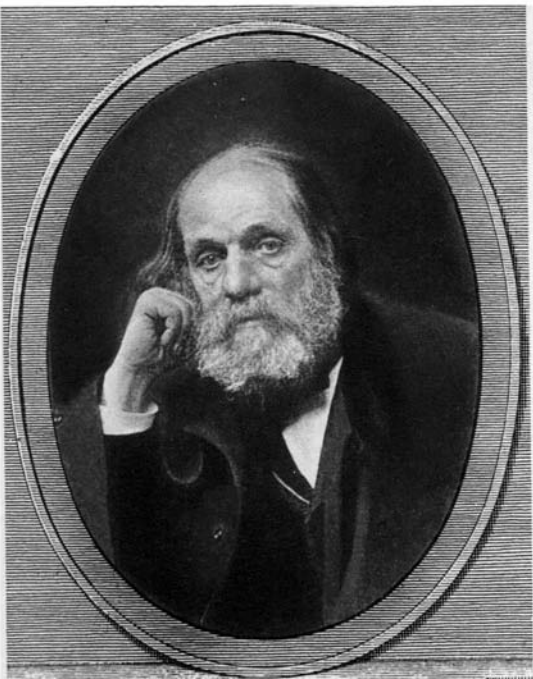


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FICTION

44

Library of
Little Masterpieces



Edward E. Hale

Mrs H. M. Little

Library of
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In Forty-four Volumes

FICTION

Edited by
HAMILTON W. MABIE



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Library of
Little Masterpieces

THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY*

BY

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

I SUPPOSE that very few casual readers of the *New York Herald* of August 13, 1863, observed, in an obscure corner, among the "Deaths," the announcement:

"NOLAN. Died, on board U. S. Corvette *Levant*, Lat. 2° 11' S., Long. 131° W., on the 11th of May, PHILIP NOLAN."

I happened to observe it, because I was stranded at the old Mission House in Mackinaw, waiting for a Lake Superior steamer which did not choose to come, and I was devouring to the very stubble all the current literature I could get hold of, even down to the deaths and marriages in the *Herald*. My memory for names and people is good, and the reader will see, as he goes on, that I had reason enough to remember Philip Nolan. There are hundreds of readers who would have paused at that announcement, if the officer of the *Levant* who reported it had chosen to make it thus: "Died, May, 11, THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY." For it was as "The Man Without a Country" that poor Philip Nolan

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had generally been known by the officers who had him in charge during some fifty years, as, indeed, by all the men who sailed under them. I dare say there is many a man who has taken wine with him once a fortnight, in a three-years' cruise, who never knew that his name was "Nolan," or whether the poor wretch had any name at all.

There can now be no possible harm in telling this poor creature's story. Reason enough there has been till now, ever since Madison's administration went out in 1817, for very strict secrecy, the secrecy of honour itself, among the gentlemen of the navy who have had Nolan in successive charge. And certainly it speaks well for the *esprit de corps* of the profession, and the personal honour of its members, that to the press this man's story has been wholly unknown—and, I think, to the country at large also. I have reason to think, from some investigations I made in the Naval Archives when I was attached to the Bureau of Construction, that every official report relating to him was burned when Ross burned the public buildings at Washington. One of the Tuckers, or possibly one of the Watsons, had Nolan in charge at the end of the war; and when, on returning from his cruise, he reported at Washington to one of the Crowninshields, —who was in the Navy Department when he came home—he found that the Department ignored the whole business. Whether they really knew nothing about it, or whether it was a

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"*Non mi ricordo*," determined on as a piece of policy, I do not know. But this I do know, that since 1817, and possibly before, no naval officer has mentioned Nolan in his report of a cruise.

But, as I say, there is no need for secrecy any longer. And now the poor creature is dead, it seems to me worth while to tell a little of his story, by way of showing young Americans of to-day what it is to be A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

Philip Nolan was as fine a young officer as there was in the "Legion of the West," as the Western division of our army was then called. When Aaron Burr made his first dashing expedition down to New Orleans in 1805, at Fort Massac, or somewhere above on the river, he met, as the Devil would have it, this gay, dashing, bright young fellow; at some dinner-party, I think. Burr marked him, talked to him, walked with him, took him a day or two's voyage in his flat-boat, and, in short, fascinated him. For the next year, barrack-life was very tame to poor Nolan. He occasionally availed himself of the permission the great man had given him to write to him. Long, high-worded, stilted letters the poor boy wrote and rewrote and copied. But never a line did he have in reply from the gay deceiver. The other boys in the garrison sneered at him, because he sacrificed in this unrequited affection for a politician the time which they devoted to

