Jenner. | MINIATURES. C. Davenport. <i>Second Edition.</i> |
| CLAUDE. E. Dillon. | OUR LADY IN ART. Mrs. H. Jenner. |
| CONSTABLE. H. W. Tompkins. <i>Second Edition.</i> | RAPHAEL. A. R. Dryhurst. |
| COROT. A. Pollard and E. Birmstingl. | REMBRANDT. Mrs. E. A. Sharp. |
| *EARLY ENGLISH WATER-COLOUR. C. E. Hughes. | RODIN. Muriel Ciolkowska. |
| ENAMELS. Mrs. N. Dawson. <i>Second Edition.</i> | TURNER. F. Tytwell-Gill. |
| FREDERIC LEIGHTON. A. Corkran. | VANDYCK. M. G. Smallwood. |
| GEORGE ROMNEY. G. Paston. | VELAZQUEZ. W. Wilberforce and A. R. Gilbert. |
| GREEK ART. H. B. Walters. <i>Fourth Edition.</i> | WATTS. R. E. D. Sketchley. <i>Second Edition.</i> |

The Little Galleries

Demy 16mo. 2s. 6d. net each volume

Each volume contains 20 plates in Photogravure, together with a short outline of the life and work of the master to whom the book is devoted

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A LITTLE GALLERY OF REYNOLDS. | A LITTLE GALLERY OF HOPPNER. |
| A LITTLE GALLERY OF ROMNEY. | A LITTLE GALLERY OF MILLAIS. |

The Little Guides

With many Illustrations by E. H. NEW and other artists, and from photographs

Small Post 8vo. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net; leather, 3s. 6d. net each volume

The main features of these Guides are (1) a handy and charming form; (2) illustrations from photographs and by well-known artists; (3) good plans and maps; (4) an adequate but compact presentation of everything that is interesting in the natural features, history, archaeology, and architecture of the town or district treated

- | | |
|--|--|
| CAMBRIDGE AND ITS COLLEGES. A. H. Thompson. <i>Third Edition, Revised.</i> | ISLE OF WIGHT, THE. G. Clitch. |
| CHANNEL ISLANDS, THE. E. E. Bicknell. | LONDON. G. Clitch. |
| ENGLISH LAKES, THE. F. G. Brahm. | MALVERN COUNTRY, THE. B. C. A. Windle. |
| | NORTH WALES. A. T. Story. |

The Little Guides—*continued*

OXFORD AND ITS COLLEGES. J. Wells. *Ninth Edition.*

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. G. Clinch.

SHAKESPEARE'S COUNTRY. B. C. A. Windle. *Fifth Edition.*

SOUTH WALES. G. W. and J. H. Wade.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY. G. E. Troutbeck. *Second Edition.*

BERKSHIRE. F. G. Brabant.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE. E. S. Roscoe.

CHESHIRE. W. M. Gallichan.

CORNWALL. A. L. Salmon. *Second Edition.*

DERBYSHIRE. J. C. Cox.

DEVON. S. Baring-Gould. *Second Edition.*

DORSET. F. R. Heath. *Second Edition.*

DURHAM. J. E. Hodgkin.

ESSEX. J. C. Cox.

HAMPSHIRE. J. C. Cox. *Second Edition.*

HERTFORDSHIRE. H. W. Tompkins.

KENT. G. Clinch.

KERRY. C. P. Crane. *Second Edition.*

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND. A. Harvey and V. B. Crowther-Beynon.

MIDDLESEX. J. B. Firth.

MONMOUTHSHIRE. G. W. Wade and J. H. Wade.

NORFOLK. W. A. Dutt. *Second Edition Revised.*

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. W. Dry. *New and Revised Edition.*

NORTHUMBERLAND. J. E. Morris.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE. L. Guilford.

OXFORDSHIRE. F. G. Brabant.

SHROPSHIRE. J. E. Auden.

SOMERSET. G. W. and J. H. Wade. *Second Edition.*

STAFFORDSHIRE. C. Masfield.

SUFFOLK. W. A. Dutt.

SURREY. J. C. Cox.

SUSSEX. F. G. Brabant. *Third Edition.*

WILTSHIRE. F. R. Heath.

YORKSHIRE, THE EAST RIDING. J. E. Morris.

YORKSHIRE, THE NORTH RIDING. J. E. Morris.

YORKSHIRE, THE WEST RIDING. J. E. Morris. *Cloth, 3s. 6d. net; leather, 4s. 6d. net.*

BRITTANY. S. Baring-Gould.

NORMANDY. C. Scudamore.

ROME. C. G. Ellaby.

SICILY. F. H. Jackson.

The Little Library

With Introduction, Notes, and Photogravure Frontispieces

Small Pott 8vo. Each Volume, cloth, 1s. 6d. net

Anon. A LITTLE BOOK OF ENGLISH LYRICS. *Second Edition.*

Austen (Jane). PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. *Two Volumes.*

NORTHANGER ABBEY.

Bacon (Francis). THE ESSAYS OF LORD BACON.

Barham (R. H.). THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS. *Two Volumes.*

Barnett (Annie). A LITTLE BOOK OF ENGLISH PROSE.

Beckford (William). THE HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

Blake (William). SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF WILLIAM BLAKE.

