LIFE LINKS



DAYVE BORIS De WALTOFF

LIFE LINKS

TALES BY AN INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIAN

Dayve Boris DeWaltoff

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GEORGE DOBSEVAGE
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LIFE LINKS

To our dear friends
Mrs + Mr. B. Fix
With best wishes
Mrs + Dr. Dayan Boris D Shuteff
Nov. 18th 1931
Brooklyn N.Y.C.



Dayre Davis Dr. Natto

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PREFACE

FORTY years have passed since I swore allegiance to the Stars and Stripes and adopted this country as my fatherland. This may be a short space of time, as space and time are measured, but in the brief period of human life, these four major decades of mine have been filled with incidents which, I believe, rarely occur to the average individual.

These years and those before, as far as my memory can recall, I present my countrymen for comparison with the life of today.

Often, when I look upon the youth of this glorious land, attending schools and colleges, I wonder if they can appreciate the tranquillity of their lives and the splendid institutions of learning so easily accessible to them. There are no stones in their paths; no cataracts threatening to engulf them.

What a difference between the flag of the Romanoffs and the Stars and Stripes! Though my life under the American flag has, at times, been beset with dangers, they were those that

I assumed happily, as a citizen's duty to his true fatherland.

My hope today is that the children of men may understand our fine system of government, and continue to develop the spirit of brotherly love that the prophet Amos taught the children of the covenant three thousand years ago.

Generations go and generations come. Let future generations benefit by the experiences of the past and keep on improving, so that our country may ever remain a beacon light for the rest of mankind.

* * *

A man's life is void unless it is joined with that of a woman in an equal life-partnership. I must acknowledge that in all I have achieved, as well as in every patriotic endeavor, I have always had the cheerful and constant guidance of my devoted life-partner, the mother of my children. As a leader in various civic activities, she has well earned the admiration and esteem of those who have come in contact with her. As a non-sectarian worker for society, she has received the plaudits of men and women of all religious creeds. To her I am profoundly grateful and inscribe this book of reminiscences.

DAYVE BORIS DEWALTOFF.

THE RETURN OF THE ESTATES

I REMEMBER a large, turreted house on top of a hill overlooking a beautiful rivulet. There were porticos on the several floors. Because of its spaciousness, people called the dwelling a mansion.

Tall, stately trees, pushing their branches skyward, grew in regualr rows on the paths in front of my home. Often these rows of trees were described as lovers' lanes.

Orchards filled with hundreds of trees, laden with bright colored fruit in spring and summer, surrounded us. On one side was the glassy lake, still and smooth and mirrorlike. Children loved to gaze into it, not only to see the golden perch gliding through, but also to find their tiny faces revealed in its clear waters.

To the rear rose the vast woodland filled with gaunt, sombre trees, whose bark always ap-

peared dark gray or black. To me that vista was a land of mystery, unknown, gloomy, weird.

Through a mist, I see myself dressed in a Russian blouse, a round beaver hat ornamented with peacock feathers, little riding boots with tassels, and velvet riding breeches. Was I not ready for a journey?

I was seated on a large St. Bernard, harnessed in saddle and bridle, all trimmed with silver. The maid walked beside me to see that I should not fall off.

I thought I was on a powerful steed that might some day take me beyond the trees, the lake, the orchard, and even the deep woods. My mother had told me that inasmuch as I was only a little boy, I must content myself with the wide porches of our house as my land of adventure.

The estate on which we lived, and ninety-nine others in the northwestern part of Russia, belonged to a Graf Tysz, one of the wealthiest noblemen in Russian Lithuania. My grandfather, a great friend of the graf's family, was in charge of the property, while my father was its superintendent.

How the graf lost and regained the estates

was one of the exciting stories I heard in my childhood.

After his father's death the young graf became the sole owner of these vast properties. Daring and high-spirited, he espoused the cause of the Poles, who hoped to receive aid from Napoleon III of France. He took up arms in an attempt to liberate them from the bondage of Russia, and in his zeal was imprudent enough to attend the Polish meeting places.

His activities were reported by spies to the Russian government, and in a short time the governor-general of Vilna, Trepoff, had him arrested and exiled to Siberia.

In order to save his estates from confiscation by the Russian government, he transferred them to Baron Werner, the Austrian ambassador, to whom a fictitious bill of sale was given, for the supposed price of fifteen million rubles.

After the Polish insurrection had been suppressed and the country was again at peace, my grandfather began negotiations with the governor-general for the release of the graf and the restoration of his citizenship. The sum

paid to this faithful servant of the Czar was in seven figures.

The governor-general then went to the Czar of all the Russians and on bended knee pleaded with the monarch to grant a pardon to Graf Tysz.

"My conscience is troubling me," the governor-general said. "I have since learned that I sent an innocent man to Siberia."

To clear the brave man's conscience, the innocent graf was pardoned. He was soon in the arms of my grandfather, who had known him since babyhood.

The returned noble went to Vienna to interview Baron Werner regarding the return of his estates. What was his dismay when he learned that the baron was critically ill and that his family would not admit visitors!

The graf returned home and told his story to my grandfather, adding that he believed the baron's family had purposely invented this story to interfere with the return of his properties.

Under these circumstances it became necessary for my father to go to Vienna and secure an audience with the baron. He tried to see him, but was repulsed. The baron, the latter's family in-

sisted, was too ill and could not possibly receive visitors, especially such as came on business.

My father was determined to see the invalid. He dressed himself as a fruit hawker, and passing through the rear door of the baron's palace to the kitchen, sold the cook the finest fruits obtainable, at ridiculously low prices.

He continued this for a few days, always bringing presents to the servants. He finally ingratiated himself with the help to such an extent, that he began spending evenings with them, treating them to the costliest liquors.

One evening my father came to the palace and outdid himself in generosity. He offered the servants so many drinks that soon they were completely under its influence and he could more readily carry out his plans.

My father had previously made arrangements with a notary public, a lawyer, and a man called Klatzo, a friend of the graf, to wait for him in a tiny, unfrequented alley at the side of the palace, thus avoiding the sentry stationed at the gates. He had also provided himself with a rope ladder.

When the servants, overcome by the liquor,

had fallen asleep, my father decided to act speedily. He entered a room, tied the rope ladder about his body, and standing against a wall for support, threw the ladder down to his friends, who climbed up. They proceeded to the baron's chamber very cautiously, to discover that he really was ill.

My father hastily informed him of the happenings of the past weeks. The baron, a man of great honor, was indignant when he learned of his family's tactics.

Since the necessary papers had been drawn up, the baron merely affixed his signature before the notary public, and said he was glad to be able, before his death, to return the estates to the graf, the son of his dear friend.

The baron rang a bell for a servant to conduct his visitors out of the palace, but as the help were dozing soundly, there was no reply. Instead, the baroness entered. She understood quickly what had happened, and uttering a scream, fell in a faint to the floor.

My father and his associates withdrew, leaving the servants, who were now aroused, to take care of their mistress.

THE RETURN OF THE ESTATES

A few days later the baron passed away. My father and Klatzo arrived home with the legal papers restoring the estates to the young graf.

I recollect the happiness of my mother when my father approached her with the good news. I was riding straight towards them on my St. Bernard.

SEEING THE STARS BY DAY

ON OUR estate was a well, the depth of which no one had ever fathomed. Some said it was filled with the rain of centuries; others that it dated back to the days of creation, and indeed must be very deep.

There were other stories about this well. It was said that if you looked into it long enough you would be able to see stars even in daylight. Some maintained that there was ice at its bottom all year around.

At the side of the well was a large tree forked at the top. In the fork a rough tapering log was affixed. To the lighter end of the log were attached a rope and a bucket. Whenever water was to be drawn from the well, the heavier end was lifted up, and the bucket would settle into the depths.

Aroused by the curious tales concerning the well, I decided to discover the truth myself. Since stars shone in the sky at night, where did they disappear during the daytime? Surely, they must be hiding in the well! I did not see

anything unreasonable in this, and determined to get a splendid view of the heavenly bodies.

One day I walked to the well, and grasping a piece of wood to push up the other end of the log, I took hold of the rope and got into the bucket, believing that I could sit there and look straight into the well.

I must have been lighter than a bucket of water, for I went up into the air instead of down, with the gaping chasm below me.

I do not remember who gave the alarm, but I soon saw my parents and the servants of the household running towards me, urging me to hold on to the rope with all my might. My tiny hands had already clutched it.

The servants rapidly covered the well with boards and placed mattresses over them. Then they pushed the other end of the tree up, and I came down.

When I was again in the arms of my mother, I told her that I had not seen any stars.

SONYA was known as a tomboy. She lived in our home, where she helped my mother with numerous chores. The peasants called her the "wild one." Still, they loved to watch her gather the sheep in the fields, and triumphantly bring back a young one which had strayed afar. Her long black hair was knotted and curled by the wind, which seemed to find pleasure in playing with it.

Sonya would ride horseback like a man, and she could run as fast as the fleetest animal of the woods. "There goes the flash of lightning," some would say, as Sonya, having finished her household duties, would be seen riding astride "Black-Fire," one of our swiftest horses. Her white cheeks turned red. Her black eyes flashed with pride. Her bosom heaved as she urged the steed on.

Mothers said that nothing good would come of her. She was too restless. She should have been born a boy. Her mother, on her death-bed, after a life of toil, had asked my parents to care for the unruly child.

"I tried to make her behave like other little girls. Please be good to her for the sake of a mother's love." With these words, the woman passed away.

Sonya grew to womanhood in our household. She was alert and learned her duties quickly. Whenever a message had to be delivered speedily to some distant peasant, Sonya was sent with it.

The peasants watched for her coming. They gave her as much tea and black bread as she wanted. To them she seemed like a breath of the Russian north wind. Sometimes, upon reaching a peasant's home, she would find a child very sick. She would hasten to neighbors and ask that they come to help and comfort the parents of the ailing baby.

The peasants remembered these little acts of kindness. And, Sonya, the "wild one," became endeared to them.

No one was more fond of her than Jacob, or as he was affectionately called, Yankele, a lad of twenty, our man of all work. And just as Sonya was quick-spirited, Yankele was even-tempered. As she was precipitous in all her movements, so he was slow and cautious.

Sonya would speed over the fields, her hair

streaming in the wind, her wide skirts brushing the grass. Yankele would look after her with peaceful joy, and inwardly hope that she would slacken her speed.

He always recalled the time when Sonya, running after a baby sheep, had stumbled over a rock. He had picked her up, comforted her, in almost inaudible tones, and promised not to tell of the incident, for Sonya did not wish anyone to know that she had tripped. Because he loved the brave lass, Yankele had kept his word. He only prayed that if she did fall again, he might be on hand to help her.

No one knew whether Sonya returned Yankele's love.

* * *

It was the year 1870. Russia was under the rule of Czar Alexander II, called the Liberator. Russian society was divided into fourteen classes, starting with the Czar and ending with the peasant. The Jew, always a supernumary in whatever country he lived, was of the thirteenth class. There was no Christian group included in the thirteenth. Only the peasant, in the fourteenth class, paid homage to the Jew, who was one step above him.

Imperial Russia always needed military re-

cruits. Its system of draft was medieval; its methods crude and savage. Young lads, on the threshold of life, with their thoughts set on continuing their studies or in pursuit of business careers, were caught like wild beasts in a chase.

Can you see a panting fox running breathlessly through a field? Horsemen, spurring on their steeds, are keen in pursuit. The enraged dogs are eager for the prey. The fox is found. The panting animal is caught! Success has crowned the chase. There is joy among the huntsmen.

So with the Russian youth. He was trapped in hot pursuit, found hiding in his home, or caught unawares at work. There was no mercy. His country called, and he often had to serve for twenty-one years in the filth and stench of Russian army life.

One day, late in the fall, a red-bearded man with earlocks, clad in a long caftan, and a fur cap, knocked at our door. My mother opened it and asked the stranger his mission. He told her he wanted to speak to the supervisor, as he had been sent to buy some sheep.

My mother replied that my father had left early in the morning on a tour of inspection of the different estates and would not return until

late. The stranger, who seemed greatly disappointed, asked if he might not see the sheep, as he wanted to prepare a report for his master, and would return the next morning to buy them. This seemed a proper request to my mother, who called Yankele to show the visitor the sheep.

Yankele and the red-bearded stranger went to the sheep enclosure. Soon our boy returned alone to tell my mother that the stranger had promised to make the purchase the next morning. My mother continued with her home duties.

That evening, when my father came home, she informed him of the incident, and described the man with the long caftan.

"That was an *isborscheck* (a gatherer of recruits)," my father exclaimed. "He came to see whether he could snatch our Yankele. Surely, his gang will be here tonight. They will come before dawn."

The entire household was aroused. So the seeker for sheep had come to hunt Yankele! What a cunning spy the *isborscheck* was! Yankele, with tears in his eyes, stood close to my father and pleaded that some way be found to save him. Yankele loved our household. He

did not want to leave the only home he had ever known.

What a fierce connotation that word had: *Isborscheck.* He remembered that the stranger had not carefully examined the sheep, as did other buyers. Moreover, he had asked Yankele personal questions, which the latter answered innocently enough.

Sonya heard the sorrowful news. She did not approach Yankele, and continued preparations for the evening meal as though nothing startling was happening.

After a hasty supper, Yankele was sent to sleep in a neighbor's house, for my father was sure that the searchers would come during the night.

At midnight we heard a loud rapping at the front door. My father had divined the truth. The rapping became louder. It sounded as though the squad of angry men would force the door open with their hard knocking.

"In the name of the Czar, open! We have come for Yankele," several voices growled.

My father opened, saying, "Yankele is not here."

About a dozen men wearing heavy breeches entered. They rushed towards my father, and

in voices that seemed to shake the walls asked: "Where is Yankele?"

My father calmly repeated, "He is not here."

This did not satisfy them. They went from room to room, searching every closet and corner. Recklessly they threw over chairs and tables, and almost destroyed a large secretary which my father prized.

They grumbled exclamations as their leader shouted: "Keep your eyes open! He's here somewhere."

Their stamping became louder. They continued to hurl things to the floor. Soon their imprecations became so loathsome that the women stuffed their ears and prayed for their departure.

They approached my room. My mother begged the leader not to enter, as her baby was sleeping.

"Men, Yankele must be in there," the leader shouted gruffly, brushing my mother aside.

They entered with a cry of victory. They searched the closets, overturned the table and chairs, and came to the small bed in which I was lying. I was no longer asleep. Their loud shouting had awakened me, and I began to cry for mother.

Large, rough hands threw the covers off my bed. I cried louder. One searcher, believing he was keener than the rest, pushed my bed to see if Yankele was underneath.

Curses became more violent. The stamping of the searchers sounded like thunder. My tiny fingers gripped the sides of my bed, as I wondered why all these strange men had invaded my room.

They left the house, disheveled and still roaring curses. They were determined to search the entire estate, going from one peasant's house to another. Yankele would surely be discovered, thought my father. But, no, he must be saved from years of torture in the Russian barracks!

Sonya was standing near a front window, looking after the searchers, when my father asked her if her feet were still strong. She replied: "I am always ready to run. If I could only save Yankele!"

My father told her to don his clothes, put on a boy's cap, stroll to the highway, and then run to the forest, which at that time was infested with wolves.

Quick as lightning, Sonya made the change and obeyed my father's orders.

Standing on the front balcony, in a loud voice, my father called: "Yankele layf (run)!"

The searchers heard and turned in the direction of the fleeing girl.

My father prayed: "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, put wings on her feet."

Sonya, the wild one, ran. She heard her pursuers shout at her. Once she looked back. The leader was only a few feet away. She was tired. She had slept little that night.

The leader caught her. She cried for help. The others fell on her like hunters who had finished a long and tedious chase. They were pulling at her clothes.

She called again for help. Some peasants, recognizing the voice of their messenger, ran out of their homes, overpowered her assailants with clubs, and freed Sonya. An old peasant took her home, where his wife bathed her feet, gently washed her face, and put her to bed.

"Sleep, brave girl; may the God of Russia reward you," they prayed.

In the meanwhile, a horse had been saddled for Yankele, who fled to safety.

A complaint was lodged with the governor against my father. The *Ispravnik* (local police officer), a friend of my father, who made the

arrest, advised him to surrender Yankele, pay a fine, and arrange for the boy to leave the country.

This was done. Yankele was brought back in chains, and then released to start for America. He embraced my parents and fell humbly at the feet of Sonya.

"Soon I shall send for you to meet me in America. It is the land of freedom, and you love to be free," he told her.

Sonya promised that she would wait for Yankele's call.

Months passed. Sonya ran errands. She watched the sheep. She took messages from one peasant to another. They loved her more, now that she had become a heroine.

"What a wonderful wife she will make in the New World," they exclaimed.

When she received a letter from Yankele, everyone knew of it. She raced through the fields, jumping over stumps and tall grass. After a few years of waiting, Yankele wrote that he was ready for her coming.

Early in the year 1875, Sonya left our home. A heavy snow had fallen the night before her departure, and the ground was covered with a coat of white. Beginning at dawn the sleighs of

the peasants drew up to our home. Young and old were arriving to bid farewell to the "tom-boy."

My parents accompanied Sonya on the sleigh to the railroad station. Five or six other sleighs followed. Sonya was leaving for the land of freedom and Yankele.

* * *

Years later, when I too came to America, I met Yankele. He was wearing a medal of honor. Fighting the Indians in the West had won him that distinction.

Yankele, who had run away from military service in a land of oppression, had enlisted in military service in a land of freedom!



BEN-ZION DEWALTOFF

Agronomist, Father of Author
(From a painting about 1880)

My father was supervising the construction of a mill on an estate in northwestern Russia. While thus engaged, he was draining some ponds and using the slime to enrich the fields, where flax was being cultivated.

During this time my mother utilized the opportunity to make a trip to Kovno to secure her winter wardrobe. She visited friends and purchased clothes for herself and the children.

When ready to return home, she engaged passage on a stage coach or "Diligence." Her trunk, together with those of other passengers, was strapped to the side of the vehicle, which was drawn by four horses.

The journey lay through a thick forest running from Kovno to the town of Yanova, where the Holy River flows on its way to the River Viliya.

This forest was infested by a band of Russian robbers, led by Kleemka, a versatile Russian who could assume the bearing of different characters. He spoke several languages fluently. Once, when hotly pursued, he came to a town

and assumed the role of a Jewish traveler. Early in the morning he entered the synagogue, and having donned phylacteries and a prayer shawl, he was "called to the Torah" to pronounce the blessing, as is usual with a pious Jew. In this manner he thwarted the efforts of the police.

While passing through the forest during the night, the ropes of the "Diligence" were cut and some of the baggage snatched off. My mother's trunk was also taken. The loss was not discovered until the vehicle reached Yanova in the early hours of the morning.

My mother was greatly grieved and hired a special post to reach my father.

It was still early and my father was reciting his morning prayers when my mother rushed weeping into his room. At the moment he was in the midst of the "Eighteen Benedictions," when strict silence must be observed.

After he had concluded, he asked what had happened. Sorrowfully my mother told him the story of the night robbery. He comforted her and told her not to worry, for he would try to regain her loss. He ordered fast horses, and was soon on his way in the direction of the town of Yanova.

He was unable to secure any information concerning the brigands, as the people, in fear of them, were loath to reveal their whereabouts or exploits. It must be remembered that there was no fire insurance in those Russian towns, and the brigands frequently utilized a form of vengeance which consisted of setting the villages on fire, or as it was termed, "letting the red rooster free."

In this dilemma my father bethought himself of a certain Frederick, chief of another band of thieves. Some years before, this worthy came to one of the estates during my father's absence, and with his band had driven away a flock of sheep. Pursuing him on horseback, my father had finally reached him after about three days' journey. Instead of turning him over to the authorities, my father struck a bargain with him.

"I shall pay you ten rubles and your aides three rubles a day for the return of the sheep to the estate," he told Frederick.

This agreement had been fulfilled to the letter, and more so. Frederick and his men took such good care in feeding the sheep, that they were worth twice as much when they were returned.

My father rewarded him with an elaborate repast and a barrel of vodka. In parting, Frederick informed my father that should he at any time need his services, he should not hesitate to call on him. The band leader had then left his address, a place near the city of Kovno.

When my father was unable to secure information concerning the robbers of the stagecoach, he thought of Frederick. After listening to my father's story, Frederick told him to wait for him at a hotel, while he endeavored to learn the details of the case.

Towards afternoon he returned and informed my father that the chief of the band was away on some "business" mission, and that there was only one man left in charge of the camp in the forest.

"The best advice I can give you," said Frederick, "is to get a horse and wagon, as well as a sack with old clothes. Drive slowly through the forest. The same man will probably be on the lookout on the road again. While you pretend to doze off, he will surely snatch the bundle from the wagon and return to the forest."

Then, handing my father a whistle with a call like a night-bird's, he continued: "Keep on

blowing this whistle until you get an answer of the same kind. Wait until this robber comes to you. Tell him you want to see the chief. He will then ask you why you need him. Tell him that you know the chief, that you have done business with him before, and that you would like to purchase some goods now.

"He will tell you that the chief is away and that you may buy from him. You will spy your wife's trunk and then try to make the best bargain."

My father thanked Frederick and decided to follow his advice. Before leaving mother, my father asked her to list the contents of her trunk, so that he might more readily identify the stolen articles. She told him that her jewelry she had placed in the pocket of one of her dresses.

My father supplied himself with a horse and a small wagon and a bundle of rags, and set out on his journey to the forest. After riding a few hours, with his eyes half-closed, he saw a tall man with an iron rod dart out from the forest. The man grabbed the sack on the wagon and rushed back into the darkness of the woods.

My father stopped his horse and blew the whistle which Frederick had given him. After a few shrill calls, he received an answer in kind;

and soon the giant appeared and asked what he wanted.

My father closely followed Frederick's instructions. He learned that the chief was away, but that this giant aide would transact the necessary business with him.

Tying the horse to a tree, my father took a flask of vodka from his pocket, drank some first to avoid suspicion, and then offered the flask to his guide. They proceeded into the depths of the forest, my father keeping in the rear and bending down twigs so as to enable him to find his way out.

Soon they came to a pit in the ground covered with branches, which the robber removed, exposing silks and satins and similar goods, the remains of the robbery of a shop in a large city.

"I have no money to buy stuff of this kind," said my father. "I am only a poor ladies' tailor. I can buy ready made women's clothes and fix them to fit others. If you have such goods I'll be glad to buy them."

"O, sure," replied the robber. "Come along and I'll show them to you."

He led my father to another dug-out, where my mother's trunk had been placed. The trunk was opened and my father began to examine its

contents. He first assured himself that the jewelry was intact and that the clothes were all there. He noticed that some silk stockings and handkerchiefs were missing.

He then began to bargain with the robber, and continued to offer him vodka. But the "merchant" kept on drinking and remained sober. My father realized that he was trying to fill a human tank.

The robber asked one hundred rubles. My father offered twenty-five. In bargaining, my father inadvertently remarked:

"Why, some of the articles are not here. You should not ask such a big price."

The robber became fearfully enraged.

"O, so you came merely to find out things!" he exclaimed. "How do you know that some of the articles are missing?"

Immediately regaining his composure and presence of mind, my father replied: "At the inn where I was stopping, I heard a woman cry that she had silk stockings and silk handkerchiefs in the trunk which were stolen."

This answer satisfied the robber.

My father took out all the money he had in his pockets, and counting fifty rubles, said: "Now I want one ruble for my expenses, and

you may have forty-nine."

When the "merchant" saw that my father had no more money, he shoved the trunk toward him and told him to take it and go.

"The next time you will have to transact business with the chief," he declared, as he pocketed the forty-nine rubles.

The robber, having helped my father place the trunk on the wagon, disappeared into the forest.

My mother's joy at the return of the precious belongings, forty-eight hours after they had been stolen, can well be imagined.

Such was life in Holy Russia only sixty years ago.

WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE SAME FATHER

A NEIGHBORING Polish lord or graf owned a great deal of land around his castle. This property was situated between the roads leading out of Vilkomir and Yanova. To go from one town to the other utilizing the highways required a full day's or night's journey, whereas making a short cut over these lands would save at least half the distance.

The graf was a great anti-Semite and would not allow Jews on his domains. For any Jew, foolhardy enough to attempt to cross, and unfortunate enough to be caught, the graf stipulated that he either kiss a golden crucifix, or be lashed. Knowing this, Jews invariably took the longer course.

At the crossroads lived a Jewish innkeeper. Before continuing their journeys to either town, travelers usually stopped at his inn.

One morning, a young Jew coming from Vilkomir, having entered the inn for refreshment, inquired concerning the roads through the graf's possessions. He expressed a great desire to take his route through the forbidden territory.

The innkeeper tried his best to dissuade him, warning him that he would be caught and flogged, since he hardly believed the young man would prefer to kiss the golden crucifix.

However, the Jewish lad did not change his mind. After refreshing himself, he sauntered away to the lands of the Polish noble.

The inevitable happened. He had gone but a short distance when he was seen by the foresters and brought before the graf, who inquired whether he desired the lash or the crucifix. To the consternation of the overseer and the delight of the noble, the young man smilingly replied that he chose to embrace the crucifix.

So overjoyed was the graf that he decided to prepare a great feast that very evening, to which he invited other nobles and the priest of the church, to witness what he termed the miraculous conversion of a young Jewish scholar.

The ballroom was decorated with thousands of candles. Banners hung resplendently on the walls. Tables covered with rich fruits and dainties were assembled. The nobles from the neighborhood and its environs, dressed in brilliant attire, soon arrived for the grand display.

When all was in readiness, a golden image of Jesus on the cross, with a crown of thorns,

was unveiled on one of the walls of the ballroom.

The young Jew was led into the salon. Giving one glance at the image at the other end of the room, he dashed towards it with outstretched arms, and embracing it, cried out aloud: "O, my dear brother, how glad I am to see you again!"

Almost paralyzed with fear, the assemblage became speechless. The graf, shaking with wrath, exclaimed: "How can you, Jew, call our Lord, your brother?"

He was about to strike him when the priest interfered.

"My son," he asked, "how comest thou to call our Lord Jesus, thy brother?"

"Your reverence," answered the youth, "my father, who is a well-known jeweler in the city of Vilkomir, carved this image, and I helped him with it. Are we not both then the children of my father? Are we not then the children of one Father who is in Heaven?"

"Thou art right," said the priest. "We are all the children of one God."

From that time on the roads through the graf's estates were open to every traveler, irrespective of race or creed.

A MODERN MIRACLE

A POLISH noble who owned vast estates near our home was known for his parsimony. His great desire was to keep all the lands he had, add more to them, and wrest the property of others in whatever way possible.

It happened that the church on his domains was becoming dilapidated. Its exterior was no longer prepossessing. The pews were broken. The religious objects and decorations were faded and worn out.

The noble, a devout worshipper, realized that it was necessary to build a new church. Upholding his motto, "More land for myself, alone," he began the construction of the new edifice on land adjoining his property, belonging to a Jewish innkeeper.

Greatly annoyed, the innkeeper appealed to the noble, saying that his business might be ruined by the new structure, and besides, the building was being erected upon his land.

The lord brushed aside the innkeeper's protests, insisting that he was master of all the land

in the vicinity, and that the new church would be built wherever he wished. Upon which the innkeeper went to the priest to explain the situation.

"My son," said the priest, "go home and trust in God. Everything will turn out in your favor."

The innkeeper returned home despondent, fearing that he had lost his property forever.

After several months the church was ready for the dedication ceremonies. The peasants and the folk from the neighborhood towns gathered for the celebration. The noble was greatly pleased with his achievement.

The priest, who led the ceremony procession, upon reaching the new structure, was unable to open the door. He tried several times, but to no avail.

Turning to the noble he said: "The door seems to be bewitched. I cannot enter. Surely something is wrong. Do you know what might have happened?"

The noble, fearing that the hand of God was at work, told the priest how he had ordered the church to be built on the innkeeper's property.

"That is why I could not enter to lead the dedication," replied the priest. "You must

make immediate restitution for the wrong you have done."

Shortly thereafter, the noble paid the innkeeper for the land upon which the church was built. Henceforth, the door opened readily.

"I told you that all would end well for you," the priest informed the innkeeper, in a secret visit. "Did you notice how miraculously the door refused to open and how miraculously it did open? The hand of God was at work."

The innkeeper smiled knowingly and approvingly.



LADY HANNAH DEBORAH
DEWALTOFF (NEE WOLK)

Mother of Author
(From a painting about 1880)

NICHOLAS I, the great-grandfather of the late Czar of Russia, enjoyed practical jokes and on occasions practiced them on others.

Once on a very bitter cold and clear night he was returning to his palace, when the sentry challenged him for the password. He promptly repeated the formula, which happened to be a quotation from the Russian poet, Pushkin: *"Zvyezda zvyezdoyu gavarit* (one star speaks to the other)."

"By the way," said Nicholas to the sentry, "how many stars are there?"

"Oh! about five million, your majesty!"

"How do you know?"

"Will your majesty wait—and I'll count them," replied the sentry, and without further ado he began to count them very slowly—one-two-three, while the Czar shivered in the cold.

Nicholas appreciated the joke and said, "Good-night, *Feldfebel* (First Sergeant)." He had thus promoted the sentry to a higher rank.

* * *

On one occasion Nicholas with but one attendant was separated from the rest of a hunting party. For a long time they rode through the forest without finding a way out. Finally, tired and exhausted, they came to the edge and beheld a light in a distant window. This proved to be the home of a poor Jewish trader, a widower with a young daughter.

Dressed as the men were in hunting costumes, they were taken for country gentry living near the town. They accepted the humble wholehearted hospitality of these Jewish folk. A samovar with tea, rye bread, fresh butter, cheese, and preserves, all home-made, tasted better to them than all the imperial dishes at home. For bedding there was clean straw covered with immaculate home-spun and sun-bleached linen, and for pillows the down of white geese. The wayfarers slept like children after a strenuous day's play.

In the morning, feeling like school boys, they walked down the brook. They bathed in the clear cold waters and felt rejuvenated. It was still very early in the morning, but the samovar and sweet cream and other dishes of the night before were ready for them. While the young daughter was waiting upon them, they beheld

the father in a corner arrayed in his phylacteries and prayer shawl. Nicholas saw a chance for a practical joke. He took a crucifix adorned with precious stones and placed it in the straw bedding upon which they had slept. Leaving an *Imperial* (ten ruble gold piece) on the table, they mounted their horses and galloped away. While removing the bedding the daughter found the crucifix. In alarm she ran with it to her father, who could find no trace of his guests. He hid the crucifix and, as time went on, forgot all about it.

But fate had ordained something else for the Jewish trader and his precious find.

Heavy and prolonged rains in the summer had ruined the products of his orchards and fields. A long drawn-out fall, with bad weather and fogs had brought sickness to the inhabitants of the cities and the countryside. This condition had also beset the trader.

Hunger finally drove him to take the emblem to the city and sell it. This brought a large sum of money. He found a bargain in the purchase of a local hotel and inn, to which he changed his abode. Fortune then began smiling upon him. He obtained a fine young man for a son-in-law, who assumed charge of the

business, leaving the elderly man free to devote himself to studies and communal affairs.

Believing, however, that some day he would be able to discover the owner of his valuable find, he put away double the amount of what he realized for it, and every year added compound interest. And so the wheels of time kept revolving.

* * *

The community was garrisoned by a great regiment of huzzars, with a number of dashing officers, who, at the local hostelry endeavored to drive away the ennui of the provincial town. The proprietor on each Wednesday evening arranged for a *"vetcherok"* (entertainment and dance).

The great salon was lit up with candles, and the local band furnished the music. The belles of the town came attired in their best to dance with the officers; and wine, vodka, and beer flowed freely till the early hours.

For a long time these weekly affairs ran smoothly, and though many became intoxicated, there were no serious brawls. But the inevitable happened.

A young officer belonging to a noble family became incensed at another who was kissing his

paramour, and in a drunken frenzy hurled a heavy pewter pitcher at him, knocking him down. In drunken madness the other rose to his feet and hurled his sword at his antagonist, killing him instantly.

The court martial found him guilty, imposing the penalty of death. The officer appealed to Czar Nicholas for mercy and justice. In reading the document, hidden memories came back to the Czar—the petitioner was the son of his companion, now dead, who several years ago had been lost with him in the forest. The night in the Jewish home and the incident of the crucifix all came back to him.

The town was near the spot where he had then found shelter. Then the urge came to him to see what happened to the Jew and the crucifix. Again donning civilian clothes, the Czar and a companion set out for the town, and put up at the Jew's hotel.

In the salon where the officers and the gentry nightly gathered, the topic uppermost of conversation was the fate of the condemned officer. Many now seemed to pity him, yet there were some whose venom and lust for revenge could not be appeased. After listening for a while, the Emperor and his aide entered the *"kabak"*

(salon) and sat down at a table near the serving counter. They ordered a pitcher of beer.

The bar-maid bloomed with rosy cheeks and rubby lips, with a head of chestnut hair ending in two long braids, and dark brown eyes that glittered like stars. Chaike was her name.

Suddenly the eyes of the guests were riveted upon a new arrival, dressed in a musician's attire of the Huzzar Regimental Band. He was the first bugler of the regiment stationed in the town; about six feet tall and proportionately built, big black burning eyes under heavy eyebrows, clean shaven except for a heavy mustache, almost regular features, and a wealth of jet black hair. The young man eminated vigor and vitality. The stripes on his sleeves showed that he had already served fifteen years of the twenty-five which every soldier had to give of his life for czar and fatherland.

Strolling up to the bar, he greeted Chaike very affectionately as *"dushenka"* (sweetheart), and asked for a glass of vodka. She handed it to him and he gulped it down instantly. He asked for another, but the bar-maid began to remonstrate with him.

"No, dear Bar Kochba. You have had enough today."

However, he persisted, and she gave him another, which also immediately disappeared. When, however, he demanded a third, she absolutely refused.

"Are you afraid to trust me, *'golubushka'* (dear pigeon)? I'll pay up as soon as my pay day comes." The girl laughed.

"Why, the wages for the ten years for the remainder of your service would not pay one-half of what you already owe my employer."

At this moment there entered the stately figure of the old proprietor. Tall, erect, a face adorned with a beard streaked with silver, eyes expressing benevolence and kindness, he came over to the trumpeter, extending his hand and pronouncing the only greeting that the Jews ever knew: *"Shalom alechem,* Bar Kochba!"

The soldier eagerly grasped the outstretched hand and with reverence answered: *"Alechem shalom,* Reb Nechemia!"

"Listen to me, my son. I overheard your conversation with Chaike, your sweetheart. It is not a drink of vodka that I would stint you, but since you are a son of Israel, I deem it my duty to advise you—nay, even beg of you, to make a halt to this drinking. On the morrow

you may have to lead your regiment of troops, and I would not see you disgrace your dignity should you be under the influence of liquor and forget your orders."