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Monongahela, hazard, and high-low-jack. Bourbon, euchre, and poker were still unknown. But one day Nolan had his revenge. This time Burr came down the river, not as an attorney seeking a place for his office, but as a disguised conqueror. He had defeated I know not how many district-attorneys; he had dined at I know not how many public dinners; he had been heralded in I know not how many Weekly Arguses, and it was rumoured that he had an army behind him and an empire before him. It was a great day—his arrival—to poor Nolan. Burr had not been at the fort an hour before he sent for him. That evening he asked Nolan to take him out in his skiff, to show him a canebrake or a cottonwood tree, as he said—really to seduce him; and by the time the sail was over, Nolan was enlisted body and soul. From that time, though he did not yet know it, he lived as A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

What Burr meant to do I know no more than you, dear reader. It is none of our business just now. Only, when the grand catastrophe came, and Jefferson and the House of Virginia of that day undertook to break on the wheel all the possible Clarences of the then House of York, by the great treason trial at Richmond, some of the lesser fry in that distant Mississippi Valley, which was farther from us than Puget's Sound is to-day, introduced the like novelty on their provincial stage; and, to while away the monotony of the summer at Fort Adams, got up, for *spectacles*,

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a string of court-martials on the officers there. One and another of the colonels and majors were tried, and, to fill out the list, little Nolan, against whom, Heaven knows, there was evidence enough—that he was sick of the service, had been willing to be false to it, and would have obeyed any order to march any-whither with any one who would follow him had the order been signed, “By command of His Exc. A. Burr.” The courts dragged on. The big flies escaped—rightly, for all I know. Nolan was proved guilty enough, as I say. Yet you and I would never have heard of him, reader, but that, when the president of the court asked him at the close whether he wished to say anything to show that he had always been faithful to the United States, he cried out, in a fit of frenzy:

“Damn the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!”

I suppose he did not know how the words shocked old Colonel Morgan, who was holding the court. Half the officers who sat in it had served through the Revolution, and their lives, not to say their necks, had been risked for the very idea which he so cavalierly cursed in his madness. He, on his part, had grown up in the West of those days, in the midst of “Spanish plot,” “Orleans plot,” and all the rest. He had been educated on a plantation where the finest company was a Spanish officer or a French merchant from Orleans. His education, such as it was, had been perfected in commercial expedi-

tions to Vera Cruz, and I think he told me his father once hired an Englishman to be a private tutor for a winter on the plantation. He had spent half his youth with an older brother, hunting horses in Texas, and, in a word, to him "United States" was scarcely a reality. Yet he had been fed by "United States" for all the years since he had been in the army. He had sworn on his faith as a Christian to be true to "United States." It was "United States" which gave him the uniform he wore, and the sword by his side. Nay, my poor Nolan, it was only because "United States" had picked you out first as one of her own confidential men of honour that "A. Burr" cared for you a straw more than for the flat-boat men who sailed his ark for him. I do not excuse Nolan; I only explain to the reader why he damned his country, and wished he might never hear her name again.

He heard her name but once again. From that moment, September 23, 1807, till the day he died, May 11, 1863, he never heard her name again. For that half-century and more he was a man without a country.

Old Morgan, as I said, was terribly shocked. If Nolan had compared George Washington to Benedict Arnold, or had cried "God save King George," Morgan would not have felt worse. He called the court into his private room, and returned in fifteen minutes, with a face like a sheet, to say:

"Prisoner, hear the sentence of the Court!

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The Court decides, subject to the approval of the President, that you never hear the name of the United States again."

Nolan laughed. But nobody else laughed. Old Morgan was too solemn, and the whole room was hushed dead as night for a minute. Even Nolan lost his swagger in a moment. Then Morgan added:

"Mr. Marshal, take the prisoner to Orleans in an armed boat, and deliver him to the naval commander there."

The marshal gave his orders and the prisoner was taken out of court.

"Mr. Marshal," continued old Morgan, "see that no one mentions the United States to the prisoner. Mr. Marshal, make my respects to Lieutenant Mitchell at Orleans, and request him to order that no one shall mention the United States to the prisoner while he is on board ship. You will receive your written orders from the officer on duty here this evening. The court is adjourned without day."

I have always supposed that Colonel Morgan himself took the proceedings of the court to Washington city and explained them to Mr. Jefferson. Certain it is that the President approved them—certain, that is, if I may believe the men who say they have seen his signature. Before the *Nautilus* got round from New Orleans to the northern Atlantic coast with the prisoner on board, the sentence had been approved, and he was a man without a country.