Borrow (George). LAVENGRO. *Two Volumes.*

THE ROMANY RYE.

Browning (Robert). SELECTIONS FROM THE EARLY POEMS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

Canning (George). SELECTIONS FROM THE ANTI-JACOBIN: With some later Poems by GEORGE CANNING.

Cowley (Abraham). THE ESSAYS OF ABRAHAM COWLEY.

The Little Library—continued

Crabbe (George). SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS OF GEORGE CRABBE.

Craik (Mrs.). JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN. *Two Volumes.*

Crashaw (Richard). THE ENGLISH POEMS OF RICHARD CRASHAW.

Dante Alighieri. THE INFERNO OF DANTE. Translated by H. F. CARY.

THE PURGATORIO OF DANTE. Translated by H. F. CARY.

THE PARADISO OF DANTE. Translated by H. F. CARY.

Darley (George). SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS OF GEORGE DARLEY.

Deane (A. C.). A LITTLE BOOK OF LIGHT VERSE.

Dickens (Charles). CHRISTMAS BOOKS. *Two Volumes.*

Ferrier (Susan). MARRIAGE. *Two Volumes.*

THE INHERITANCE. *Two Volumes.*

Gaskell (Mrs.). CRANFORD. *Second Edition.*

Hawthorne (Nathaniel). THE SCARLET LETTER.

Henderson (T. F.). A LITTLE BOOK OF SCOTTISH VERSE.

Kinglake (A. W.). EOTHEN. *Second Edition.*

Lamb (Charles). ELIA, AND THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA.

Locker (F.). LONDON LYRICS.

Marvell (Andrew). THE POEMS OF ANDREW MARVELL.

Milton (John). THE MINOR POEMS OF JOHN MILTON.

Moir (D. M.). MANSIE WAUCH.

Nichols (Bowyer). A LITTLE BOOK OF ENGLISH SONNETS.

Smith (Horace and James). REJECTED ADDRESSES.

Sterne (Laurence). A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

Tennyson (Alfred, Lord). THE EARLY POEMS OF ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

IN MEMORIAM.

THE PRINCESS.

MAUD.

Thackeray (W. M.). VANITY FAIR *Three Volumes.*

PENDENNIS. *Three Volumes.*

HENRY ESMOND.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS.

Vaughan (Henry). THE POEMS OF HENRY VAUGHAN.

Waterhouse (Elizabeth). A LITTLE BOOK OF LIFE AND DEATH. *Thirteenth Edition.*

Wordsworth (W.). SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Wordsworth (W.) and Coleridge (S. T.). LYRICAL BALLADS. *Second Edition.*

The Little Quarto Shakespeare

Edited by W. J. CRAIG. With Introductions and Notes

Pott 16mo. In 40 Volumes. Leather, price 1s. net each volume.

Mahogany Revolving Book Case. 10s. net

Miniature Library

Demy 32mo. Leather, 1s. net each volume

EUPHRANOR: A Dialogue on Youth. Edward FitzGerald.

THE LIFE OF EDWARD, LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY. Written by himself.

OLONIUS; or, Wise Saws and Modern Instances. Edward FitzGerald.

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM. Edward FitzGerald. *Fourth Edition.*

The New Library of Medicine

Edited by C. W. SALEEBY. *Demy 8vo*

- | | |
|---|---|
| CARE OF THE BODY, THE. F. Cavanagh.
<i>Second Edition. 7s. 6d. net.</i> | DRUGS AND THE DRUG HABIT. H. Sainsbury. |
| CHILDREN OF THE NATION, THE. The Right Hon. Sir John Gorst. <i>Second Edition. 7s. 6d. net.</i> | FUNCTIONAL NERVE DISEASES. A. T. Schofield. <i>7s. 6d. net.</i> |
| CONTROL OF A SCOURGE; or, How Cancer is Curable, THE. Chas. P. Childe.. <i>7s. 6d. net.</i> | HYGIENE OF MIND, THE. T. S. Clouston. <i>Sixth Edition. 7s. 6d. net.</i> |
| DISEASES OF OCCUPATION. Sir Thos. Oliver. <i>10s. 6d. net. Second Edition.</i> | INFANT MORTALITY. Sir George Newman. <i>7s. 6d. net.</i> |
| DRINK PROBLEM, in its Medico-Sociological Aspects, THE. Edited by T. N. Kelynack. <i>7s. 6d. net.</i> | PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS (CONSUMPTION), THE. Arthur Newsholme. <i>10s. 6d. net. Second Edition.</i> |
| | AIR AND HEALTH. Ronald C. Macfie. <i>7s. 6d. net. Second Edition.</i> |

The New Library of Music

Edited by ERNEST NEWMAN. *Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net*

- | | |
|---|---|
| BRAHMS. J. A. Fuller-Maitland. <i>Second Edition.</i> | HANDEL. R. A. Streatfeild. <i>Second Edition.</i> |
| | HUGO WOLF. Ernest Newman. |