The soldier listened in silence and respect. Tears glistened in his eyes, and then he exclaimed, "Oh, Reb Nechemia, it is the verdict of this damned court martial that I want to forget! My poor dear unfortunate captain—my dear innocent lamb!"

"Trust in God, my son. Pray to Him. We are offering up prayers daily at the synagogue that the All-merciful may illumine the mind of our father czar, to see a way for mercy."

The soldier sat down in a corner in deep thought. The Jew turned around to leave the room and suddenly became petrified with astonishment.

There, sitting at a table, he beheld the very guest he was daily praying for, the man who had left the precious crucifix on that memorable night in his humble home.

"Sit down with us, Nechemia," commanded the guest, "and tell me all about the affair the bugler spoke about. By the way, is Bar Kochba his real name?"

"No, your honor," replied the host. "He re-

ceived this nick-name on account of his great strength and valor. He fears nothing; he is as strong as a lion. He loves the czar, the country, the officers, and every one connected with the service. Particularly, though, he loves children. He is the bar-maid's sweetheart, and they expect to be married as soon as he gets permission from the regiment. Why, only last week he risked his life for a group of children against an infuriated bull. He has the love and respect of every one in town. Unfortunately, since the tragedy—" and here Reb Nechemia retold with much pathos the unfortunate event which had resulted in the verdict against the beloved officer. "Samson, or as we all like to call him, Bar Kochba, began to drink to forget his sorrows."

"Well, *'starik'* (wise one), you know the saying: 'The morn is wiser than the night.' So let us drink to the health of the Czar and our fatherland. By the way, what became of my crucifix?"

"Honorable Sir, before answering this, would you kindly grant me a few minutes to go to my room?"

As soon as Reb Nechemia left, the bugler rushed to the counter and began appealing for

another glass of vodka. He pulled out his sabre, unscrewed it from the hilt, and grabbing a wooden sword that evidently belonged to some small child, broke off the handle and edging it into the hilt, inserted it back into the scabbard.

"Here, Chaike, take it as a pledge. I'll be back soon and redeem it. I must have this night-cap or it will drive me insane."

The bar-maid took the sword and hid it under the counter, pouring out a glass of vodka. He gulped it down, and without saying another word, rushed out of the inn!

Nicholas observed all this, and a smile played on his face. At this moment Reb Nechemia returned carrying a heavy box.

"Now, Honorable Sir, with your permission I will tell you all about your valuable loss." And he narrated the whole series of events.

"Trusting that some day my benefactor would appear, I put away a double amount in gold of what I received for it, and every year I added compound interest. Do me the honor of accepting this box, which contains three times the amount of the original sum, since I cannot replace the crucifix. I have been informed by the jeweler who purchased it that

it is now owned by the imperial family at St. Petersburg."

The Czar smiled broadly. "'*Charosho!*' (it is well!) I see you are an honest man and honesty always deserves a reward. Keep this gold for the present. I cannot carry it with me. I will leave instructions inside the box." Taking a pad from his companion, he wrote a short order, sealed it, and placed it in the box, which he locked. He took the key with him. "When my messenger comes with this key, open the box and follow the instructions I have placed there. Now we must leave. Goodnight!"

The guests mounted their horses and disappeared in the darkness.

The next day there was great commotion in the town. An "estafet" (special messenger) on horseback brought news to the commanding officer of the huzzars that the Czar was coming personally to examine and determine the verdict of the court martial. This officer immediately notified the mayor of the town, who in turn notified the town counselors, who notified all their constituents, who then ordered the inhabitants to clean the town, decorate the houses with flags, rugs and shields, and light

candles in each window facing the streets, in honor of the occasion.

Then a few *"gorodovoys"* (town policemen) visited every house to see that the orders were carried out and to notify all to don holiday attire. The Czar's eyes must behold only prosperity and happiness among his subjects.

* * *

Have you ever watched the first rays of the sun in the eastern horizon crimsoning the skies? The day is attempting to break out of the shell of night, to bring its elixir once more to our sphere, and with its warmth rejuvenate the living world. No wonder the Psalmist, beholding it, exclaimed in ecstacy, "How wonderful are Thy works, my Lord!"

The sun rose majestically over the town and the inhabitants, accustomed to early rising, began to don their holiday attire. Soon the natural, rosy-cheeked, cherry-lipped, blue, brown and black-eyed madonnas, with long braided hair and in native costumes, paraded the streets of the town.

About ten o'clock in the morning the Czar arrived with his entourage, surrounded by a company of Circassian cavalry. The party closeted themselves with the commanding offi-

cer of the huzzars. Within a half hour all the troops were drawn up in perfect formation at the Platz Parad.

The prisoner was brought forward, and the Czar's aide announced the decision of his majesty: "The prisoner shall be placed upon a block of wood, and the tallest and strongest soldier of the regiment, whose name is Samson, shall with his own sabre cut off the head of the prisoner."

Bar Kochba was called to the front. Facing his officers he begged permission to pray:

"O, Lord, our God, Thou who hast created us and commanded us to obey the laws of our country, knowest well that *'czarskoe-slovo zakon* (the word of the czar is our law)'. I pray to Thee now, O, Lord, to give me strength and courage to perform my sworn duties, and if my beloved captain is guilty, let my sword chop off his head with one stroke; but be he innocent, then I pray to Thee, merciful God, to perform Thy miracle again and turn my sword into wood."

Stepping forward, he quickly withdrew the sword from the scabbard and everyone present saw that it was wood. While the multitude standing around began to kneel at the mircle,

the Czar smilingly pardoned the prisoner and turning to the soldier said, "Good-bye, Feldfebel Bar Kochba." Thus was the bugler also raised in rank.

A few days later a messenger arrived with the key to the box in the possession of Reb Nechemia.

"Open it!" he commanded the Jew, "and follow the instructions you find there."

When they opened the box, they read this welcome note signed by Nicholas:

"One third of the sum contained within this box should be given to the condemned captain; one third to Reb Nechemia for his honesty, to do with as he sees fit; and one third to the soldier Samson or Bar Kochba on his wedding to Chaike, which shall take place immediately."

CHURCH BELLS FOR A JEWISH WEDDING

A FULL moon sent its silver glow over the town of Vilkomir, in northwestern Russia, one summer evening more than a half century ago. Its beams spread a shining carpet on the Holy River, calmly flowing to the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, and emptying into the River Viliya. Colorful wild flowers, lining its banks, were kissed by the tiny ripples, and filled their chalices with silvered spray.

Through a grove, overarched by tall trees, a young man and woman were strolling arm-in-arm. They admired the silvery night. The warm air enticed them to seek shadier paths. They whispered little words of happiness. They exchanged joyous kisses. Their love pulsated in their hearts.

"Would that we could spend our lifetime in such happiness, Benzion," the young woman said softly, "but I fear that my parents will soon learn that I am meeting you."

"Do not fear, my beloved Sarah Pesche. I shall always protect you, should our parents discover our love," the youth comforted her.

"You are strong, indeed, Benzion, but my father's word is law in our home. He will never permit me to marry you, you being a Misnagid (modern Jew)."

"I will love you always, Sarah Pesche, and will marry you. Whether your father casts aside his old beliefs or not, your life will be mine, my beautiful sweetheart."

The full moon shone. The lovers embraced, swearing eternal devotion. Parting, they promised to meet again the following night.

* * *

On the banks of a narrow rivulet opening into the Holy River, two mansions stood directly opposite each other.

One was the home of Sarah Pesche, the only daughter of a pious, Chassidic, government contractor. He loved his daughter and wanted her to marry the son of a pious Jew, who would observe the ancient customs of his faith as strictly as he did.

The other mansion was the home of Benzion, only son of a merchant prince, who followed the more liberal and modern views of Judaism. Thus, the two families were separated as though they belonged to the ancient Pharisees and Sadducees.

They would not permit their children to see each other, fearing that their friendship might lead to serious difficulties, as a union of the two families through marriage was unthinkable.

Sarah Pesche was seventeen, and regarded as the belle of Vilkomir. Her long Titian hair fell in ringlets over her white shoulders. Her blue-black eyes held one spell-bound; they were an invitation to tarry a while, but one remained a little while longer. Her skin was the color of ripe peach blossoms.

Benzion was twenty-two. He was tall, slim, and blue-eyed, and had thick black hair. He was called romantic. His education had been liberal. He was considered a country gentleman.

It is not to be wondered that this young pair fell in love at their first meeting. Sarah Pesche's father ordered her to avoid Benzion, but she yearned to see him. How could Chassidic tenets override the creed of love?

On nights when the moon shone, on nights when not even a single star peeped out to watch them, Sarah Pesche and Benzion enjoyed their romantic meeting in unfrequented places. They prayed that it might continue forever. They hoped that God would soften the hearts of their parents.

Once, while they were strolling near an arbor in the government gardens, a party of Chassidim met them.

"So you are carrying on a secret affair with Benzion!" the leader shouted at Sarah Pesche. "You should be a model to Jewish women, and not a traitor."

He took hold of Benzion and was about to throw him to the ground when Sarah Pesche interceded. Standing between him and her lover, she cried out:

"You must not hurt him. We are both Jews and we love each other dearly. You will never separate us. Why should our parents' beliefs divide us?"

The leader told Sarah Pesche that she had been too forward and bold to stand in his way.

"Your father will know of this insult to me. We will tell how you defended the man who is trying to take you from us. He will punish you as you deserve."

The Chassidim departed, leaving Sarah Pesche weeping bitterly in the arms of Benzion, who again swore always to protect her.

The following day the Chassidic leader appeared before Sarah Pesche's father, and in a solemn address told him what he had seen.

Sarah Pesche's father thanked the Chassid and assured him that he would punish his daughter in a way that she would soon forget her lover.

"I will make an example of her," he exclaimed. "My daughter will marry the man I choose for her. The Chassidim will have reason to be proud of my son-in-law."

That very day he locked up Sarah Pesche in the garret of his mansion. It was a dreary, dark room. It contained a small hard bed, a clothes closet, a wooden table, and a chair. He gave her a few Hebrew books, so that she might read during the day. He also permitted her to mend and sew. At night the room was lighted by a small candle only.

Three times a day a servant would bring her food. Sarah Pesche could not leave, nor could any visitors come to see her. The imprisonment would last until her father believed she had forgotten her lover.

But Sarah Pesche could not forget. The book she read dealt with the sages of Israel. In each wise man, she saw Benzion. Each tale which spoke of love, was her love. Even the prayer books contained prayers for dear ones. Surely, Benzion was her dearest one. She

prayed for his health and continued love.

Through the only window, the stars and the moon shone, bringing heavenly symphonies, and reminding her of her meetings with Benzion. She was lying in her bed, communing with the heavenly bodies, and dreaming of her lover.

Benzion had not seen Sarah Pesche since the eventful meeting with the Chassidim. Every night he had stealthily wandered near her home. At times he would stand beneath her window, but could not detect a sound. Thinking she might be ill, he threw a note through the window into her room, but he received no reply.

Several weeks passed. He made every effort to find Sarah Pesche. Then he bribed one of her father's servants, who told him that the young woman was confined in the garret, and was treated like a medieval prisoner.

Benzion became ill as a result of worry. He could neither attend to his studies nor business duties. In fact he became so morose that his father ordered him to stay home. His family planned to send him to a distant resort, where it was hoped he might recuperate.

He lost weight, grew sombre and solemn, and became morbidly introspective. At the dinner table, where he was wont to enliven his parents

and guests with witty remarks and jovial anecdotes, he waxed sullen and downcast. He ate his food mechanically, sulked in his room all day, and rarely walked in the gardens, which he loved to frequent.

One day my parents and I visited Benzion's father, my uncle. We were informed about Benzion. My mother, who was considered a woman of sympathy and understanding, told my uncle that she wanted to speak to Benzion privately, to find out whether she might not help him.

She opened Benzion's room, and saw the young man, pen in hand, poring over a note. His face was distracted. He was muttering to himself. His eyes were bewildered. On his desk at which he sat stood a filled tumbler.

Intuitively my mother snatched the glass and was about to pour it out. Benzion tried to seize it. My mother held the glass as tightly as she could, but Benzion's grip was so strong that she was unable to overcome it. She screamed for help, and Benzion, struck with grief and shame and weak from exhaustion, fell on his bed, weeping. My mother broke the glass.

Benzion had written the following note:

"Forgive your only son for this sinful act. I cannot live without Sarah Pesche, whom I love with all my heart and

soul. Since fate wills that I cannot have her, I am taking my life. Please forgive me, and tell her that I died because I could not live without her."

My mother's cries had attracted the entire household. Benzion's parents, my father, and I rushed to his room, where we soon learned what had happened. A physician was called to treat the young man, who had completely collapsed.

My parents consoled him and assured him that he would soon have Sarah Pesche, even if they had to kidnap her to make this possible. They asked him to write a short letter to his sweetheart, asking her if she would consent to run away with him the next night, in accordance with my father's instructions.

Benzion was calmed. He swore to my parents that he would never again attempt suicide, and prayed that their plans to bring his love to him would be realized.

In my father's employ was a dwarf, called "three-quarter Labele." Although he was very short and stocky, he had the strength of a giant. He was named "three-quarter" because he looked like three-fourths of a yard in height. The name "Labele" was given to him because it is the Yiddish word for lion.

No one knew his family origins. No one

ever questioned him. But all liked him, even though his face was ugly. Whenever a tall tree was struck down by a heavy storm, Labele was called to pull it out of the way. He lifted the largest barrels. He moved the weightiest stones. Some jokingly said that he was descended from Samson, the mighty one.

Another feat of Labele was his ability to climb. He ascended trees like a gorilla. His hands and feet moved with such dexterity, and grasped the boughs and twigs so quickly, that within the twinkling of an eye Labele was on the topmost branch.

My father told Benzion's story to the dwarf and gave him the note to be delivered that night to Sarah Pesche. About ten o'clock, Labele climbed to the roof of Sarah Pesche's house. Tying a rope around his waist and fastening it to the chimney, he lowered himself until he reached the young woman's window, into which he threw the following message:

"I have become almost frantic living without you. My uncle and aunt are now helping me to gain you. Will you come with us to Ramagolav, where we will be married, and live forever in happiness?

"This man who delivers my message wil wait for an answer. Darling, everything will be ready tomorrow night for our flight. This man will take you to my aunt, who will wait for you in her coach. Will you come?"

Sarah Pesche read the letter with the aid of the candle. She kissed the signature several times. It was the first message she had received from her lover these many weeks. She had no pen nor pencil for a reply. With a needle she pricked her finger, and then, dipping the point of the needle into her blood she wrote, "Yes", at the end of Benzion's note and signed her name.

The dwarf quickly descended, rushed to Benzion's house, and delivered the young woman's answer.

My parents were busy the next day preparing for the flight. Everything had to be done speedily and secretly, so that no one in Sarah Pesche's home would discover what was transpiring.

At intervals of ten miles my father stationed two horses in charge of one of his men. There would be five changes for my mother's coach, as there were fifty miles between Vilkomir and Ramagolav. The horses were the fleetest we had. When these preparations were completed, my father and Benzion rode on horseback to Ramagolav.

Benzion became invigorated in health and spirit. He was riding to his wedding and happiness. The horses themselves seemed to know

they were on an important mission, for they raced at their greatest speed.

At Ramagolav, my father made arrangements for the wedding to be held the next day at an inn.

It was late in the fall. The night was bleak and cold. A full moon was shining. Tiny stars sprinkled the heavens. Sarah Pesche was sitting near the window of her garret, waiting for Labele. Each minute seemed an hour. The slightest noise made her tremble. She was overcome with fear lest a member of the household come to her room while she was preparing her escape.

At about nine o'clock the dwarf appeared. He lifted her on his shoulders, ascended to the roof, and there lowered himeslf by a rope to the ground. Labele was agile and quick. Sarah Pesche feared to open her mouth and obeyed him implicitly.

Wrapping her in a heavy blanket, he carried her to the river near which my mother sat impatiently waiting in her coach. Sarah Pesche was soon in the arms of my mother, who comforted her with soothing words. The coach whisked across the bridge of the Holy River. At full gallop the horses sped toward Ramagolav. After running for ten miles, they were

stopped, and a fresh pair of horses was attached to the coach. So through the night they dashed until early morning, when they arrived in Ramagolav, to be greeted by my father and the groom.

Neither my mother nor Sarah Pesche had slept. The coach had rumbled over rocky roads, down steep inclines, and across fallen trees. It had made no stop except at the ten-mile points of change.

But the young woman was happy in the excitement of this new adventure. She was speeding from her parents into the unknown. Her only prayer was that her father might not be hot in pursuit.

As soon as the young people had been reunited, my father went to the rabbi of the town to make arrangements for an immediate ceremony. But it was early Friday morning, and the venerable elder of Israel refused to perform a ceremony until twelve noon.

My father stressed the urgency of the wedding, saying that Sarah Pesche's father might at that very moment be nearing the town, but the rabbi was resolute. He had never broken that custom, and he did not intend to.

"The young people will have to wait until twelve noon. I cannot help them, and there is

no other rabbi in this town," he repeated calmly.

Fortunately, Ramagolav was a small town. It had no town hall, and no official town clock. It had only one Catholic church, whose bells were rung at noon. That was how the townspeople knew the hour. That was how the rabbi told time.

It was still several hours before noon. My father felt certain that Sarah Pesche's parents would arrive before the appointed hour and destroy their plans.

He asked for the bell-ringer of the Catholic church, and found a little, wizened old man who politely greeted him and asked his mission.

My father told him that the happiness of two lives was at stake and explained the situation.

"Would you be able to ring the bells before noon?" my father inquired.

"No! No!" the old man said. "The people must know the right time. I have never deceived them."

My father gave the bell-ringer five rubles. The old man grasped the money and quickly put it in his pocket.

"Could you ring the bells at ten o'clock?" my father queried.

"That would be too soon. I will ring the

bells at eleven o'clock."

My father assured the man that he was saving two lives, and that nobody would know his error.

At eleven o'clock that morning, the bells in the belfry rang out clear and loud. The rabbi performed the ceremony. He was content in that he had been sufficiently strong-willed not to be influenced by my father.

The young couple, happy in their great love, thanked my father for his ruse.

Later in the afternoon of that day, the bride's parents arrived in the town. My parents informed them of the marriage. At first they were grief-stricken, and Sarah Pesche's father continued to exclaim:

"I wanted my daughter to marry the son of a Chassid!"

In trying to console him, the rabbi said the father should have arrived before noon.

"Now it is too late. Exactly at noon I married them, and marriage vows are marriage vows. You might as well forgive them."

Sarah Pesche and Benzion soon received the blessings of their parents, and began their wedded life in a little home on the rivulet off the Holy River.

JUSTICE ON THE RIVER NEVA

It was a peaceful early spring morning in St. Petersburg, in the year 1869. The gentle River Neva, around which the city is built, was warming itself in the rays of a brilliant sun.

On one side of the stream rose the Palace of Justice, the Supreme Court of the Russian Empire, next to the Czar himself in judicial power. Its judges, appointed by the monarch, numbered retired ministers, generals and nobles.

A clear blue sky looked down on the statue of Peter the Great, erected by Nicholas I, with one hand pointing to the Neva on whose shore the city had been built, and with the other to the Palace of Justice, symbolizing the two accomplishments of the Great Peter.

Suddenly, in front of this grand monument, appeared an aged man, who looked like a high priest of Israel. He was tall, gaunt, and had a long, gray beard, bushy, heavy eyebrows, and black, piercing eyes. The venerable visitor wore a long, silk gabardine tied with a black sash. A black hat trimmed with sable skins covered his white head. Donning a prayer

shawl and opening a prayer book, he began to pray fervently.

A few people passing the monument stopped to look at the old man as he mumbled the Hebrew words. They wondered why he had chosen the base of the statue of Peter the Great as a place of worship.

Other pedestrians looked on in surprise, and in a short time a crowd had gathered around the worshipper, who continued his supplications, disregarding the attention he had attracted.

A gendarme, noticing the assemblage, made his way through the crowd to ask the aged man his reason for calling on God before the memorial.

"I see a great miracle about the statue," quietly replied the Jew.

"What is the miracle?" the officer asked in astonishment, gazing at the statue, which appeared altogether unchanged.

"That miracle I can tell to the Czar alone," answered the old man.

Believing that there might be something unusual in connection with the statue, that he had not observed, the gendarme informed his superior officer of the occurrence. When this police official questioned the old man, he was

also assured that he would only speak of it to the Czar. A crowd had now gathered.

The matter was communicated to the supreme commander of the capital city who, piqued by curiosity, hurried to the statue to discover the miracle. To him also the Jew gave the same response.

A dramatic climax had been reached. The leading officials of the city had been rebuffed by the venerable "prophet". Only the Czar might know his meaning.

By this time the Ruler of all the Russias, Czar Alexander II, had learned of the large crowd gathered around the Jew in the gabardine. He dispatched one of his retainers to bring the worshipper to him.

In the presence of the Czar, the old man knelt down, and pronouncing the prescribed blessing recited before a ruler, said:

"Sire, it was Peter the Great who built this city and ornamented the River Neva, but the great miracle I see lies in the position of his hands, which to me signifies that he who seeks justice in the Palace of Justice may as well drown himself in the river."

The Czar did not understand this unique interpretation of the statue's hands, and asked

the old man to explain himself. Whereupon, he related the following tale:

"I have a lawsuit with one of the grafs of my neighborhood about a piece of land and a lake. This lord has been diverting the waters feeding the lake, and has reduced the necessary pressure for running the watermill. He also claims some of the land I purchased to protect the lake.

"I brought my suit before all the lower courts, where a decision was granted in favor of the graf. Then I appealed to the Palace of Justice. For years the case has been hanging.

"Knowing that I was right, I decided to come to St. Petersburg to present my claims in person before the honorable judges of this great tribunal. Every day I would appear at the gates of the Palace to seek permission to address the judges, but attendants told me to 'come tomorrow.'

"Sire, that 'tomorrow' never came, although I presented myself each day for an entire month. I planned to see you myself, and to address you who are known for your great mercy and justice."

Czar Alexander II made additional investigations into the case and granted judgment in favor of him who had worshipped at the statue of the Great Peter.

JUSTICE ON THE RIVER NEVA

The old man who returned home victorious was my grand-uncle, then ninety-six years old. Before appealing to the highest court, he had read an extraordinary story in the Hebrew papers:

"A Jewish merchant in St. Petersburg engaged a wet-nurse for his child. After a disagreement with the mistress of the house, the nurse left the baby and then brought suit for the recovery of her wages.

"The counter-charge stated that she had been engaged for one year; had left the household abruptly, thus causing the child to suffer; had drawn some of her wages, and was not entitled to any more.

"When a judgment was rendered in her favor, the merchant appealed to the Supreme Court. The case dragged along for twenty-five years. Then the highest court decided that the woman must continue as nurse to the baby, and the merchant was obliged to pay her wages."

She was to nurse the child twenty-five years after its birth!

My grand-uncle was determined to get justice speedily, hence his journey to St. Petersburg. In his case, there was to be no twenty-five year old baby.

"MAY GOD MAKE THEE AS EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH"

THE school was on the top floor of our great mansion, where all the children for miles around came to study under a tutor provided by my father.

As a child of four and a half, I used to listen to these children, seated around a long table, learning the alphabet. I watched them form the letters with their pencils, and tried to imitate their writing. As they enunciated the letters, I repeated them in alphabetical order, forward and backward.

The teacher watched me, and one day said: "Would you like to come to school?"

When I replied that I wanted to know as much as the older children, he said he would speak to my father about it.

The next Sunday morning, my father wrapped me in a prayer shawl, and with a party of children as an escort, carried me in his arms to the schoolroom. As we ascended the stairs, the children sang: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy tabernacles, O Israel! As for me, in the abundance of Thy loving kindness will I

come into Thy house: I will worship toward Thy holy temple in the fear of Thee. Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth. As for me, I will worship and bow down: I will bend the knee before the Lord, my Maker. And as for me, may my prayer unto Thee, O Lord, be in an acceptable time: O God, in the abundance of Thy loving kindness, answer me in the truth of Thy salvation."

I was seated at the head of the table. The teacher asked me to repeat the alphabet. I did, first reciting from *Alef* to *Tav* and then from *Tav* to *Alef*. When I had finished, a large silver coin dropped in front of me. As I picked it up, my father announced that the angel Gabriel had sent it to me for being a studious boy.

He then recited the blessing: "May God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh. The Lord bless and preserve thee! The Lord cause his countenance to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee! The Lord direct his countenance toward thee, and grant thee peace."

My education had begun in earnest, and at the age of six I could read Russian, German and Hebrew.

GHOSTS!

MOST of us were diligent children, and we studied hard in our large schoolroom underneath the attic of the mansion. One day the rumor spread that there were ghosts in the attic. We could not study. Our teacher noticed our strange behavior, and asked why we were so unduly disturbed.

"There must be ghosts upstairs. We've heard them," we replied in frightened voices.

Our teacher, of course, told us that we were mistaken, and should continue our work.

But how could young boys study when they were absolutely certain that they had heard strange noises in the room above them!

As a climax to that restless day, one of our number suddenly called out: "Do you hear it? I heard it—a soft noise from above."

Yes, there was no doubt about it. Ghosts were thronging the chamber above our schoolroom, and we meant to destroy them.

Armed with old, useless sabres, we formed a brigade, and led by older boys, ascended the

stairs on our "ghostly" mission. The leaders pounded on the attic door three times, as if that mystic number would call the unwelcome prowlers to immediate attention, and we demanded that the spirits depart in peace.

The door was opened. We were confronted by a large cat and a litter of kittens!

We threw down our weapons of defense, descended the stairs, and were soon poring over our books.

We were dismissed a little earlier that day. I wonder whether our teacher wished to relieve us from the strain of that ghastly day or to laugh at us behind our backs.

IN THE TRENCH

We had received a half-holiday from school, and decided to go berry-picking in the woods. Had we not heard that sweet, luscious, wild strawberries grew there in abundance? We would fill our stomachs and pails with the glorious fruit.

Wandering into the woods, we came upon a trench which had probably been dug during war days. It was filled with muddy water. On the other side of the trench we saw the giant berries we were seeking. The older children jumped across, but the younger ones had to content themselves with watching their older schoolmates, who promised to share their booty.

The berry-pickers worked industriously. At first they would cry out: "Look at this bush! How big these are! How juicy! What wonderful cakes for our mothers to make! How delicious!"

But soon they became quiet, and only the rustling of tiny branches and leaves was heard. Suddenly, the stillness was broken by a loud, weird yell. The children clutched their pails

and scurried to the trench. All jumped over safely, except one who fell into the slimy water. Screaming with fear, he was unable to draw himself out.

As fast as my little feet could carry me, I ran home crying, "Matthew is drowning!"

Everyone who passed me caught the refrain, and within a short time mothers and fathers were running towards the woods, calling the names of their children.

The woodland became a din of echoes.

Some of those whose children had not gone berry-picking, but who, nevertheless, ran to the woods, added to the confusion by shouting: "Matthew is drowning!"

All found Matthew wallowing in the muddy water. He was soon "rescued" and carried home. Each of the berry-pickers contributed some of his berries to the "drowning" Matthew, who had more to show for his afternoon's adventure than we. For he not only had a large assortment of strawberries, but he had obtained a fine mud bath too.

And what do you think had caused all the turmoil? A stray young gelding.

WHEN I was still a youngster I heard my parents and their friends discuss the affairs of the Russian Empire. Of course, they spoke particularly of the reigning Czar and his attitude to his people.

One evening, as several of my father's friends sat around a large table, drinking glass after glass of tea poured from a large samovar, I heard a guest narrate a tale of such dramatic interest that it held the entire group spellbound. Years later I wove the following story around his words:

Czar Alexander II, the noblest of the Romanoffs, initiated an epoch of great reforms. In 1863 he issued an ukase, or edict, emanicpating the Russian serfs, who were living under the complete domination of rich landowners. The serfs had been chattels in the hands of their masters, to be used as they saw fit. Death was a penalty for many an offense. Severe punishment for the slightest error was usually meted out.

The ukase liberated the serfs from the ar-

bitrary rule of the landowners, many of them of the nobility. These "white slaves" were made equal to the other lower classes of Russian society.

On account of this courageous and liberal act, Czar Alexander was termed the "Liberator." Monuments in his honor have been erected throughout the country to commemorate his noble deed.

It was during his reign that Count Ivan Zolotov owned vast estates in northwestern Russia. Numerous serfs cultivated his immense grain fields. His servants took care of his castle, a distinctive mansion handed down to him from his wealthy forefathers.

With its turreted towers and gray thick walls, it suggested from the outside, a prison or fortress more readily than a house of luxury. Vistas of majestic oaks and elms overarched the drives and rose all about, lending an air of dignity and repose that half redeemed the first sombre impression. A sweep of rich emerald sward sloped gently to the beach of the beautiful and romantic river Viliya, kissing the flowers and grasses in its graceful passage to the sea. From the dark hills to the rear of the castle, sparkling cascades dashed into rocky

gorges, then rippling into a lake of blue and gold, which in turn delivered its crystalline surplus to the river. A few rods distant, beneath a waterfall, stood an old mill. It had for centuries ground the grain for the innumerable mouths composing the family of the owner.

In early life, Count Ivan had married a young woman of the Russian nobility. Their deep love was short-lived, because she died through illness, leaving him no issue. Count Ivan mourned for her, but found some solace in the management of his vast property. Day after day he would inspect his estates to see that the best care was given his rich fields.

He had one brother, Count Michael Zolotov. Just as Count Ivan was economical and thoughtful, Count Michael was profligate and light-minded. He had wasted a large portion of his income, carousing in the dance halls of European capitals.

In his youth, Michael had an affair with a pretty serf-girl who bore him a son. She did not live long thereafter, as a result of his abuse. Her death did not dismay him, nor did he pay much attention to his son, whom he soon abandoned. The entire occurrence was to him a mere trifle.

The bright lights of Parisian salons and dance halls beckoned him. He took a mistress, an actress, whom he later brought to his Russian estate and married. She died in childbirth. Her son was christened Gregor Zolotov.

It was on a visit to his brother that Count Ivan fell deeply in love with the beautiful serf-girl, whom Count Michael wished to make his mistress. During Michael's absence, Ivan had the young woman abducted, and a secret marriage was consummated in the home of an old Jewess, Miriam, and her son, Benzion, who jointly operated the mill on the estate.

Count Michael was greatly infuriated at his brother's act. But since he was indebted to him, he had no means of reprisal. He continued his debaucheries, and finally committed suicide.

Count Ivan loved his comely, young serf bride. His late marriage had surprised his household, but the quiet charm of the young woman made the servants love her, and they soon came to approve his act.

She died at the birth of a baby girl. Count Ivan dearly loved his daughter, who grew into beautiful womanhood. She was educated by private tutors; and became endeared to all her father's slaves. She would visit their homes,

play with the children, and comfort the women toiling in the fields.

Her tastes were simple. She wore inexpensive gowns, but every dress was in excellent choice. Her golden hair, sometimes arranged in ringlets, sometimes braided around her head, was like a halo kissed by sunbeams. Her faultless white skin reminded one of the pureness of untouched snow.

The old Count took her on all his journeys. Whenever he visited another noble's house or made a pilgrimage to a different city, she accompanied him. He wanted others to admire her as he did, and praise the lovely jewel under his protection.

His only grief was that he had no son to perpetuate the name of Zolotov, famous for centuries in Russia. Would that his serf bride had lived to bear him a son! A son surely would have been as noble as his daughter, and worthy of upholding the best characteristics of his family.

As the years went on, his passion for the perpetuation of his name grew. There was only one recourse. His beautiful daughter, Countess Marya Ivanovna, should be betrothed to her cousin, Count Gregor Zolotov, his brother's

son. Thus, the family name of Zolotov would continue forever.

Gregor had been sent to study in Paris. Tall and handsome, he soon became a desirable guest at banquets and other social functions. He attended the salons, and pretty women invited him to the theatre. He frequented dance halls, like his father before him, spending his time in frivolities. Life's happenings were mere trifles, and women, in his opinion, were made to be trifled with.

He neglected his studies, and devoted himself to the life of a philanderer. He became enamored of a young gypsy danseuse, Anastasia, for whom he established a residence. Its maintenance and other extravagances soon involved him in heavy debt, and he had to resort to usurers, who continuously harassed him.

With him in Paris was his valet, a serf named Sergei, unusually intelligent for his class. He was tall, fair-haired, and blue-eyed. Devoted to his master, he tried to persuade him to give up his reckless conduct, but to no avail. He repeatedly urged him to be mindful of his noble blood and do nothing to disgrace the name of Zolotov.

While Gregor was playing with Anastasia,

Sergei studied and soon attained a considerable education. The final examinations prerequisite to Gregor's graduation were to be held. Sergei informed his master that they were impending. Gregor shouted at his slave, "Why are you here? Go and take those examinations."

Sergei passed the examinations for his master.

When Gregor returned to Russia he was summoned to the castle of his uncle, who informed him that he desired to have his daughter betrothed to him. Count Ivan took his nephew on a tour of inspection of his estates, and explained that all his lands and personal property would be his.

Count Gregor did not want to marry Countess Marya.

"She is a serf," he said to himself, "and besides, I love the gypsy maid."

But he was penniless. He had squandered all his money in Parisian night life. The usurers were clamoring for payment. Anastasia, his well-beloved, was accustomed to fineries and a lavish household.

Count Gregor decided that he would have his uncle's fortune, but not his daughter. So, pressed for money, and in love with the gypsy woman, he planned to do away with his beauti-

ful cousin, and thus become the sole heir of Count Ivan.

He informed Sergei of his decision, assuring the serf that he would become free and rich, and perhaps possess a title, should he help him with this plan. The serf pleaded with him at first, saying that the young woman was too beautiful and good to die. Would he not relent? She would bear him wonderful sons and daughters. The serfs loved her. Her culture and refinement would attract the best of Russian society to his home.

Sergei's entreaties were of no avail. He soon realized that he must obey his master or suffer severely. Though he promised Count Gregor implicit obedience and assistance in his plans, inwardly he resolved to do all in his power to thwart the murder.

One day Count Gregor received a letter from Anastasia urging him to send her money, else she would elope with a German nobleman who was deeply in love with her.

"Of course," she wrote, "I would prefer being with you, my darling, but I cannot live on love alone. Besides, the German is very handsome."

Count Gregor was determined to get money.

He urged Sergei to appeal to a money-lender. But the serf returned disheartened, saying that he could not obtain the required funds.

"Why did he refuse?" Gregor shouted. "Didn't you tell him that I would possess all the property of Count Ivan through my marriage with Countess Marya?"

"I did," meekly replied the serf, "but he answered that there was many a slip 'twixt cup and lip!"

Count Gregor sneered defiantly. He would show those cursed money-lenders. In this case, there would be no slip if he could help it. He conceived a definite plan to get rid of his fair cousin.