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The plan then adopted was substantially the same which was necessarily followed ever after. Perhaps it was suggested by the necessity of sending him by water from Fort Adams and Orleans. The Secretary of the Navy—it must have been the first Crowninshield, though he is a man I do not remember—was requested to put Nolan on board a government vessel bound on a long cruise, and to direct that he should be only so far confined there as to make it certain that he never saw or heard of the country. We had few long cruises then, and the navy was very much out of favour; and as almost all of this story is traditional, as I have explained, I do not know certainly what his first cruise was. But the commander to whom he was intrusted—perhaps it was Tingey or Shaw, though I think it was one of the younger men (we are all old enough now)—regulated the etiquette and the precautions of the affair, and according to his scheme they were carried out, I suppose, till Nolan died.

When I was second officer of the *Intrepid*, some thirty years after, I saw the original paper of instructions. I have been sorry ever since that I did not copy the whole of it. It ran, however, much in this way:

“WASHINGTON (with a date, which must have been late in 1807).

“*Sir*: You will receive from Lieutenant Neale the person of Philip Nolan, late a lieutenant in the United States Army.

“This person on his trial by court-martial

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expressed, with an oath, the wish that he might 'never hear of the United States again.'

"The Court sentenced him to have his wish fulfilled.

"For the present, the execution of the order is intrusted by the President to this Department.

"You will take the prisoner on board your ship, and keep him there with such precautions as shall prevent his escape.

"You will provide him with such quarters, rations, and clothing as would be proper for an officer of his late rank if he were a passenger on your vessel on the business of his Government.

"The gentlemen on board will make any arrangements agreeable to themselves regarding his society. He is to be exposed to no indignity of any kind, nor is he ever unnecessarily to be reminded that he is a prisoner.

"But under no circumstances is he ever to hear of his country or to see any information regarding it; and you will especially caution all the officers under your command to take care, that, in the various indulgences which may be granted, this rule, in which his punishment is involved, shall not be broken.

"It is the intention of the Government that he shall never again see the country which he has disowned. Before the end of your cruise you will receive orders which will give effect to this intention.

"Respectfully yours,

"W. SOUTHARD, for the

"Secretary of the Navy."

If I had only preserved the whole of this paper, there would be no break in the beginning of my sketch of this story. For Captain Shaw, if it were he, handed it to his successor in the charge, and he to his, and I suppose the commander of

the *Levant* has it to-day as his authority for keeping this man in this mild custody.

The rule adopted on board the ships on which I have met "the man without a country" was, I think, transmitted from the beginning. No mess liked to have him permanently, because his presence cut off all talk of home or of the prospect of return, of politics or letters, or peace or of war—cut off more than half the talk men liked to have at sea. But it was always thought too hard that he should never meet the rest of us, except to touch hats, and we finally sank into one system. He was not permitted to talk with the men, unless an officer was by. With officers he had unrestrained intercourse, as far as they and he chose. But he grew shy, though he had favourites: I was one. Then the captain always asked him to dinner on Monday. Every mess in succession took up the invitation in its turn. According to the size of the ship, you had him at your mess more or less often at dinner. His breakfast he ate in his own state-room—which was where a sentinel or somebody on the watch could see the door. And whatever else he ate or drank, he ate or drank alone. Sometimes, when the marines or sailors had any special jollification, they were permitted to invite "Plain-Buttons, as they called him. Then Nolan was sent with some officer, and the men were forbidden to speak of home while he was there. I believe the theory was that the sight of his punishment did them good.

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They called him "Plain-Buttons," because, while he always chose to wear a regulation army uniform, he was not permitted to wear the army button, for the reason that it bore either the initials or the insignia of the country he had disowned.

I remember, soon after I joined the navy, I was on shore with some of the older officers from our ship and from the *Brandywine* which we had met at Alexandria. We had leave to make a party and go up to Cairo and the Pyramids. As we jogged along (you went on donkeys then), some of the gentlemen (we boys called them "Dons," but the phrase was long since changed) fell to talking about Nolan, and some one told the system which was adopted from the first about his books and other reading. As he was almost never permitted to go on shore, even though the vessel lay in port for months, his time at the best hung heavy; and everybody was permitted to lend him books, if they were not published in America and made no allusion to it. These were common enough in the old days, when people in the other hemisphere talked of the United States as little as we do of Paraguay. He had almost all the foreign papers that came into the ship, sooner or later; only somebody must go over them first, and cut out any advertisement or stray paragraph that alluded to America. This was a little cruel sometimes, when the back of what was cut out might be as innocent as Hesiod. Right in the