Oxford Biographies

Illustrated. Fcap. 8vo. Each volume, cloth, 2s. 6d. net; leather, 3s. 6d. net

- | | |
|--|--|
| DANTE ALIGHIERI. Paget Toynbee. <i>Third Edition.</i> | ERASMUS. E. F. H. Capey. |
| GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA. E. L. S. Horsburgh. <i>Sixth Edition.</i> | ROBERT BURNS. T. F. Henderson. |
| JOHN HOWARD. E. C. S. Gibson. | CHATHAM. A. S. McDowall. |
| ALFRED TENNYSON. A. C. Benson. <i>Second Edition.</i> | FRANCIS OF ASSISI. Anna M. Stoddart. |
| SIR WALTER RALEIGH. I. A. Taylor. | CANNING. W. Alison Phillips. |
| | BEACONSFIELD. Walter Sichel. |
| | JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE. H. G. Atkins. |
| | FRANÇOIS DE FÉNELON. Viscount St. Cyres. |

Four Plays

Fcap. 8vo. 2s. net

- | | |
|---|--|
| THE HONEYMOON. A Comedy in Three Acts. Arnold Bennett. <i>Second Edition.</i> | MILESTONES. Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblauch. <i>Sixth Edition.</i> |
| THE GREAT ADVENTURE. A Play of Fancy in Four Acts. Arnold Bennett. <i>Second Edition.</i> | KISMET. Edward Knoblauch. <i>Second Edition.</i> |

The States of Italy

Edited by E. ARMSTRONG and R. LANGTON DOUGLAS

Illustrated. Demy 8vo

- | | |
|---|--|
| A HISTORY OF MILAN UNDER THE SFORZA. Cecilia M. Ady. <i>10s. 6d. net.</i> | A HISTORY OF VERONA. A. M. Allen. <i>12s. 6d. net.</i> |
| A HISTORY OF PERUGIA. W. Heywood. <i>12s. 6d. net.</i> | |

The Westminster Commentaries

General Editor, WALTER LOCK

Demy 8vo

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. Edited by R. B. Rackham. *Sixth Edition.* 10s. 6d.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. Edited by H. L. Goudge. *Third Edition.* 6s.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS. Edited by A. H. M'Neile. With a Map and 3 Plans. 10s. 6d.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL. Edited by H. A. Redpath. 10s. 6d.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by S. R. Driver. *Ninth Edition.* 10s. 6d.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH EDITIONS OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS. S. R. Driver. 1s.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH. Edited by G. W. Wade. 10s. 6d.

THE BOOK OF JOB. Edited by E. C. S. Gibson. *Second Edition.* 6s.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by R. J. Knowling. *Second Edition.* 6s.

The 'Young' Series

Illustrated. Crown 8vo

THE YOUNG BOTANIST. W. P. Westell and C. S. Cooper. 3s. 6d. net.

THE YOUNG CARPENTER. Cyril Hall. 5s.

THE YOUNG ELECTRICIAN. Hammond Hall. 5s.

THE YOUNG ENGINEER. Hammond Hall. *Third Edition.* 5s.

THE YOUNG NATURALIST. W. P. Westell. *Second Edition.* 6s.

THE YOUNG ORNITHOLOGIST. W. P. Westell. 5s.

Methuen's Shilling Library

Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net

BLUE BIRD, THE. Maurice Maeterlinck.

CONDITION OF ENGLAND, THE. G. F. G. Masterman.

DE PROFUNDIS. Oscar Wilde.

FROM MIDSHIPMAN TO FIELD-MARSHAL. Sir Evelyn Wood, F.M., V.C.

HILLS AND THE SEA. Hilaire Belloc.

*HUXLEY, THOMAS HENRY. P. Chalmers-Mitchell.

IDEAL HUSBAND, AN. Oscar Wilde.

INTENTIONS. Oscar Wilde.

JIMMY GLOVER, HIS BOOK. James M. Glover.

JOHN BOYES, KING OF THE WA-KIKUYU. John Boyes.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN. Oscar Wilde.

LETTERS FROM A SELF-MADE MERCHANT TO HIS SON. George Horace Lorimer.

LIFE OF JOHN RUSKIN, THE. W. G. Collingwood.

LIFE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, THE. Graham Balfour.

LIFE OF TENNYSON, THE. A. C. Benson.

LITTLE OF EVERYTHING, A. E. V. Lucas.

LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME. Oscar Wilde.

LORE OF THE HONEY-BEE, THE. Tickner Edwardes.

MAN AND THE UNIVERSE. Sir Oliver Lodge.

MARY MAGDALENE. Maurice Maeterlinck.

OLD COUNTRY LIFE. S. Baring-Gould.

PARISH CLERK, THE. P. H. Ditchfield.

SELECTED POEMS. Oscar Wilde.

SEVASTOPOL, AND OTHER STORIES. Leo Tolstoy.

TWO ADMIRALS. Admiral John Moresby.

UNDER FIVE REIGNS. Lady Dorothy Nevill.

VAILIMA LETTERS. Robert Louis Stevenson.

VICAR OF MORWENSTOW, THE. S. Baring-Gould.