The latter part of August came. The last field of grain had been cut and stalked. The peasants were to celebrate the event by a holiday. In large numbers they would come to his uncle's castle to crown him with field flowers. There would be rejoicing and merry-making.

Would it not be easy to slip away with Marya while those stupid serfs drank their vodka and gorged themselves with cakes? He would invite her to a ride on the lake. She would admire the water-lilies blooming so colorfully. He would try to get one for her, and, of course, the

boat would capsize. She could not swim; he could. The noisy gambols of the serfs would drown her cries. He would swim to shore and say that he had tried to save her, but his efforts had been futile.

How simple his plan was. No one would doubt him. He would become the master of rich lands. His Anastasia would soon be mistress of his vast domains.

Thus Count Gregor pondered, and congratulated himself on his wisdom. He communicated his brilliant plan to the faithful Sergei, ordering him to have a boat ready on the morrow when the serfs held their festival. Sergei assented.

He went to the mill where Benzion lived, and told him of Count Gregor's strategy. Benzion was about Sergei's age. They had met on the field when children. After playing together numerous times, they had sworn an everlasting devotion, and promised to aid each other in every difficulty. The two young men had often read and discussed books together, and were considered as possessing the finest minds in their respective classes on Count Ivan's estates. Benzion, an able swimmer, said he would save Marya, and assured his friend that he need not fear.

The following day, the serfs—men, women, boys, girls—clad in their picturesque Russian and Polish costumes, wearing sandals of wood fastened to their feet by bark straps, with field flowers on their heads, in accordance with an ancient custom, marched to the castle, singing and dancing, to place a crown of flowers on the head of the master.

This was their great day of merrymaking, the harvest festival. They were exempt from the duties of field and home. For some it was the only happy day of the year.

In groups, they romped across the fields, singing popular ballads and folk-songs. They danced the famous *chorovod,* which corresponds to the Virginia Reel. Partners changed continuously.

Three serf-children holding a crown of field flowers approached the front porch of the castle, where Count Ivan and his daughter were standing. They prostrated themselves, kissed the hands of their masters, and then, lifted by three tall serfs, placed the crown on Count Ivan's head, amid cries of joy from the other serfs.

Count Ivan made a short address, and ordered barrels of vodka and trays of cakes to be

served. The serfs again made merry, drinking and eating.

During their boisterous play, Count Gregor asked Countess Marya to go rowing with him on the lake, where the lovely water-lilies were opening their buds. She consented, and entered a row-boat prepared by Sergei. To make sure that no mishap might befall him, Count Gregor put on a life-belt.

The two young people were gliding along the smooth waters of the lake with Marya admiring the flowers.

"What a lovely shade of pink that lily has," she said, pointing to one a few feet from the boat.

"I shall try to get it for you, my dear cousin," Gregor remarked courteously.

"It is too far away. I really do not want it. Let it bloom. It may die if we take it from the water; besides, you may fall overboard in your anxiety to reach it."

"I would risk anything to get you what you desire, my fair one," he answered.

He abruptly turned the boat, capsizing it. Marya called for help, but Gregor swam to shore.

Benzion had watched the incident from his

hiding-place in a clump of tall grass on the shore. He jumped into the water, swam swiftly to Marya, and rescued her. Sergei rushed to Gregor on the pretense of assisting him, but in reality to help Benzion with his fair burden.

The serfs learned what had happened. They shouted for joy because their beloved Marya had been saved. Some drank extra glasses of vodka and ate more cake. For a long time Count Ivan held his daughter close to his heart. He thanked Benzion for the rescue. Gregor, cold and drenched, ran shivering to his room, cursing his ruined project.

A few months elapsed. The old count had frequently asked Gregor whether he had fixed upon a date for the marriage. Each time Gregor would find a different excuse. Once it was because a particular friend, whom he wanted to be best man, could not be present. At another time he asserted that he was in no great hurry, as Marya herself had declared that she wished to wait.

Finally, the great event was set for the Christmas holidays. Many serf-women began sewing for their dear Marya. Happily and skilfully they prepared the linens. A beautiful trousseau was in readiness. Although Marya's tastes

were simple, she yielded to the will of her father, who desired the best finery for the occasion. One room in the castle was set aside for the linens and dresses in Marya's bridal outfit. It was called the chamber of beautiful gifts.

Count Gregor remained sullen. His first plan had failed.

"O, that wretched Jew," he thought. "Why was he there when the drowning act took place? This time my plans will not be frustrated."

And Gregor schemed again.

He begged his uncle to permit him a bachelor's party before the nuptials, so that he might invite the nobles from miles around to make merry at the castle. Count Ivan readily consented. He wanted everyone to see his beautiful daughter. He wished splendor to precede the marriage as well as follow it. The servants of the castle made ready for the feast in honor of Count Gregor.

Invitations were sent far and wide. Everyone accepted, knowing that a lavish celebration was to be arranged. When the guests were assembled, Count Gregor proposed that a hunt take place the following day.

"There are too many wolves in the forest. Should we kill some of them, it would be of

great advantage to the serfs and all the people living on its borders."

Count Gregor informed Sergei that Marya would also take part in the hunt. While she rode in front of him he would aim at her.

"Of course," he added jocosely, "it would be an accidental shot, and I can say that I mistook her for an animal."

Sergei again resorted to his bosom friend, Benzion, for aid.

It was the Sabbath eve. A golden candelabrum with seven branches had been kindled. Its glowing lights flooded a tidy little room in back of the mill. The aged Miriam was listening to her son reciting the prayers welcoming the day of rest:

"O come in peace, the crown of thy husband; also with joy and mirth in the midst of the faithful and beloved people. Enter, O bride, enter, O bride! Come, my beloved, to meet the bride; the presence of the Sabbath let us receive."

Sergei was asked to partake of the meal. He told his friends of the coming hunt and asked them for their counsel. Miriam was considered a sage among women. Benzion was his best friend. It was at this time that Miriam in-

formed Sergei that he was a half-brother to Gregor, as Count Michael Zolotov was also his father. Thus Marya was his cousin as well.

Benzion hit upon a plan. He would also attend the hunt. With so many taking part, an additional person would not be noticed. He would follow Count Gregor closely, hide behind tall trees if necessary, and watch every movement of his gun. He would go to bed early, so that he might mingle with the earliest hunters at dawn.

That night Sergei prayed that Benzion should again save Marya, now known to him as his cousin.

Dawn came. It was cold and brisk. Snow was falling. The hunters were ready for their invigorating exercise. The old count was also up to wish his guests success, although he was not to accompany them. He kissed Marya, and laughingly ordered her to bring home at least a dozen wolves.

The hunt was on. Count Gregor watched Marya, who was riding through the forest with Sergei at her side. Always hiding behind a stump or a tree was Benzion, watching cautiously every move of Gregor. Many wolves were caught. Shouts of victory ran through

the forest after every kill.

"Marya is directly in front," Gregor mused. "Now is the right moment."

He aimed at her head. Benzion aimed at Gregor's gun, and fired several shots, throwing the weapon out of his hands, and then made a stealthy escape.

Uttering imprecations under his breath, Gregor picked up his gun. He was unable to use it any longer. He began to curse again, giving vent to foul exclamations at the unseen culprit. No one was near him. It must have been a distant hunter. He hurled the weapon angrily to the ground. His second attempt at Marya's life had been unsuccessful.

The day for the nuptials was approaching. Count Gregor requested that Marya appeal to her father to postpone the wedding.

"We are both so young, Marya," he said. "Are not the days of our engagement filled with bliss? Let us prolong them.

"Besides, spring will soon be here. We shall have greater happiness if our marriage takes place in that beautiful season."

Marya was persuaded to think as Gregor had advised. She implored her father to postpone the wedding, saying that her greatest desire had

always been to marry in the time of the birds' singing and the blooming of the trees and flowers.

The old count consented.

Spring came. Gregor had tried to appease his Anastasia by sending her all the money his uncle gave him. He would soon have to marry Marya. He could think of no more excuses for postponing the wedding. His evil mind, tormented by the failure of his ruthlessness, schemed to make another attack on Marya's life.

One day he met the *feldsher,* a combination village barber and surgical assistant, in a state of drunkenness. He gave him five rubles for five kopeks' worth of strychnine.

The drunken *feldsher,* meeting Sergei, boasted of the large sum he had received for the deadly poison, and said: "Your master must be in great need of the poison if he was willing to pay so much for it. I hope he did not spend that much money just to kill a rat!" He laughed as he reeled away.

Sergei divined the truth. Perhaps that very afternoon, at the tea table, Gregor would try to kill Marya. He rushed to Benzion, and related the story of the drunken *feldsher.* The Jewish youth promised to be present at the afternoon tea.

Behind the castle lay a beautiful garden with rows of flowers. Beds of glorious color surrounded a tea-house, in which a table was set for three. Sergei had just brought in a steaming samovar.

Count Ivan, Countess Marya, and Count Gregor sat down at the table. The young woman was beaming with happiness. She was telling her father of a dress that one of the serf-women had embroidered for her.

Gregor said that he would pour the tea while Marya was describing her gown. Into Marya's glass he placed the strychnine.

At that moment Sergei entered, saying that Benzion was exceedingly anxious to speak with Count Ivan. The old count, remembering that the Jewish boy had rescued his daughter, asked Sergei to admit him.

Benzion paused in front of the samovar, and started to ask questions about its construction. The count and Gregor, amused at his foolish queries, explained the mechanism of the samovar. Suddenly Benzion pulled out the faucet, and the hot water poured down the table. While consternation reigned at the Jewish lad's stupidity, Benzion deftly changed Marya's glass, placing it where he thought Gregor

would sit. Sergei realized his friend's strategy.

Count Ivan drank his tea. Suddenly he felt ill, and putting his hand over his heart, he arose to breathe more freely. No sooner was he on his feet than he swooned, fell again, and died shortly after in the arms of Marya.

The heartbroken young woman agonizedly lamented the death of her father.

Gregor wondered: "Did I put the poison in the wrong glass?"

An elaborate funeral was held for Count Ivan. The nobility from the surrounding territory and most of his serfs attended. Marya mourned deeply. An inquest was held at which all members and servants of the household were questioned. Gregor swore that he had seen Sergei put the fatal potion in the glass of his uncle. No one was able to disprove it.

In the dead of night, through the aid of Benzion, Sergei ran away, to avoid the punishment of death which would have been meted out to him.

Several months passed. Marya tried to console herself by visiting the homes of the serfs, whose hardships she attempted to alleviate by kind words and deeds.

Gregor took hold of the management of the

estates and spent most of his time in drinking and eating. One day, filled with joy at the outcome of his strategy, he sat on the porch of the castle, soliloquizing:

"At last I have succeeded. I am now master of these vast estates and of darling Marya, too. What clever attorneys I hired! They could find no trace of the certificate verifying the marriage of Count Ivan to Marya's serf-mother. In that case, the pretty one is my serf-girl. Anastasia will be my queen.

"Here comes my favorite overseer leading a little brat of a serf. Hold him fast, kick him hard, Yousoff. That's right. What has he done?"

Yousoff, a swarthy Russian, famed for his tyranny over the serfs, approached Gregor.

"Master, this young serf was picking strawberries in our forest. We cannot let that go unpunished. Soon all those stupid serfs will do the same."

"You are right, Yousoff. Strawberries were not made for the digestion of slaves. Have him whipped as an example to the rest of his kind."

Gregor kicked the serf-boy, who fell on his knees, imploring the laughing master for mercy.

As Yousoff dragged the child away to carry out the sentence, Marya, dressed in black, was

returning from a walk. She heard the boy's cries, and asked Gregor to withdraw his order.

"Dear cousin, he is only a harmless boy, and picking strawberries is no offense. Was not the forest created by God, and are not its fruits to be enjoyed by all, regardless whether they are serfs or not?"

"Pretty reasoning, my dear Marya," Gregor responded coldly, "but it is I who am owner of this estate, and therefore only I can say who shall not eat strawberries.

"Besides, my lovely one, to be more explicit, I am not only master of this land, but master of you also. Listen to what my attorneys say:

" 'We can find no trace of the marriage certificate between Count Ivan and the serf-girl he is said to have wedded.'

"Does that satisfy you, pretty one? May I also inform you that I never loved you, but acted as if I did to please my uncle. I love my gypsy, Anastasia, who will soon arrive to be the partner of my fortunes.

"Seeing that you are of delicate breeding, and have never worked, I shall make you her servant. Be sure that you please her, my pretty cousin."

Laughing in derision, Gregor entered the

castle, as Marya fell fainting on the porch steps. Benzion, who happened to be passing, took her to her room. He returned home and told his mother of the occurrence. She volunteered to take Marya under her protection. Benzion communicated the message to the girl, who gratefully accepted Miriam's invitation. She packed some of her belongings, including a portrait of her father and mother, and sped to the boat waiting for her on the lake.

Benzion was rowing swiftly. He had almost crossed the lake when Gregor, looking out of a window in his room, saw them, and ordered her return. In a fit of anger he shrieked at Marya:

"So you are the mistress of this Jew! You intend to run away with him to avoid my service. No serf-girl can escape me!"

He called for Yousoff and ordered him to knout Marya. Benzion pleaded with him. He offered his own life, but Gregor would not listen.

Yousoff prepared to knout Marya. Her hands were tied. The signal, the lighting of a fresh cigar by Gregor, was about to be given, when a Russian officer was seen galloping towards the castle, crying: "Halt! Halt!"

Opening a document, he read:

BY UKASE OF THE CZAR

"By ukase of his Imperial Majesty, the Czar of all the Russias, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Finland, Alexander Nikolaiwich the Second, all the serfs in Russia are declared free, under the humane laws of the Empire."

Marya's hands were untied. Benzion took her to his home.

The serfs soon became aware of the ukase. They rushed through the streets singing songs of gladness. Men, women, and children embraced each other. Waving their farm tools and firebrands, they danced in joy. They were greeting their new freedom.

Gregor cursed Czar Alexander: "It is such liberators as he who spoil the plans of our nobility. Some day he will regret his generosity. Freedom for the serfs. Ha! Freedom for Marya!"

Several months had elapsed. Anastasia had become the wife of Gregor. She ruled her servants with an iron hand. As they had loved Marya, so they feared and scorned the gypsy woman.

One day Gregor and Anastasia were riding on horseback when they approached the mill. Anastasia inquired about its owners, and dismounting, expressed a desire to enter the

curious place. Gregor knocked at the door. It was opened by Miriam, who had more fully informed Marya concerning the evil machinations of her cousin. Gregor saw Marya, and called out derisively: "So, beautiful countess, you are the mistress of a Jew!"

Turning to Anastasia, he explained that this serf-girl, trying to play the role of a countess of royal blood, had degraded herself to become the paramour of a Jew.

As Anastasia and Gregor were enjoying their mockery, Sergei, dressed as an *ispravnick* (sheriff), accompanied by two gendarmes, entered. Sergei pointed to Gregor and ordered one of the gendarmes to arrest him.

"In the name of the Czar," he called out, "you are arrested for the murder of your uncle."

Gregor was seized and put into chains.

"What a pretty scene for me!" Anastasia laughed. "I should have followed my handsome German. It may not be too late. Good-by, my loving Gregor."

Angrily she walked out, mounted her horse, and sped to the castle.

Gregor begged his captors to permit him to enter his home once more before being taken to the authorities. Marya, remembering the days

of her courtship with Gregor, interceded for him, and asked that his request be granted.

Gregor went to his room, placed some poison in a glass of water, drank it, and dropped dead. The gendarmes, who were standing outside, wondering at his delay, broke open the door and found his lifeless body.

Anastasia was summoned. She remained cold and aloof. Going to her boudoir, she penned an endearing note to her "Dearest Baron" advising him what had transpired and offering her gypsy heart to him.

In the meantime, Sergei recounted to his friends the story of his life since his escape. He had gone to St. Petersburg, where he entered army service in the third division. He had risen rapidly from the ranks because of his education.

When Benzion had informed him of the happenings on the estates, he had applied for appointment as *ispravnick* of the division. With this appointment, by good fortune, he had come in time to meet Gregor.

Sergei remained with his Jewish benefactors for a few weeks. During this period his love for Marya grew steadily, and they consented to an early marriage. Sergei also found the old priest

who had married Marya's mother, and thus the certificate was verified.

Marya became the sole mistress of the vast estates of her father. Amid the rejoicing of the former serfs and great festivities, she was married to Ispravnick Sergei.

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

ABOUT the year 1875 Moscow boasted twelve hundred manufacturing plants and forty times forty churches. Almost every block had a church. Almost every Russian who passed a church crossed himself.

Fortunate indeed was the Jewish lad, the Protestant, or the Catholic, who, passing a Greco-Roman church, and failing to cross himself, was not seen by a pious Russian! If a fanatic were caught in this act of infidelity, the "infidel" would probably have been knocked down.

As a child I was subjected to similar punishment on many occasions, coming home with a bleeding nose numerous times. Then I learned to avoid passing Russian churches. When I saw a church at one end of the street, I would run across the way.

The Jewish merchants and others built a parochial school of their own. Buses would call from home to home to transport the chil-

dren to this modern school at eight in the morning. The little ones would remain there until about eight at night. They would have their meals, study periods, and recreation exercise, in school, where students from the university were employed as teachers.

The children would usually continue at the school until after their confirmation, when they would file an application for the competitive examinations in the various classical and non-classical gymnasia.

The classical gymnasia were schools where the degree of master of arts could be obtained. The degree of bachelor of science was issued in the non-classical places of learning. Graduates from the classical gymnasia would be entitled to enter the university to pursue studies in medicine, law, and philology. The non-classical graduates could study the other arts and sciences, such as engineering and architecture. There were eight yearly courses in the classical gymnasia and six in the non-classical.

At that time Moscow had six classical and about nine non-classical gymnasia for a population of nearly one million, including that of the environs of the city.

In the early part of August of each year, vacancies would be filled through competitive examinations, provided applicants were within the age limit. All applications for a certain class, particularly the higher classes beginning with the fifth, would be placed in a large room under the supervision of a special inspector. A messenger from the minister of education would arrive with a sealed envelope. In the presence of the boys he opened it, and handing a paper to the inspector, read the questions to be answered.

Government paper was provided for each applicant upon which to write the answers. Two hours were granted for the examination. Of course, those who passed with the highest marks became the successful candidates.

Shortly after my confirmation, when I was about thirteen years old, I passed my examination for the fifth course of the classical gymnasium. Soon I became a *stipendist* or honor man, so that I did not have to pay for my tuition. I had paid only for the first half-year.

An odd incident occurred during my examination. I was writing my answers when a Russian *batyoushka,* or priest, entered the class-

room. He saw me, looked at me quizzically, and approaching me said: "I believe you are one of the circumcised ones?"

My reply was: "Yes, your reverence, I am of the same tribe as Jesus was."

He smiled and passed on. Throughout my four years at the gymnasium we were the best of friends.

A LESSON IN GREEK

OUR marks at the gymnasium were from zero to five plus. In order to be a *stipendist* the student had to maintain the mark of five in every subject all through the course of the year.

In the classroom I was placed between two older boys. One was the son of the president of the military supreme court; the other was the son of the commissioner of education for the second capital of Russia. The fathers of both boys were influential government officials, whose titles were even higher than that of count.

I received instructions always to write a fine, legible hand, so that these two boys might be able to copy. Naturally, I was not told directly to do so, but I received inklings as to what was required.

One day, preparing a composition in Greek, in the genitive plural for "of the animals" (*zohon*), I forgot to put the *iota* under the *omega*. The boys, who were copying, did the same.

When the papers were returned, mine was marked four plus, while they received five minus. Four plus would have robbed me of my rank as honor student. With tears in my eyes I went to the Greek master, and asked why he had given me four plus, while the others had received five minus.

Taking my paper into his hands, he said: "Why, they certainly deserve five."

When I asked for what reason, he replied: "Now, you made a mistake, didn't you?"

My answer was: "Yes, I did, but so did they."

"No," he continued. "They made no mistake. They copied it absolutely and exactly right."

However, he changed my mark from four plus to five, and with the words, "Go and sin no more," sent me to my classroom.

HOW TALL SHOULD A SYNAGOGUE BE?

WHILE I was a student in the gymnasium I took great interest in the theological dissertations and expositions of the Russian priest or *batyoushka.* It was very difficult for him to explain the doctrine of the Trinity to the boys, as some would be puzzled by the idea of one God in three distinct aspects.

I remember listening to one boy who could not fathom its mystery. Exasperated, the good *batyoushka* asked him for his military cap or *kepi.* Then the priest continued his pedagogical efforts in the following manner:

"You see the top of this *kepi?* That represents God, the Father. You see the lining? That represents God, the Son. You see this space between? That represents the Holy Ghost.

"Do you understand this now?"

The student answered in a vague affirmative. Whereupon his instructor queried:

"Well then, what is the Trinity?"

The response was immediate from the lips of the diligent disciple:

"The *kepi.*"

At another time the *batyoushka* took three matches for his demonstration: "One match is the Father," he declared. "The second is the Son, and the third is the Holy Ghost."

He lit the three and placed them together to produce one flame, saying "This is the Trinity."

When he asked the boys if they knew what the Trinity was, one answered "The flame"; another, "The three matches."

The *batyoushka* and I would often converse together. He would ask me to tell him what liberal Jews thought regarding Greco-Roman theology. I was always frank with him in expressing my own views as to certain dogmas of Christianity.

I told him that I could never believe in a personal God, and the very utterances of Jesus demonstrated that even he did not believe in a personal God. The crucifixion episode appeared to me as a glorified melodrama.

I pointed out to him that while there was considerable historical material extant dealing with the origin of Christianity and with the Nazarene's message to the world, it is regret-

table and unfortunate that there is almost nothing of documentary proof or other contemporary evidence of the existence of Jesus.

"I do not deny his existence, but I maintain that all his teachings, beginning with the Golden Rule, are nothing more than the result of the teachings of his predecessors, such as the prophet Amos, Rabbi Hillel, and other Jewish sages who lived and taught long before his advent."

The *batyoushka* would listen to me attentively, drink his vodka very deliberately, and smack his lips, and end the discussion thus: "That's all very well for the intelligentsia of Russia, but for the common people we must have all the holy *ikons* and more of them."

I agreed with him, for after all, at that time we were living in a land where education was limited to the few; where of the one hundred and fifty million population, probably not more than ten per cent could read and write; where they still believed that God was the Lord of Heaven, while the Czar was the lord of the earth.

Even the Czar himself, Alexander II, emphasized this fact when he refused to interfere with a question concerning the height of the

synagogue of Moscow, which happened to be a taller structure than a church erected on the same street.

Certain bigots who could not tolerate this "indignity" sent a petition to the Czar, asking him to order the removal of the spires of the synagogue, so that the Jewish place of worship might be lower than the spires of the church.

The Czar's famous reply was:

"I am the Czar and the lord over the breath and width of Russia, but not over its height. That belongs to the King of Heaven."



AUTHOR AS A RUSSIAN STUDENT
IN 1880

At the age of sixteen and a half I was graduated from the classical gymnasium, receiving my attest of ripeness (diploma) with a gold medal. I was entitled to enter any university in the Russian Empire. Shortly afterward I was working in the chemical laboratory of the University of Moscow.

There the students, especially those who expected to join the army, might wear regular officers' uniforms with gold epaulets and gold collars, and swords at their sides. They also had the privilege of registering a girl as a concubine, who would thus have the rights and immunities of living anywhere in Holy Russia. But an honest, virtuous, Jewish girl who desired to avail herself of the educational advantages in the imperial cities could never obtain that opportunity.

In their own provincial cities, Jewish girls could apply to the police department for a yellow passport which would place them in the category of the fallen women of the streets.

They would proceed to a university city, where each would register herself as the concubine of one of the students. In this way they would secure the privilege of remaining and drinking at the fountain of learning.

Woe unto her who happened to be too attractive in the eyes of lascivious police officials. They would fall upon her and pursue her, in an attempt to force her virtue.

To the honor of the students of Russia be it mentioned, never was anyone of them known to have taken advantage of his position. On the contrary, these girls always found the students eager to aid and protect them in every way.

In Russia, at that time, not only was the population divided into fourteen classes, but some of these classes were subdivided. For instance, there was the *peruque macher,* who had the rights of a barber. A member of another grade was called *tzirulnik;* he had the privilege of putting on leeches, cupping, massaging, and lavage. Another was the *feldsher* class, that had the right to prescribe medicine, and even treat patients, but could not issue a death certificate.

Among the midwives also there were distinctions. Some were called *povevalnaya babka,* a

sort of *femme d'accouchement.* Then there was the trained graduate, *akouscherka,* who after receiving training in any of the provincial hospitals, had to come to the university and pass an examination before receiving a diploma. She had certain rights and privileges, among which was permission to put out a sign and practice her profession.

These subdivisions even occurred in the higher professions. A physician would not receive the title of M.D. until he had practiced two years in a hospital and then defended a thesis.

Upon the explanation of these unique divisions rests my rare experience with the yellow passport.

Mrs. L. was a beautiful young Jewess, the wife of a *feldsher* in one of the provincial cities of the empire. She had taken courses in midwifery in the hospital to which her husband was attached, and was prepared to work in the university to secure a diploma as *akouscherka.*

As her family knew mine, she came to Moscow with letters of introduction and a yellow passport, and was soon registered as attached to me. She lived with relatives in one section of

Moscow and attended the courses at the university.

She was tall and stately, with wavy chestnut hair and dark, lustrous eyes. Indeed, she would have been the center of attraction at any social gathering.

But she was unfortunate enough to be regarded as luscious fruit in the eyes of one of the police inspectors in her part of the city. She repulsed him whenever he attempted to force his attentions upon her. Angered by her refusals, he decided to take vengeance.

One night, with an escort of a few police, he came to her boarding place, and knocking at her door, demanded that she open it in the name of the Czar.

It was a bitter cold night in the middle of winter, about twenty degrees below zero. The frost-laden air pierced to the very bones. No one ventured to walk outside unless on a special mission.

The young woman immediately realized her danger. She knew that the inspector would inform the authorities that he had found her in her own home and not with the student under whose name she was registered.

She hastily put on her warm boots and her

shuba (fur coat), and throwing a shawl over her head, jumped through a window onto a snowbank. She ran as fast as she could, and commanding the first *isvoschick* (cabman), came to my quarters, where she told me of her plight.

She lay down in my bed while I sat on a chair, anxiously waiting for developments. It was not long before there was a knocking at my door, and I was ordered to open it in the name of the Czar.

I readily did so. Whereupon they asked where my concubine was. I immediately pointed to the bed.

Crestfallen and chagrined, the police inspector left my home. His satellites followed him.

I sat up all night, waiting for the morning, which at that time of the year did not come until eight o'clock. The young woman's clothes were brought to her, and she had to find quarters in a remote section of the city, some streets of which were more than sixty miles long.

Luckily, this incident took place at the end of the semester, when she successfully passed her examination and returned home.

THE RABBI'S SECRET

DURING my university days I had the good fortune to meet the leading rabbi of St. Petersburg, now Leningrad. He invited me to his home, saying that I might be interested in some rabbinical books in his library.

I was delighted to accept his invitation, and visited him during a short holiday recess. On his desk I noticed an alabaster seal of fine workmanship and asked him whether he had purchased it in the capital city. He told me that he had received it as a gift from a man who no longer lived in Russia.

"That man's sister and mother were two of the finest women of our race," he said. "Would you like to listen to their story? I promised that I would not reveal the secret of their lives while they remained in the Empire, but since they are no longer here, I shall not be breaking a confidence."

* * *

"Vox populi—vox Dei." We must acknowl-

edge that occasionally the voice of God is in the mouth of the multitude.

During our short span of life tragedies crowd in, gripping the human heart with such painful intensity that no author can portray them even in his greatest moments.

Have we not suffered the anguish of mind and body of our fellowmen? Have we not lived through their agonies many times, utterly unable to alleviate them?

There is a wonderful legend in the Talmud. The question was once propounded to the rabbis: "Who is more merciful, man or woman?"

On the high holy days the Jews pray to God for mercy and say: *"K'rachem av al banim, ken y'rachem adonoi alenu"* (as the father is merciful to his children, so be merciful to us, O Lord!).

The rabbis favored the mother, saying that she is ever merciful, full of pity and compassion. In support of their reply, they related the following parable:

Once a woman had a son, who fell deeply in love with a vampire. She demanded the heart of his mother in exchange for her caresses.

The weakling, unable to resist her pleadings,

killed his mother. Removing her heart, he hastened with it to his paramour. On his way, he stumbled and fell. From the ground, he heard his mother's heart consoling him and inquiring about his injuries.

He reached the chamber of the vampire. Tremblingly, he held before her the heart of his mother. Seeing its bloodless condition, the siren disdainfully threw it at his feet. Again the youth heard his mother's heart pitifully beseeching the vampire in his behalf!

He was unable to tolerate the poignant tragedy, and in his rage killed the temptress. Tenderly, he picked up his mother's heart, pressed it to his own, and ran wildly into the open fields, where he fell into a well and was drowned.

Before the Throne of Justice came the soul of the mother and son. They were so intertwined that even the angels could not separate them.

"O Father of Mercy," implored the mother's soul, "have pity on me, and do not separate us!"

The Omnipotent then spoke:

"It was at my command that thou didst pass for your child through the shadows of the valley of eternity. Let Justice then be tempered

with Mercy and guided by Pity or the children of the earth shall all perish!"

And while the father is said to possess only *rachamim* (mercy), the mother has *chesed, v'rachamim* (loving kindness and mercy).

I

Tramp—tramp—tramp—

"Halt!" the voice of a Jewish officer shouted to his American doughboys as they approached a Jewish cemetery in a hilly region in France. It was a few months after America had entered the World War.

Dawn had come. Streaks of red across a whitening sky heralded the sun. There was an early morning dampness in the air. Drops of dew covered the grass and bedraggled wild flowers.

The soldiers were tired. They had tramped over rough hills during the night. Their feet were heavy. They welcomed the command with sighs of relief.

If they could only have a cot upon which to rest their burning feet, and forget in sleep the weariness of their souls!

Tombstones were before them. Some were sunk into the ground, others towered above the

rest. Inscriptions in French and Hebrew described the "Dearly beloved mother." "Our affectionate father." "In memory of a faithful son."

Even rest behind a tombstone was welcome to the weary soldiers.

The officer lay down near a large stone. He began to think of his comfortable home in America, the softness of his bed, his books, his friends.

Suddenly, with a start, he arose. Today was the anniversary of his father's death, and it was necessary that he recite the *Kaddish* (prayer for the dead).

"Who among you is of the Jewish faith?" he asked his company. He had to get nine other men to join him in his prayers.

Eight doughboys came forward. As wearied as they were, they volunteered to take part in the services; it is considered a *mitzvah* or a good deed to say "amen".

One more man was needed. The officer expressed regret that he would not be able to proceed. From behind a distant tombstone a French officer stepped.

" I am a Jew, and will make your tenth man," he said.

The *Kaddish* was recited on this Jewish cemetery in France. *"Yisgadal, veyiskadash,"* the officer praised the name of the Lord.

"He who maketh peace in his high places, may He make peace for us and all Israel, and say ye amen."

"What brought you here today?" the American officer asked the Frenchman.

"I came to visit the graves of my mother and grandparents," he answered, pointing to a double stone bearing the inscription:

"Hanaim Vehaneimim BeHayehem Uv'mesam Lo Nifradu" (Those who truly love and are devoted are parted neither in life nor in death).

Below the inscription were the names of the deceased.

The American officer appeared startled. He told his companion that their surname was his.

"Who are you?" the American asked, and the Frenchman revealed to him a little history of his people. They were first cousins.

In this secluded cemetery the two men embraced.

"Those who truly love and are devoted are parted neither in life nor in death," and so may

it be said of their children and children's children.

The Frenchman and American were of the same blood, and this circumstance reveals a tale of superhuman sacrifice and of the mercy and compassion the rabbis of old preached.

II

It was a beautiful spring morning in St. Petersburg in the year 1873, just after the Passover holidays.

Buds on the trees were opening. Young birds were learning to sing. Insects hushed in winter were awakening. There was fresh joy in the air. Life seemed good.

Rabbi A. was in his study, awaiting the morning mail. He carefully assorted some correspondence, planning to answer the most important letters later in the day.

The bell rang, and the postman entered with several letters. Hastily, the rabbi glanced at their contents. Friday night he was asked to make an address in the synagogue. The following night he would have to attend a meeting. He would be a guest at a reception to a rabbi from a distant city on Monday. Would he not

come to supper at the home of the leading Jewish merchant on Wednesday night?

He opened the last letter. The stationery, used only by the best society in Russia, was slightly perfumed. The handwriting was beautiful, and evidently written by a woman of culture.

The address on the envelope contained the rabbi's residence and last name only, indicating that the author of the letter knew only that name; otherwise she would have used his first name and that of his father, as is customary in Russia.

Piqued by curiosity, he hastily opened the missive, and read the following note:

"A lady, who has a great secret to tell you, wishes to visit you, about six o'clock in the evening. She begs you to be alone, so that her coming and departure may not be seen by anyone.

"Respectfully, in distress,

"A Lady."

Rabbi A. had never before received such a letter.

Who was this woman who desired to see him alone? He did not recall the handwriting. She had signed no name. Day after day he received scores of letters, but none had ever hidden its origin.

Why had she chosen six o'clock? What could the secret be? And why should a lady, supposedly of the Russian nobility, wish to confide in him, a Jew and a rabbi?

He delved more deeply into the recesses of his memory, but could think of no woman of rank he knew who might wish to see him privately.

He even thought that this was a trick to place him in a compromising situation. He formed a description in his mind of this beautiful woman, who might turn out to be a temptress.

"Should I meet her, I, the spiritual leader of my people, their rabbi, who, like Caesar's wife, should be above suspicion? She may be the very incarnation of the female Satan, Lilith, who gloried in the fall of virtuous men.

"Should I prepare myself with the prescribed amulets against the machinations of her Satanic majesty, or leave it all to fate and the Lord?"

Thus pondering, he could accomplish little else that day. He wanted to confide in his dearest friend, a learned scholar. But on second consideration he decided to remain silent. None would know of the tryst.

He could not eat. He tried to study, but

everything was meaningless. He attended to necessary duties mechanically and tried to be alone as much as possible.

The hour of six approached. He politely dismissed some people who had called on him. Alone, he went into his study, and sat down with an open volume of the Talmud.

At the stroke of six, the bell rang. He had heard no carriage stop outside and presumed she had walked. He opened the door himself.

A tall woman dressed entirely in black, her face covered by a heavy dark veil hiding her features, stood before him. Her stateliness, grand carriage, and queenly walk indicated she was a lady of quality and station.

"Am I privileged to speak to Rabbi A.?" she asked gently.

"Yes, madam, I am at your service," the rabbi replied.

The stranger followed the rabbi into his library, where he offered her a chair. Before sitting down, she looked about to ascertain that no one else was present.

"Be assured, madam, that our only witness is our God," spoke the rabbi, noticing her anxiety.