midst of one of Napoleon's battles, or one of Canning's speeches, poor Nolan would find a great hole, because on the back of the page of that paper there had been an advertisement of a packet for New York, or a scrap from the President's message! I say this was the first time I ever heard of this plan, which afterward I had enough and more than enough to do with. I remember it, because poor Phillips, who was of the party, as soon as the allusion to reading was made, told a story of something which happened at the Cape of Good Hope on Nolan's first voyage; and it is the only thing I ever knew of that voyage. They had touched at the Cape, and had done the civil thing with the English Admiral and the fleet, and then, leaving for a long cruise up the Indian Ocean, Phillips had borrowed a lot of English books from an officer, which, in those days, as indeed in these, was quite a windfall. Among them, as the Devil would order, was the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which they had all of them heard of, but which most of them had never seen. I think it could not have been published long. Well, nobody thought there could be any risk of anything national in that, though Phillips swore old Shaw had cut out the "Tempest" from Shakespeare before he let Nolan have it, because he said "the Bermudas ought to be ours, and, by Jove, should be one day." So Nolan was permitted to join the circle one afternoon when a lot of them sat on deck smoking and reading aloud.

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People do not do such things so often now, but when I was young we got rid of a great deal of time so. Well, so it happened that in his turn Nolan took the book and read to the others, and he read very well, as I know. Nobody in the circle knew a line of the poem, only it was all magic and Border chivalry, and was a thousand years ago. Poor Nolan read steadily through the fifth canto, stopped a minute and drank something, and then began, without a thought of what was coming.

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,”—

It seems impossible to us that anybody ever heard this for the first time; but all these fellows did then, and poor Nolan himself went on, still unconsciously or mechanically:

“This is my own, my native land!”

Then they all saw something was to pay; but he expected to get through, I suppose, turned a little pale, but plunged on:

“Whose heart hath ne’er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?—
If such there breathe, go, mark him well,”—

By this time the men were all beside themselves, wishing there was any way to make him turn over two pages. But he had not quite presence of mind for that; he gagged a little, coloured crimson, and staggered on:

“For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentrated all in self,”—

and here the poor fellow choked, could not go on, but started up, swung the book into the sea, vanished into his state-room, “And by Jove,” said Phillips, “we did not see him for two months again. And I had to make up some beggarly story to that English surgeon why I did not return his Walter Scott to him.”

The story shows about the time when Nolan's braggadocio must have broken down. At first, they said, he took a very high tone, considered his imprisonment a mere farce, affected to enjoy the voyage, and all that; but Phillips said that after he came out of his state-room he never was the same man again. He never read aloud again, unless it was the Bible or Shakespeare, or something else he was sure of. But it was not that merely. He never entered in with the other young men exactly as a companion again. He was always shy afterward, when I knew him, very seldom spoke, unless he was spoken to, except to a very few friends. He lighted up occasionally—I remember late in his life hearing him fairly eloquent on something which had been suggested to him by one of Fléchier's sermons—but generally he had the nervous, tired look of a heart-wounded man.

When Captain Shaw was coming home—if,

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as I say, it was Shaw—rather to the surprise of everybody they made one of the Windward Islands, and lay off and on for nearly a week. The boys said the officers were sick of salt-junk, and meant to have turtle-soup before they came home. But after several days the *Warren* came to the same rendezvous; they exchanged signals; she sent to Phillips and these homeward-bound men letters and papers, and told them she was outward-bound, perhaps to the Mediterranean, and took poor Nolan and his traps on the boat back to try his second cruise. He looked very blank when he was told to get ready to join her. He had known enough of the signs of the sky to know that till that moment he was going “home.” But this was a distinct evidence of something he had not thought of, perhaps—that there was no going home for him, even to a prison. And this was the first of some twenty such transfers, which brought him sooner or later into half our best vessels, but which kept him all his life at least some hundred miles from the country he had hoped he might never hear of again.

It may have been on that second cruise—it was once when he was up the Mediterranean—that Mrs. Graff, the celebrated Southern beauty of those days, danced with him. They had been lying a long time in the Bay of Naples, and the officers were very intimate in the English fleet, and there had been great festivities, and our men thought they must give a great ball on

board the ship. How they ever did it on board the *Warren* I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was not the *Warren*, or perhaps ladies did not take up so much room as they do now. They wanted to use Nolan's state-room for something, and they hated to do it without asking him to the ball; so the captain said they might ask him, if they would be responsible that he did not talk with the wrong people, "who would give him intelligence." So the dance went on, the finest party that had ever been known, I dare say; for I never heard of a man-of-war ball that was not. For ladies they had the family of the American consul, one or two travellers who had adventured so far, and a nice bevy of English girls and matrons, perhaps Lady Hamilton herself.