Books for Travellers

Crown 8vo. 6s. each

Each volume contains a number of Illustrations in Colour

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A WANDERER IN FLORENCE. E. V. Lucas.</p> <p>A WANDERER IN PARIS. E. V. Lucas.</p> <p>A WANDERER IN HOLLAND. E. V. Lucas.</p> <p>A WANDERER IN LONDON. E. V. Lucas.</p> <p>THE NORFOLK BROADS. W. A. Dutt.</p> <p>THE NEW FOREST. Horace G. Hutchinson.</p> <p>NAPLES. Arthur H. Norway.</p> <p>THE CITIES OF UMBRIA. Edward Hutton.</p> <p>THE CITIES OF SPAIN. Edward Hutton.</p> <p>THE CITIES OF LOMBARDY. Edward Hutton.</p> <p>FLORENCE AND NORTHERN TUSCANY, WITH GENOA. Edward Hutton.</p> <p>SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY. Edward Hutton.</p> | <p>ROME. Edward Hutton.</p> <p>VENICE AND VENETIA. Edward Hutton.</p> <p>THE BRETONS AT HOME. F. M. Gostling.</p> <p>THE LAND OF PARDONS (Brittany). Anatole Le Braz.</p> <p>A BOOK OF THE RHINE. S. Baring-Gould.</p> <p>THE NAPLES RIVIERA. H. M. Vaughan.</p> <p>DAYS IN CORNWALL. C. Lewis Hind.</p> <p>THROUGH EAST ANGLIA IN A MOTOR CAR. J. E. Vincent.</p> <p>THE SKIRTS OF THE GREAT CITY. Mrs. A. G. Bell.</p> <p>ROUND ABOUT WILTSHIRE. A. G. Bradley.</p> <p>SCOTLAND OF TO-DAY. T. F. Henderson and Francis Watt.</p> <p>NORWAY AND ITS FJORDS. M. A. Wyllie.</p> |
|--|--|

Some Books on Art

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>THE ARMOURER AND HIS CRAFT. Charles Houllkes. Illustrated. <i>Royal 4to.</i> £2 2s. net.</p> <p>ART AND LIFE. T. Sturge Moore. Illustrated. <i>Cr. 8vo.</i> 5s. net.</p> <p>AIMS AND IDEALS IN ART. George Clausen. Illustrated. <i>Second Edition. Large Post 8vo.</i> 5s. net.</p> <p>SIX LECTURES ON PAINTING. George Clausen. Illustrated. <i>Third Edition. Large Post 8vo.</i> 3s. 6d. net.</p> <p>FRANCESCO GUARDI, 1712-1793. G. A. Simonson. Illustrated. <i>Imperial 4to.</i> £2 2s. net.</p> <p>ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF JOB. William Blake. <i>Quarto.</i> £1 1s. net.</p> <p>JOHN LUCAS, PORTRAIT PAINTER, 1823-1874. Arthur Lucas. Illustrated. <i>Imperial 4to.</i> £3 3s. net.</p> <p>OLD PASTE. A. Beresford Ryley. Illustrated. <i>Royal 4to.</i> £2 2s. net.</p> <p>ONE HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF PAINTING. With an Introduction by R. C. Witt. Illustrated. <i>Second Edition. Demy 8vo.</i> 10s. 6d. net.</p> | <p>THE BRITISH SCHOOL. An Anecdotal Guide to the British Painters and Paintings in the National Gallery. E. V. Lucas. Illustrated. <i>Fcap. 8vo.</i> 2s. 6d. net.</p> <p>ONE HUNDRED MASTERPIECES OF SCULPTURE. With an Introduction by G. F. Hill. Illustrated. <i>Demy 8vo.</i> 10s. 6d. net.</p> <p>A ROMNEY FOLIO. With an Essay by A. B. Chamberlain. <i>Imperial Folio.</i> £15 15s. net.</p> <p>THE SAINTS IN ART. Margaret E. Tabor. Illustrated. <i>Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo.</i> 3s. 6d. net.</p> <p>SCHOOLS OF PAINTING. Mary Innes. Illustrated. <i>Cr. 8vo.</i> 5s. net.</p> <p>CELTIC ART IN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN TIMES. J. R. Allen. Illustrated. <i>Second Edition. Demy 8vo.</i> 7s. 6d. net.</p> <p>'CLASSICS OF ART.' See page 14.</p> <p>'THE CONNOISSEUR'S LIBRARY.' See page 15.</p> <p>'LITTLE BOOKS ON ART.' See page 18.</p> <p>'THE LITTLE GALLERIES.' See page 18.</p> |
|---|---|