She removed her gloves, placed them on

the table, and threw back her black veil.

The rabbi saw a beautiful woman of about thirty-five, her black eyes shaded by large black lashes. Hair of the same hue surrounded her round white face. Her cheeks wore a ruddy glow, but the set cast of her features showed that she concealed a deep secret.

"I was told," she began in a soft voice, "that you are the leader of Jewish affairs in this city. Is that true?"

"It is true, madam. How can I serve you?"

"Then the synagogue is also under your management?"

The rabbi nodded assent. Speaking more freely, the woman continued:

"This being the case, I have a great request to make of you. However, dear sir, before I make my statement, may I ask that you promise me not to reveal a single word of mine to any living soul while I remain in St. Petersburg? Under this condition, can you promise to fulfill my request?"

The rabbi knew he would soon have a tragic drama unfolded before him. He was deeply impressed by the appeal of his strange visitor, and faithfully promised to keep her secret.

"My heart tells me that you are an honorable

man," she commented, "and that I also can trust you as your people do. To you my request may seem very simple, but to me it means everything—the agony of an awakened conscience!"

Sighing deeply and lowering her voice, she added: "Is it possible for you to obtain a Jew to recite the *Kaddish* daily for the required time, and entreat rest for the soul of a Jewish woman, who died here recently?"

This seemed a simple request to the rabbi, who hastily replied: "Why not? The House of God is to pray for the living and for the dead."

"But I must tell you, dear sir, that the departed one, though she lived and died a Jewess, unfortunately was not buried in a Jewish cemetery among the graves of her forefathers. An alien cemetery holds her remains. Would this serve as a hindrance?"

The rabbi observed the appeal in the woman's eyes. She wanted him to say that nothing would serve as a hindrance. He knew that the departed must have been her dear friend, else why this wholehearted earnestness?

"No, madam, this fact has no influence in our belief," he assured her. "So long as she died in her religion, she is entitled to all our prayers."

With relief and joy lighting her lovely face, the woman spoke: "Then will you kindly write down her name and her father's name, and tell me the cost for the services?"

"The cost is very reasonable. However, can you not inform me whether this Jewess left any sons, who could themselves recite the prayers?"

A saddened tone came into the woman's voice as she answered: "Yes, she did leave a son, but unfortunately he cannot perform these holy duties."

The rabbi was aware that his beautiful guest had not told him her secret. He wanted to know her story. Who was this Jewess whose son could not pray for her?

"You will pardon me, dear lady, if I take the liberty of asking you why this good Jewess was not buried in our cemetery. Was it an accident or was it done for a purpose?"

"To enlighten you on this matter it would be necessary to acquaint you with my biography, which I am afraid may take more time than you could spare me now."

The rabbi had been much impressed with the poise and self-possession of his fair visitor. He knew that if she left now he might never have

the opportunity of hearing her story. This extraordinary woman must have lived an unusual life.

"There is no better time than the present, and I am at your service," he answered.

"Listen, then, to the confession of a Jewess!"

She leaned back, rested her arms on the chair, and began the story of her life.

III

"I am a Jewess, born in France. The woman for whom I was arranging prayers was my own dear martyred mother, who died but a month ago.

"My father was one of the best known citizens of Bordeaux. He was a wealthy merchant whose trade extended to the four corners of the earth. Day after day ships would sail, laden with his merchandise. His integrity was a byword. People praised his bountiful charity. His trade increased because other merchants believed in his sincerity. Men deemed it a distinction to be in his employ.

"At home, he was very severe. His word was law, and obedience was absolutely necessary. He was a man of fixed opinions and judgments. When he decided upon a certain action, it

would be almost impossible to change his viewpoint.

"Although a great industrialist, attending to business transactions most of the time, he was greatly interested in civic betterment, always sponsoring movements that sought the public good.

"He attended meetings of leading citizens to discuss means of improving the community, and was always ready to give suggestions for needed reforms.

"He believed in giving immediate charity to the needy. Anyone in great distress, either through business failure or other unforeseen circumstances, would receive his personal succor. The widow, the orphan, any poor unfortunate, would be supplied with food and clothing and funds, until able to carry on for themselves.

"My mother, of blessed memory, was an *eshes chail* (a woman of piety and good deeds). She had two children, my brother and myself, whom she made happy with her steady cheerfulness. We loved her to correct our errors with a kindly word, buy us new playthings, and teach us how to play with them.

"Every day we would walk in the beautiful

garden surrounding our home. She would point out the different flowers, the lovely colors of their petals, the greenness of their stems, and tell us stories regarding each one of them.

"She spoke to us of Nature, and the wonderful God whose kindness made the flowers and grass grow, and whose greatness was manifested in each little bud that opened its heart to the sun.

"People said my mother possessed charm. Her lovely disposition seemed to flood our home with sunlight. She knew how to direct the servants so that they considered her a friend more than a mistress. She had a keen sense of beauty; our home was tastefully decorated. Each room was a work of art. The furnishings harmonized with their settings. She chose the furniture, the draperies, and the paintings.

"Our home was not only a haven of joy for us, but the gathering place of the elite in Bordeaux. The cultured came to discuss the newest in music and books. The notable men of business always sought to be invited. The sons and daughters of the leading citizens came to our receptions.

"The fact that we were Jews was no deterrent. My mother's refinement, her ability to

make our entertainments so pleasurable, and her diplomatic manner in handling delicate situations made our home one of the most desirable places in the city.

"My brother, a few years older than I, was sent to the Lycée, where he took commercial courses to prepare him for a business career. He read extensively, and was versed in the best literature of the period. Devoted to his teachers and studies, he became a brilliant, and highly praised scholar.

"My parents were proud of their only son, for whom they continually purchased new and expensive books, so that he might not only read the finest of works, but also enjoy the handicraft of good bindings.

"You may recall some of the history of France at this period. From 1840 to 1848 Louis Philippe was extending his foreign policy. His prime minister, Guizot, had established his slogan of 'Peace and No Reforms.' It was a regime of general corruption running through all the channels of government.

"Naturally, under such conditions, a tempest was brewing. In 1847 the monarchy was in so weak a state that even a powerful minority could have overthrown it. Following the revo-

lution of February 24, 1848, a provisional republic was formed, and later an executive commission was established.

"The despotic Louis Napoleon was made president, and my father became a member of the Chamber of Deputies as a representative of the people.

"It was during the revolution of 1848 that my brother, then in his early 'teens, graduated from college and became a member of my father's extensive enterprises.

"One year after my father's election, we moved from Bordeaux to Paris, where my father opened his salon, which soon became one of the most famous homes in the capital city. As our former home had been the center of cultural and social activity in Bordeaux, our Parisian home became a similar rendezvous on a grander scale.

"Leaders in the government came to discuss internal and foreign policies. The social life of Paris was well represented. Consuls of various European countries paid homage to my father. Scholars and professors from the universities and learned academies, leading scientists, and men of *belles lettres,* were frequent visitors.

"As a young girl, I was dazzled by their bril-

liance. Men and women in gorgeous attire attended our musicales. We were immersed in happiness.

"One of our constant guests was Count Lombardo, a nephew of the Lombardo who was president of the ministry from the Neapolitan Kingdom, which he was then representing in Paris. He was known to Napoleon. Young, handsome, cultured, and amiable, he was a desirable asset at any social function. Women in the best society invited him to their receptions.

"Lombardo never refused an invitation to our salon. He was fond of my brother, and shortly after they became acquainted a great friendship arose between them.

"My brother was fond of books and music. Lombardo also had a keen interest in literature and musical composition. My brother discussed foreign commerce. Lombardo had a comprehensive knowledge of Italian trade and Mediterranean and Eastern commerce. Being the son of a deputy, my brother was much interested in domestic and foreign diplomacy. Lombardo, as a representative of an Italian Kingdom, took delight in considering the problems of his own country.

"The two young men became inseparable.

They went together to the theatre, and to balls and receptions.

"I was still very young. At the College of the Jesuits I took lessons in music, singing and painting, as did the other young women of the day.

"Lombardo helped me with my music and painting. As an Italian, he loved these arts, being particularly gifted in music. Often he sat at my pianoforte, playing a new selection I had just received. I would listen attentively and try to imitate his technique.

"Time ran on. I enjoyed my life in Paris to the full. My mother and I strolled along the Seine. We walked through the beautiful gardens. I was advancing in my studies. My heart was full of joy.

"But clouds of darkness were hovering over the French Republic. They gathered in intensity, until they formed a deep pall over the city I had learned to love. Like a storm gathering momentum, the clouds burst with excessive fury, and the French Republic was overwhelmed.

"For three years there had been a struggle between the Assembly and the prince-president, Louis Napoleon. Desiring the restoration of the monarchy, he did everything to further his personal ambitions.

"You will recall that on the night of December 1, 1851, he dissolved the Chamber, called a new Assembly to extend his term of office to ten years, and had party leaders arrested.

"Fearing opposition to his plans for self-aggrandizement, he ordered troops to scatter the deputies who had met to defend the constitution and seek his deposition. A few days later, a *coup d'état* favoring him was ratified.

"It was on December 2, 1852, one of the momentous dates in French history, that the despot became Emperor Napoleon III. France was afraid of anarchy, and an almost unanimous plebiscite gave him supreme power.

"It was then that he began his turbulent rule. He did everything to crush public spirit. The legislative body became a dumb parliament. He instituted a surveillance of suspects.

"He wanted to rid himself of the representatives of the Republican party, believing his greatest opposition would come from them. Their arrest and imprisonment was ordered.

"This would have been the fate of my father. A *coup d'état,* a revolution, the whim of a despot—and the affairs of a nation are changed.

"It was at this point that Lombardo proved himself the faithful friend of our household.

It is not in times of prosperity that true friendship is revealed, but in adverse circumstances.

"In his consular mansion Lombardo hid my father from the spies of Napoleon III. He took care that none might know of his whereabouts, doing everything to make his life comfortable.

"New deputies having been named in place of the old, my father decided to return entirely to civil life. Politics had shattered his health. He sought means of reorganizing his business so that he might visit watering places for a cure.

"He became unusually nervous and high-strung. The slightest maladjustment irritated him. If displeased by word or action, he would severely reprimand the guilty one.

"One day in a nervous attack he completely lost his self-control, and struck my brother. The youth was abashed and humiliated, as several people were present when the act occurred. Others became aware of the attack, and my brother, always sensitive, could not tolerate this humiliation.

"He now tried to be left alone, and to avoid people. He would not even approach my mother or me, whom he loved so dearly.

"Nothing could console him. Not even his books gave him comfort, and he lost interest in

his business enterprises. One night he disappeared. He left no note, and we were at a loss as to his whereabouts.

"My father, feeling himself the cause of our sorrow, adopted all possible means of search. Every ship that left the harbors was informed of my brother's departure. Lombardo took part by enlisting the aid of the consular service.

"For three years the quest was continued with great zeal. Whenever a vessel came in from the high seas, my father sent a messenger to inquire whether the captain had any news of his son. He communicated with friends and clients in foreign cities. But all his efforts were futile.

"His physical condition became worse. He would moan at nights before falling asleep. No longer did he attend meetings. He remained silent for hours at a time.

"My mother too grieved. I tried to comfort her, saying that brother would return after he had forgotten his shame, and that he had probably gone to a distant land which could not be reached by communications.

"A rumor spread that my brother had been drowned while on his way to America. My father heard of it. His sorrow was increased.

He spoke only at rare intervals. He became thin and emaciated.

"Our home became a house of mourning. My mother lost all interest in life. I told her the rumor was untrue, and prayed to God that my words were correct.

"During these years of grief, Lombardo was our only friend. He came frequently, told us anecdotes of the outside world, continually held out hopes of my brother's return, and tried to amuse us with pleasantries.

"For hours he would sit with me. We read books together. I enjoyed the charm of his voice. We played the lyrics of Chopin, Beethoven's sonatas, and the entrancing melodies of Schubert. We painted together.

"I loved to feel the touch of his hand on mine as he guided my brush on the canvas. Often our hands came together as we played some musical selection.

"I was eighteen. The fervor of a strange and new happiness pulsated within me. I wanted to be with Lombardo. I awaited his coming. He was making me forget my deep sorrow.

"We fell in love.

"He told me of his deep affection for me, and that he could only achieve greatness with me

as his life's companion. We pledged our troth with a holy oath, and decided to keep our love secret until a later date, when my father's health would be improved.

"It may sound strange to you, dear rabbi, that I should tell you of my love for a non-Jew. However, in France at the time that was a daily occurrence.

"We were anxious about my father, hoping shortly to be able to tell him of our love and ask for his blessing.

"Those days of waiting! Those happy days of our engagement! Each lyric, each symphony, was another pledge of our love. The great masters had composed them only for us!

"But fate was implacable. Hope for my father's recovery was shattered, and in the year 1857 he went to his eternal rest.

"After his death, I decided to reveal to my mother my feelings for Lombardo. One morning, in her chamber, I told her of my ardent love for the young Italian.

"My dear mother, with her usual foresightedness, immediately understood the situation, and did not oppose the match, although she was a lineal descendant of the greatest lights in Israel. She had realized that my constant companion-

ship with Lombardo could lead to no other result, and that we were bound together by stronger ties than friendship.

"In the presence of both of us, she said: 'You can see for yourself the step you are taking. The greatest peril may come to you. Between you and this man, whose antecedents are foreign to you, there is a great and terrible chasm, shadowed by an impenetrable darkness known only to the Creator. But if you have weighed all this well, have considered every angle of it, and Lombardo still desires to become united to you in the bonds of matrimony, I will not become the rock on the road of your happiness. But there is one thing I ask of you, my dear Maria. Always remain true to your people, and under no circumstances change the religion of your ancestors. That is the only request I make, and upon which I ask both of you to give me your oath.'

"Lombardi and I assured my mother that we would fulfill her wish.

" 'Then, dear children, I give you my consent, and also the blessing of a mother. I shall pray to Him always to guard and guide you, and to send you the blessings of Heaven. Let man leave his father and mother and cleave

unto his wife. This commandment was given long before the enlightenment of nations, long before the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mt. Sinai.'

"After our year of mourning, I became the bride of Lombardo. We were immensely happy and felt that all the prayers of my mother had been answered by our Father above.

"But our joy was short-lived. Just as political reactions had ruined the career of my father, so politics played a great role in my early life with my husband.

"The wars of 1859 broke out in Italy, and great controversies raged between Cavour and Garibaldi. Finally, you may recall, the states of Italy were made into a United Kingdom with Victor Emmanuel as king. The Neapolitan Kingdom was wiped out, only to be remembered in history.

"My Lombardo and other officers of high rank had to leave their native land. My mother, my husband, and I went to St. Petersburg, where Lombardo received a military commission in the service of the Czar. It is now almost fourteen years that we are here.

"My husband's devotion has been so great that he rose in the ranks, and is now in the en-

tourage of the Czar himself."

"So General Lombardo, commander of the cuirassiers of his Imperial Majesty, is your husband?" the rabbi interjected.

"Yes," replied his visitor. "In France and Italy, of course, no one is concerned about the religious beliefs of officers and all are equal before the law; but here in Russia, as my husband rose from one rank to another, we decided to keep my descent a secret, for my husband is now one of the nearest to his Imperial Majesty, and we are both invited to the palace.

"I have four children, who are being brought up with the children of the imperial family. Since they attend the same school, you can readily understand how important it is that my ancestry remain unknown and unfathomed, and that my children do not discover that their mother is a despised Jewess."

At these words, the voice of the woman broke, and she began to weep bitterly. Indeed, this was the great confession of her life! Her children could never know their mother's origin!

The rabbi, who had never before heard such an impassioned tale, could not restrain himself. Tears covered his cheeks.

"You will not blame me, dear rabbi," con-

tinued the visitor, after she had composed herself, "for the words I have spoken. I am not ashamed of my Jewish ancestry, but how can I struggle against fate and the conditions surrounding me? I am too weak to oppose Russia's ostracism of our peole."

"Dear madam, who would ever think of blaming you?" the rabbi responded. "This is not our fault. Neither we nor our children have any share in it. The fault rests on our enemies who constantly berate us, and throw all blame and accusations upon the Jew, making him the scapegoat for everything before the nations of the world.

"Was Pushkin ashamed of his ancestor because he was a Negro slave? Were not the palaces of Peter the Great open to him?

"Yet we children of Israel must suffer because we have been born of one of the greatest peoples in the world, one that has given enlightenment to the nations and taught them Justice and Mercy.

" 'Yes, even not as the Ethiopian are ye unto me, children of Israel,' calls out the Lord, with the lips of the prophet."

"A terrible calamity may befall my home and children," the woman continued softly,

"should it be learned that in their veins flows the blood of a Jewess. For this reason we take every possible precaution to keep the fact a secret. It is, thanks to our God, still unknown."

Choking sobs halted the woman's voice. She tried to restrain the tears that began to flood her dark eyes. The rabbi knew that she had not told all, and that a leading part of her secret was as yet unfolded. Soon the story was resumed.

"My mother became ill of pneumonia and died. When she felt that the end was near, she called me to her bed, and holding my hands within her own, spoke:

" 'My dearest daughter, who knows the secret we have kept for fourteen years better than you? Deep in my soul I have kept it; the slightest suspicion would have destroyed the happiness of yourself and your children.

" 'My last hours are near. How I wish that I would not be buried in a non-Jewish cemetery! But I can see the hardships which would come to you and yours.

" 'I am satisfied to lie in a non-Jewish resting place, but bury me in the cemetery of your husband's people.

" 'Our loving and forgiving God well knows that only my great love for your and your children compels me to give up the hope of resting in a grave of Israel. In His loving kindness He will take my soul to Him. There is one thing I ask. When I am gone find someone who will say *Kaddish* for my soul.'

"I promised my mother that I would fulfill her holy wish. The martyr who had lived and practically died for me, who had sold her soul that I might live in happiness, had gone, and I was left alone to carry out her last desire.

"Following her burial, I tried to get information about the Jews in the city. I feared that my inquiries might cause suspicion. I would lose myself in the different streets of the city on the pretense that I was taking a walk. Occasionally, I would order my coachman to stop at some cross street. Then, I would wander through the by-streets, hoping to find some Jew to whom I could safely talk.

"After a quest of ten days, I passed a small store-window containing *matzoth*. Three days ago I entered the place. On the pretext of making a purchase, I learned some particulars about my people and the synagogue. It was he who told me that you were the spiritual leader

of the Jews and he spoke of you in the highest terms.

"I see now that it was God's will to bring me here to you, the man whom I was seeking. I beg you to help me fulfill the promise I gave my dear mother."

"What a woman is now before me!" thought the rabbi. "What a mother she had! It is such devotion that will keep the soul of Israel alive!"

"You can rest assured," he said, "that your wish will be carried out to the letter. I regret that conditions compel me to keep this matter secret. If our people could only learn of the devotion and love your mother has given her daughter, and of her self-sacrifice, her memory would remain to them eternally as a sacred symbol."

The eyes of the Jewess opened wide with happiness.

"This is not all, dear friend. My mother showed greater self-sacrifice and strength of will than you now surmise. Let me tell you how she acted when she actually found her only son."

"O, then, your brother was found! Where, when, how?"

"My mother found her lost son accidentally,

and yet he remained lost to her forever. He was discovered in this city."

"In this city?" the rabbi repeated in amazement.

"Yes, here in the capital," the Jewess responded. "Let me reveal to you the great character of my mother.

"One day about three years ago she was walking along one of the boulevards, observing the signs on the great shops. She noticed a new jewelry store with a French sign bearing the surname of my father.

"She was rooted to the spot, and was determined to investigate. Imagine her surprise when she discovered that the proprietor was her only son, who had been missing these many years.

"Her heart stood still. Her hands began to tremble. She touched her eyelids to make sure that her imagination was not playing some prank with her.

"When she felt that the man she saw was actually her son, her first impulse was to rush towards him, embrace him, and reveal her identity.

"But a second thought came to her, and she tried to crush her first impulse. She thought of

me and my children, and beheld the terrible consequence that might befall us.

"No, she would not go to her son. He had been gone from her so many years. Let him be gone for eternity. What could she think? 'Thank God that I see him before I die, and that he is well. Seeing me will be only a short joy to him. But to my daughter and her children it will prove an everlasting misfortune.'

"My brother did not recognize her, as years of sorrow and tribulation had changed her features.

"The dear woman walked out of the store. How often do we pray a lifetime for a certain event to occur, and when it does, we are unable to avail ourselves of it?

"My mother had hoped for this moment ever since my brother had disappeared. Now that he was found, she could only look upon him in silence. She could not walk towards him, although her hands ached to embrace him. Her soul was afire with love for him, but she had to still her longings as she thought of another love.

"How often does a child stand in front of a shop window, looking at a beautiful doll. The doll seems to smile at her alone, and hold out

its lovely hand. If she could but gain access to the precious toy!

"But there is a large pane of glass between her and the doll. It would be necessary to break the barrier. Then the forces of law would be armed against her. In gaining her desired object, she might bring destruction to herself and her dear ones. She looks fondly at the doll and walks away.

"A long time my mother suffered silently. Almost weekly she went to the shop on different pretexts. She wanted to see her son, although she did not dare speak to him. Heavily veiled, fearing lest someone might recognize her, she approached one of the clerks and spoke to him in Russian. It was enough that her son was near.

"Even to me she did not reveal the realization of our quest. It was only when she knew that death was near that she told me of her find."

"In that case, it is nothing but a holy duty to inform your brother of your mother's death, so that he may pray for the rest of her soul," interjected the rabbi.

"But, my dear friend, I have already told you that we consider our brother lost forever, even

though he has been found!" insisted the Jewess.

"In the first place, my dear mother herself advised me not to reveal myself to him, fearing that going to his store would endanger me. Secondly, in surveying the police registration of passports, she found that Michael M., the proprietor of the jewelry emporium on the Grand Boulevard, who had only lately come from Hamburg, was a Catholic."

"Michael M!" the rabbi exclaimed. "This M. who owns that establishment is a Jew holding an honorable place in our synagogue, although he attends only once a year, on the Day of Atonement."

"Is it possible?" cried the Jewess. "But consider the police records. Perhaps you are mistaken? Maybe you do not recall his name?"

"No!" the rabbi returned emphatically. "Those documents are simply *pro forma.* I not only remember his name, but I also know him well. I can tell you certain things about him, that he has personally revealed to me. This information, I am certain, will make you feel that we are both discussing the same person.

"His story is very simple. When he ran away from your home he boarded a vessel sailing around the world. Three years he spent in

travel. That is why you were unable to get any traces of him.

"He landed in Australia, where he secured a position with a large manufacturing concern in Melbourne. The god of fortune smiled upon him there. Subsequently, he left that city and came to Hamburg.

"He tried to locate your people, but without success. In 1871, during the Franco-Prussian War, as a Frenchman he could not remain in Germany, and so came to St. Petersburg. I know that the records show he is a Catholic, but this he did to be able to conduct business in the capital of Russia. In reality, he is a Jew and true to his people."

"Dear, dear mother," the visitor exclaimed with deep fervor, "if you had only known all this while you were living, how peacefully your life's journey would have ended!"

"My dear madam," the rabbi continued, "there is no need now for strangers to pray for the peace of your mother's soul. Allow me to inform your brother of his mother's death, so that he may recite the prayers for her. This, of course, is more in keeping with the traditions of our faith."

The Jewess fell into a deep revery. Finally,

raising her head as though she had been awakened from a dream, she said: "No, my dear rabbi, I cannot agree with your advice. You can see that my brother is unknown as a Jew; his Christianity may be a mere cloak, only a matter of form. But attendance at the synagogue every day would bring upon him the suspicion of the police. Therefore I do not think we should count upon him to fulfill the wishes of my mother. For this, we must have a stranger, and I am depending upon you to make the necessary arrangements.

"On my part, I shall do everything possible to see my brother and unfold the entire story. I am sure that if my mother knew all you have told me she would never have advised me to remain unknown to him. Tell me what expenses will be incurred for one year during the services for my mother."

"In the synagogue we charge about five rubles, and the man engaged may possibly cost you fifty rubles."

"Is that all? I thought that a great sum of money would be required. Please take these hundred rubles."

"What was her name?" the rabbi asked, reaching for his pen and notebook.

"Teresa. Her father's name was Samuel. Do not mention the family name in the synagogue, lest it cause trouble for my brother. Perhaps the family name of her father, which was Lamporte, would do?"

"What, that name?" the rabbi ejaculated, laying down his pen. "That is the name of one of the greatest Talmudists in Italy!"

"I told you," responded his guest calmly, "that my mother was descended from one of the greatest rabbinical lights in Israel."

The Jewess arose, warmly shook the rabbi's hand, and said: "I cannot express my gratitude for your reception. Once more, I beg of you to remember that the future happiness of my home rests in your hands, and that my origins must be kept secret as long as my children and I remain in Russia."

"Be assured," the rabbi responded, "that your wishes will be fulfilled, and that God has been our only witness."

The beautiful Jewess threw the heavy veil over her face, and quietly left the home of the rabbi.

III

Beginning the next day the *Kaddish* was regularly recited in the syangogue. On Saturdays and holidays special prayers were read for the rest of the soul of Temma, the daughter of Rabbi Samuel Lamporte.

None of the worshippers knew who she was. None knew where she had lived nor who her relatives might be. Their rabbi had asked them to pray for her, and they prayed without questioning.

A short time after prayers for her soul had been instituted, a newspaper in the capital published the following report:

"Ghouls have robbed the grave in the Italian cemetery in St. Petersburg, containing the remains of Madame Teresa M."

Later the rabbi observed an announcement which read:

"The large jewelry emporium on the Grand Boulevard is going out of business. Its proprietor, Michael M., is moving from this city. Within one month all the merchandise will be sold at a great reduction."

On the second day of *Shabuoth,* the festival commemorating the giving of the Law, the

synagogue worshippers were surprised by a visit from Michael M., since they knew that he attended only on the Day of Atonement.

The cantor and choir were reciting the *El Moleh Rachamim* for Temma, when Michael M. arose, bowed his head, and whispered a few Hebrew words. Tears flowed down his cheeks. Members of the congregation observed this in amazement.

Towards the end of the services, Michael M. approached the pulpit and recited the *Kaddish*. On leaving the synagogue he shook hands warmly with the rabbi, but said not one word.

He walked through the streets of St. Petersburg. A warm summer wind was blowing. Each zephyr seemed to whisper, *"Yisgadal Veyiskadash."*

The following day the rabbi received a package, and a letter which read:

"You, reverend Rabbi, you alone know our secret. My sister has told me all. I am leaving this land forever.

"The golden candelabrum I am sending herewith I wish to donate to the synagogue, and I trust that on my mother's *Yahrzeit* the candles will be kindled. This sum of money is for expenses.

"For you I am sending an alabaster seal. Please accept it with my gratitude.—M. M."

The rabbi reread the letter. The history of four lives had been completely revealed to him.

He was called the spiritual leader of his people. Never before in his service had he been entrusted with so great a confidence. He had not been required to give spiritual guidance or counsel, only to keep a secret, an unnamed and unsung hero. For was he not actually saving the fortunes and perhaps the lives of several of his people?

The rabbi saw the alabaster seal as a symbol of secrecy. Its workmanship was beautiful and costly. He would cherish it dearly. Thereafter he scanned the news for information about Marie Lombardo or her brother. In the year 1876 he read the following report:

"General Lombardo, attached to the entourage of the Czar, has been selected as the special guard and guide of Umberto, King of Italy, during his visit to Russia."

On another occasion about a year later, during the Russo-Turkish War, he read:

"General Lombardo, one of the greatest soldiers of the Czar, was mortally wounded at the Battle of Plevna."

Curious to know the fate of Marie, the rabbi inquired at the Bureau of Addresses of the Police Department, where every resident is registered. He learned that the lovely Jewess no

longer lived in St. Petersburg, but had moved to France.

Thus ended the life of Marie Lombardo in the capital city of Russia, where she had been compelled to keep her birth secret. She had to wait for death to release her tongue.

The Jewess returned to the city where her father had been buried. Another grave was now next to his. It was the final resting-place of her mother.

Her brother had bribed the workmen in the Italian cemetery in St. Petersburg to remove his mother's remains. This was done, and her body was sent to France to be interred by the side of her husband.

Over both graves the son had a double tombstone erected, bearing the inscription: "Those who truly love and are devoted are parted neither in life nor in death."

Bidding his sister farewell, he sailed for America, where he founded a prosperous business. He married and had one son.

In the land of her birth Marie Lombardo told her children of her ancestry. Under her influence they adopted Judaism. After a peaceful life spent in the care of her children,

she departed this life. Her body was placed next to her mother's.

It was her youngest son, an officer in the army of France, who had met the son of Michael M., the American officer commanding a battalion of the 77th Division, on the French cemetery.

A great friendship arose between the two men. They communicated with each other as often as the exigencies of war permitted. For a long time the son of Marie Lombardo did not hear from his cousin on the American front. One day his name appeared as lost with his battalion. He had disappeared into eternity.

* * *

A rabbi in St. Petersburg was dying. Members of his congregation, who loved him dearly, surrounded his bed to hear his parting words.

"Friends, do not forget to kindle the lights on the large golden candelabrum for Temma, the daughter of Samuel Lamporte. She was a noble Jewess, who gave her life for her daughter. It was of such a mother that our rabbis said: 'She is not only merciful, but full of loving kindness and compassion.' "

An thus a sage of Israel passed away.

THE CRUCIFIX OF THE JEW

DURING the golden days of Alexander the Second and the local governor general, Count Dolgoruki (Long Arms), the Jews in Moscow enjoyed life and a certain amount of freedom, such as they had never had before nor have had since.

This was due to several causes. The Jews there were of a superior class. Many were manufacturers, who in their youth had served in the army of Nicholas the First and had earned the rank of "honorable hereditary citizen," or merchant of the first (highest) guild. Some were first class mechanics in many branches of trade. Others, recipients of diplomas from colleges and universities, were physicians, lawyers, pharmacists, engineers, and professional men of various kinds.

Of course, there was a second cause, the inevitable "chabar," another word for bribery. From the patrolman to the highest official in the empire everyone expected and received

"chabar." It was only a question of how much for each person.

I once heard a story in this connection from my grandfather. Alexander the Second was not the original successor to the throne of the Romanoffs. He had an older brother. Nicholas the First, the tyrant father, gave orders to train the older brother to follow his footsteps, while Alexander, the younger, was sent to the continent for an education.

The severe Russian training, plus many nights with Bacchus, proved too much for the young heir. He contracted tuberculosis and died. It was then that Alexander was recalled from the continent and proclaimed the heir presumptive, to wear the *skapa monomacha,* as the Russian crown was called. Shortly after his return to Russia he quietly began investigating the wheels of government. What he learned was so appalling to him that he resolved to see his sire about it. With the enthusiasm of youth he pleaded for a change of officials and administrators. Nicholas listened to him attentively and then with a smile told him that there were but two officials in the whole Russian Empire who could not be bribed.

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed the prince,

"place them at the head of the government!"

"They are already there," answered the Czar. "We and you!"

For the sake of peace and as an extra precaution, the Jews of Moscow made a little present of a quarter of a million rubles to the morganatic father-in-law of the Czar, the governor-general of Moscow, that he might enjoy his vacation on the Riviera every year.

One condition was strictly exacted by the Jews of Moscow from their co-religionists. All had to wear either Russian clothes or the modern European, for which every citizen had great respect. With *sorak sorokov* (forty times forty) churches, cathedrals, monasteries, and other religious institutions in the city, it was the better policy for the Jews to be inconspicuous, particularly on the innumerable holidays, when the Russian imbibed freely, danced the *kazatchok* (the dance of the Cossacks), or sang "E ach Moskva, Moskva, Moskva, zolotaya golova . . . (O, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, you golden head)." And indeed the city bore a golden halo, when the rays of the sun played upon the forest of golden domes and spires of the sixteen hundred churches.

Yes, life was good, sweet, and tranquil at the

time, pleasant in the short summer months, and ecstatic in the bracing air of winter. The magnificent drives through the Petrovski Razoumorski Park; the excellent cuisine of the famous Slavyanski Bazaar Restaurant, where one of the upper floors was converted into an artificial lake filled with live fish which the patrons could select for their meal; and the Moscow Imperial Opera House, with the greatest divas of the world singing to overcrowded audiences—these and hundreds of other attractions added to the spice of life at the ancient capital of all the Russias.

It was during this era that the hero of this story lived. His real name was Yitzchak (Isaac). His father's name was Ephraim. Their surname had been Tzukernik, but, when he came as a lad to work in his uncle's fur factory in Moscow, his cousins had bestowed on him the euphonious Russian appellation, Ivan Yefremovitz Sacheroff.

Under the tutelage of his uncle, Ivan not only became an expert furrier, but grew up a stalwart and good-looking young man, full of business acumen. The Russian merchants singled him out as worthy of conducting business with them at the famous *traktirs* (restaurants),

while they sat around a steaming samovar, drinking tea flavored with lemon and preserves. This was the custom of the time, and some of the greatest business transactions were concluded around the samovar.

It happened that one of the Russian merchants from Kiev, Stepan Vassilevitz Baranoff, wrote that he could not come to Moscow on account of ill health, and he asked that some one be sent to him with merchandise. It so happened that all the traveling salesmen were away. Ivan was immediately dispatched. The Kiev merchant, who had a fine shop on the most prominent street in the city, was well known. Thus Ivan had no difficulty in locating the place.

However, the merchant was ill at his home, and one of the clerks volunteered to take him there. At a florist's Ivan bought a bouquet of *landyshi* (lilies of the valley), the Russian national flower, and roses. At the confectioner's he purchased a box of French sweets. The cabby finally drew up in front of the merchant's home. A *gornitchnaya* (waiting maid) admitted them to a reception room, into which there soon entered a beautiful, richly gowned

young woman. In his introduction the clerk called her Baryshnya Varvara Stepanovna, which meant that Miss Varvara was the merchant's daughter.

While bowing and kissing her extended hand, according to custom, Ivan felt a thrill go through his whole body. It was another case of love at first sight. When the clerk had left them alone, she volunteered that she was an only child, orphaned in babyhood, and that today she was the right hand of her father, who had developed an incurable malady. Not only did they need the goods for the approaching winter season, but they also sought some one to take care of the business. As her father had spoken so well of him, she asked Ivan whether he would not undertake that task. She added that he might reside at their home, where he would be in touch with her father concerning the general welfare of the business.

The longer she gazed at him with her penetrating eyes, the more he felt he loved her. The more her voice sounded in his ears, the more he knew he could not resist her. As a last attempt at self-control he asked to see her father. When the sick man had added his prayers to those of his daughter, Ivan Yefremovitz sent a telegram

to his uncle ordering several thousand dollars worth of merchandise and advising that he would remain at Kiev over the season.

He engaged a suite of rooms and began his duties as manager. This brought him into daily contact with his beloved. She occupied his mind and soul. The minutes were hours to him until she arrived, and then the hours became fleeting seconds. He acted upon her suggestions with alacrity, ordering goods even from other firms. These orders were readily filled by the manufacturers, who knew his name well.