Well, different officers relieved each other in standing and talking with Nolan in a friendly way, so as to be sure that nobody else spoke to him. The dancing went on with spirit, and after a while even the fellows who took this honorary guard of Nolan ceased to fear any *contretemps*. Only when some English lady—Lady Hamilton, as I said, perhaps—called for a set of "American dances," an odd thing happened. Everybody then danced contra-dances. The black band, nothing loath, conferred as to what "American dances" were, and started off with "Virginia Reel," which they followed with "Money-Musk," which, in its turn in those days, should have been followed by "The Old Thirteen." But just as

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Dick, the leader, tapped for his fiddles to begin, and bent forward, about to say, in true negro state, "'The Old Thirteen,' gentlemen and ladies!" as he had said "'Virginny Reel,' if you please!" and "'Money-Musk,' if you please!" the captain's boy tapped him on the shoulder, whispered to him, and he did not announce the name of the dance. He merely bowed, began on the air, and they all fell to—the officers teaching the English girls the figure, but not telling them why it had no name.

But that is not the story I started to tell. As the dancing went on, Nolan and our fellows all got at ease, as I said—so much so, that it seemed quite natural for him to bow to that splendid Mrs. Graff, and say:

"I hope you have not forgotten me, Miss Rutledge. Shall I have the honour of dancing?"

He did it so quickly that Fellows, who was with him, could not hinder him. She laughed and said:

"I am not Miss Rutledge any longer, Mr. Nolan, but I will dance all the same," just nodded to Fellows, as if to say he must leave Mr. Nolan to her, and led him off to the place where the dance was forming.

Nolan thought he had got his chance. He had known her at Philadelphia, and at other places had met her, and this was a Godsend. You could not talk in contra-dances, as you do in cotillions, or even in the pauses of waltzing, but there were chances for tongues and sounds,

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as well as for eyes and blushes. He began with her travels, and Europe, and Vesuvius, and the French, and then, when they had worked down, and had that long talking time at the bottom of the set, he said boldly, a little pale, she said, as she told me the story years after:

"And what do you hear from home, Mrs. Graff?"

And that splendid creature looked through him. Jove! how she must have looked through him!

"Home!! Mr. Nolan!!! I thought you were the man who never wanted to hear of home again!" And she walked directly up the deck to her husband, and left poor Nolan alone, as he always was. He did not dance again. I cannot give any history of him in order; nobody can now, and, indeed, I am not trying to.

These are the traditions, which I sort out, as I believe them, from the myths which have been told about this man for forty years. The lies that have been told about him are legion. The fellows used to say he was the "Iron Mask," and poor George Pons went to his grave in the belief that this was the author of "Junius," who was being punished for his celebrated libel on Thomas Jefferson. Pons was not very strong in the historical line.

A happier story than either of these I have told is of the war. That came along soon after. I have heard this affair told in three or four ways, and, indeed, it may have happened more

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than once. But which ship it was on I cannot tell. However, in one, at least, of the great frigate-duels with the English, in which the navy was really baptised, it happened that a round-shot from the enemy entered one of our ports square, and took right down the officer of the gun himself, and almost every man of the gun's crew. Now you may say what you choose about courage, but that is not a nice thing to see. But, as the men who were not killed picked themselves up, and as they and the surgeon's people were carrying off the bodies, there appeared Nolan, in his shirt-sleeves, with the rammer in his hand, and, just as if he had been the officer, told them off with authority—who should go to the cock-pit with the wounded men, who should stay with him—perfectly cheery, and with that way which makes men feel sure all is right and is going to be right. And he finished loading the gun with his own hands, aimed it, and bade the men fire. And there he stayed, captain of that gun, keeping those fellows in spirits, till the enemy struck, sitting on the carriage while the gun was cooling, though he was exposed all the time, showing them easier ways to handle heavy shot, making the raw hands laugh at their own blunders, and when the gun cooled again, getting it loaded and fired twice as often as any other gun on the ship. The captain walked forward by way of encouraging the men, and Nolan touched his hat and said:

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"I am showing them how we do this in the artillery, sir."

And this is the part of the story where all the legends agree. The commodore said:

"I see you do, and I thank you, sir; and I shall never forget this day, sir, and you never shall, sir."