Some Books on Italy

- ETRURIA AND MODERN TUSCANY, OLD. Mary L. Cameron. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.*
- FLORENCE: Her History and Art to the Fall of the Republic. F. A. Hyett. *Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- FLORENCE, A WANDERER IN. E. V. Lucas. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- FLORENCE AND HER TREASURES. H. M. Vaughan. Illustrated. *Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- FLORENCE, COUNTRY WALKS ABOUT. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- FLORENCE AND THE CITIES OF NORTHERN TUSCANY, WITH GENOA. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- LOMBARDY, THE CITIES OF. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- MILAN UNDER THE SFORZA, A HISTORY OF. Cecilia M. Ady. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- NAPLES: Past and Present. A. H. Norway. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- NAPLES RIVIERA, THE. H. M. Vaughan. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- PERUGIA, A HISTORY OF. William Heywood. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*
- ROME. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- ROME. C. G. Ellaby. Illustrated. *Small Pott 8vo. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net; leather, 3s. 6d. net.*
- ROMAN PILGRIMAGE, A. R. E. Roberts. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- SICILY. F. H. Jackson. Illustrated. *Small Pott 8vo. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net; leather, 3s. 6d. net.*
- SICILY: The New Winter Resort. Douglas Sladen. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- TUSCANY, IN UNKNOWN. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- UMBRIA, THE CITIES OF. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- VENICE AND VENETIA. Edward Hutton. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- VENICE ON FOOT. H. A. Douglas. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- VENICE AND HER TREASURES. H. A. Douglas. Illustrated. *Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- VERONA, A HISTORY OF. A. M. Allen. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*
- DANTE AND HIS ITALY. Lonsdale Ragg. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 12s. 6d. net.*
- DANTE ALIGHIERI: His Life and Works. Paget Toynbee. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- HOME LIFE IN ITALY. Lina Duff Gordon. Illustrated. *Third Edition. Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- LAKES OF NORTHERN ITALY, THE. Richard Bagot. Illustrated. *Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT. E. L. S. Horsburgh. Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- MEDICI POPES, THE. H. M. Vaughan. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 15s. net.*
- ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA AND HER TIMES. By the Author of 'Mdlle. Mori.' Illustrated. *Second Edition. Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.*
- S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, THE LIVES OF. Brother Thomas of Celano. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- SAVONAROLA, GIROLAMO. E. L. S. Horsburgh. Illustrated. *Cr. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- SHELLEY AND HIS FRIENDS IN ITALY. Helen R. Angeli. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- SKIES ITALIAN: A Little Breviary for Travellers in Italy. Ruth S. Phelps. *Fcap. 8vo. 5s. net.*
- UNITED ITALY. F. M. Underwood. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*
- WOMAN IN ITALY. W. Boulting. Illustrated. *Demy 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.*

PART III.—A SELECTION OF WORKS OF FICTION

- Albanesi (E. Maria).** SUSANNAH AND ONE OTHER. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE BROWN EYES OF MARY.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- I KNOW A MAIDEN.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE INVINCIBLE AMELIA; OR, THE POLITE ADVENTURESS.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- THE GLAD HEART.** *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- OLIVIA MARY.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE BELOVED ENEMY.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Bagot (Richard).** A ROMAN MYSTERY. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE PASSPORT.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- ANTHONY CUTHBERT.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- LOVE'S PROXY.** Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- DONNA DIANA.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- CASTING OF NETS.** *Twelfth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE HOUSE OF SERRAVALLE.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- DARNELEY PLACE.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Bailey (H. C.).** STORM AND TREASURE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE LONELY QUEEN.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Baring-Gould (S.).** IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MARGERY OF QUETHER.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE QUEEN OF LOVE.** *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- JACQUETTA.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- KITTY ALONE.** *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- NOËMI.** Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE BROOM-SQUIRE.** Illustrated. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- DARTMOOR IDYLLS.** Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- BLADYS OF THE STEWPONEY.** Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- PABO THE PRIEST.** Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- WINEFRED.** Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- ROYAL GEORGIE.** Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- IN DEWISLAND.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MRS. CURGENVEN OF CURGENVEN.** *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Barr (Robert).** IN THE MIDST OF ALARMS. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE COUNTESS TEKLA.** *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE MUTABLE MANY.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Begbie (Harold).** THE CURIOUS AND DIVERTING ADVENTURES OF SIR JOHN SPARROW, BART.; OR, THE PROGRESS OF AN OPEN MIND. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Belloc (H.).** EMMANUEL BURDEN, MERCHANT. Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A CHANGE IN THE CABINET.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Bennett (Arnold).** CLAYHANGER. *Eleventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE CARD.** *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- HILDA LESSWAYS.** *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- BURIED ALIVE.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A MAN FROM THE NORTH.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE MATADOR OF THE FIVE TOWNS.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Benson (E. F.).** DODO: A DETAIL OF THE DAY. *Sixteenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Birmingham (George A.).** SPANISH GOLD. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE SEARCH PARTY.** *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- LALAGE'S LOVERS.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