While encouraging him in his ardor, which she easily recognized, Miss Varvara kept him at a certain distance. After the Christmas holidays he presented her with a coronet set in diamonds and pearls, and found courage to speak of his love and of his hope of becoming her slave and husband. In a voice of pity she asked him to wait until her father's soul was at rest, as his remaining days were not many, and then if he still loved her. . . .

While passing a monastery one day, Ivan beheld a man selling crucifixes. Something about the vendor attracted his attention. He drew near and as he started to examine the wares, the

peddler suddenly asked him in Yiddish what he wanted with a crucifix.

"I could use one as a present for a very fine and noble Russian lady," answered Ivan, in the same language.

"If that is so, then look at this one," said the vendor, opening a case in which gleamed a crucifix made entirely of semi-precious stones. "I bought it from a drunken sailor in Odessa, who secured it in Italy. I shall sell it to you at a bargain price."

Ivan bought it and next morning presented it to Varvara, who graciously kissed it in his presence and put it in her purse.

The winter months passed. April arrived, and Ivan's uncle and the other creditors began to send at first statements and then demands for money. Finally he spoke to his angelic Varvara.

"Answer them all that on the 25th of April I shall give you the money to go to Moscow to pay everybody," she replied.

As this was the 20th he simply sent a telegram stating that all was well and that he would start for Moscow on the 26th. Of course, he was simply to go there to select goods for the next season and then hurry back. On the 25th day of April, 1881, all the accounts were ex-

amined and passed upon by Varvara personally. She asked Ivan to be ready in the morning to leave for Moscow with fifty thousand rubles sewed in the back of his waistcoat. As the special train left daily about two in the afternoon, he had time to pack his belongings and send them to the railroad station, obtain a good seat in the second class car, and then come to her house for the *prostchaieny zavtrak* (farewell breakfast).

Ivan carried out all her orders, and at the minute of twelve was at Varvara's house. Everything was in readiness. Even the sick Stepan was at the table. A *zavtrak a la Russe* with the inevitable vodka, which each had to drink to the health of the other, was served with numerous other dishes. Everybody appeared happy. Varvara treated Ivan with the utmost consideration. At one o'clock Stepan, Varvara, and Ivan went into another room, where the money was counted for Ivan, who gave them a receipt. Then Varvara helped him sew the money in his clothes. The last *"do sveedanya"* (au revoir) was said and Ivan was about to leave the house, when Varvara said she would go with him to the station.

Suddenly many loud shrieks and horrible

cries were heard. It sounded as though a multitude of people were coming nearer and nearer to the house. As Ivan stepped outside he received a blow on his head and fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness he found himself sitting in the railroad coach. Someone was kissing him and saying goodby. The second bell rang. Then the third and last bell gave its warning. She said something about his saving them from bankruptcy and how she had saved his life.

"This is the end. Goodby forever, *nuschastni szyd* (unfortunate Jew)."

She was gone. The bugle call from the watchman of the nearest crossing, the third bell at the station, and the train began moving. He looked for her in vain. When his brain cleared he looked in the mirror and could hardly recognize himself. He was dressed in real Russian style, with a fur hat to which a crucifix was attached. He soon recognized it as the one he had bought from the Jewish peddler. Just then the conductor came for his ticket.

"Strashny pogrom ouv Kievah (a terrible pogrom in Kiev). They are robbing and killing the Jews like wild beasts," casually re-

marked the trainman to the passenger with the expensive crucifix on his hat.

Ivan found his purse with his own money and ticket in one of his pockets. But the vest and the other money were gone. Then he understood it all. Stepan had his receipt for the money. A convenient pogrom, and, of course, Russian hands were clean.

After all, it was Varvara Stepanovna who had saved his life with the crucifix.

THE COSSACKS COME

MOSCOW was bathed in an early spring sun. A mild breeze flooded the city. Merry birds, harbingers of the season, chirped melodiously as they flitted from branch to branch.

The university building housing the medical and chemistry department was still a busy hive for the future chemists, physicians, and pharmacists who expected to fill the needs of the great Russian Empire.

My friend, Romain Ukraine, who was to become a doctor of pharmacy, and I were on the top floor of the chemical laboratory, engaged in numerous experiments, when we heard a sudden tremendous noise in the yard of the university and the surrounding streets.

In the great corridors of the buildings we heard loud shrieks and the swishing of *nagaikas,* as the Cossacks wielded them unmercifully on the young students, arresting everyone who came in sight.

This occurred in 1881 shortly after the assas-

sination of Czar Alexander II by terrorists. The governor-general of Moscow, Count Dolgoruki, probably after receiving orders from the capital in St. Petersburg, had arrested thousands of students in the universities. By direct administrative process, without trial before any tribunal, they were exiled into the wilds of Siberia.

The cries became louder. Agonizing groans rent the air. A deathly pallor came over my friend's face.

"They have come to arrest us, and will soon be here," he mourned. "What shall we do?"

While the other students rushed out of the laboratory, I grabbed Romain and virtually dragged him up the ladder to the attic of the building, where were stored innumerable theses by former students.

We hid among columns of dusty papers for about thirty-six hours. The noise had subsided. Quiet again reigned in the vast halls. Our tongues were parched. We were becoming weakened from lack of food.

Finally we climbed down. It was late at night. We did not hear a soul stir in any of the corridors or rooms. We made our way to one of the janitors who, for a little cash, led us

through the cellars of the university building to an obscure little street.

Engaging a *droshka* (cab), we hurried to our quarters and dressed in civilian clothes, as students ordinarily wore officers' uniforms. Then we proceeded to the railroad station, where my friend boarded a train for his parents' home in Warsaw, and I took one for the northwestern part of the empire. I wanted to reach my father, who at the time was stationed in a forest as purveyor of railroad ties.

I was exceedingly happy to be with him again. I felt safe in the woodland, hidden in the depths of this natural protectorate.

But lonesomeness overcame me. I wanted to venture beyond the confines af the forest. At first I rode on horseback. Then I became bolder and wandered on the highways and into Vilna, the capital of the province.

ONE day a heavy hand grasped my coat, and I was arrested by a secret agent of the Third Division of the Government, who took me back to Moscow, whence, with thousands of others, I was sent on a journey to Siberia.

The only crime of which we were guilty was that a secret list of names had been found in the underground editorial office of the newspaper, *Zemlya e Volya* (Land and Freedom). This publication was printed by a group of men who were sacrificing themselves for the people of Russia by demanding free speech, free press, free education, and a czar with a representative form of government to which the ministers would be responsible.

Thousands of students were apprehended. Without trial we were sent to starve or eke out an existence in the Siberian wilds. Our hands and feet were in chains.

The ignominy and the tribulations that were heaped upon this mass of humanity could not

break their courage or their spirit. They trod the jagged roads and byways. Their feet were blistered and bleeding. Yet each one tried to aid his fellows as best he could.

In the evening, we were usually brought to an enclosure, and surrounded by military guards. The chains were then removed, but each morning they were replaced by skilled locksmiths.

After long and arduous tramping we reached the Ural Mountains, the great divide between European and Asiatic Russia. Familiar signs of others who had passed through the same Golgotha were soon in evidence.

"Abandon ye all hope who pass here."

"THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD"

NIGHT came. We sat down and watched a beautiful moon rising in the heavens. Millions of stars were scintillating. Then for the first time hope was reawakened in my bosom when I recalled the Psalm of David:

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.
Day poureth out speech unto day, and night showeth knowledge unto night.
Without speech, without words, so that their voice is not heard,
Their line goeth out over all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

My companions were not religious. In fact, a majority of them were agnostics. The happenings of the last few months had not added much to their faith.

A group sat on one of the knolls, marveling at the magnificent spectacle of the stars in their orbits. It seemed that we could trace the fall of a shooting star.

Recollections of astronomy lessons came into

our minds. We remembered the remarks of our professors, that should any of these worlds depart from its orbit, even for a fraction of an inch, it would soon clash with our own mundane sphere and destroy it.

The more I thought, the more I came to the conclusion that there must have been a super-intelligent Power to have created the universe and placed it in incomprehensible space with such mathematical precision that it might not deviate from its course. Yes, only a Divine Being could have brought forth such a spectacle on that night of heavenly glory.

Hope anew was born, and the words of my childhood Jewish training came back to me:

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy tabernacles, O Israel! As for me, in the abundance of Thy loving kindness will I come into Thy house; I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth. O, God, in the abundance of Thy loving kindness, answer me in the truth of Thy salvation.

"Thou O, God, art our Guardian and our Deliverer; yea, Thou, O God, art a gracious and merciful King; and guard our going out and our coming in unto life and unto peace from this time forth and forever more; yea,

spread over us the tabernacle of Thy peace. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who spreadest the tabernacle of peace over us and over all Thy people Israel, and over Jerusalem.

"Thou sustainest the living with loving kindness, quickenest the dead with great mercy, supportest the falling, healest the sick, loosest the bound, and keepest Thy faith to them that sleep in the dust. Who is like unto Thee, Lord of mighty acts, and who resembleth Thee, O King, who killest and quickenest, and causest salvation to spring forth?"

For a long time the group of Jewish students lay contemplating the hosts of stars. They reviewed in their minds the many episodes that had crowded into their youthful lives, seeing in each entirely different meanings.

Our renewed hope gave us vigor, and a desire for new life and new aspirations.

As the early morning rays of the sun brightened our faces, I sprang up to reach running water for a bath ere the blacksmith replaced the shackles on our hands and feet.

THREE of us stuck close together in a comradeship of misery. As we came to the shore of the River Ural, we saw the man who was to put the iron bracelets on our wrists. Strange as it may seem we felt no antagonism towards him.

With gestures he beckoned us and drew us to a cluster of trees that hid us from the others, who were beginning to stir. To our great surprise, as we came together, he spoke in whispered tones: "Comrades, I have been following you as your chainer, seeking an opportunity to rescue you from this slavery. I have joined the smithies as a helper for this sole purpose; your parents helped me in this scheme.

"You will have to undergo this torture a while longer, until we reach the River Lena. There, in a certain spot, I have arranged that a boat be held in readiness. You will find in it food, false passports, and civilian clothes for the three of you.

"After I have put loose shackles on you, which you can throw off easily, you will, while

on the march, fall back from the *ehtape* (gathering), and gradually go deeper into the woods, where you will see the river flowing to the Nordenskiold Sea.

"You will have to row without let up for a few hours. Of course, you will not be missed until the roll-call in the evening. The officials will worry little about you, because feeling that you cannot escape, you will be only too glad to return when hunger seizes you.

"Should you not come back, a report would be made that you died on the way, and the government would only be the happier for it, as they would say, 'Good riddance to more dirty dogs.'

"At night, if you are too tired, you may rest in the boat, or by the full moon you may row to the village, which you will find along the river's bank about twenty miles from the place where the boat is hidden. Full directions you will find in an envelope in the boat."

Suddenly, noticing that a petty officer was approaching, the chainer harshly called out to us: "Get back there, dogs, and bathe."

We jumped away with a mingled feeling of hope, faith, and thanksgiving.

I repeated to myself: "For Thy salvation

have I hoped, O Eternal! I have hoped, O Eternal for Thy salvation. O Eternal, for Thy salvation have I hoped."

After the plunge we went back to the ranks, and were again chained. We trudged on. Days passed. Our chainer performed his work. The only words he would say to us were: "Not yet."

For days and nights we prayed, pouring out our souls in thankfulness to Him who was preparing our deliverance.

THE DASH FOR FREEDOM

ONE morning our chainer simply said: "At noon today."

We noticed that the chains were replaced in such a loose manner that they could easily be removed. With trepidation, perhaps, yet outwardly calm, and with a resolute faith in Him who never sleeps nor slumbers, I resolved to make a dash for liberty and taste again God's freedom.

As the noon hour neared I could see the majestic flow of the River Lena from a high eminence. Casually, we began to fall backward. Hidden behind boulders, we waited until the last soldiers had disappeared in the distance. Then we ran down the slope of a hill to a cluster of trees, where we knew our salvation lay. Just as our deliverer had spoken, the boat was there.

We hastily divested ourselves of the insignia of thralldom, which we took into the boat with us, and when we reached mid-stream threw

them overboard. Closely hugging the western shore of the river, we took turns in rowing vigorously. In this way one of us was always in shape to row.

When twilight fell we were miles away from our starting point, and perhaps twice the distance from the enclosure where the roll-call was taken. Believing that our absence might be noted too soon, we did not wish to tie up on the mainland. We rowed on until we found a little island, where we pulled to shore. There, having eaten some of the food without attempting to light a fire, we entrusted ourselves to the protection of the Almighty.

Bright and early the next morning we arose. Before us lay the settlement concerning which our friend had spoken. We had long since discarded our prison clothes for civilian attire. With the passports and money found in the boat we felt like monarchs, and boldly stepped toward the village to seek the innkeeper mentioned in the hidden instructions.

The good man provided us with a room and all necessities for comfort. We had our hair trimmed and faces shaved. Upon the advice of our host we kept close to our quarters.

Since the nights were short and the moon

shone brightly, he urged us to rest during the day and row only at night. He also gave us the names of other friendly innkeepers, who would accommodate us in the various settlements to which he directed us. When we reached the river we could either let the boat drift or scuttle it, and then proceed with our passports to the place intended.

Following his advice, within three months we reached a railroad station, where we boarded a train for Moscow. Thence each of us went to his own destination.

Three friends communicated with my father, who advised me to meet him in the city of Kovno. There he thought I might be able to get a raft on the River Niem and float out to Tilsit, Prussia, for it was necessary to secure a governor's passport in order to leave the Russian Empire, and we were afraid to obtain it on my false passport, which entitled me only to travel within the country's boundaries.

When I arrived in Kovno I discovered that the plan was not feasible, as it would take some time for its operation, and secret police might be watching the raft. Therefore I resolved to take passage on a small steamer that plied between Kovno and Georgenberg, where I would

engage someone to convey me to the border.

It was on a Thursday morning that I boarded the steamer Fronkin. I recall one incident that left a great impression upon me.

A German officer was sitting near me. He called to his dog that was running across the deck: *"Yudchen, Yudchen,* come here."

I felt picqued that the animal should have been named "Little Jew."

The dog happened to come to me. I patted his head and said to the owner: "It is unfortunate that you gave him that name."

"Why?" asked the German.

"He will never become an officer," I replied. (Jews could not attain that rank.)

The German scowled at me angrily. I left my place near him and avoided him during the rest of the trip.

THAT evening we landed in the little town of Georgenberg, where I was almost apprehended.

As I was getting off the steamer, and looked around to see if a friend might be there, some men shouted: "He looks like an escaped prisoner."

They were about to surround me, when a young woman, who happened to be standing nearby on the shore, ran to me and embraced me. I had never seen her before and wondered at her effusiveness.

In a loud voice so that the men might hear her, she said: "My darling, I am so glad you came. Now we can get married."

In a whisper she told me that she had realized my danger and had adopted this means of saving me. I praised the brave girl for her presence of mind. When the men who suspected me saw us embracing, they left me alone.

But I knew that they might follow me, so the

young woman and I decided to play the role of sweethearts until my safety was assured.

Arm in arm we walked into the town, and told each other interesting episodes of our lives. A circus with some traveling players was entertaining the townspeople. We joined them and joyously spent the evening watching the actors. I then bade farewell to the splendid young woman who had rescued me.

Before midnight, my father's man came to the village inn with a horse and carriage upon which we left the town and traveled over the roads. We both uttered prayers for our safety. Suddenly he drove to the main road and returned. Lying with his ears to the ground, he informed me that he had heard a mounted guard.

We waited silently. Within a few minutes a guard galloped by. After the echoes had died out we resumed our journey to the little stream that separated the czar's dominions from that of the kaiser.

We rode along for a little distance. The driver then ordered me to get out and take a big running jump at a spot where he thought I could clear the river and the land of the Muscovites. I did as he had commanded, running

down a slope to the stream, which was surrounded on both sides by hanging trees.

It was a moonless night. Only a few stars twinkled above. I made a running jump. Whether the river at that point was wider than the driver had calculated, or whether I had made a slanting jump, I landed knee-deep into the water. Scrambling out, I ran for some distance on German soil.

I tried to follow the directions of the driver, who had told me to run straight ahead for a mile, turn to the left where I would see a farm, and then to the right, reaching the road that led to a tavern and the outskirts of the town of Smolenkin.

However, I must have run in a circle, for suddenly, before me again appeared the rivulet, and on the other side of it the little house of the border police, painted in the Russian colors.

Hastily resuming the opposite direction, I ran as fast as my legs could carry me.

"O LORD, MY ROCK AND MY REDEEMER"

FINALLY I saw the gray walls of the inn that the driver had described. I thanked the Almighty Father for sending me to this refuge. I knocked vigorously at the gates, and was admitted into the large hall of the tavern, where my host left me tired and exhausted. I lay down on one of the benches, and using my little carpet-bag as a pillow, soon fell fast asleep, feeling an ultimate relief from the dangers of the Russian Government.

It was then that I understood the prayer:

"I lie down and sleep, and do awake, for the Eternal doth sustain me. I will not be afraid of the myriads of people that encompass me round about. Rise, O Eternal, save me, O my God! For Thou smitest all my foes upon the cheek, the teeth of the wicked hast Thou shattered. Unto the Eternal is salvation, upon Thy people rests Thy blessing."

In the morning the driver, who had a government passport allowing him to drive to and fro

over the border, appeared at the inn and took me to the town of Smolenkin.

As we were driving through the gates, a small window was opened. A man stuck his head out and asked: "Have you anything to pay duty on?"

Receiving a negative answer, he closed the tiny window and pulled his head in. We continued our journey to the inn at the wharf of the River Niem. At ten o'clock a German steamer appeared. It was scheduled to bring me that evening to the city of Tilsit, since made famous in the World War by Hindenburg, who drove the Russians pell-mell out of it.

At the wharf I met a young man who took me to a Jewish hotel, where I found myself among many friends with whom I spent a happy Sabbath. This particular Sabbath was called *Sabbath Nachmu.*

The following day I left for Koenigsberg in an effort to reach my maternal grandfather, a merchant prince of Russia, who owned docks on the River Oder.

When I reached that city I was warned not to travel by rail, since the German Government was returning Russian refugees, particularly students. I learned that the kaiser was attempt-

ing to form an alliance with the czar, and was therefore endeavoring to ingratiate himself by the expulsion of Russian students.

Walking along the wharves, I located a small grain tender that would leave at four o'clock the next morning for Stettin. I soon struck a bargain with the pilot, and in the evening went aboard the tender, which contained no quarters for passengers. I lay on the deck, using my carpet-bag as a pillow.

The tender left precisely at the appointed hour, and was scheduled to reach Stettin at four o'clock that afternoon. Soon after we left the harbor of Koenigsberg, a heavy rain began to fall, which developed into a violent storm. At midday huge waves rocked our craft. There was no rail around the steamer. The hatches were closed.

I stood near the pilot's cabin, watching the fierce grandeur of the storm. A mighty wave rushed over the tender, and receding, took me along. I felt my end had come, and that no one would know what had become of me.

I prayed to God, in Whom lay my only hope.

"Save me, O God;
For the waters are come in even unto the soul.
I am sunk in deep mire, where there is no standing;

I am come into deep waters, and the flood overwhelmeth me,
O God, in the abundance of Thy mercy,
Answer me with the truth of Thy salvation.
Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.
Let not the waterflood overwhelm me,
Neither let the deep swallow me up;
Answer me, O Lord, for Thy mercy is good;
According to the multitude of Thy compassions
turn Thou unto me."

I thought I was living through eternity as I lay on the crest of that turbulent wave. Suddenly the same wave came back, and threw me towards the tender. I managed to grab the heavy chains of the anchor, and held on with all my might.

The wave again receded, leaving me prostrated on the deck, none the worse for the immersion. One of the sailors who had seen me gave me a helping hand and took me down to the bowels of the steamer, where the engines were working. I removed all my clothes to dry, and donned a sailor's uniform.

Night came. Dark clouds covered the heavens. The storm had not yet subsided. The waves rocked the steamer. I began to feel pangs of hunger.

One of the sailors offered me a plate of soup.

It was made of potatoes (part of the cargo on board), and cooked with salt, pepper, water, and onions.

What a wonderful taste that soup had! How my mouth watered as I drained the plate! To this day I feel grateful to the humble sailor who served me that hot stimulant. It infused strength into me, and gave me the hope that Providence was preparing me for a different destiny than a watery grave in the North German Sea.

I remembered the beautiful Psalm:

"They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters—
These saw the works of the Lord,
And His wonders in the deep;
For He commanded, and raised the stormy wind,
Which lifted up the waves thereof;
They mounted up to the heaven, they went down to the deeps;
Their soul melted away because of trouble;
They reeled to and fro, and staggered like a drunken man,
And all their wisdom was swallowed up.
They cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
And He brought them out of their distresses,
He made the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof were still.
Then were they glad because they were quiet,
And He led them unto their desired haven.
Let them give thanks unto the Lord for His mercy,
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people,
And praise Him in the seat of the elders."

"I SHALL NOT DIE, BUT LIVE AND DECLARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD"

We did not reach Stettin until three o'clock in the morning. As I stepped off the gangplank to the street of the city, a man approached me and said he would take me to No. 3 Kluster Strasse, where my grandfather resided. I asked a policeman whether I could entrust myself to the stranger. After questioning my new friend, the officer answered in the affirmative.

At four o'clock in the morning, eight days after leaving Russia, I found myself embracing my venerable grandfather.

My stay at Stettin was long, since my parents and grandparents desired that I remain in Germany to continue my medical studies.

I was introduced to Dr. Freund, the city physician, who was a remarkable man. His wife personified goodness itself. I became a steady visitor in their home. Our mutual admiration grew so strong that in a short time I began seeing them daily. They had no children, and treated me as their only son.

To enable me to remain in Germany, it became necessary that an application for citizenship be made. Dr. Freund made this application for me, telling the minister of the interior that he intended to adopt me as his son. He begged the government of Prussia to grant me the right of domicile with the ultimate object of allowing me to become a son of Germany.

After a few weeks the long awaited reply came. It maintained that in order to gain my object I must obtain permission from the Russian government to become a German citizen.

Of course, this ended all our hopes. My chagrin was great. How could an escaped Russian student from Siberia, accused of being a nihilist, obtain that permission.

Since I was now a suspect in the eyes of the government, it was deemed best for my safety that I leave Germany at once. My heart filled with sorrow, I bade farewell to my relatives and to the dear doctor and his wife, who had so affectionately befriended me.

I left at midnight for Hamburg, where I boarded a steamer for Havre. There I decided that the safest place would be the Land of Freedom, the United States of America. I set sail for New York.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

SOON after I landed on the glorious soil of my now adopted and beloved fatherland, the news leaked out that an escaped Russian nihilist from Siberia had come to New York. Numerous reporters interviewed me, and *volens nolens,* I became the symbol of a *cause célèbre.* The Sunday editions of the newspapers devoted columns to the recital of my escape. I had become famous in an unknown land.

My popularity became so great that a number of German Jews held a reception in my honor. I was taken to see some of the leading institutions in this city, including Mt. Sinai Hospital, then at Sixty-sixth Street and Lexington Avenue; the Jewish Orphan Asylum, in the same neighborhood; Temple Emanuel; and the old Portuguese Synagogue on West Nineteenth Street and Fifth Avenue.

I asked my friends where the Jewish institutions of learning were. To my amazement, they replied that there were none. Then I inquired

what they did with their youth. The answer was: "When the boys and girls graduate from public school, knowing the three R's, they go to work."

Involuntarily I exclaimed:

"On this I pour out my tears."

These words are read on the fast of *Tisha b'Ab*, commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem.

"Woe unto the future," I added, "for ye continue not the teachings of your sires."

Looking about for a place to cast anchor in my new land, I decided that the heights of Brooklyn were a delightful place in which to live.

I selected Long Island College as the place in which to continue my studies. The professor of medicine was Dr. McCorkle, who spoke German fluently, and he promised to assist me, since my English was poor.

I remained at the college for a few months. One day I received a message from my friends in Russia, informing me that I might safely return and enter the University of St. Vladimir, since Moscow University had been closed.

I went back to the land of my birth. My heart was filled with gratitude to the country

that had given me a safe asylum, where I feared neither the days nor the nights, knowing that I could wake and slumber safely.

Again the words of the Psalmist came to my mind:

"I lift up mine eyes unto the hills; whence will my help come? My help is from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not suffer my foot to slip; He that guardeth me will not slumber. Behold, He that guardeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is my guardian; the Lord is my shade upon my right hand. The sun shall not smite me by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall guard my going out and my coming in, from this time forth and for evermore."

BY UKASE OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY

THE process of rehabilitation, I learned from friends, was simple. A large bribe had been given to the secretary of the governor-general, who merely removed from the ledger the pages containing the names of students banished to Siberia. The governor-general received his usual yearly bribe of one-quarter of a million rubles from the Jewish merchants of Moscow, to recuperate from his arduous duties on the continent, notably at Monte Carlo.

Two incidents of importance occurred during my college days at St. Vladimir. One was the disappearance of the German professor of obstetrics and gynecology, who was a great friend of the students.

In the middle of the night he was arrested in his home by the gendarmerie, and speedily taken away in a closed carriage. No one ever learned of his whereabouts.

The students, who were sincerely fond of him, since he was a good teacher as well as a

friend, decided to take justice into their own hands. Subsequently the colonel of the gendarmes was shot.

A short time after this event, we were surprised by the appearance in the lecture hall of a venerable Russian surgeon-general, who greeted the students sonorously with the following salutation:

"By ukase of his Imperial Majesty, the Czar of all the Russias, I have been appointed your professor of obstetrics and gynecology.

"I have been in his Imperial Majesty's service for nigh half a century, and as I have never practised this branch of medicine, I shall read to you from the latest works of German and French authorities.

"I advise you to take your practical work from the assistant professor, and when you are through with your studies, it would be of great value for those of you who understand German to take post-graduate courses at some German university, and those who understand French, to go to France or Switzerland."

We admired the Russian surgeon-general as an honorable man.

During the summer vacation, which began early in May and lasted until late in September,

we visited Berlin, Vienna, and Zurich, where we worked in the clinics.

In 1887, when I had completed my college work, I was immediately appointed to a military post, and became military assistant surgeon in the hospital of Kremenchug, Government of Poltavia, and I worked among the Cossacks on the banks of the Dnieper.

IN Kremenchug, a low, flat city of stucco houses, I became acquainted with a prominent Talmudist, who loved to expound portions of the Bible as we walked through the streets on the Sabbath. The learned man, who had suddenly become blind, had visited many famous occulists.

The Talmudist discussed the beginning of the first chapter of Genesis with me:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters."

"If, according to the text," he explained, "God had only created the heaven and the earth, and no mention is made of water, how could his spirit be seen on the waters?

"The word *Elohim* meaning gods is used in the passage: 'and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.' *Elohim* should have a

plural verb. Instead, the verb is singular. When the word *Elohim* is analyzed, we have two words, *el* meaning life, and *ha-yam* meaning water, or life on the waters.

"Evidently, the person who wrote this chapter of Genesis ran the two words together, and thus the use of the singular verb."

According to my friend's interpretation, life appeared on the waters, and therefore water had already been created. He advised me to read between the lines when I perused the Bible.

He loved the Psalms of David. Feeling sure that some day his sight would be restored, he would often quote:

"Mine eye languisheth by reason of affliction;
I have called upon Thee, O Lord, every day,
I have spread forth my hands unto Thee.
Wilt Thou work wonders for the dead?
Or shall the shades arise and give Thee thanks?
Shall Thy mercy be declared in the grave?
Or Thy faithfulness in destruction?
Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark?
And Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

One day, as we were walking together, a heavy wind began to blow, throwing dust into his eyes. We went to a drugstore, where I prescribed a wash.

That night I was suddenly awakened by a loud knocking at my door. The officer who guarded the Talmudist's home told me that I was wanted immediately. I dressed hastily, and accompanied by the officer, proceeded to the home of my friend. As soon as I entered, he embraced me, and excitedly exclaimed:

"I have regained my sight! I can distinguish between light and dark. It must have been your prescription."

Immediately realizing what had happened, I threw a towel over his eyes. The nerves of his eyes, which had become paralyzed, had temporarily regained their motion, and the good man believed that my eye-wash was restoring his sight.

Later he visited several famous eye surgeons, and was enabled to see with the aid of glasses.

It was my duty to attend the manoeuvres in the Ukraine, which lasted about a month. Some of these mimic battles were so fierce that men were severely injured and sometimes killed. These wild children of the steppes, in a drunken stupor, would forget that they were not fighting in real warfare.

After the din and smoke had cleared away, we had to go over the fields to find the injured and the dead. In a large hole dug on the field, the dead received a common burial. It was customary for the junior surgeon, the *feldsher,* and a couple of stretcher-bearers to examine the fields. When they found a dead man, they would chalk a cross on his clothes. Then the stretcher-bearer would dump him into the open grave.

It happened that one of the Cossacks had imbibed too much vodka. He was paralyzed drunk, and lay stretched out on the field. The *feldsher* turned him, and when he observed that

there was no movement, I marked him with a cross. The orderlies placed the supposedly dead Cossack on a stretcher. After traveling a short way, the "dead" man inquired: "Why are you carrying me?"

"Because you are dead," the orderlies answered.

"Where are you carrying me?" the Cossack continued, regaining more consciousness.

"To a trench to bury you," they answered promptly.

"But I'm not dead!" the Cossack exclaimed.

"What!" shouted one of the orderlies. "You mean to say you know better than the doctor?"

The orderlies continued carrying the Cossack to his grave despite his protestations that he was alive. He began to yell for aid. The *feldsher* and I came to his assistance, and rubbed off the cross. Even then it was difficult for us to release the doomed Cossack from the orderlies, who had also drunk too freely of the Russian national beverage.

One summer evening during the manoeuvers, dusty and parched with thirst, I came to a Cossack settlement, where in front of one of the cottages, I heard a Cossack woman singing a familiar lullaby as she rocked a cradle.

Sleep, my infant, sleep, my beauty,
Biyushki, Biyu. . . .
Quietly, the moon is peeping
On thy little cradle, too.
Biyu, Biyu, Biyu, Biyu, Biyu. . . .
Biyushki, Biyu.

Over the stones the river is flowing,
The muddy waves are rippling;
Along the shore the wicked enemy is crawling,
His fierce stiletto sharpening.

But your father is an old warrior,
Full of experience in battle lore.
Sleep, my angel, sleep, my own,
Biyushki, Biyu. . . .

You'll grow up to learn
To fight life's battles,
Bravely into the stirrup
Your foot you'll place
And grab your gun.
Your saddle will I ornament with silk.

Sleep, my darling, close your eyes,
Biyushki, Biyu. . . .

On the road I'll give you a holy *ikon*,
And when you pray to God,
Do think of your mother.
Biyushki, Biyu. . . .

I stood enchanted by the melody. The entire life of the Cossack seemed to be concentrated in the song.

"Sleep, my infant, sleep, my beauty"—the voice of the mother the world over.

"Along the shore the wicked enemy is crawling"—the Cossack mother warning her child of great danger. Surely he will have to conquer powerful enemies during his rovings through life.

"But your father is an old warrior"— she tells her child not to fear, as his father is skillful in the art of war, and will teach him all the tricks of battle so that he, in turn, may become a powerful fighter.

"Bravely into the stirrup, your foot you'll place, and grab your gun"—she imagines him a full-grown man dashing off for battle and conquest over the mountains and rivers.

"Your saddle will I ornament with silk"—the eternal feminine love for adornment.

"On the road I'll give you a holy ikon, and when you pray to God, think of your mother" —years later, when he has wandered away from her, let him only think of her as he prays to God.

The refrain *"Biyushki, Biyu"* is untranslatable, and can only be sung.

I knocked gently at the open door to attract attention. When the mother approached me I asked for a cold drink. She brought me a bottle

of *Koumyss,* the great Russian drink of the steppes. To my mind came the words of Pushkin, who graphically portrayed the gypsies, the children of the steppes:

"How jolly and free is their resting place,
As between the wheels of their wagons
They lie half-covered with rugs!
How peaceful their slumbers
Under the clear blue heavens!
A fire is kindled; the family
Gaily prepares the supper:
In the broad fields the horses are grazing,
And the Koumyss mares.
Behind the sleeping gypsies a trained bear is
Lying, lazily stretching himself.
All is lively amid these steppes:
The families live peacefully together
And are ready, with morn, to pursue their travels,
With song and happy wives
And shouts of gleeful children
And sound of the anvil."

One of these Calmucks, distinguished as a healer, fortune-teller, and folklorist, told me that *Koumyss* had been invented by one of their beautiful queens, who had been held in high favor by the gods. It happened in this manner.

There is a custom among the Calmucks to win their brides on horseback. For this purpose, one mounts the fleetest and finest steeds obtainable. The girl starts off first, and is pur-

sued by her lover. If the latter overtakes her he returns with her as his bride.

At one time a great chieftain proposed to a fair queen, who already was pledged to another. In her distress she appealed to the gods, who instructed her how to make *Koumyss*. She gave this to the chieftain to drink before starting on the eventful ride. Becoming dizzy after a time, he lost his equilibrium and was unable to overtake her. This is how the Calmucks explain the origin of *Koumyss*.

MEMORIAL PRAYERS IN THE RAILROAD TOWN

AFTER serving as a medical officer with the Cossacks, I became a medical inspector in northwestern Russia, with headquarters in Vilna, whence I traveled through different cities, inspecting military units and making reports to the military authorities.

One September we were manoeuvering between the states of Kovno and Vilna, retreating in an orderly fashion from an attack of the enemy, who was coming down from the other side of the River Niemen. We fell back beyond the fortress of Kovno, which was covering our retreat and holding the enemy in check, with its thousands of cannons at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, in the valley below the Niemen and the Viliya.

In the World War, after the Russians had inflicted severe blows on the German eastern front and occupied the city of Tilsit, Hindenburg drove them out. But instead of an orderly retreat, such as we were making, the Russians fled precipitously, surrendering without a shot into

the hands of the Germans the fortress of Kovno, considered one of the strongest in Russia.

It may not be amiss to say here that the miracle of Hindenburg was not due to the cowardice of the Russians, but to the unfortunate fact that the construction of this fort, as well as of other forts in Russia, was mainly entrusted to German engineers, who communicated to their government their secrets and vulnerable points. Even the commanding general of the fort was a Russified German.

In company with sanitary engineers, it was my duty to select the site for a halt for the retreating army. On horseback we arrived in the early hours of the night at the railroad station of Koshedari, almost midway between the cities of Kovno and Vilna. In this region the country is composed of gentle hills, clear crystal lakes, and innumerable springs, surrounded by pine woods on one side and silver birches on the other. We selected this as the most admirable site for encampment.