And after the whole thing was over, and he had the Englishman's sword, in the midst of the state and ceremony of the quarter-deck, he said:

"Where is Mr. Nolan? Ask Mr. Nolan to come here."

And when Nolan came, he said:

"Mr. Nolan, we are all very grateful to you to-day; you are one of us to-day; you will be named in the despatches."

And then the old man took off his own sword of ceremony, and gave it to Nolan, and made him put it on. The man told me this who saw it. Nolan cried like a baby, and well he might. He had not worn a sword since that infernal day at Fort Adams. But always afterward, on occasions of ceremony, he wore that quaint old French sword of the commodore's.

The captain did mention him in the despatches. It was always said he asked that he might be pardoned. He wrote a special letter to the Secretary of War. But nothing ever came of it. As I said, that was about the time when they began to ignore the whole transaction at Washington, and when Nolan's imprisonment began

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to carry itself on because there was nobody to stop it without any new orders from home.

I have heard it said that he was with Porter when he took possession of the Nukahiva Islands. Not this Porter, you know, but old Porter, his father, Essex Porter—that is, the old Essex Porter, not this Essex. As an artillery officer, who had seen service in the West, Nolan knew more about fortifications, embrasures, ravelins, stockades, and all that, than any of them did; and he worked with a right good-will in fixing that battery all right. I have always thought it was a pity Porter did not leave him in command there with Gamble. That would have settled all the question about his punishment. We should have kept the islands, and at this moment we should have one station in the Pacific Ocean. Our French friends, too, when they wanted this little watering-place, would have found it was preoccupied. But Madison and the Virginians, of course, flung all that away.

All that was near fifty years ago. If Nolan was thirty then, he must have been near eighty when he died. He looked sixty when he was forty. But he never seemed to me to change a hair afterward. As I imagine his life, from what I have seen and heard of it, he must have been in every sea, and yet almost never on land. He must have known, in a formal way, more officers in our service than any man living knows. He told me once, with a grave smile, that no man in the world lived so methodical a life as he. "You

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know the boys say I am the Iron Mask, and you know how busy he was." He said it did not do for any one to try to read all the time, more than to do anything else all the time, but that he read just five hours a day. "Then," he said, "I keep up my note-books, writing in them at such and such hours from what I have been reading, and I include in these my scrap-books." These were very curious indeed. He had six or eight, of different subjects. There was one of History, one of Natural Science, one which he called "Odds and Ends." But they were not merely books of extracts from newspapers. They had bits of plants and ribbons, shells tied on, and carved scraps of bone and wood, which he had taught the men to cut for him, and they were beautifully illustrated. He drew admirably. He had some of the funniest drawings there, and some of the most pathetic, that I have ever seen in my life. I wonder who will have Nolan's scrap-books.

Well, he said his reading and his notes were his profession, and that they took five hours and two hours respectively of each day. "Then," said he, "every man should have a diversion as well as a profession. My Natural History is my diversion." That took two hours a day more. The men used to bring him birds and fish, but on a long cruise he had to satisfy himself with centipedes and cockroaches and such small game. He was the only naturalist I ever met who knew anything about the habits of the house-fly and

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the mosquito. All those people can tell you whether they are *Lepidoptera* or *Steptopotera*; but as for telling how you can get rid of them, or how they get away from you when you strike at them—why, Linnæus knew as little of that as John Foy, the idiot, did.

These nine hours made Nolan's regular daily "occupation." The rest of the time he talked or walked. Till he grew very old, he went aloft a great deal. He always kept up his exercise, and I never heard that he was ill. If any other man was ill, he was the kindest nurse in the world; and he knew more than half the surgeons do. Then, if anybody was sick or died, or if the captain wanted him to, on any other occasion, he was always ready to read prayers. I have said that he read beautifully.

My own acquaintance with Philip Nolan began six or eight years after the English war, on my first voyage after I was appointed a midshipman. It was in the first days after our Slave-Trade treaty, while the Reigning House, which was still the House of Virginia, had still a sort of sentimentalism about the suppression of the horrors of the Middle Passage, and something was sometimes done that way. We were in the South Atlantic on that business. From the time I joined, I believe I thought Nolan was a sort of lay chaplain—a chaplain with a blue coat. I never asked about him. Everything in the ship was strange to me. I knew it was green to ask questions, and I suppose I thought there

was a "Plain-Buttons" on every ship. We had him to dine in our mess once a week, and the caution was given that on that day nothing was to be said about home. But if they had told us not to say anything about the planet Mars or the Book of Deuteronomy, I should not have asked why; there were a great many things which seemed to me to have as little reason.