- Bowen (Marjorie).** I WILL MAINTAIN. *Eighth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.** *Sixth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- A KNIGHT OF SPAIN.** *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE QUEST OF GLORY.** *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- GOD AND THE KING.** *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Clifford (Mrs. W. K.).** THE GETTING WELL OF DOROTHY. *Illustrated. Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Conrad (Joseph).** THE SECRET AGENT: A SIMPLE TALE. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- A SET OF SIX.** *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- UNDER WESTERN EYES.** *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Conyers (Dorothea).** SALLY. *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Corelli (Marie).** A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS. *Thirty-Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- VENDETTA; OR, THE STORY OF ONE FORGOTTEN.** *Thirtieth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THELMA: A NORWEGIAN PRINCESS.** *Forty-third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- ARDATH: THE STORY OF A DEAD SELF.** *Twenty-first Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE SOUL OF LILITH.** *Seventeenth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- WORMWOOD: A DRAMA OF PARIS.** *Nineteenth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- BARABBAS: A DREAM OF THE WORLD'S TRAGEDY.** *Forty-sixth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE SORROWS OF SATAN.** *Fifty-seventh Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE MASTER-CHRISTIAN.** *Fourteenth Edition. 179th Thousand. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- TEMPORAL POWER: A STUDY IN SUPREMACY.** *Second Edition. 150th Thousand. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- GOD'S GOOD MAN: A SIMPLE LOVE STORY.** *Sixteenth Edition. 154th Thousand. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- HOLY ORDERS: THE TRAGEDY OF A QUIET LIFE.** *Second Edition. 120th Thousand. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE MIGHTY ATOM.** *Twenty-ninth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- BOY: A SKETCH.** *Thirteenth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- CAMEOS.** *Fourteenth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE LIFE EVERLASTING.** *Sixth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Crockett (S. R.).** LOCHINVAR. *Illustrated. Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE STANDARD BEARER.** *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Croker (B. M.).** THE OLD CANTONMENT. *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- JOHANNA.** *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE HAPPY VALLEY.** *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- A NINE DAYS' WONDER.** *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- PEGGY OF THE BARTONS.** *Seventh Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- ANGEL.** *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- KATHERINE THE ARROGANT.** *Sixth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- BABES IN THE WOOD.** *Fourth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Doyle (Sir A. Conan).** ROUND THE RED LAMP. *Twelfth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Drake (Maurice).** WO₂. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Fenn (G. Manville).** SYD BELTON: THE BOY WHO WOULD NOT GO TO SEA. *Illustrated. Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.*
- Findlater (J. H.).** THE GREEN GRAVES OF BALGOWRIE. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE LADDER TO THE STARS.** *Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Findlater (Mary).** A NARROW WAY. *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- THE ROSE OF JOY.** *Third Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- A BLIND BIRD'S NEST.** *Illustrated. Second Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Fry (B. and C. B.).** A MOTHER'S SON. *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Harraden (Beatrice).** IN VARYING MOODS. *Fourteenth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- HILDA STRAFFORD AND THE REMITTANCE MAN.** *Twelfth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- INTERPLAY.** *Fifth Edition. Cr. 8vo. 6s.*
- Hauptmann (Gerhart).** THE FOOL IN CHRIST. *Cr. 8vo. 6s.*

- Hichens (Robert).** THE PROPHET OF BERKELEY SQUARE. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- TONGUES OF CONSCIENCE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- FELIX: THREE YEARS IN A LIFE. *Tenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE WOMAN WITH THE FAN. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- BYEWAYS. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE GARDEN OF ALLAH. *Twenty-second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE BLACK SPANIEL. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE CALL OF THE BLOOD. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- BARBARY SHEEP. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Hope (Anthony).** THE GOD IN THE CAR. *Eleventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A CHANGE OF AIR. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A MAN OF MARK. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE CHRONICLES OF COUNT ANTONIO. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- PHROSO. Illustrated. *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- SIMON DALE. Illustrated. *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE KING'S MIRROR. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- QUISANTÉ. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE DOLLY DIALOGUES. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- TALES OF TWO PEOPLE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A SERVANT OF THE PUBLIC. Illustrated. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE GREAT MISS DRIVER. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MRS. MAXTON PROTESTS. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Hutten (Baroness von).** THE HALO. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- 'The Inner Shrine' (Author of). THE WILD OLIVE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Jacobs (W. W.).** MANY CARGOES. *Thirty-third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d. Also Illustrated in colour. *Demy 8vo.* 7s. 6d. net.
- SEA URCHINS. *Seventeenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- A MASTER OF CRAFT. Illustrated. *Tenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- LIGHT FREIGHTS. Illustrated. *Eleventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- THE SKIPPER'S WOOING. *Eleventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- AT SUNWICH PORT. Illustrated. *Tenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- DIALSTONE LANE. Illustrated. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- ODD CRAFT. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- THE LADY OF THE BARGE. Illustrated. *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- SALTHAVEN. Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- SAILORS' KNOTS. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- SHORT CRUISES. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- James (Henry).** THE GOLDEN BOWL. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Leitch (William).** THE HUNCHBACK OF WESTMINSTER. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE CLOSED BOOK. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW. Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- BEHIND THE THRONE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- London (Jack).** WHITE FANG. *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Lowndes (Mrs. Belloc).** THE CHINK IN THE ARMOUR. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MARY PECHELL. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- STUDIES IN LOVE AND TERROR. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Lucas (E. V.).** LISTENER'S LURE: AN OBLIQUE NARRATION. *Ninth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- OVER BEMERTON'S: AN EASY-GOING CHRONICLE. *Tenth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- MR. INGLESIDE. *Ninth Edition.* Fcap. 8vo. 5s.
- LONDON LAVENDER. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Lyall (Edna).** DERRICK VAUGHAN. NOVELIST. *44th Thousand.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