We found an inn at which we decided to remain during the night, preparing to awake at sunrise in order to stake out the different locations.

Early in the morning, as I entered the main

room of the inn, an elderly son of Israel met me. In plaintive tones he explained that the usual miracle had occurred, namely, that another man of his faith had come to the hamlet just in time to be the tenth man to recite the yearly memorial services for a *baal-teshuva* (a repenting Jew).

Since I was curious to know the story of this annual miracle, I consented to go into a special room in the inn, which was equipped as a synagogue. There I found all the male adults of that little town, harboring eight Jewish families. A teacher and I made the ninth and tenth men, completing a *minyan.*

After we had finished the prayers and recited the *Kaddish* in great solemnity, refreshments were served by my host.

All day long I was busy. In the evening I returned to the inn, where I had my supper and urged my host to tell me the story of this *baal-teshuva.*

"It is really a profound secret in this town," the inn-keeper said, "but if you will give me your word of honor that you will not reveal it, at least in this generation, I shall tell it to you."

I assured him that I would keep the secret in strict confidence.

"You know," he began, "during the reign of Czar Nicholas I, Jewish children, even of the tender age of six, were snatched from their parents, taken to some distant part of Russia, and then impressed into military service.

"I do not know whether you are familiar with the reason for all this. When the Jews entered Poland after their expulsion from Spain, they paid a large sum of money to the Polish king and the government for a domicile within the kingdom, to enjoy the full rights of citizenship and not be compelled to enter its army except as volunteers.

"As long as Poland existed, the covenant was observed. It was in the form of a written agreement, and Poland never had to regret it. In every crisis in Polish life, Jews freely joined its armies. Some reached high rank. One became the governor of Smolensk.

"On one occasion, when the Russians pressed Smolensk, the officers of the Polish garrison came to this Jewish governor, urging him to surrender on the best terms obtainable from the Russians; but the governor's wife, a young Jewess, told them that the enemy would have to cross over her dead body before the city, with its thousands of women and children, would be

surrendered to the tender mercies of the Russian Cossacks.

"Needless to say, the governor refused to listen to the pleas of the officers. The city was not surrendered and aid came from Poland within the next few days.

"But when Nicholas I became the Czar, he called the rabbis to St. Petersburg, telling them to bring the written covenant. They obeyed.

"While they were sitting in the audience hall of the palace, he took the parchment from them, tore it up, and threw it into a great fire. Then he told them that he was now king of Poland, but above all, the Czar of Russia, keeper of the empire, and his word only was law.

"He added that he granted them the special favor of returning home with their heads on their shoulders, and ordered them to tell the people in their communities that they must furnish their quotas of young unmarried men to his armies.

"The rabbis did as they were told. The Czar had betrayed them by holding out false hopes for an arbitration, while they were in possession of the document. Since he had destroyed it, they were helpless, even before the courts of the rest of the world.

"According to the Czar's decree, all unmarried men would be recruited for army service. An only son would be exempt. The rabbis told the people there were two remedies; to marry the boys at an early age, and, should they have more than one son, to ask childless couples to adopt them. Young men were deemed ready for service at the age of eighteen and would be obliged to serve thirty years.

"The Jews married off their sons soon after their confirmation, at the age of thirteen. A father-in-law would keep his young son-in-law in his home until maturity and train him in his business.

"When the Czar was informed that the Jews were marrying their children at such early ages, he ordered his minions to seize them at the age of six.

"It so happened that a boy considered an *illui* (prodigy), for he mastered almost all of the Babylonian Talmud at the age of nine, was among those who was snatched and carried away to some distant part of Russia.

"While resisting one of the men, he was struck by a *nagaika* (whip) over his head and lost consciousness. When he recovered, he found himself far away from his home. The shock

had brought on amnesia. He forgot who he was and where he came from. He was a handsome lad, and a Russian family adopted him as their son.

"He studied engineering and became the station master of this town of Koshedari. He married a Russian woman who bore him children. Then he realized that he was a Jew. Occasionally his memory would play pranks with him, for he would recite the most difficult passages of the Talmud by heart.

"It was then that the people of this town came to believe he was one of the *cantonists* (snatched children).

"Some years ago a great rabbi visited Koshedari. It was on the eve of *Tisha b'Ab.*

"Just as today, we found that we had only nine men and needed a tenth to say the memorial prayers; a tenth man was required to recite the *Kinnoth* (Lamentations). The people told the rabbi the story of the station master, as they surmised it.

"He requested that two of them approach the *cantonist* and say that the rabbi had asked him to be the tenth man at the services. At first the people were reluctant, but when the rabbi insisted, they obeyed.

"He was sitting alone in his library. When the message was delivered, he put on his uniform and hat and came to the same place where you attended services this morning.

"The rabbi began to recite the 'Lamentations'. From the moment he entered the room to the time of the chanting, the station master riveted his eyes on the reader. As the worshippers were chanting the last stanzas of the prayers, the engineer burst out into lamentations himself, and threw himself on the neck of the rabbi, with the cry: 'Father, father!'

"Long did father and son sit together while the rest of the people waited outside. When the station master finally appeared, he shook hands with everyone and said:

" 'I am now a *baal-teshuva,* I have returned to the fold of my people. I shall go back and make arrangements to leave for America, where I shall become what I was born to be.'

"He returned for the early services, and everybody swore before the rabbi to keep the occurrence a secret. The rabbi left our town, and the *baal-teshuva* began to dispose of his real estate, to obtain money for his departure.

"Some time passed. It was this season of the year. The station master was ready to leave

for the new world. One night the town was aroused by flames shooting from the home of the penitent. All the people ran to give whatever aid they could, but it was too late. The roof had caved in, burning the whole family.

"During the excitement the charred remains of the station master were found. They were interred in our little cemetery, where no tombstone marks the grave, except a pile of stones left by visitors as a mute witness of their presence.

"Every year we observe his *Yahrzeit* (anniversary of his death). And strange as it may seem, some Jew always appears to be the tenth man. This year it was you. Is this not a miracle?"

I fully agreed with my host that it was.

THE GIRL WITH THE GILGUL
(*A Girl Possessed*)

"WHAT an unearthly shriek! Did you hear it, doctor?" Colonel Marozoff, who was in charge of the cavalry, rode up closer to me.

As I was about to reply, another piercing cry fell upon our ears. It seemed to emanate from the inside of the canvas covered wagon far ahead of us. We were returning from manoeuvres and were near the city of Vilna.

"Let us investigate." And giving spurs to our horses we galloped up to the slowly moving van. All halted. Neither the driver nor the lady inside the wagon could speak Russian. There was with them a beautiful young girl, about eighteen years of age, who had evidently uttered those piercing cries.

I began to interrogate the lady and found that she was the mother of this sick girl. She told me the story of how this, her only child, had been a healthy, strong girl all her lifetime up to about a few months before. They had

lived in a mill which her husband operated near the town of Oshmyany.

As her daughter grew up a number of *shadchanim* (marriage brokers) began claiming her hand for a number of young marriageable *luftmenschen* (idle men).

"Of course, there was one young man with whom our daughter actually grew up, a distant relative of ours, an orphan, whom we kept in the mill. But he became a *shaygetz,* hankering after secular knowledge. He wanted us to give him our Mirele for a wife but we could not think of it. He would not study the Talmud any more.

"So we finally selected the son of a great rabbi whose family for generations back had all been great Talmudic scholars. We invited the father and son to come to us to spend the Sabbath. Everything seemed lovely and we had decided to make announcement of the betrothal that very Saturday night, when something terrible happened to our darling.

"After the rabbi had recited the *Havdalah* (Saturday night prayer over wine) and while Mirele was standing and looking out of the window, she suddenly emitted terrible screams just like those you heard a little while ago.

"Nothing we could do would quiet her. We sent for the *feldsher* (assistant physician) who sent for the doctor of the town. But they could do nothing. Of course, there was no more talk of marriage with this great rabbi's son, who declared that a *gilgul* (devil) must have taken possession of our child. We even had her to the witch-doctor, but nothing availed us.

"Now we have heard that a *Baal Shem* (a possessor of the holy name of God) is in the city of Vilna, and I am taking her there to him. Maybe God will have pity on us and allow the holy man to drive the *gilgul* out of our Mirele."

I translated everything to the colonel, who believed very little in ghosts or *gilgulim.*

"Doctor, ask the driver where they are going to stop in Vilna." So I did.

"Charosho! (It is well!) Let us go back."

And we turned back to the regiment, which had almost caught up with us. Towards evening we arrived in the city and out of curiosity I went to the same hotel where the travelers were to put up. True enough, they were there. I took the driver into the back of the inn and gave him a ruble to reveal to me where and when this expulsion of the ghost would take

place. With this information I strolled among my friends telling them of the incident. A number of young ladies and men decided to accompany me to the house.

It was on the outskirts of the city, quite a way from other houses. We got into conversation with the servant maid, to whom we also gave a ruble, asking her to arrange the shutters of the house so that we could peep in. She informed us that the ceremonies would begin about half past eleven that night.

Meanwhile, we left for a nearby café and spent our time there waiting for the appointed hour. When we returned to the house, we found one corner room on the ground floor lit up with big wax candles. In the middle of the room was a bed upon which all in white lay the beautiful Mirele, evidently strapped in.

An old man with a long gray beard, adorned with two pairs of phylacteries, which really looked to us like black horns growing out of his head, and dressed in a white robe with a white cap on his head, encircled in a praying shawl, was walking around the bed seven times. In his hand was a glass filled with something we could not distinguish. Every time he made a round, he would press the glass to the lips of

the girl. Finally, as the clock began striking twelve, he stood at the foot of the bed and in a commanding voice repeated seven times a formula commanding the *gilgul* to depart.

At the last stroke of the hour, he came closer to the bed and evidently must have stuck a needle into the foot of the girl, for she gave a terrible shriek. Then he broke the glass, stamping it with his foot, and cried: "*Mazel Tov—Mazel Tov—Mazel Tov.* (Good luck)." The girl was in some sort of a stupor, probably from the drink that he was forcing to her lips.

When we were about to take up the cry of "*Mazel Tov,*" we noticed the arrival of the police commissioner with a number of gendarmes. In the name of the czar they commanded the doors of the cottage to be opened.

Suddenly all the lights were extinguished, but the police broke into the house. They could not find any trace of the old man. He had disappeared into the woods through a cellar door. They took the girl to a hospital. I found out later that Colonel Marozoff had notified the police to do their duty.

A few days later while visiting the hospital, I learnt from the attending physician that the girl was simply suffering from hysteria

brought about by the marriage her parents were trying to force her into with a *schlemiel* (good-for-nothing) ; that her heart had long ago been given to a young man studying medicine at the university, who now happened to be one of the internes.

"In order to get the girl well, we have persuaded her parents to give her in matrimony to this medical student—and they were duly married yesterday. He was the former *shaygets*."

VERA BORISOVNA

SHE was a very young widow. A tall and graceful brunette. A skin like ripe peaches; pearly teeth. Round face with a cupid's bow mouth. And eyes—eyes, that the Russians love and sing about—dark eyes, black eyes, burning eyes. Lustrous dark brown hair adorning a beautifully shaped head. There was a dimple in her chin, and a smile brought two more to her cheeks. Quick at repartee, a linguist, well read, possessor of a sweet soprano, able pianist, of a proud lineage, and with the wealth left to her by her husband, this made her a much sought after personage. I met her at Libau, on the Baltic Sea, which in the eighties of the last century played a considerable part in Russian commerce, and as a bathing resort in the summer season. Most of the population, however, spoke German.

Madame Vera Borisovna was a "Kur-Gast" at one of the prominent hotels of the town. An introduction to her was sought by every one of

note. I did not know she was a Jewess. In fact, when I first beheld her on the beach and admired her Venus-like appearance, I was fully convinced that she was one of those beautiful Circassian princesses, whom I had often met at the capitals of Russia during the opera season, when Patti was the idol of the Muscovites. However, my introduction to her was as startling as unexpected. The cantor and choir of the local temple were famed the empire over and, as I always was passionately fond of music, I attended the Sabbath services. In the vestry rooms, after the services, I came face to face with this goddess of beauty and was introduced to her by our friend the cantor. It was later in the day that he related the two following incidents about her.

A German troupe had come to sing a Wagnerian opera at the local theatre, and every one of note had come to listen. Vera Borisovna was the guest of a local Jewish banker, who had also invited an elderly Russian general and his red-headed spouse. The Russian officer at once began paying marked attention to the beauty, much to the consternation and consuming jealousy of his consort. Vera Borisovna yawned and the general's wife audibly remarked: "Please do not

swallow me." Instantly and just as audibly, Vera answered: "Fear not, Madame, I eat only kosher food!"

It was during the bathing season that a local baron's son fell madly in love with her. He was a fine young man physically and morally, well educated, and with certain convictions of his own as to religion. However, his parents were strict Lutherans and would not sanction the marriage, unless Vera changed her religion. She, however, though liberal in her views would not consent.

The old baron finally came to town to interview the haughty Jewess. "Our only son is offering you his hand and name. It is true, his heart you already possess. All our estates and titles he will inherit and you will share it all. Think of the great honor we shall bestow upon you. Our patent of nobility runs back several centuries. The only thing we ask of you is to be baptised."

"It is true," answered Vera, "that I also love your son, that I would wish to bring him all the happiness one mortal could bring to another. As to the abode of our souls, no one has ever come back and pointed out the exact path how to reach it. As to my patent of nobility, it has

been bestowed upon me by the Lord himself at Mount Sinai, for I am a descendant of the High Priest Aaron, being the daughter of a *Cohen* (priest); and remember, my good baron, of me it is said, *Ata bachartanu* (one of the chosen ones)."

"Oh yes," scornfully exclaimed the baron, "one of the chosen people! Chosen to be cuffed, kicked, spat at, hated, derided, abused and,—oh, well, what is the use to continue?"

"And in spite of all this, my dear baron, when the good Lord once decided to take a wife unto himself, he chose a Jewess for His mate!"

A few years later I met Vera Borisovna in the Paris Temple when she was reciting the memorial service for her parents, but her name was now Baroness von Hohen. Love had found a way!

A MODERN TAMAR

THE town of Ponevyez was all agog with excitement; the town crier Jehuda Leib was calling upon all the prominent inhabitants, friends and relatives of the bride, and in the name of her parents inviting everybody to her nuptial celebration. This was to begin on Friday afternoon, on the eve of *Sabbath Nachmu* and continue Saturday night and the following nights—probably till the end of the week. Such was the custom among the well-to-do of the land of the Czars.

The bride, the only daughter of a rich flax merchant, was a beautiful girl of sixteen. Well developed, talented, and with a smile playing around her mouth, she charmed everyone with her oriental attractiveness and friendliness. Her name was Miriam, but from babyhood everybody had called her Mirele; and now Mirele was to be wed to the great *illui* (Talmudical genius) Mordecai, the son of Rabbi Eliezer. The town folk still remembered the magnificent oration by this young master-mind on the day of his Bar Mitzvah and they speculated on the

greatness of his speech at the festive board. At last came the Thursday eve before the wedding day. Mirele and her parents were at the market place, giving to the poor, irrespective of creed, live chickens and *challos* (white Sabbath bread) so that everybody might enjoy the Sabbath with them. Thus too, they obeyed the Talmudical injunction: "Fill the hand that is stretched out in supplication."

Friday at midday the town became hushed. All business ceased; all stores closed; everybody hurried to don holiday attire. Towards evening, more than an hour before lighting the Sabbath candles, people began gathering near the great synagogue. To the strains of music by the local band, in the open, under a canopy supported by decorated poles in the hands of four stalwart men, the ancient marriage ceremony was performed by the old rabbi, aided by the cantor and choir.

The people made way for the bride and groom to their carriage. One poor Christian widow, who came forward with a tray upon which was bread and salt, promptly received a donation from the bride. Another approached with a pitcher overflowing with milk, another with a cruse of honey, and one even carried two

pails of clear water on a yoke balanced on her shoulders. Everyone received a gift and Mirele's thanks. Quaint customs, but each one expressing the innermost good wishes of one human being to another.

Tempus fugit et tempora mutantur.

In those days people knew nothing of honeymoon trips;—after the wedding the couple remained with the bride's parents. The young benedict continued studying the Talmud at the synagogue, coming home to eat and sleep, while the bride occupied herself with all kinds of handiwork and in assisting her parents to entertain visitors.

In such manner the years came and went and came again. A son and then a daughter enriched the happy household. The parents were growing older; and the young couple felt that they too were maturing and must look out for their own future.

Inasmuch as the business population of the town were friends and relatives of the two families, a gathering was called which decided to send the young man to Moscow as a resident buyer. Most of a winter was spent in teaching him the intricacies of retail trade. Armed with a passport, and letters of introduction to the

manufacturers, he left immediately after the Easter holidays for the ancient Russian capital, carrying orders for the fall and winter trade. Here for the first time he beheld a new life. Different conditions; different people,—dressed in European fashions or in their native costumes. It did not take him long to acclimatize himself. He was soon lost in the business activities of the Russian metropolis. The venture proved a success. After the summer season he came home for the New Year's holidays, the idol of the business people and the hero of his wife. He spent a month with his people then again left for Moscow. This form of living lasted about three years. Mordecai, or as he was now called, Mahtway Erlitch, came home twice a year, for the Easter and New Year's holidays, to spend a month with his family. These visits were a great joy to all.

But a few days before the spring home-coming, Miriam received a telegram that business made it impossible for him to come home. A letter followed with the most endearing expressions of love for her and the children and apologies for his remaining in the metropolis, all due to the responsibilities of the business. The Easter festivities were marred, and tears of dis-

appointment were seen in the eyes of Mirele. The shock might have led to graver consequences were it not for his frequent letters, breathing love and devotion and promises to come earlier for the festivals.

He did come home long before the holidays. Now he declared that the physicians in the capital had ordered him to Carlsbad; and after but a week home he left for the Kur-Ort. That year the New Year fell early in September, so he wrote home that he would continue his baths and come home for the Feast of Tabernacles. When he returned from Carlsbad, he was a typical European gentleman. Even his Yiddish had assumed a German twang. He passed but a few days with his family and left immediately after the last festival day for Moscow. All realized the change in him. A vague feeling of uncertainty took possession of Miriam's mind. For days she would walk about as in a daze. Only his occasional letters cheered her; but when before the following holidays there came a repetition of the old business excuses, Mirele broke down completely and took to bed.

* * *

"By the man, whose these are, am I with child." Genesis, Chap. xxxviii-25.

In one of the apartments belonging to her father, resided a young married woman Marya Fyodorovna. She was the wife of a local police officer. Husband and wife had come from Moscow. Miriam made the stranger welcome and a great friendship sprang up between them. When Marya learned of Miriam's illness she immediately repaired to her and Miriam unbosomed herself of her fears and suspicions.

"Why don't you go to Moscow and find out the truth instead of eating your heart out?"

"But I cannot stay there; you know I am a Jewess," plained Miriam.

Marya Fyodorovna started thinking. Her husband's family and her own had connections with the police department. "I have a way," she exclaimed. "You and I are of the same age and almost look alike, except for the color of your hair, and this can easily be repaired. Your husband knows nothing of us and has never seen me. I will get a pass and give it to you. I shall also give you a small Greek cross, which you must carry conspicuously on you when you come to Moscow. Obtain rooms in the same place where your husband is lodging and watch him. If nothing else will deceive him, the Greek cross surely will."

Within a week the whole town knew that Mirele was going to visit her husband, but of course no one even surmised the details of the plan.

She reached Moscow without incident and traveling first class, received the attention due to personages of quality.

Instead of light brown hair, her head was adorned with coils of titian red, and a pince-nez covered her eyes. She obtained a two room furnished suite in the same house where her husband lodged. When the *"dvornik"* (house superintendent) came for the passport to register with the precinct police, it said, "Marya Fyodorovna, a married woman."

That very night she followed her husband to the Moscow Public Theatre, where he met his paramour, and after the performance she followed them to the Slavyansky Bazaar. Next day by bribing the help she found out that her paragon of virtue had been traveling a rather fast road.

However, she learned that he did not form any permanent liaisons; the butterflies were only momentary excitements. Towards evening she decided to become one of his temporary flames. Purposely coming face to face with him at the

entrance doors she pretended to have hurt her ankle. With profound apologies he offered aid, and she readily consented to be taken to his rooms.

Marya Fyodorovna, or Mirele, played her role so well that her husband became deeply enamored of her. He made violent love, declaring that she was really the only woman he had ever adored and to whom he had declared himself in that manner. And this was really the truth, since he never before had allowed himself either to court or make love to the woman he was married to—the Talmud then having filled his whole life.

After spending two weeks with him she thought it best to return home. He bought her a number of presents and she also exacted from him a signet ring she herself had presented to him during their engagement. She asked him to write to her, *post restante,* to a city near her home. Thus a new liaison was inaugurated. He saw her enter a first class compartment. Both were dreaming—she of the old love and he of the new. The interchange of letters continued with the real Marya Fyodorovna writing the answers for her friend. After a while Mirele realized that within a few months she would be-

come a mother. Trusting that he would come home for the fall holidays she began laying plans for revealing her deception.

However, this time he did not even take the trouble of excusing himself; he simply sent a draft for money and good wishes. Mirele even quit writing to him, but with the aid of her friend kept up the exchange of love letters.

Soon after Christmas she gave birth to a son, the very image of his father, as all her friends maintained.

Mordecai Ben Eliezer, or Mahtway Erlitch, was surprised to receive two telegrams from his home town, one from the parents of his wife, asking him to come home to the circumcision celebration of his son born three days ago; the other from his paramour asking him to meet her about the same day at Ponevyez. He was nonplussed. Fuming with rage at what he thought the infidelity of his wife and the terrible shame it would bring upon his home and children, should he not come home and publicly renounce her—he was yet softened by thoughts of meeting his paramour. He finally decided to come to the ceremony and then after a few days arrange for a divorce.

The more he thought the matter over the hap-

pier he became. At last the day arrived, and the hour of the celebration; almost all the town folks were there awaiting the arrival of the father. Mirele, sitting up in bed, was adjusting the baby. The train was late, but finally the father drove up to the house and the circumcizer called out, *"Baruch habah!"* (Blessed be the newcomer). The baby was brought into the room on a silk cushion reposing on a large silver plate. Around his neck hung a string of pearls bearing a signet ring and the other presents Mirele's husband has given her in Moscow. On a card written in large bold Hebrew letters was a paraphase of the quotation from the 25th verse of the 38th Chapter of Genesis: "To the man to whom these belong I bore this child."

In a moment Mordecai Ben Eliezer saw it all. His own wife a modern Tamar! Love returned to him. When the real Marya Fyodorovna was introduced to him, Mirele asked the privilege from her now doting husband to present the string of pearls to her. He readily assented, handing Mirele a set of diamonds which he had brought with him to present to his beloved.

"*Za dlug, na dlug, i do diable!*"—Paying debts, incurring debts, and to the devil!

Around this ancient maxim are woven two tales.

When still a child I heard my mother quote it to an acquaintance who had exhibited her three very pretty daughters and dilated on their sagacity, beauty, and other attainments. When the proud mother asked for an explanation of the quotation, my mother related this story. Later in life, while serving as a military medical inspector of northwestern Russia, I happened to stop at the very same quaint *kretchma* (inn) my mother had described in her narrative. There the proprietor told me another anecdote about the famous tavern.

For centuries the *kretchma* of the Red Goose had stood as an oasis or beacon light at four cross roads leading to four different towns. There were no other habitations for miles around. The fields and forests, lakes and rivers,

as far as the eye could behold, were the property of an extremely wealthy lord called Graf Tysz. The age of this inn, built of ash and oak timber from the surrounding forest, could not be ascertained. This, however, was certain: the direct descendants of one Jewish family had been the tenants of this tavern since its construction.

It faced the state road, or *"shassei."* Over its main entrance hung a wooden goose, painted red, the face pointing toward the city of Kovno and tail toward Vilkomir. In a country where ninety per cent of the population was illiterate and inscribed signs were a mockery, such a *kretchma* was a Godsend, especially in the long winter months, when heavy snows covered all the landmarks. This inn was also well known for its *maitzovah peevoh* (March beer), imbibed mainly during the summer, and a delicious meal of goose cooked in sauerkraut.

After an inspection of the barracks and the military building in this quaint town of Vilkomir, along the banks of the Holy River, where almost every street has its own spring of crystal clear cold water, I took a first class seat in the *diligence* (chaise) for Kovno, which was my next destination.

The *diligence* was a government post-chaise which carried the mail and first and second class passengers. Light luggage was placed on top of the coach. At intervals of several miles the postillion would stop at a designated inn to unharness his horses. Another postillion with fresh horses would then take his place for the ensuing miles of the journey.

I was the only passenger in the first class compartment, which was nearest the postillion. A full moon poured its silvery light upon the harvested fields, innumerable lakes, forests, and stones along the post road. I was fighting against sleep as the kaleidoscopic scenes held me spellbound. However, I must have been dozing, for suddenly I awoke with the stoppage of the post-chaise and the pleasant baritone voice of the driver.

"Vashi, vysoko blagokoderah (your high noble birth), would you not wish to partake of a drink and *zakuska* (bite) at the Red Goose inn?"

For a moment I thought I was dreaming of my mother's story. But there in front of me was the red goose hanging over the door.

"Usz ochen blarodaren, bratetz" (Why, I am very grateful, brother), I stammered, and, as

he held the door open for me, I quickly left the carriage to enter the enchanted tavern.

The second class passengers were ahead of me. As it had been quite late when we left the town, I had not noted who they were. Now I could see that there were four. A beautiful young brunette accompanied by a stalwart titian-haired young man, whom I readily recognized as newlyweds, and an elderly pair who, I believed, might be the parents of either one of the young people. Later I learned their romance. But of that anon.

I was in the full uniform of the Russian army service and as I entered the inn the proprietor, his wife, and all the guests arose as one and kept standing until a young, handsome, blue-eyed boy of about fifteen, addressing me in good Russian, invited me to a table. This was covered with an immaculate, homespun, pure linen cloth, upon which stood a steaming samovar. Clean glasses, freshly baked rolls, pickled herring, fresh butter, preserves, evidently home-made, and the inevitable bottle of vodka all adorned the table. Another dish aroused my curiosity. On a plate there reposed what looked like a freshly baked black loaf of rye bread. It was steaming and gave

forth a savory odor. The young man, who was the second son of the proprietor, said that this was a Polish dish, served as an appetizer to those who did not care for the pickled herring.

After drinking a few glasses of tea with sweet cream, I looked around to see what had become of my fellow passengers. In one corner of this immensely large room I saw father and son, in the full regalia of orthodox Judaism, engaged in reciting the morning prayers. I sent my young waiter to invite the ladies to my table. Evidently fearing that my invitation meant a command, the young bride hastened to me and in perfect Russian apologized for the prolonged praying of the men. I regretfully accepted her explanation, as I could see she was a highly educated and cultured young woman, far above the status of her husband and parents-in-law. Expressing my thoughts perhaps more with my eyes than words, I offered her my services, should she at any time need them.

A piece of roast goose and some glasses of beer completed my breakfast. I strolled outside and invited my young waiter to accompany me. I was in no hurry to depart, as the place was quiet, soothing, and majestic in its lonesomeness. The sun was still in the east. The

meadows were covered with a heavy dew that glistened like diamonds where the rays shone upon it. We lit cigarettes and leisurely walked towards a mirror-like lake, overhung by a mighty forest of magnificent white birches.

"Tell me, *bratetz* (dear brother), what is the meaning of the red-painted wooden goose sign over the door of your inn?" I asked my young companion. "And please, please address me simply as 'doctor'!"

"*Da gaspodin* (yes sir), the sign has a meaning and also a story, not a long one, but a very old one. I heard it from the lips of my grandfather and he, I presume, heard it from his grandfather. For how many generations we have occupied this tavern I do not know. It is inherited by the eldest son. We are tenants of the famous multi-millionaire, Graf Tysz, and so were our ancestors. Our family tradition maintains that we first settled here during the reign of the Polish King, Casimir the Great, who, it is said, married a famous Jewish beauty, Esterka Bright-Eyes—and this brings us nearer the story of the Red Goose.

"The then Graf Tysz was to entertain the king and his bride at his estate called Wysoki Dwor (High Castle), which is within a

few versts from here. For several months artisans, decorators, and various craftsmen came from Warsaw to prepare for the occasion. After a short time the superintendent began missing small but valuable articles belonging to the castle. Although he took careful precautions he could not detect the pilferer.

"The *arendar* (lessee) of the inn at the time was one of my ancestors, known to the whole countryside as Binah Hakham (Binah the Wise). In his dilemma the superintendent appealed to him for a solution. The advice of my grandsire was to assemble all the male and female help at the inn the very next night. He said he would point out the culprit.

"When all were gathered in the immense room where you, *gospodin* doctor, had your breakfast, my grandsire brought forth in full view of everybody a white goose, securely bound. After placing it in a shallow wooden tub on the table, he covered it with a red table cloth, and stated that each would have to touch the white goose. To the innocent nothing would happen, but when the thief touched the goose his hand would turn red. He then asked the superintendent to blindfold everybody and lead them to the goose as the lights were dimmed.

After this had been done, the lights were relit. While still blindfolded the servants were asked to raise their hands. The hands of all were red, with the exception of one young girl whose hands remained white.

"This is the pilferer," exclaimed my grandsire. "The others are innocent. Afraid that her hands would turn red, she did not touch the goose, which was purposely sprinkled with a red powder while being covered by the table cloth."

"In gratitude the artisans fashioned a goose out of a piece of oak, painting it red and hanging it with heavy iron chains over the entrance door to the inn, where it has remained ever since."

"Dypravda, chorashaya chronika (yes, surely, a good tradition)," I exclaimed. "But did you ever hear the story about your inn which begins with the quotation, *'Za dlug, na dlug, i do diable'?"*

"Nyet, nyet (no, no), *gospodin* doctor; are you jesting?"

I assured my young friend that I was in earnest, and told him the story my mother had related in the days of my childhood.

"It happened, as it always does in real life,

that the old graf died, and his son became the master of these vast estates. An unscrupulous ruffian, learning of this, came to the young graf and offered to lease your inn at a greater rental. The young count answered that for generations your people had occupied this place, and that friendly associations had existed between the families through the years. However, he said he would drive to the place, and perhaps your grandsire would pay the advanced rental and thus be entitled to a longer stay.

"The ruffian really did not want the tavern, but the opportunity to steal the valuable timber of this forest. He therefore made a higher offer.

" 'Come back next week, and you'll have my answer,' was the graf's reply.

"A messenger on horseback was dispatched to notify your grandsire that the new graf would stop at the inn on the way to his castle the next Friday. Everything in and about the inn was made spic and span. Even the wooden goose received a new coat of red paint. As the outriders appeared in the offing, your ancestor went to the driveway, carrying on a platter bread, salt, and wine, in accordance with the custom of the day. The young master stepped

into the inn, where he partook of *gefülte* fish (the day being Friday and he a good Catholic), *blintzes*, (cheese pancakes), huckleberries, cream soup, and other delicacies of the Jewish kitchen. Before departing he asked your grandsire how he was prospering at the inn.

"'*Yasne wellmoszny pan h'rabb*' (grand light, sir count), answered the man. 'I can sum it up in few words, *Za dlug, na dlug, i do diable'!* (paying debts, incurring debts, and to the devil!)

" 'That is strange,' answered the graf. 'Only a few days ago a fellow offered me twice the amount of rent you pay here. I cannot understand this. Will you explain yourself?'

" 'Sir graf has perhaps noticed the old people around this place?' began the man. 'They are my parents. I am taking care of them now, which means *za dlug* (I am repaying my debts). The boys and girls who so lustily cheered you upon your arrival I am bringing up. I also keep a teacher to educate them, which means *na dlug* (incurring debts) now, so they may take care of me when I become old. But here are the daughters. Soon they will grow up and then for the devil, perhaps!'

"The young graf understood. As he departed

he threw a silver coin for each of the children. A week later, when the designing Szulikowski came for an answer, the graf, who in the meantime had found out all about him, gave him three hours to explain the meaning of *Za dlug, na dlug, i do diable* or receive fifty lashes. As the graf glanced out of the window, he could see Szulikowski riding away for dear life.

"'*Do diable! do diable!*' shouted the graf, laughing."

As I finished my story, we heard the bugle call of the postillion, signifying that he was ready to proceed. The sweet aroma from the forest, the crystal clear waters of the lake, and the golden perch begging to be caught made me loth to go, but as the Russians say, "*Sluszba nie druszka*" (service is no friendship). My destination was the *lazaret* (military hospital) of Kovno and the *laager* (summer military camp) at Slobodka.

Returning with my young friend I asked him whether he would follow in the footsteps of his father and manage the inn.

"*Niet, gospodin* doctor, my oldest brother is in the Golden West of the United States, where he is working in a machine factory. He is sending me money for my education. I have just

been graduated from the county school and am entering the Technical School of Vilna, where I hope to graduate as a mechanical engineer."

"And then?" I asked, fully aware of the hardships of a Jewish lad in the engineering field in Russia.

"Oh, then?—to my brother in the Golden West," he replied, almost inaudibly, as though afraid the zephyrs might reveal his secret.

"Who'll run the inn then?" I queried.

"The inn—the inn," repeated the boy. *"Do diable!"* and burst out laughing.

"KOMU *goreh, komu smyech*"—What may be grief to one is a source of laughter to another.

August in Lithuania looms warm and dry, with crisp and breezy mornings, so that he who is young and fancy-free imagines everyone brimming with the joy of life.

We still had a few hours to reach Kovno. The next stop was at Yanovah, where, on an old fashioned ferry, we had to cross the River Viliya.

This ferry consisted of two boats tied together. A flooring of heavy planks was laid upon them. In the center a heavy piece of round timber about fifteen feet high was solidly fastened. The top of the pole or mast was adorned with an iron contrivance in the shape of a screen which rotated loosely around the top of a ferrule. A heavy rope whose ends were tied to masts or trees on the opposite shores stretched across the river. The rope fitted the

grooves, which were greased with tar. The boats faced the current of the river. When ready to cross, two husky musziks, armed with long and heavy poles, pushed the ferry away from the shore. Then the rope was adjusted into the grooves of the mast and the current brought it to the other side. A rather primitive method this was, but it served its purpose, especially since this ferry was in use about five months in the year. During the other seven the river was frozen, and all vehicles crossed as on terra firma. Some called the conveyance *Perovoz* (a carrier over), while others a *Prom,* perhaps on account of the fact that it was introduced into Russia by the military engineers of Napoleon the First, when he invaded the country in 1812.

Upon our arrival at Yanovah the passengers left the *diligence* and walked to the ferry. Near the post station was a watchmaker's shop in whose window was a big clock indicating the correct time. As I was setting my watch I noticed our *yamshzchik* (official driver) standing at attention near me with his face full of smiles.

"What is it, *bratitz?*" I asked.