I first came to understand anything about "the man without a country" one day when we overhauled a dirty little schooner which had slaves on board. An officer was sent to take charge of her, and, after a few minutes, he sent back his boat to ask that some one might be sent him who could speak Portuguese. We were all looking over the rail when the message came, and we all wished we could interpret, when the captain asked who spoke Portuguese. But none of the officers did, and just as the captain was sending forward to ask if any of the people could, Nolan stepped out and said he should be glad to interpret, if the captain wished, as he understood the language. The captain thanked him, fitted out another boat with him, and in this boat it was my luck to go. When we got there, it was such a scene as you seldom see, and never want to. Nastiness beyond account, and chaos run loose in the midst of the nastiness. There were not a great many of the negroes; but by way of making what there were understand that they were free, Vaughan had had their hand-cuffs and ankle-cuffs knocked off, and, for convenience's

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sake, was putting them upon the rascals of the schooner's crew. The negroes were, most of them, out of the hold, and swarming all round the dirty deck, with a central throng surrounding Vaughan and addressing him in every dialect, and *patois* of a dialect, from the Zulu click up to the Parisian of Beledeljereed.

As we came on deck, Vaughan looked down from a hogshead, on which he had mounted in desperation, and said:

"For God's love, is there anybody who can make these wretches understand something? The men gave them rum, and that did not quiet them. I knocked that big fellow down twice, and that did not soothe him. And then I talked Choctaw to all of them together, and I'll be hanged if they understood that as well as they understood the English."

Nolan said he could speak Portuguese, and one or two fine-looking Kroomen were dragged out, who, as it had been found already, had worked for the Portuguese on the coast at Fernando Po.

"Tell them they are free," said Vaughan. "And tell them that these rascals are to be hanged as soon as we can get rope enough."

Nolan "put that into Spanish"—that is, he explained it in such Portuguese as the Kroomen could understand, and they in turn to such of the negroes as could understand them. Then there was such a yell of delight, clinching of fists, leaping and dancing, kissing of Nolan's

feet, and a general rush made to the hogshead by way of spontaneous worship of Vaughan, as the *deus ex machina* of the occasion.

"Tell them," said Vaughan, well pleased, "that I will take them all to Cape Palmas."

This did not answer so well. Cape Palmas was practically as far from the homes of most of them as New Orleans or Rio Janeiro was—that is, they would be eternally separated from home there. And their interpreters, as we could understand, instantly said, "*Ah, non Palmas,*" and began to propose infinite other expedients in most voluble language. Vaughan was rather disappointed at this result of his liberality, and asked Nolan eagerly what they said. The drops stood on poor Nolan's white forehead, as he hushed the men down, and said:

"He says, 'Not Palmas.' He says, 'Take us home, take us to our own country, take us to our own house, take us to our own pickaninnies and our own women.' He says he has an old father and mother who will die if they do not see him. And this one says he left his people all sick, and paddled down to Fernando to beg the white doctor to come and help them, and that these devils caught him in the bay just in sight of home, and that he has never seen anybody from home since then. And this one says," choked out Nolan, "that he has not heard a word from his home in six months, while he has been locked up in an infernal barracoon."

Vaughan always said he grew gray himself

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while Nolan struggled through this interpretation. I, who did not understand anything of the passion involved in it, saw that the very elements were melting with fervent heat, and that something was to pay somewhere. Even the negroes themselves stopped howling, as they saw Nolan's agony, and Vaughan's almost equal agony of sympathy. As quick as he could get words, he said:

"Tell them yes, yes, yes; tell them they shall go to the Mountains of the Moon, if they will. If I sail the schooner through the Great White Desert, they shall go home!"

And after some fashion Nolan said so. And then they all fell to kissing him again, and wanted to rub his nose with theirs.

But he could not stand it long, and, getting Vaughan to say he might go back, he beckoned me down into our boat. As we lay back in the stern-sheets and the men gave way, he said to me: "Youngster, let that show you what it is to be without a family, without a home, and without a country. And if you are ever tempted to say a word or to do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your family, your home, and your country, pray God in his mercy to take you that instant home to his own heaven. Stick by your family, boy; forget you have a self, while you do everything for them. Think of your home, boy; write and send and talk about it. Let it be nearer and nearer to your thought the farther you have to travel from it; and rush

back to it when you are free, as that poor black slave is doing now. And for your country, boy," and the words rattled in his throat, "and for that flag," and he pointed to the ship, "never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look at another flag, never let a night pass but you pray God to bless that flag. Remember, boy, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers, and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother. Stand by Her, boy, as you would stand by your mother if those devils there had got hold of her to-day!"