- Macnaughtan (S.). THE FORTUNE OF CHRISTINA M'NAB. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- PETER AND JANE. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Malet (Lucas). A COUNSEL OF PERFECTION. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- COLONEL ENDERBY'S WIFE. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE HISTORY OF SIR RICHARD CALMADY: A ROMANCE. *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE WAGES OF SIN. *Sixteenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE CARISSIMA. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE GATELESS BARRIER. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Mason (A. E. W.). CLEMENTINA. Illustrated. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Maxwell (W. B.). THE RAGGED MESSENGER. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- VIVIEN. *Twelfth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE GUARDED FLAME. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- ODD LENGTHS. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- HILL RISE. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE COUNTESS OF MAYBURY: BETWEEN YOU AND I. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE REST CURE. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Milne (A. A.). THE DAY'S PLAY. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE HOLIDAY ROUND. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Montague (C. E.). A HIND LET LOOSE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Morrison (Arthur). TALES OF MEAN STREETS. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A CHILD OF THE JAGO. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE HOLE IN THE WALL. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- DIVERS VANITIES. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Ollivant (Alfred). OWD BOB, THE GREY DOG OF KENMUIR. With a Frontispiece. *Twelfth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE TAMING OF JOHN BLUNT. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE ROYAL ROAD. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Onions (Oliver). GOOD BOY SELDOM: A ROMANCE OF ADVERTISEMENT. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Oppenheim (E. Phillips). MASTER OF MEN. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE MISSING DELORA. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Orczy (Baroness). FIRE IN STUBBLE. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Oxenham (John). A WEAVER OF WEBS. Illustrated. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE GATE OF THE DESERT. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- PROFIT AND LOSS. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE LONG ROAD. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE SONG OF HYACINTH, AND OTHER STORIES. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MY LADY OF SHADOWS. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- LAURISTONS. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE COIL OF CARNE. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE QUEST OF THE GOLDEN ROSE. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MARY ALL-ALONE. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Parker (Gilbert). PIERRE AND HIS PEOPLE. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MRS. FALCHION. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE TRAIL OF THE SWORD. Illustrated. *Tenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- WHEN VALMOND CAME TO PONTIAC: THE STORY OF A LOST NAPOLEON. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- AN ADVENTURER OF THE NORTH: THE LAST ADVENTURES OF 'PRETTY PIERRE.' *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY. Illustrated. *Nineteenth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE BATTLE OF THE STRONG: A ROMANCE OF TWO KINGDOMS. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE POMP OF THE LAVILETTES. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- NORTHERN LIGHTS. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Pasture (Mrs. Henry de la). THE TYRANT. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

- Pemberton (Max).** THE FOOTSTEPS OF A THRONE. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- I CROWN THEE KING.** Illustrated. Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- LOVE THE HARVESTER; A STORY OF THE SHIRES.** Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN HEART.** *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Perrin (Alice).** THE CHARM. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE ANGLO-INDIANS.** *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Philipotts (Eden).** LYING PROPHETS. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- CHILDREN OF THE MIST.** *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE HUMAN BOY.** With a Frontispiece. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- SONS OF THE MORNING.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE RIVER.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE AMERICAN PRISONER.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- KNOCK AT A VENTURE.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE PORTREEVE.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE POACHER'S WIFE.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE STRIKING HOURS.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- DEMETER'S DAUGHTER.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Pickthall (Marmaduke).** SAID, THE FISHERMAN. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- 'Q' (A. T. Quiller-Couch).** THE MAYOR OF TROY. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MERRY-GARDEN AND OTHER STORIES.** Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- MAJOR VIGOUREUX.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Ridge (W. Pett).** ERB. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- A SON OF THE STATE.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- A BREAKER OF LAWS.** *A New Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- MRS. GALER'S BUSINESS.** Illustrated. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE WICKHAMSES.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- SPLENDID BROTHER.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- NINE TO SIX-THIRTY.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THANKS TO SANDERSON.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- DEVOTED SPARKES.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Russell (W. Clark).** MASTER ROCKA-FELLAR'S VOYAGE. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 3s. 6d.
- Sidgwick (Mrs. Alfred).** THE KINS-MAN. Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE LANTERN-BEARERS.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE SEVERINS.** *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- ANTHEA'S GUEST.** *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- LAMORNA.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Snaith (J. C.).** THE PRINCIPAL GIRL. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- AN AFFAIR OF STATE.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Somerville (E. Æ.) and Ross (Martin).** DAN RUSSEL THE FOX. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Thurston (E. Temple).** MIRAGE. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Watson (H. B. Marriott).** ALISE OF ASTRÁ. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE BIG FISH.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Webling (Peggy).** THE STORY OF VIRGINIA PERFECT. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE SPIRIT OF MIRTH.** *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- FELIX CHRISTIE.** *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- THE PEARL STRINGER.** *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Weyman (Stanley).** UNDER THE RED ROBE. Illustrated. *Twenty-third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Whitby (Beatrice).** ROSAMUND. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.
- Williamson (C. N. and A. M.).** THE LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR: The Strange Adventures of a Motor Car. Illustrated. *Twenty-first Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. Also Cr. 8vo. 1s. net.

THE PRINCESS PASSES: A ROMANCE OF A MOTOR. Illustrated. *Ninth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s. net.

LADY BETTY ACROSS THE WATER. *Eleventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

THE BOTOR CHAPERON. Illustrated. *Eighth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

THE CAR OF DESTINY. Illustrated. *Seventh Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

MY FRIEND THE CHAUFFEUR. Illustrated. *Twelfth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

SCARLET RUNNER. Illustrated. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

SET IN SILVER. Illustrated. *Fourth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

LORD LOVELAND DISCOVERS AMERICA. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s

THE GOLDEN SILENCE. *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

THE GUESTS OF HERCULES. *Third Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

THE HEATHER MOON. *Fifth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

THE LOVE PIRATE. *Second Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

Wyllarde (Dolf). THE PATHWAY OF THE PIONEER (Nous Autres). *Sixth Edition.* Cr. 8vo. 6s.