"You can see we have several new passengers

who wish to leave with us for Kovno, and we shall not have room for two unless you will have the kindness to allow them to travel with you in the compartment," he replied.

"Good!" I commented. "But I shall choose my two companions."

I decided to select the young couple who had been my fellow travelers of the second class. I wanted to take the old couple with them also and offered to pay the extra fare, but I was informed that such a procedure was against the rule. As long as there were seats in the second class these people could not ride with dignitaries in the same cabin.

The young bride thanked me most profoundly for my selection. To tell the truth, I was very happy for this opportunity for intellectual companionship. After crossing the river and remounting the post-chaise, I asked them to sit vis-a-vis, so that we might talk during the remaining hours of our journey. All this time the young man remained quiet. He smiled at our comments but did not open his lips. At first I wondered at his silence, but suddenly the tragic reason dawned upon me. He was a handsome, intelligent boy, but speechless.

"*Prostite menya* (forgive me)," I began. "I

am a physician and feel privileged to ask questions, which otherwise could be construed as idle curiosity. Is your husband also deaf and was he born this way?"

"*Niet, gospodin* doctor," she answered. "I am very grateful to you for your kind interest. My husband was a perfectly normal young man until about a year ago, when he fell through thin ice while skating on the River Nieman. The day before some people had cut the ice to fill their ice-cellars. Of course, my husband was unaware of this. He was in a state of shock when his companions rescued him. Later, it was found he had completely lost the power of speech.

"You see, *dorogoy* (dear) doctor, we had been sweethearts since childhood. Our grandfathers, who were brothers, had betrothed us while we were very young. His misfortune hastened our nuptials. My parents-in-law have but this son with them now, for his other brothers emigrated to Africa and America. His mother thinks that the sun rises for him only and the moon shines for him alone. His father is worried that he may not be able to recite the *Kaddish* (memorial prayer) for him.

"We are what is called among our people *bekovede baale batim* (honorable house-owners)

and considered well-to-do people. In fact we are classified as *gvirim* (rich people)."

"How do you come to speak such a perfect Russian?" I asked.

"I am a graduate of the Kovno Female Gymnasium," she proudly answered.

I could neither express sympathy nor bemoan her plight, since she seemed happy. I simply remarked that the sickness was probably temporary, and turned the conversation into other directions. We discussed contemporary Russian and foreign literature, while the young groom began to doze.

Suddenly my companion started quoting in a low, sweet voice, *"Es reden und traumen die menschen viele nach goldenen kuenftigen tagen.* . . . (Man speaks and dreams of future golden days. . . .)" Tears showed in the corners of her enchanting black eyes. I could hardly refrain from expressing my sympathy.

We were nearing Kovno. While adjusting her hat, she bent over and asked whether I would be the examining physician of recruits in Kovno that fall. I replied that I probably should not be, but should sit on all appeal cases. Nothing more was said. In pantomimic gestures she conversed with her husband. Then the *diligence*

stopped. We were in Kovno. As I helped her dismount, she held my hand and looked at me with an expression which seemed to say, "Forget me not."

A cabby led me to the military hospital, where I was to receive and make out reports after a personal inspection. Then I departed for the summer military camp, quite a few miles away. As I was greatly interested in my duties, I soon forgot my night ride, the Red Goose Inn, and the beautiful young Jewish bride and her unfortunate husband. With new scenes and other faces, the old soon fade from the memory of youth.

There was a lovely gubernatorial garden at Kovno, with a troupe of German actresses entertaining the officers stationed there. At Vilna there was a beautiful botanical garden, with a fine café chantant, where Russian, Polish, Jewish, and French girls sang nightly and danced to the strains of the local theatre orchestra. All this helped to while away the time.

However, I was destined to meet the couple sooner than I thought. I was ordered to Kovno to pass upon appeal cases in the fall drafts. All those who claimed exemption on account of physical disabilities, and cases where the exam-

ining physicians could not unanimously agree, were ordered to the military hospital for a re-examination by two medical inspectors. As I entered the detention ward of the *lazaret* I beheld the young bride speaking in sign language to her husband, and then I understood her anxious query when we were about to leave the *diligence*. They also saw me, but I stiffly passed them by without any sign of recognition.

I soon met the other four physicians and immediately began reading the protocols. Each man was re-examined. A secret vote was cast and the majority opinion ruled. It was either *nye goden* (not fit) and *byeli bilet* (white pass), which released the man from army service forever, or *otstrotzku* (delay), with *krassny bilet* (red pass), which meant that the man might be called later in case of war or other emergencies, or *goden* (fit), which would place him in immediate service.

We soon came to the mute man. I read the report which stated that two physicians had voted *nye goden* and one *otstrotzku,* maintaining that his case was either malingering or at best a temporary illness. For a moment I felt inclined to agree with his views, but the tears in the beauty's eyes and her last look appeared

before me. I wrote on the ballot *nye goden,* which meant at least three to two, should the other medical inspector vote against him. When the chairman announced, "Four to one," a thrill of joy passed through my whole body.

The story, however, does not end here. Two years later, while taking post graduate courses in Vienna, I came face to face with the couple at a famous cafe.

"*Zdraviya szelaiyem, gospodin* doctor (a military salute); we wish you the best of health." This from the mute bridegroom, and a sudden hug and kiss from the more matured young matron. He seemed fully restored, and both were happy. They had gone to Vienna soon after he had received his white pass, ostensibly to consult the best medical men but actually to pursue an educational course.

In any case, *Komu goreh, komu smyech*— "Russia has perhaps lost a soldier, but will regain a highly cultivated citizen," I was thinking.

Was it worth while?

My conscience said, "Yes."

THE MIRACLE OF THE KEYS

IT was Friday evening on a hot summer day in the town of Vitebsk, where manoeuvres of a division of the Russian army were taking place. In mimic battle the soldiers were trying to repel an imaginary invasion of German troops in that part of northwestern Russia, which actually occurred years after when the Germans occupied it under the command of Hindenburg.

I was medical inspector of the division. Since the manoeuvres that year were strenuous, I was detained until late, examining the wounded and making my rounds of sanitary inspection.

Earlier in the day I had sent an orderly to secure a room for me in the home of a representative Jewish citizen, as we intended to remain in the environs of the town until Monday.

It was late when I arrived at the home of my host. The Sabbath lights were kindled. All the children were seated around a large table. The evening meal was being served. As soon as I entered I was seated at the place of honor,

since my host deemed it a distinction to entertain a Jewish army doctor.

In front of each male member of the family I noticed two small loaves of wheat bread, with a key design on top of each.

In blessing the bread, my host saw that I looked at the loaves in great astonishment.

"You are doubtlessly surprised, doctor, to see a key on the bread," he smiled. "There is a story attached to this symbol. In fact, this Sabbath is observed in this town as *Sabbath Geula* (miraculous escape). Would you be interested in its origin?"

When I assured him that I would be delighted to listen, he leaned back in his large chair and related the following narrative:

About two centuries ago this town belonged to a rich Polish count. He owned all the land, the buildings, the mill, and every form of enterprise. There was nothing of importance here that was not in his possession.

So powerful was he that he maintained an army of retainers and soldiers, whom he led in wartime under the disposition of the King of Poland.

Many Jews were in his employ. He was kind

to them, and never tried to interfere with their worship or their business. They respected his wishes and tried to please him in every way possible, living peacefully and happily under his rule.

It happened that one Jewish boy became a great profligate. He was the ne'er-do-well of the town. In fact, he was the only black sheep in the Jewish fold.

In the synagogue the rabbi and congregation prayed that the lad might change his evil ways. He was offered employment, but after working for a while, squandered his money, and was again wandering indolently in the byways of the town.

Nothing would change him. Despite all efforts he steadily became a greater scourge to the community.

At an assemblage of the leading citizens it was decided to expel the youth from the Jewish fold. Upon being notified of this edict, he promptly became a Catholic. Shortly afterward he disappeared from the town, and no one heard further news about him.

The townspeople were happy to be rid of him whom they called their plague. They believed

he had either done away with himself or had gone to some distant country.

Time passed. Friendly relations between the Polish noble and the Jewish people continued. The convert was forgotten as a dim, bad dream of the past.

One Friday evening after services a weary stranger entered the synagogue and asked the beadle to put his prayer shawl and phylacteries into the Ark of the Law, as he would come the following morning to pray.

The man was tall, gaunt, and emaciated. His face was furrowed. Beneath his eyes was a thick layer of black, indicating that he had spent many sleepless nights.

His walk was slow and stealthy. He was poorly dressed, with pockets torn, shoes unstrapped, and strands of uncombed hair underneath a shabby hat.

Many of the worshippers had already gone home. Those who were still in the synagogue thought he was a traveler from some distant city. The beadle, who wished to converse with the other worshippers, told the stranger to put away his small parcel himself. He opened the ark and went away.

When everyone had left, the beadle locked

the syangogue with a large key and went to his home, a small dwelling a few yards away. He hung the key on its usual hook, ate his supper, and was about to retire for the night, when he heard a loud knock. Turning around, he saw the synagogue key on the floor. He picked it up and replaced it on the hook.

The good man was almost undressed, when he heard another knock. At once he turned towards the wall, where the key had been hung, again to find it lying on the floor.

In wonderment he again replaced it on the hook. This time he examined the hook, and saw that it was in good condition. He also looked at the key. It was exactly the same shape and size as always.

The beadle had almost finished his retiring prayers, when a loud noise indicated that the key was on the floor for the third time. There was nothing wrong with the hanging, he mused. Some strange bewitchment had come over the key.

He feared to go to bed lest the object fall again. Dressing himself hurriedly, he ran to the home of the rabbi, who lived nearby.

He found the rabbi studying the Talmud. The beadle quickly told him of the falling of

the key, and asked the learned man if he had any explanation for the occurrence.

The rabbi urged him to get the key immediately and go with him to the synagogue. In the dead of night, when practically everyone had gone to bed, the two men walked into the place of worship, which was totally dark except for the perpetual lamp burning in front of the ark.

Guided by intuition, the rabbi opened the ark, and in a corner saw a large bottle filled with a red liquid. He uncorked it, poured some of the contents into a goblet, and found that it was blood.

The two men looked at each other in surprise and dismay. Then the beadle told the rabbi about the dilapidated stranger who had visited the synagogue.

Hurriedly the rabbi emptied the bottle, washed it very carefully, and then filled it with wine. He placed it in the same corner from which he had taken it.

On leaving the synagogue, the rabbi told the beadle to maintain absolute silence concerning the event. He believed the hand of God had guided them, and no matter what occurred, the Divine Being would save the Jews of the town.

It was already very late. Neither the rabbi

nor the beadle could sleep. They knew that the day would bring in its wake strange developments. They were anxious to see the stranger.

Early morning came. A bright, clear Sabbath was being welcomed by the worshippers gathering in the synagogue. Soon the house was filled. The rabbi was reading the Scrolls of the Law.

Suddenly a loud knocking was heard outside. The large door of the synagogue was opened, and into its midst marched the Polish nobleman and his retainers, led by the stranger.

Prayers ceased. The worshippers became frightened. Children huddled close to their parents as they beheld the armed men. Never had their house of prayer been disturbed on the Sabbath.

In a loud voice the unknown man accused the Jews of using Christian blood in their services, and as proof, he said there was a bottle filled to the brim with it hidden in the ark.

Children cried. Women called upon the merciful Father to take pity on their peaceful lives. Men murmured that it was impossible.

The rabbi raised his hands and ordered his

congregation to be silent. Turning to the stranger, he said:

"You are telling an untruth. Our religion forbids us to use blood. Human sacrifice was abolished by Moses, our lawgiver. We use neither the blood of human beings nor even of animals in our services."

Addressing the count, he added: "Your excellency, the ark is open. Come near it and see what it contains."

The count found the bottle filled with red liquid. The rabbi opened it, and drank some of its contents. The stranger was then asked to drink.

"You see, your excellency," the rabbi explained, "this is a bottle of wine."

The unknown man then revealed to the worshippers that he was the apostate who had lived in the town years ago.

"This is a miracle of the God of Israel," he exclaimed. "I put blood in that bottle, and it has been changed to wine. Surely the hand of God has been at work. I have sinned before Him."

The count apologized before the rabbi for causing the disturbance, and urged him to come to his castle for retribution. He ordered his

soldiers to march out of the synagogue quietly.

The worshippers spent the rest of the day singing psalms of joy to God for again delivering them from their enemies. They spent many hours after their Sabbath meal, praising the Lord with chants and hymns.

Shortly thereafter, as a punishment and warning, the count ordered the apostate quartered. The pieces were hung in four corners of the town.

A scroll of the narrative was made and read each year on the Sabbath, commemorating the miracle of the keys. That is why our women ornament the bread with keys.

I thanked my host for the tale, and praised his wife for the care with which she had kneaded and shaped the keys.

VILNA is one of Russia's most beautiful cities. The gently flowing Viliya River gives it serenity and the calm of soft breezes. Nestling at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, it enjoys a delightful climate. Its Park and Botanical Gardens are the meeting places of the young and the old, who go there to rest and dream of beauty.

Beds of carefully cultivated flowers, some of the finest specimens in all Russia, color the landscape. Purples, reds, greens, and the delicate shades that tint a disappearing rainbow blend in a rare harmony.

Through the Park flows a rivulet. Its tiny ripples wash the green blades of grass. The faint sounds are like the last silvery notes of a violinist completing a minuet.

The people of Vilna are hospitable. They will entertain you lavishly at their homes, offering you the choicest foods.

Their women are beautiful. It is not an evanescent beauty that they possess, but the

color of their cheeks, the brilliance of their eyes, the fairness of their complexions are worthy of enduring admiration.

In 1812, when he was preparing to advance on Moscow, Napoleon, enraptured by the charm of the city, said that he wished he could take the environs of Vilna and throw them around Paris.

It was in Vilna, the city of beautiful women, that I met Luba. Her skin was white. Her cheeks bloomed like deep pink roses at the height of their splendor. Her dark brown eyes danced. Long Titian hair covered her comely shoulders. She was a madonna for a Raphael.

Luba was seventeen. I was also young. We strolled along the river's banks. I kissed her glowing hair. Her lovely figure enchanted me.

Words from the Song of Songs came to me:

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride;
Thou has ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,
With one bead of thy necklace.
How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is thy love than wine!
And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!
Thy lips, O my bride, drop honey—
Honey and milk are under thy tongue;
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."

I fell in love. Luba loved me too.

She was the only daughter of a pious, wealthy Jew who did not favor the match. He wanted her to marry the son of a rabbi. Persuaded by her mother, he finally consented to our betrothal provided I would settle and practice in Vilna. I had not yet completed my military service, and our troth was kept secret.

I shall never forget those Vilna nights with Luba. As the moonbeams silvered the stream in the Park, we pledged our great love. I told her that nothing could part us. She said she would be a true wife to me forever.

In the fall of that year I received a commission to go to Kiev, where I was to be examining physician in the drafting of recruits for the Russian army.

I said farewell to Luba, promising to return as soon as my duties were finished. I vowed that this service would take only a short time. Her eyes spoke to me:

> **"Make haste, my beloved,**
> **And be thou like to a gazelle or to a young hart**
> **Upon the mountains of spices."**

There were three military surgeons assigned to each central point in every state of the Empire, a Greek Russian, a Catholic, a Jew. Every man who had reached the age of

twenty-one, irrespective of race, creed, nationality, or station, had to report for military duty in the Fall. He was led into a large room, where, from a bowl, he had to pick a slip containing a number.

That year Kiev had a quota of six thousand. Thirty thousand men had to report.

A young medical student beginning his university courses might pick a slip making him one of the six thousand. A peasant born and bred in ignorance might also select the fateful number.

A youth starting a business career that had made his ancestors prosperous might make the unfortuante choice. So might a village ne'er-do-well, offensive to his family and community.

Russia gained her recruits indiscriminately from the persevering youth dreaming of a brilliant career and the illiterate peasant accustomed to the mire and stench of the dunghill.

I arrived in Kiev on a Thursday evening. The following morning I reported to the chief surgeon, who was chairman of the board of examiners.

As soon as my presence was announced, he came out of his private office to greet us, and, to my great astonishment, threw his arms about

me, embracing me as though I were a long lost brother. Although I was amazed at his unexpected enthusiasm, I returned the greetings.

My superior then informed me that his *galouboushka* (dear pigeon) would serve the breakfast.

A steaming *samovar* was on the table, as well as *pryanniki* (Vienna rolls). I had scarcely sat down when a beautiful woman of aristocratic bearing and dress entered. The surgeon introduced me to her Imperial Highness. I kissed her hand, and wondered at the royal setting.

I knew that a drama would soon be enacted, and that I would be a chief participant. But I calmly ate the delicious fruits served so lavishly by the lovely "pigeon." At the end of the repast, she excused herself.

The surgeon and I were alone in the room. Moving close to me, in a voice of deep confidence, he said:

"My dear little brother (*dorogoy bratitz*), I need money. I was instrumental in bringing you to Kiev because I knew you had been graduated from its university, and were acquainted with its people.

"We have here thirty thousand candidates, and only six thousand to choose. Go to the

people you know and see if you can make arrangements so that we can free those whose lives would be ruined by the interruption of study or work.

"Do you not realize that by choosing the ignorant peasants we may benefit them? They will see something of the world, learn reading and writing, and have a little of their veil of darkness lifted."

I left the surgeon, and walked through a lonely street to think.

"My dear little brother, I need money." "Go to the people you know." "Lift the veil from the ignorant peasants."

After much deep thought, I realized that the surgeon was right.

Why ruin the lives of aspiring young men? Why take them from happy homes to live in barracks swarming with vermin? They would serve under cruel taskmasters, who, in the name of the Czar and Holy Russia, would kill their hopeful spirits, and leave them broken in health and soul.

I decided to go to my people in Kiev and seek aid.

It was Friday night. The leaders of Israel had gone to the synagogue. Dressed in full

uniform, I entered the house of worship as the cantor was chanting the invocation to the Sabbath:

"Come, my beloved, to meet the bride. The presence of the Sabbath let us receive.

"Shake off the dust. Arise, O my people, and adorn thyself with my beautiful attire, for by the hand of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, redemption draweth nigh to my soul."

The beadle asked me to sit in the president's pew. At the conclusion of the services, I was invited to the president's home. He was a successful merchant, and his children were either studying or carrying on his business. I was warmly welcomed, and received the place of honor at the table bedecked with the Sabbath lights.

When all the children were seated, I joined in the song for the Sabbath eve:

"Humble home, I fondly greet thee, hither towards thy peaceful tent
Angels bend their steps to meet me, from the world's Creator sent.
Forms from a bright sphere, come and alight here,
Around us the mantle of peace to spread;
And make ye a home in my humble shed."

My host wanted me to spend the Sabbath with him. After supper I asked him to walk with

me in his garden along the Dnieper. There I told him of my mission.

"The Lord has sent you here," he exclaimed. "I shall call a meeting and inform the people of the city of your errand."

The gathering took place in the synagogue. The leading citizens of Kiev were present. As the messenger between the people of Kiev and the surgeon general, I also attended. Everyone agreed to accept the physician's proposal, and I was sent to inquire the amount of money needed to save the youth of Kiev.

I went to the hotel of my superior and told him of my successful venture.

"Monday we commence to examine the recruits," he said. "I must have 50,000 rubles on that day. The remainder, 500 rubles for every recruit freed, should be deposited with the rabbi, from whom you are to get a receipt. This money is to be given to me, when all matters are satisfactorily arranged."

I hastened to inform the people of Kiev of the surgeon's decision. They sang paeans of joy to God for delivering their children. Jew kissed Gentile, and the synagogue was turned into a place of festivity.

Examination week started. A medical de-

ficiency was found for every man who was on the list to be excused. Most of them received white tickets, freeing them from military service entirely. Those who obtained red tickets would be summoned for service only during a war.

The examination of recruits had been successful. Kiev furnished her quota that year to the service of the Czar and Holy Russia.

I gave my commanding officer the money left in the custody of the rabbi. He handed me a petition to sign.

I read the paper carefully. At first I could not believe the words before me. Was it possible that I did not understand their significance?

It was a petition of resignation from the medical service of the Russian army.

Was this the end of the drama that had begun a few days ago, when I first appeared before my commanding officer?

Again I heard him say: "Dear little brother, what has Russia done for you? You served her well, and were sent to Siberia. I know your career. The western border is open to you. The way to America is clear. I know you want to take post-graduae courses. You want titles. Here are 110,000 rubles."

I obeyed my superior officer, and signed the paper, which he countersigned.

Bidding me farewell, he continued: "While Russia does not approve of your people, there are other countries which do. You have no ties here. Why not go where greater happiness awaits you?"

I had only one recourse, and that was to leave the country. Should information leak out concerning my part in the examination procedure, I would be severely punished.

I wrote to Luba, and asked her to come with me, as I could not remain in my native land. Her father would not permit his only daughter to leave him.

The gardens of Vilna, the park where Luba and I pledged our eternal love, beautiful Luba, my song of songs! I had to leave all behind.

"O God of Israel, give me a land where I may live and love," I prayed.

I sent Luba a letter filled with my noblest sentiments. I told her I would never forget her, my Russian love and beauty.

My life then became absorbed in advanced studies of medicine which I pursued in the capitals of Austria, Germany, and France.

There is a little epilogue to my Vilna affair.

During the World War, when I was working for the United States Government in Washington, a gentleman asked me if I was Dr. De Waltoff. When I replied in the affirmative, he said that I owed him a hundred dollars.

I did not recall ever having met the gentleman before, but politely told him that I certainly would return the money if such were the case.

He said he had just returned from Vilna, where he had been sent by a relief association to aid the inhabitants of that city.

"At a hotel a woman asked me if I had heard of you in America. When I said 'Yes,' she told me she had been betrothed to you, and showed me a picture you had presented to her with your sentiments written on the back.

"She asked me to help her, saying that you would return the money. I gave her one hundred dollars."

After communicating with Luba I found that her husband had died, and that she had a son studying medicine and a daughter whom she wanted to send to America. I sent Luba money for her daughter, who is now married. Her son has become a physician. My Vilna love has prospered.

A SOUTH AMERICAN SOJOURN

WHILE taking courses in Paris I met a relative who was a merchant prince from South America. He deprecated my plan to go to the United States, saying that physicians in that country were poorly paid.

He invited me to South America, where physicians received gold pieces for their services or the equivalent of ten rubles. Such fees loomed large in my views, and being fancy-free, I consented to go with him to his country.

We boarded a steamer at Marseilles. After a journey of one month, during which we made innumerable stops, we landed in the harbor of Carthagena, Colombia. It was so hot that we could blister the palms of our hands by just touching the sides of the steamer. Only at night could we breathe more freely. I decided that Colombia was not the place for one accustomed to the cold dry winters of Moscow and the mild summers of the Russian Empire.

I walked along the waterfront and found a German steamer that was preparing to sail for

Baltimore within a few days. The captain was a genial, friendly German of great culture. Soon a warm friendship developed between us, and since his was not a passenger craft, he asked me to share his quarters.

Within a few days I was again on my way to the glorious land of my dreams, learning, perhaps, another lesson that "All is not gold that glitters."

I discovered that the captain was a great friend of the beloved Catholic clergyman of that time, Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore, to whom my seafaring companion introduced me.

I lingered awhile in the monumental city, but spent most of my days in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington. I sent articles describing the city and photographs of the museum displays to the Russian illustrated newspaper, *Neva,* at St. Petersburg, thus earning money as a correspondent.

Although I became a registered physician in Maryland and Washington, I finally decided to go to New York. After a long search where to cast anchor, I determined to align myself with the military service of the United States Government in Fort Hamilton and Bay Ridge, as the beginning of my new life in a new world.

I WAS appointed a surgeon at the World's Fair in Chicago, where the nations of the whole world congregated and the tongue of almost every inhabitant of the earth babbled together in the Midway Plaisance.

During my sojourn in Chicago I lodged at the Palmer House, occupying a room on the same floor with the great Hungarian correspondent, Marcus Braun. In my leisure hours I did some writing and sent several articles through the Associated Press to the New York newspapers.

While breakfasting one Sunday morning, I glanced through the Chicago papers and came upon an advertisement reading something as follows:

"Wanted: the acquaintance of a foreign nobleman now staying in Chicago, who would be willing to invest with the advertiser an equivalent sum of $2,500; money to be handled by the nobleman; and from $25,000 to $50,000 could be divided within a short time."

I showed the advertisement to my friend, Mr. Braun. We agreed that it must be some

great scheme, and that I should answer the advertisement, signing myself "Count Da Valhoff."

Thus I became a member of a royal family.

I instructed the clerk at the Palmer House to refer anyone who asked for Count Da Valhoff to me, as well as to give me all the mail addressed to that name.

The next day a letter came, asking me to arrange for an appointment. The message was signed "Colonel Humphrey," and requested that the answer be left with the hotel clerk.

I was anxious to meet the colonel and immediately responded, making the appointment for that same evening at eight o'clock. Mr. Braun and I decided to speak in French. I was to assume a French accent in my English conversation. And so linguistically prepared, we were ready to satisfy our desire for a new adventure.

At the stroke of eight a tall, military-looking man met us at the desk of the Palmer House. I introduced my friend as Mr. Le Braun and myself as Count Da Valhoff. Colonel Humphrey invited us to a cafe in a neighboring street, and ordering a room for the three of us, related the following story:

"In the siege of New Orleans I was in the

service under General Butler. I was a very young officer.

"When I entered the city I happened to come into the house of a rebel officer who had been killed. We found a young woman, his widow and the mother of two children, a little boy and girl. She had been wounded. Seeing me in command, with her dying breath she implored me to protect her young children. I promised to do so.

"I took the children under my care, and have faithfully performed my obligations. The girl is now happily married, but the boy drifted away from me and became a croupier in the employ of the greatest gambler in the United States, who is at present in Chicago.

"He has been working for him for many years on the promise that he would make him rich, but the gambler has never fulfilled that promise. My adopted son is now married and has two children.

"As you see, I am getting old. I take no stock in the promise of this gambler, and I should like to see this boy get a competency and quit his occupation forever.

"Therefore, I induced him to allow me to find someone whom the gambling fraternity

does not know, but who would be fair and square with me.

"I would entrust him with twenty-five hundred dollars of my own money and he would have twenty-five hundred dollars of his. He would go up and play in this gambling place, where my boy would be dealing cards. It would be so arranged that he should lose some money the first time and a few hundred perhaps the second time.

"Then on a prearranged night and in a prearranged play he would stake a roll of money and clean up about fifty thousand dollars, which he would later divide in equal parts. He would go his own way, and we in ours. My son would be able to leave his work and I should die in peace.

"My son has made hundreds of thousands of dollars for that gambler, and has assumed all the risks. But he merely works for a small sum to make a living."

The story of Civil War gallantry was completed. We shook hands with the colonel, promising to meet him the next morning, when he would take us to another place, to be introduced to his adopted son and receive our instructions.

My friend and I walked back to the hotel. We wondered at the scheme and its dénouement.

"Let us wait for the morning."

Having been ordered early to the exhibition grounds, I could not meet Colonel Humphrey. Marcus Braun went in my place. When we met again in the afternoon, my friend was almost convinced that this was a *bona fide* proposition.

However, I could not take the matter seriously. At a meeting with the colonel that evening I asked him to show me on the following morning the same lay-out he had shown Mr. Braun. The next day the four of us (the colonel, his son, Mr. Braun, and I) came together and I was shown how the game was played and how the croupier intended to give me the signal when to stake all.

We agreed to meet the next morning at eleven o'clock at the Palmer House, whence we would go to the real gambling house and begin play.

After parting with the colonel and his son I hailed a cab, and ordered the chauffeur to take me to the post office. When we arrived there, I told Mr. Braun we were going to interview the Chicago chief of police. We remained in the post office a short time to avoid suspicion,



Author in 1895

fearing lest the colonel or some associate might be watching us, and then we proceeded to the station house, where I unfolded the gambling story before the police chief.

"It is our old friend at his game again," he said smilingly. "I am very happy that you came here. This fellow is called Gold Bond Clarke!

"His scheme is simply this: He will take you to a certain place and give you three bonds supposed to be United States Government gold bonds. He will tell you that since you do not need to play for all the money, you should take the three thousand dollar bonds as security, until it is time to play it all.

"In the meantime, of course, he would accompany you to some place where you would be robbed, retaining the three imitation bonds."

The police chief instructed me to meet the colonel, according to previous arrangements, as I would be amply protected. The next morning the brave "Civil War veteran" and I went to the Masonic Building, where a number of elevators were running. In the meantime the police had provided a number of young men dressed as telegraph messengers, who learned where we were going and followed us.

We entered an elevator and the colonel

named his floor. Just as we stepped into the corridor, detectives pounced upon us and arrested the colonel and me, according to previous agreement. In the excitement which followed they overlooked the adopted son of the colonel, who was supposed to be in another elevator.

At police headquarters I was released. Clarke was searched and was found in possession of a number of false gold bonds, as the chief of police had anticipated. Later he pleaded guilty to the charge of possessing fraudulent government bonds and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

In bidding him *adieu* I still maintained the character I had assumed as a count and nobleman. He said he had nothing against me, but that my friend, Mr. Le Braun, was a French Government detective.

So to Colonel Humphrey, Gold Bond Clarke, the sympathetic Civil War hero, renowned for his exploits at the siege of New Orleans, I still remained Count Da Valhoff.

Whenever I met a police officer who recognized me as the nobleman who was to redeem a croupier from an ignoble occupation, so that his father might die in peace, I was greeted with "How is the count today?"

"AND A VISION CAME BEFORE ME"

A PECULIAR incident happened to me while I was sojourning in Chicago. On several occasions later in life similar instances have occurred. I cannot explain them. Perhaps they belong to mysterious phenomena that have not as yet been analyzed.

I decided to move to that city, and engaged an apartment over a newly-opened drug store on the corner of South Thirty-third Street and Indiana Avenue. Then I telegraphed my wife to pack our belongings and make them ready for shipment to Chicago.

It was the first of May. President Cleveland officially opened the World's Fair for the people of all nations. Probably half a million visitors attended the Fair Grounds that day. We had but few accidents, thanks to the excellent government arrangements.

Yet I was very tired when I returned to my hotel that evening. My friend, Marcus Braun, was waiting for me. I hastily changed my

clothes and lay down on the bed for a few minutes' rest. I had just received mail from my wife, who informed me that everything was well at home and that she had made arrangements with a shipping concern for the removal of our belongings.

I was in a state of semi-wakefulness when I suddenly saw my baby boy in his crib, with a white cloth and icebag on his head. His face was flushed and feverish. With his little hands he was beckoning to me and crying, "Papa, papa."

I must have screamed at this vision, for when I came to consciousness, I saw not only my friend but strangers in my room, who were trying to revive me with cold water and smelling salts.

Then I related the incident to those who were present. Of course, they ascribed the occurrence to my great exhaustion, and pointed to the fact that my mail had brought me only reassuring messages.

My friend and I went to dinner, took a stroll, and returned to the hotel about ten o'clock. As I approached the desk, the clerk said:

"A telegram for you, doctor."

I hastily opened it and read:

"Come home at once. Morton very ill. Cries for you constantly."

It was signed by my wife.

Although it was very late, I managed to see the President, who invited me to leave Chicago on his train, which would make specially fast time to Washington. I could stop at any station and change for New York. I accepted his offer.

Early the next morning I was on my way home. I had telegraphed my wife to send a message to the Presidential Special, but I received no dispatch from her.

Arriving in New York I hastily summoned a cab, and when I entered my house found my child in exactly the same position I had seen him in the vision in the Chicago hotel.

My wife told me that only one-quarter of an hour before my coming, the child had been in her arms. The fever suddenly rose, and she had to put him into his crib, placing the cloth and icebag on his warm brow.

THE CRACKED THERMOMETER

AFTER the recovery of my first-born from a severe illness, I decided to establish myself in private practice in civil life.

My first office was on Ninth Street, South Brooklyn, where I soon gained a foothold in the neighborhood. I was elected chief surgeon of the German *Schutzenbund,* an organization composed mainly of German reservists and their families, numbering about fifteen thousand.

Speaking about a dozen languages and dialects, I soon gained the good-will of the foreign-born population of the section. I was kept pretty busy. While the fees were not large, the quantity of my calls was great. And never being afraid of work, I was happy to serve humanity and do my duty to my fellow-men.

It was during the summer of 1894, when the summer ailments were still a scourge among the infant population of the city, that I was called to see a child of a pharmacist's sister, who lived within a few blocks of my office.

THE CRACKED THERMOMETER

The child had been sick a few days, vomiting and purging. I inserted my thermometer into the child. To my surprise, the thermometer cracked. I thought that the instrument must have been defective.

Always carrying two with me, I inserted the second, which also cracked. I then realized that the temperature of the child must be so high that it had broken the thermometers.

Of course, I was rather angry that I had been called to a dying child, and when the houseful of women, blubbering with all kinds of advice, asked me what I thought of the case, I said that the only thing left to do was to put the child on ice and give it a little brandy and water.

It was my belief that the child was ready for the undertaker. I left the house without asking for any fee, deprecating the ill luck that I, a young physician, should have been called to a dying child, and have to write its death certificate.

The next morning I fully expected that the mother would appear for the certificate, but as the office hour waned and no one called for it, I left to make my routine calls.

At noontime, as I drove to my house, from a distance I saw the mother of the baby sitting

upon my steps. I was about to ask her when the little one had breathed its last, when she began to laud me as the savior of her child. She begged me to see her babe again, as she did not know what to do next.

"What have you done?" I asked her.

"I did just as you instructed me," she replied. "I obtained a cake of ice from a passing ice-man, and placed the child on the ice, clothes and all.

"Soon the fever began to abate, and she retained her brandy and sugar and water. She now looks like a new-born child, and we want you to prescribe for her again."

The case now had a different aspect. I would not be called upon to write a death certificate, after all.

I helped the mother into my carriage, drove to her residence, prescribed for the child, and received my fee.

I shall never forget that woman's gratitude.

THE LOCKED DOOR

ONE day, in the early years of my medical practice in Brooklyn, my wife opened the door to an Italian who asked in broken English:

"Does the doctor who cut my brother's throat live here?"

My wife looked at him in trepidation, but recalling an incident that correlated with a "cut throat," she replied in the affirmative and told him to enter and wait for me.

When I returned from making a call, the Italian, whom I immediately recognized, asked me to attend to his wife, who was seriously ill. He was the brother of the man whose throat I had cut, and upon this occurrence rests a little tale.

I was hastily summoned one evening to see a young Italian who could scarcely breathe. He lay stretched out on a small bed, gasping painfully. Visitors in his room were screaming and crying, believing him about to die.

I looked into his throat, where I saw a large abscess that was hindering his respiration and might soon cause his death. From my emer-

gency satchel, carried by all physicians at the time, I took out an instrument and lanced the abscess. In a short time the boy began to breathe freely, lifted his head, and spoke.

His brother approached me and asked me what my fee was. I asked ten dollars, a large sum in those days. The Italian took out a twenty dollar bill and told me to keep it all.

"I don't want any change," he said. "You saved my brother, and you're worth fifty dollars. I called many doctors, but they were afraid to touch his throat. Somebody told me to call the Jew doctor."

I prescribed some treatment for the boy, and when I tried to open the door, found that it was locked. The brother looked at me and said he was glad it was all right. He then produced a dirk, showed it to me, and explained:

"If you had not saved my brother, I would have killed you with this. That is why the door was locked."

After urging me to come again until his brother was completely cured, saying that I would be given much more money, he unlocked the door.

I hastened home to tell my wife how near I had been to the angels.

GEFUELTE FISH AND ROYALTY

It was during the closing years of the last century that official duties took me to Europe. While in Paris, I received word from my sister in Russia that she and her husband were coming to Marienbad.

As I had to be in Berlin for the Sedan's Fest and watch the manoeuvres at Potsdam in the wee morning hours of September second, I decided to pay a visit to my sister in Marienbad and from there to proceed to Germany. I found the place a delightful resort. It was the month of August, yet the climate was bracing and invigorating, particularly the Yaeger Forest with its quaint Casino, romantic paths, magnificent shade trees, and superabundance of wild strawberries. The town is very hilly, and it looks as though one house were built on top of the other. The place has several mineral and iron springs and possesses a grand estrada, built around the springs. A theatre, club-house, and innumerable hotels, restaurants, boarding houses and rooming houses, care for the seasonal guests, who come

here by tens of thousands, above the normal small population.

Arriving at the height of the season, I had to content myself with a room in a pension, all the hotels being filled to capacity. My first night there was rather an exciting one. Long past midnight the proprietress of the pension knocked at my door.

"Bitte, Herr Doctor, there is a Polish countess in one of my rooms, and there is something wrong with her. I cannot quiet her. She keeps calling for her man. I am afraid lest she kill herself."

For a moment only I hesitated, but then I realized my duties as a physician. The local physician might be too late. Hastily donning my bathrobe and slippers and grabbing my emergency case, I accompanied her to the sick lady. A hasty examination relieved my anxiety; it was only a case of nerves. A few weeks of dieting to reduce superfluous adipose, with strenuous mud baths and mountain climbing, had brought on the attack. A nightmare had added the finishing touches. I succeeded in quieting her, but my rest was broken. Of course there was no remuneration. I could charge nothing for my services. To do this would re-

quire a government license to practice. And people expect doctors to do these things as a matter of course. A day later, in answer to a telegram, the Polish graf came and took her away, much to the delight of the rest of the guests.

Bright and early, every morning the band played in the Park, facing the "Estrada," a very long roofed boardwalk, and soon the thousands of guests gathered there, drinking the waters *ad libitum,* each from his own cup. After each potion they would gambol up and down the walk, meeting friends and indulging in the pleasantries of the latest gossip.

From a bench on the Estrada we beheld a statuesque woman, tall and graceful, with blue eyes and coils of titian hair. Her complexion was rather of the lily type, and her face though attractive bore a cynical expression. At her side stood a handsome olive-skinned boy of six, in a Lord Fauntleroy costume, the great fashion of that day.

We soon noticed that she was the cynosure of all beholders. Women looked at her with haughtiness and disdain, while men seemed very curious, and some at least seemed to be racking their brains to recollect places or incidents.

We overheard an attendant telling a curious lady inquirer that "die Hochgeborene" was a Polish *graefin!* Later, we heard one man about town telling another that she was a Russian princess. And so the tongues wagged on.

It was on a Friday morning that my folks proposed to go to the Hotel Warsoviene for "a gefuelte fish dinner," which really meant joining most of the Kur-guests, who flocked to this famous hostelry for this appetizing morsel. Seats had to be reserved early and for a certain time of the day, as only one hour was allotted to meet guests. We obtained five seats for the hour of five to six.

At the appointed hour three of us were escort- to our seats by the "Zahlmeister"; a few minutes later, word was brought to us that our two friends could not come. I had paid for five couverts. So the chairs remained propped up against the table. However, just as we were served with the first course, the major domo came to our table and with profound apologies begged leave to know if I would not relinquish the seats to two very distinguished gentlemen. We had no objections, so he brought the two to the table. Both were handsome men, distinguished, and dressed in the height of fashion.

The older one wore a long beard while the younger one had a Van Dyke.

Noticing my high Masonic emblem, set in an American flag, the younger of the gentlemen casually remarked in English: "Though divided by a great ocean yet we are brothers." To this I replied that we were indeed happy to share our hospitality with our English brethren. Our friends seemed to enjoy the gefuelte fish, and the noodles and wine, and the conversation touched on various American subjects.

Then the younger man asked: "Are your fair American cousins just as beautiful as they were a few years ago when I was over there?"

"If anything," I said, "we are growing them handsomer with every crop," and I added, "but they have some real titian beauties here too. Where are they? Well, that princess or Polish graefin that we saw on the Estrada!"

Both burst out laughing. "A princess? A graefin? This perennial Vienna plant certainly can make up well. We met her twenty years ago in Monte Carlo, when she passed as the wife of a certain diplomat. A few years later we saw her in Paris, when she posed as the wife of a merchant prince from South America, and now she is a Polish princess! By Jove, this is a good

joke!" The hour was almost up, and prince and beggar all must make room for the next guests.

When we rose to part I said in an undertone: "It was certainly very gracious of your Majesty and your Royal Highness, to sit at our table and be so democratic. I recognized both of you immediately, but realizing your strict desire to remain incognito, I felt in honor bound to preserve it. I humbly say, should you ever visit my glorious land, you may command me."

"I thank you for both of us," broke in the elder. "Kindly keep this secret." We all shook hands.

A few days later I was at the railway station leaving for Berlin; in a show case were a few lovely apples.

"What wonderful fruit you have here," I exclaimed, "please sell them to me."

"Oh, yes," answered the station master, as he took the gulden, "they only arrived here this morning from America."

IT was early in the morning of February 15, 1898, that the United States was shocked by the news that its man-of-war, Maine, was blown up in the harbor of Havana, and that most of its crew had been killed while peacefully resting in their bunks.

Furor raged in the wake of the atrocity. The United States, as well as the Spanish Government, appointed naval courts of inquiry to make investigation. The report of the Americans declared:

"The loss of the Maine was not in any respect due to the fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of her crew; the ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines."

The Spanish court of inquiry declared that causes within the ship itself had brought about the explosion. Whereupon Spain proposed that the question be referred to a committee chosen by different nations. This proposal the United

States Government refused to accept, and the tension between the two governments was at its height.

One afternoon, a few days after the explosion, I received word from the chief surgeon of our military forces to come at once to Washington. I left immediately on the late train and arrived at the capital early in the morning. The general informed me that the President wished to see me, as he desired to send me on a special mission.

Shortly thereafter he escorted me to the White House, and we were ushered into the private cabinet of the President. When I was introduced, the President warmly shook my hands, and asked me to be seated.

"I understand that you speak a number of European languages fluently," he began, "and that you have been for the last few years the chief surgeon of the German *Schutzenbund* in your city. Undoubtedly, you speak German as a German does.

"You know what happened to our man-of-war in Cuba?" he continued. "The Spaniards accuse the Cubans of the atrocity, and the Cubans place the blame on the Spaniards.

"It is necessary to find out who the guilty really are, in order to be just.

"We have decided to send a special agent to Spain to learn the truth, and as Germany is the power most friendly with Spain, a man assuming the character of a German would be *persona grata* at Madrid.

"We were looking for a suitable man and the general recommended you. You could assume the character of a German physician traveling for pleasure in Spain. Will you accept?"

I was taken aback with the suddenness of the proposition. Through my mind ran the thought of becoming a spy, which I so hated on account of my experience in Russia. As the President noted the hesitancy in my expression, he inquired:

"Are you not a Hebrew?"

"Yes, Mr. President," I replied. "I am a Jew who was born in Russia."

"Well, you remember what the Spaniards did to your ancestors," he added. "We may have war. You may have the satisfaction of the settlement of old scores."

"Mr. President," I returned, "my mission in life has been peace. I am a physician. To me every human being, irrespective of race, creed,

or nationality, while sick, is holy; and yet, were I a Christian and born in the United States, I feel I should absolutely deny myself the honor of your offer.

"Were I a Jew born in America, I cannot tell what my answer would have been. But being a Jew born under the Moscovite Government, having suffered trials and tribulations on account of it, and finally having found an asylum here, accepting this as my fatherland, and having sworn allegiance to the flag (I arose and saluted), I am at your service, your excellency."

The die was cast. If I were to become a spy, at least I would be of service to the cause of humanity. Should Spain be proven guilty, the United States would surely engage in war and free Cuba from its masters.

The President and I shook hands warmly. This occurred on a Tuesday. I returned to Brooklyn, hurriedly arranged all my affairs, and boarded a steamer for Germany on Thursday. Passes and instructions would be furnished me in Europe.

My parting was sad. An infant daughter was quite ill. My young sons could not realize the meaning of my departure. The only one who

knew the secret was my life companion. She understood the danger of my mission.

Perhaps she would never see me again. Yet she bravely accepted her lot and trusted in the Great Architect to shape her destinies.

My heart sank within me. I was leaving my dearest ones alone, and venturing into the unknown. I prayed God to protect them and me so that I might return to my dear family.

The great city receded. What a clutching at my heart!

"America: my country, 'tis of thee."

I decided to travel under my own name, since I might meet people who knew me. My new character could be assumed after I had received my passport and letters of introduction to the grandees of Spain.

The steamer was on its way. My eyes filled with tears as I caught the last glimpse of my country. It was with great effort that I finally tore myself away from the railing of the steamer, and went down into my cabin, while the ship's band was still playing "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Within forty-eight hours I had made the acquaintance of almost everyone on board. And then I received a sealed note from a passenger

in mid-deck (third-class), which ran somewhat as follows:

"My dear doctor: In scanning the lists of passengers on board, I noticed your name. You will possibly remember me as the German waiter who used to serve you at the Imperial Hotel. I am on a visit to my parents.

"This note is not written as an appeal for myself, but we have on board a Russian who is being sent back to Germany, because he did not have the necessary twenty-five dollars that our government demands for the admission of immigrants.

"He paces the deck day and night and says he will throw himself into the ocean before reaching European shores. As I know you have helped so many in our city, perhaps you may be able to devise a way in which to assist this poor immigrant."

There was a young Jewish gentleman on the steamer who was head of a skirt manufacturing company in New York. I knew him and showed him the letter. He agreed with me that we should investigate the story. We found the waiter and then interviewed the Russian.

He told us that for generations back his

people had kept an inn in a certain town in Russia.

"I know no other business," he continued. "When the Russian Government declared a monopoly and took over the catering of spirituous liquors, my family and I were left penniless and starving.

"I attempted to eke out an existence by selling beverages to friends and neighbors, but was arrested, put into jail, and sentenced to Siberia.

"I managed to escape, and had just enough money to reach New York, where I expected friends to come to my rescue. After waiting vainly for aid, I was ordered back to Germany, to be transferred from there to Russia and punishment in Siberia.

"It would be better for me to confine my body to the merciless sea than to the knouts and lashes of the Russian Cossacks."

We found other people being returned to their countries because they lacked the means of entry.

After luncheon we decided to call a meeting of every Freemason on board the steamer. Everyone of the fraternity responded to our call. We were in a dilemma as to how to save this Russian.

Among ourselves we had collected enough money to help him, but we could not find a way of getting this man out of the clutches of a German officer who was in charge of him. This officer of the steamer had been instructed to turn him over to the German authorities, who would return him to the borders of Russia, where guards would take him in hand.

At this point in our discussion one of the passengers recalled that the genial captain of our steamer was also a Freemason. He joined our gathering and we told him the story. After deliberating a few moments, he said: "Gentlemen, I have a plan. I have a large consignment of gold and silver to be delivered to Southampton, England. I shall arrange to reach Southampton in the middle of the night.

"When we get there, some of you gentlemen approach our *Zahlmeister* (purser) and tell him that you wish to send cables home. He will then go back to secure the blanks, while I take his place at the discharging of the cargo.

"During these few minutes you will have to dispose of your friend and land him on English soil. We shall then enter on the log that so and so disappeared in mid-ocean, evidently a suicide."

We cordially thanked the captain, and decided to follow his instructions.

Within a few nights we were notified to have everything in readiness, as the captain expected to anchor at two o'clock in the morning at Southampton.

We transformed our Russian friend into an English gentleman. His Russian breeches and top-boots were consigned to the depths of the ocean. The boots were replaced by American shoes. He was dressed in long pants and a cutaway coat in place of his Russian blouse. His Russian cap was discarded for a fedora.

At the proper time we ushered him up, handed him two hundred dollars in gold, and told him to shove through the tube through which the silver bricks were being tossed to the barrels on the English dock. He became frightened. In order to reassure our Russian friend I went first, he came next, and my New York friend followed.

As it proved later, it was lucky for the man that we accompanied him. We found ourselves in the English Custom House, with all the exits closed. Of course, if he had been found wandering there, he would have been returned to the steamer.

As we hunted for a way of egress, we heard the clink-clank of a bell from a railroad engine. A large gate swung open, and an engine and tender came into the yard of the Custom House, probably to receive the silver that was being unloaded.

We hailed the engineer and told him our story. Without a word, he helped us jump on board, and reversing the engine, again began the clink-clank of the bell. The gates opened, and after taking us with him for a few blocks in the city, he told us that we could get off; that we were safe on English soil.

I offered a gold piece to the engineer and one to his fireman, but both refused to accept them. Then, shaking our hands, they gave us the greeting of a Mason. They had seen our insignia on the lapels of our coats, and had recognized us as brethren of the craft.

We went to the great Northwestern Hotel, where we remained until morning. Our Russian friend then made arrangements to sail for Canada. We returned to our steamer; my New York friend went to Carlsbad, and I to my appointed destination.

AT Paris I received my instructions, my passports, and my letters of introduction, and was soon on my way as a wealthy German physician traveling for my pleasure to the capital of Spain.

These letters of introduction opened for me the salons of the grandees. Shortly I was on intimate terms with men of high official rank, and even became a boon companion of General Weyler's son.

Card parties were the order of the day, and stakes were rather high. The homes of some of the grandees were nothing more than gambling salons.

One night after one of these parties I decided to stroll back to my hotel. I happened to be a winner that night, and had a large sum of money in my possession.

I was enjoying the beautiful moonlight in old Madrid. It was in the spring of the year and quite warm. I was contemplating the romantic names of the streets and wide plazas of the city—*Puerto del Sol, Plaza de Cibeles,*

Paseo de la Castellana, Plaza de Toros, Calle Alcala.

It was pleasant to speculate on this city, situated on a desolate table-land of New Castile, boasting of its Museum of the Prado, that famous building housing the paintings of Raphael, Titian, Tintoretti, Veronese, Rubens, and the Spaniards, Velasquez, Murillo, Riberas, and Goya.

I had not gone very far when a fashionably dressed woman approached me. Since I had been lost in my romantic thoughts, I did not know from which direction she had come. Taking me by the arm, she declared in an undertone: "Come, *señor,* do not walk alone. You are being followed. Someone must have seen you win a large sum of money."

I allowed myself to be led, wondering whether her story was true. At one of the street intersections I glanced back, and really saw someone lurking in the background.

We had sauntered a few blocks when she invited me into her apartment, where she asked me to remain until she would be able to secure police protection for me.

I entered a cosily appointed home. My *señora* gave me a bottle of wine and some

viands, and sweetly begged me: "Make yourself at home. I shall not be away long."

She then disappeared.

I sat down on one of the sofas, but made no attempt to drink the wine. I read a magazine, and decided to occupy myself in this way until the woman's return.

After a few moments of silence, I heard a groan from the adjoining room. I listened attentively and heard sounds like the dropping of water. Another groan followed that.

Rising hastily, I approached the door and opened it. I saw a room in darkness. By the aid of the light from the room in which I had been sitting, I saw a man lying on a bed, a dagger piercing the region of his heart. Blood was trickling to the floor.

I rushed to the door of my room and attempted to open it in order to flee. To my consternation, I found the door locked! My kind *señora* had evidently taken care of that on her departure.

Various suppositions and premonitions came to my mind. The horror of my position overwhelmed me. I knew of no other exit except the door through which I had been escorted into the apartment.

I dared not make an outcry, fearing to attract attention and thereby incriminate myself. I attempted to open the windows, but they were also barred with iron shutters. How careful my protectress had been!

While so perplexed, I heard steps approaching my apartment. I thought I was doomed, and that I would immediately be given over to the police. That might probably end my career in Spain. The door was flung open, and my sympathetic *señora* entered with a man who appeared to be a police officer. Pointing to me, the gracious woman imperiously commanded: "Arrest him. He is the murderer of my husband."

I immediately understood the situation. What a beautiful drama! But at the time, I had no desire to be an actor, and play such an important role. So I calmly asked: "How much?"

The police officer was exceptionally alert, and quickly responded: "All your winnings."

I had expected some such answer, and therefore, without a word gave him all the money I had made that night, and left the house.

Walking out, I heard their mirthful laughter. Their ruse had been successful. Of course, I

realized that the entire affair had been staged, but I did not wish to complain to the real police, as I feared that some of them might have been partners in this brilliant hold-up.

Going to my hotel I thought of the song from Rigoletto, "La donna è mobile."

"Plume in the summer wind
Waywardly playing,
Ne'er one way swaying,
Each whim obeying.
Thus heart of womankind
Ev'ry way bendeth:
Woe who dependeth
On joy she spendeth.
Sorrow and misery
Follow her smiling;
Fond hearts beguiling,
Falsehood assailing;
Yet all felicity
In her bestowing;
No joy with knowing
Is there but wooing.
Yes, heart of woman
Ev'ry way bendeth;
Woe who dependeth
On joy she spendeth."

I had made arrangements for a code in Hebrew in which to transfer my information, which was to be sent in Spanish cigarettes. There would be numbers in the inside of the mouthpiece, placed in certain rows. The mean-

ing of these figures would be clear to those who held the key.

As soon as I had my anchorage, I began to gather the information necessary to establish the guilt or innocence of those suspected of the sinking of our warship.

Without any shadow of doubt, it soon became apparent that some hot-headed Spaniards and their officials, wishing to cover certain crimes of their own, had conspired to carry out this dastardly deed.

After six weeks of torture, I was happy to leave the shores of Spain, safe and sound. For six weeks I had carried in my vest pocket two capsules of the most deadly poison known to me. They would have ended my life in a moment, had I been apprehended as a secret agent from an unfriendly government. I had made up my mind that I would never be garroted by Spanish gentlemen.

Returning to Paris, I received orders to interview the editors of the most influential newspapers in Europe. Most of the press except the English seemed hostile to us. They were under the impression that we wanted to wrest Cuba from Spain and annex it as our territory.

At that time Paris was in the turmoil of the

Dreyfus affair, and it was a hard task to get Frenchmen to listen to the cry of justice for Cuba.

However, it gradually dawned on them that since Germany was playing right into the hands of Spain, it might be of advantage to the French to adhere to their old ally, Uncle Sam.

Then I traveled almost through the length and breadth of Europe, interviewing many men and explaining our position in the matter, and gradually had the satisfaction of seeing most of the European intelligentsia taking our point of view.

In Germany I had seen a militant spirit being infused into the very blood of the youth. While walking with a famous professor on *Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse,* we were suddenly confronted with three subalterns. On that street the sidewalks were not very wide, and the officers would not move an inch. I was about to protest, when the old, gray-haired German professor gently took me by the arm, stepped into the street, and allowed the three musketeers to pass. Looking after them, I saw that every civilian did as we had done.

When I expressed my indignation to the savant, he sadly remarked: "Here, doctor, the

Germany that you knew is no more. The old German proverb, *'Mit Hoeflichkeit kannst du die welt beherschen'* (with courtesy one can conquer the world), is dead. Militarism is the idolatry of today."

Learning that there would be manoeuvres in Potsdam, I went there early in the morning, and although I arrived a little after four o'clock, I found the Kaiser in his saddle.

Later I returned to Berlin, where I dined at the *Cafe* on the corner of *Unter den Linden* and *Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse.* The waiter laconically remarked: *"Jetzt kommt er nun."* (now he is coming).

All the guests turned to the balcony to watch the pomp and splendor of the conquering hero. First came the heralds and a band of music, and then the Kaiser on his charger, hardly deigning to acknowledge the plaudits of the multitude.

The Socialist waiter again whispered into my ear: *"Er zeigt aus wie er für morgen kein Brod hatte."* (He looks as though he wouldn't have any bread to eat in the morning).

The Kaiser seemed like an overlord concentrating his entire state within himself.

I watched him that same night at the Grand

Opera. At about one o'clock in the morning I passed the palace and saw him at his desk in his cabinet. To me he appeared nothing but a monomaniac with an exaggerated ego.

In the meantime we had entered war with Spain. The shouts of victory for our fleets in Manila Harbor and at Santiago reverberated in all the corners of the earth, and the nations began to learn that above the worship of Mammon, there lived in the hearts of my countrymen the love of justice. They realized that our flag stood for enlightenment and liberty.

My work was accomplished. The information necessary to justify us in these victories had been obtained at very little expense, in comparison with the results. I hurried back home.

I shall not easily forget that Sunday morning when on a French steamer I entered the Narrows between Fort Wadsworth and Fort Hamilton. How beautiful the shores of Staten Island and Bay Ridge appeared! My heart sang with joy. I wanted to jump to shore and kiss the very earth. I rejoiced with the Psalmist:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvellous things; His right hand, and His holy arm, hath wrought salvation for Him. The Lord hath made known His

salvation; His righteousness hath He revealed in the sight of the nations. He hath remembered His mercy and His faithfulness toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout unto the Lord, all the earth; break forth and sing for joy, yea, sing praises.

"Sing praises unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp and voice of melody. With trumpets and sound of horn shout ye before the King, our Lord. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein; let the floods clap their hands; let the mountains sing for joy together; before the Lord, for He is come to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity."

At the pier I was reunited with my happy family, and returned home, full of gratitude to Him who had thus shaped my destinies.

While visiting Buffalo one year, my wife and I stood on the hallowed spot where the blood of the Martyred President, who fell at the hands of an insane assassin, had crimsoned the earth during the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. I could not but shed tears in memory of him at whose behest I became an agent of justice in the service of the country I loved best.

THE BARD OF VILNA

TWILIGHT, the world over, has a romantic fascination. When the sun begins its travels toward the west and the crimson horizon transforms the window panes of tall buildings into fiery flames, man leaves his daily travail and in the dying sunshine dreams his fairy fantasies. He is loath to spare the departing rays. They are his friends, his protectors, his very life.

Summer twilights in the former capital of northwestern Russia were not only beautiful but very lengthy, and many times have I read books late in the evening by the rays of the disappearing monarch of the skies.

If Moscow was the city of churches, Vilna then was the city of synagogues. In the 80's of the last century there seemed to be one on every street. Christians were satisfied with the few churches commemorating their long dead saints, but the Jews had one for every trade and occupation. The carpenters, the tailors, the expressmen, the blacksmiths, the merchants—each

group had a house of worship of its own. There was the great Vilna synagogue, the great house of study, the conservative temple; and many well-to-do men had private shrines in their own homes.

Most of these edifices housed devoted students of secular and rabbinical lore. Many who were to become great luminaries of the arts and sciences sat on the hard benches of these Jewish national free schools.

There were Professor Chwolson, greatest student of oriental languages; Antokolsky, sculptor of Ivan the Terrible; Levanda, the author; General Trachtenberg, the physician; and others too many to recall.

It was in the hours of growing dusk that I cantered into the city from the military camp, to visit a friend whose father's estate housed one of these academies. As I was dismounting and while turning my horse over to the stableman, I heard the strains of a violin, flute, and cornet floating out of an open window of the synagogue.

The melodies were oriental, rich, charming and gripping at the heart-strings. They impelled me to enter the house of worship. I saw a group of young men in one corner leaning

over the open books of the Talmud in a sort of revery, while near them stood three wizened and shriveled old men.

There were no musical instruments to be seen, but the tones of the enchanting melodies were emanating from the mouths of these genii. So absorbed were all that they neither heard nor saw me until they had finished their sacred songs.

I had never before nor ever since heard such artists, capable of perfectly imitating with the human throat these musical instruments.

An offer of fifty copecks to each to tell the story of his achievement, was readily accepted. They then related to me a tale of passion and love, of human struggle and sacrifice, ending with the death of a great young genius and the undying love of a Russian princess for her Jewish artist lover.

II.

"You have never heard of the Bard of Vilna? We three are the sole survivors of his boys' choir and orchestra. From the days of King David until our master Joel David, for this was his name, there was none like him, and

now that he is dead, there will probably be no other such singer and musician until the days of resurrection. We verily believe, nay, we are certain, and all who heard him were certain, that the spirit of our holy King David had taken possession of him and transferred to him all of David's divine musical attainments. The Bard of Vilna was born in the outskirts of this city, and from his early babyhood he loved to listen to the songs of birds, the rustling of the leaves, and the murmurings of the river Wileyka that touched the shores of his father's garden.

"Before he could walk, he already could imitate every sound he heard. At the age of seven he officiated in the great synagogue of the city, and a bench had to be provided for him to stand on so that he could reach the altar. And so he grew up, pure in soul and handsome in body.

"One Summer day while in the woods near his home, singing new melodies in praise of the name of the Lord, he heard himself accompanied by the strains of a violin. He followed the sound deeper and deeper into the woods. Suddenly he beheld a very old man on a rock playing the instrument, while near him stood a

beautiful young woman with blue eyes and golden hair.

" 'Come nearer to me, my son,' spoke the old man. 'I have heard your singing and tried to accompany you with my violin, but I am getting too old. My fingers are becoming too stiff. Only a pure soul and unsoiled hands must touch this divine instrument, to play the Lord's praise. Come closer to me and I will teach you how to play it.'

"Joel David obeyed the command and the venerable man taught him to play the holiest of melodies. All day long he played, and in his ecstacy he did not notice that the sun had already begun to set in the west. His reveries were only interrupted by the voice of his anxious father, searching for him.

" 'Where are they?' the Bard exclaimed.

" 'They? Who?' said the father.

" 'The old man and the beautiful young girl. I want to return the violin to him.'

"They searched but could find no trace of them.

"From that time on his singing and playing became finer and more ecstatic. The people of the city clamored for the *gabaim* (elders) to elevate the Bard as head cantor of the great

synagogue. But as the rules stated that only a married man could occupy so high a position, Joel David, though only eighteen years old, was married off by his father to the only daughter of the *gevir* (rich man) of Vilna.

"As the result of this marriage, two sons were born.

"The Bard now surrounded himself with a large choir of young boys, whom he trained not only to sing, but to imitate musical instruments. Thus he had a singing choir and also an orchestra to accompany him on holidays and special services.

"Well—you see us. We three are the last survivors of this orchestra. After the death of the martyr, the choir and orchestra disappeared. For about half a century the great synagogue of Vilna had no permanent cantor. There was no one who could fill his place. We also drifted into other vocations, and now that we are growing old and feeble, we are making rounds of the different synagogues to play his sacred melodies and perpetuate his memory. Oh!—how we did love him. . . ."

* * *

The old man stopped, tears shining in his eyes.

"But, how about the Bard himself? How did he live? How did he die? Why a martyr?" I asked.

"Friend, you only bargained to be told our achievement. I fulfilled your desire and our promise."

However, I was anxious to know more about this mystic Bard of Vilna, so I offered another half ruble to each for the whole story, which was continued by another of the trio. The first, overcome by emotion, silently stood by lost in his own memories.

III.

"The fame of this genius spread far and wide not only among Jews but among many Christians as well. It became the popular belief that King David and his beloved Bath Sheba had to pay penance for their sin, and were sent down upon this earth until the King could find an earthly successor as bard in the service of God. King David, having found the Vilna Bard, had lured him to the forest, and there bestowed upon him all his own musical gifts and presented to him the divine instrument upon which he played the praises of the Creator.

"All this finally came to the ears of the governor-general of the city, who commanded the Bard of Vilna to appear on the stage of the city theatre in a concert of his own selection.

"We rehearsed until our master was satisfied that everything was perfect. Now the great day arrived. I can never forget it. We were all massed in the wings of the theatre, brilliantly lit up with myriads of candles. The place was packed with civilians and officers of all ranks. The loges, except the imperial one, were filled by beautiful women and high officials.

"The regular orchestra was playing Glinka's opera, "A Life for the Czar." Suddenly they stopped and began playing the Russian anthem. Everybody stood up, and the governor-general with his beautiful young daughter came into view in the imperial loge. The musicians finished the anthem and began a popular ballad. All sat down.

"When the orchestra had finished, the curtain began to rise for the appearance of our master. He was dressed in a dark blue velvet long coat with a sash. His breeches and stockings were pure white silk. His blue velvet sandals were adorned with silver buckles. His dark curly

hair was covered with a silver embroidered velvet cap. He looked like a veritable saint!

"He was standing in the back of the stage with his violin ready, and as the curtain stopped, the first notes of his divine instrument cleft the air. We accompanied him in his famous composition, 'On Account of Our Sins, We Are Exiled.' When he finished, the ovation was tremendous. His violin again sounded, but this time in the joyous prayer for rest and peace. Again the house came down. A few voices were heard clamoring for him to sing. The cry was taken up by many, and the master, still holding the violin, came forward.

"The audience was hushed. The Bard evidently was prepared to sing one of our holy songs to the accompaniment of his own instrument and our choral orchestra, when a bouquet of roses fell at his feet! He picked it up, and glancing towards the imperial loge, he beheld the smiling countenance of the governor-general's daughter.

"Instantly he saw the very image of the fairy in the woods. He became transfixed. He stood there on the stage like a stone statue. A deathly silence fell upon the audience, when the soothing voice of the princess was heard—

" 'Sing, Bard, sing!'

"At once he was transformed and began a song in Russian which we at the time knew nothing about. It ran:

Thou art to me my soul and strength,
Thou art to me a fire holy,
Thou hast revealed a new life to me,
Angel mine, God watch over thee!

"The regular theatre orchestra took up the accompaniment. The theatre burst into applause and bravos. He continued singing, but not holy songs. He sang in German from what we now know as Don Juan:

Dich zu besitzen habe ich Heldenkrafts,
Dich zu verlieren—keine. . . .

"When he finally finished, he fell exhausted into a chair on the stage. The curtain was rung down. Again he was surrounded by the notables of the city and congratulated upon his triumph.

"Before he left an adjutant handed him an invitation to come to the governor-general's palace, which really meant a command.

"At the palace he was ushered into the music room where the beautiful princess was playing an operatic aria. When she finished, she extended her hand to him to be kissed.

" 'How do you like my playing?' she asked him.

" 'It was marvelous,' he answered, 'but you or the composer made an error in the composition.' At her request he played the aria on his violin as the composition should have sounded.

"Their friendship grew. She engaged him as her teacher. He still kept performing his duties at the great synagogue, but at times we noticed that he would go off by himself in deep thought, tears streaming down his beautiful face, the cheeks of which were becoming paler and paler.

"The governor-general also noticed that the attachment of his daughter to this Jew was becoming too strong, and he asked his imperial master to transfer him to another city. He became governor-general of Warsaw.

"Our Bard became melancholy. . . .

"However, one day he received a command to come to Warsaw and give a concert there on the stage of the Imperial Theatre. The summons was obeyed without delay. We

noticed his feverish preparations for the concert. His cheeks regained their natural glow. He went to Warsaw alone. What happened there I cannot tell, but our third companion, whose father was a merchant buying his wares in Warsaw took him along on the trip, and he perhaps can tell you you more than I. . . ."

IV.

"Yes, I was in Warsaw at the time of the great concert of our master. What shall I say? If the triumph in Vilna was great, his triumph in Warsaw was like a crown of glory. The concert was given, but he remained at Warsaw. I truly believe that Bath Sheba, whose spirit hovered in the governor-general's daughter, took possession of the soul of our master.

"His dress and appearance had changed. He no more officiated as cantor, or sang the holy songs of our religion, but employed the operatic music of the day. Much of his time, of course, he spent with the maid who had bewitched him.

"Finally his father came for him. What took place between father and son, I do not know. But—the master returned with his father to

Vilna. When we saw him again in Vilna he was wan and emaciated. No more could he play the holy songs, though many times he tried. The violin would not emit the old sounds. Once, while again attempting to play, 'For Our Sins We Have Become Exiles,' the violin string burst, the instrument fell to the floor, and was broken into pieces.

"The *gabaim* (elders) of Vilna called a meeting, and it was decided that he should divorce his wife and go to Italy to recuperate. Rather than see him die of a broken heart in Vilna, they wanted him to travel the continent and do as he saw best.

"One twilight evening I dropped in at the great synagogue to recite the prayers. I saw the master standing in one dark corner of the holy edifice. He evidently was reciting the prayers of penitence, for he was beating his chest with his clenched fists. As the night advanced and all the prayers had been recited, the people gradually forsook the place of worship. But I could not tear myself away.

"I sat on one of the benches and waited for him to finish his devotions. Suddenly I heard the same sweet voice of our master in a holy song asking the Lord for forgiveness, and it

seemed as though the angels themselves came to answer his prayers.

"When he finished he fell to the floor. I rushed to him.

"His pure soul had taken up its abode under the holy wings of the *Shechina* (Holy Presence). He was a true martyr to his duty to God."

* * *

"Do you know what became of the princess?" I asked.

"Yes, I know. She was at his funeral and so were all the great men of the city of Vilna. She erected a beautiful monument over his grave, and herself entered a convent. Hers also was a pure, true love. . . ."

ERRATA

(The numbers refer to the pages)

42, ruby for rubby; 49, miracle for mircle; 59, will for wil; 123, *Hanovim* for *Hanaim;* 163, *shapka* for *skapa;* 164, *sorok* for *sorak;* 165, Sacharoff for Sacheroff; 170, *prostchailny* for *prostchaieny;* 171, *nyeschastni* for *nuschastni;* 188, Georgenburg for Georgenberg; 209, 210, *bahyoushky, bahyou* for *biyushki, biyu;* 243 godsend for Godsend; *Mahrtzovo* for *maitzovah;* 244, *Vashe, vysoko blagorodyeh* for *Vashi, vysoko blagokoderah* and *Uzs otzen blagodahren* for *Usz ochen blarodaren*; 149, *Da, pravda, choroshaya* for *Dypravda, chorashaya;* 252, *druszba* for *druszka;* 255, 275, *bratetz* for *bratitz;* 258, *Menschen* for *menschen* and *Tagen* for *tagen;* 266, synagogue for syanogogue; 279, degrees for titles; 302, escorted for escort; 322, *Welt* for *welt,* and *Brodt hätte* for *Brod hatte;* 334, *Heldenkräfte* for *Heldenkrafts;* 336, line 7, omit extra "you."