Methuen's Two-Shilling Novels

Crown 8vo. 2s. net

BOTOR CHAPERON, THE. C. N. and A. M. Williamson.

CALL OF THE BLOOD, THE. Robert Hichens.

CARD, THE. Arnold Bennett.

CLEMENTINA. A. E. W. Mason.

COLONEL ENDERBY'S WIFE. Lucas Malet.

FELIX. Robert Hichens.

GATE OF THE DESERT, THE. John Oxenham.

MY FRIEND THE CHAUFFEUR. C. N. and A. M. Williamson.

MYSTERY OF THE GREEN HEART, THE. Max Pemberton.

OLD GORGON GRAHAM. G. H. Lorimer.

PRINCESS VIRGINIA, THE. C. N. and A. M. Williamson.

SEARCH PARTY, THE. G. A. Birmingham.

SEATS OF THE MIGHTY, THE. Sir Gilbert Parker.

SERVANT OF THE PUBLIC, A. Anthony Hope.

SET IN SILVER. C. N. and A. M. Williamson.

SEVERINS, THE. Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick.

SIR RICHARD CALMADY. Lucas Malet.

VIVIEN. W. B. Maxwell.

Books for Boys and Girls

Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

GETTING WELL OF DOROTHY, THE. Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

GIRL OF THE PEOPLE, A. L. T. Meade.

HEPSY GIPSY. L. T. Meade. 2s. 6d.

HONOURABLE MISS, THE. L. T. Meade.

MASTER ROCKAFELLAR'S VOYAGE. W. Clark Russell.

ONLY A GUARD-ROOM DOG. Edith E. Cuthell.

RED GRANGE, THE. Mrs. Molesworth.

SYD BELTON: The Boy who would not go to Sea. G. Manville Fenn.

THERE WAS ONCE A PRINCE. Mrs. M. E. Mann.

Methuen's Shilling Novels*Fcap. 8vo. 1s. net*

- | | |
|--|---|
| ANNA OF THE FIVE TOWNS. Arnold Bennett. | MISSING DELORA, THE. E. Phillips Oppenheim. |
| BARBARY SHEEP. Robert Hichens. | ROUND THE RED LAMP. Sir A. Conan Doyle. |
| CHARM, THE. Alice Perrin. | SAÏD, THE FISHERMAN. Marmaduke Pickthall. |
| DAN RUSSEL THE FOX. E. C. Somerville and Martin Ross. | SECRET WOMAN, THE. Eden Phillpotts. |
| DEMON, THE. C. N. and A. M. Williamson. | SEVERINS, THE. Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick. |
| FIRE IN STUBBLE. Baroness Orczy. | SPANISH GOLD. G. A. Birmingham. |
| GUARDED FLAME, THE. W. B. Maxwell. | SPLENDID BROTHER. W. Pett Ridge. |
| HILL RISE. W. B. Maxwell. | TALES OF MEAN STREETS. Arthur Morrison. |
| JANE. Marie Corelli. | HALO, THE. Baroness von Hutten. |
| JOSEPH IN JEOPARDY. Frank Danby. | TYRANT, THE. Mrs. Henry de la Pasture. |
| LADY BETTY ACROSS THE WATER. C. N. and A. M. Williamson. | UNDER THE RED ROSE. Stanley J. Weyman. |
| LIGHT FREIGHTS. W. W. Jacobs. | VIRGINIA PERFECT. Peggy Webling. |
| LONG ROAD, THE. John Oxenham. | WOMAN WITH THE FAN, THE. Robert Hichens. |
| MIGHTY ATOM, THE. Marie Corelli. | |
| MIRAGE. E. Temple Thurston. | |

Methuen's Sevenpenny Novels*Fcap. 8vo. 7d. net*

- ANGEL. B. M. CROKER.
- PRINCE RUPERT THE BUCCANEER. C. J. CUTCLIFFE HYNE.
- I CROWN THEE KING. MAX PEMBERTON.
- THE BROOM SQUIRE. S. BARING-GOULD.
- LONE PINE. R. B. TOWNSHEND.
- THE SIGN OF THE SPIDER. BERTRAM MITFORD.
- MASTER OF MEN. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.
- THE POMP OF THE LAVIETTES. SIR GILBERT PARKER.
- THE HUMAN BOY. EDEN PHILLPOTTS.
- BY STROKE OF SWORD. ANDREW BALFOUR.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY,
BERKELEY

**THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW**

Books not returned on time are subject to a fine of 50c per volume after the third day overdue, increasing to \$1.00 per volume after the sixth day. Books not in demand may be renewed if application is made before expiration of loan period.

MAR 24 1921

Scott

MAR 27 1921

MAR 22 1921
OCT 17 1930

JUL 9 1931

days

APR 11 1923

MAR 27 1926

MAR 25 1927

DEC 25 1927

DEC 28 1927

OCT 17 1931

JUL 1 1931

Scott
Will
Neill
Graham
Bowell
Parsons
Malozemoff

MAR 10 1926
 MAR 10 1927
 DEC 12 1927
 DEC 21 1927

495872

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