I was frightened to death by his calm, hard passion, but I blundered out that I would, by all that was holy, and that I had never thought of doing anything else. He hardly seemed to hear me, but he did, almost in a whisper, say: "Oh, if anybody had said so to me when I was of your age!"

I think it was this half-confidence of his, which I never abused, for I never told this story till now, which afterward made us great friends. He was very kind to me. Often he sat up, or even got up, at night, to walk the deck with me, when it was my watch. He explained to me a great deal of my mathematics, and I owe to him my taste for mathematics. He lent me books,

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and helped me about my reading. He never alluded so directly to his story again, but from one and another officer I have learned, in thirty years, what I am telling. When we parted from him in St. Thomas harbour, at the end of our cruise, I was more sorry than I can tell. I was very glad to meet him again in 1830; and later in life, when I thought I had some influence in Washington, I moved heaven and earth to have him discharged. But it was like getting a ghost out of prison. They pretended there was no such man, and never was such a man. They will say so at the Department now! Perhaps they do not know. It will not be the first thing in the service of which the Department appears to know nothing!

There is a story that Nolan met Burr once on one of our vessels, when a party of Americans came on board in the Mediterranean. But this I believe to be a lie; or, rather, it is a myth, *ben trovato*, involving a tremendous blowing-up with which he sunk Burr, asking him how he liked to be "without a country." But it is clear from Burr's life that nothing of the sort could have happened, and I mention this only as an illustration of the stories which get a-going where there is the least mystery at bottom.

So poor Philip Nolan had his wish fulfilled. I know but one fate more dreadful: it is the fate reserved for those men who shall have one day to exile themselves from their country because they have attempted her ruin, and

shall have at the same time to see the prosperity and honour to which she rises when she has rid herself of them and their iniquities. The wish of poor Nolan, as we all learned to call him, not because his punishment was too great, but because his repentance was so clear, was precisely the wish of every Bragg and Beauregard who broke a soldier's oath two years ago, and of every Maury and Barron who broke a sailor's. I do not know how often they have repented. I do know that they have done all that in them lay that they might have no country, that all the honours, associations, memories, and hopes which belong to "country" might be broken up into little shreds and distributed to the winds. I know, too, that their punishment, as they vegetate through what is left of life to them in wretched Boulognes and Leicester Squares, where they are destined to upbraid each other till they die, will have all the agony of Nolan's, with the added pang that every one who sees them will see them to despise and to execrate them. They will have their wish, like him.

For him, poor fellow, he repented of his folly, and then, like a man, submitted to the fate he had asked for. He never intentionally added to the difficulty or delicacy of the charge of those who had him in hold. Accidents would happen, but they never happened from his fault. Lieutenant Truxton told me that, when Texas was annexed, there was a careful discussion among the officers, whether they should get hold of

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Nolan's handsome set of maps and cut Texas out of it—from the map of the world and the map of Mexico. The United States had been cut out when the atlas was bought for him. But it was voted, rightly enough, that to do this would be virtually to reveal to him what had happened, or, as Harry Cole said, to make him think Old Burr had succeeded. So it was from no fault of Nolan's that a great botch happened at my own table, when, for a short time, I was in command of the *George Washington* corvette, on the South American station. We were lying in the La Plata, and some of the officers, who had been on shore and had just joined again, were entertaining us with accounts of their misadventures in riding the half-wild horses of Buenos Ayres. Nolan was at table, and was in an unusually bright and talkative mood. Some story of a tumble reminded him of an adventure of his own when he was catching wild horses in Texas with his adventurous cousin, at a time when he must have been quite a boy. He told the story with a good deal of spirit—so much so, that the silence which often follows a good story hung over the table for an instant, to be broken by Nolan himself. For he asked perfectly unconsciously:

“Pray, what has become of Texas? After the Mexicans got their independence, I thought that province of Texas would come forward very fast. It is really one of the finest regions on earth; it is the Italy of this continent. But I have not

seen or heard a word of Texas for near twenty years."

There were two Texan officers at the table. The reason he had never heard of Texas was that Texas and her affairs had been painfully cut out of his newspapers since Austin began his settlements, so that, while he read of Honduras and Tamaulipas, and, till quite lately, of California, this virgin province, in which his brother had travelled so far, and, I believe, had died, had ceased to be to him. Waters and Williams, the two Texas men, looked grimly at each other and tried not to laugh. Edward Morris had his attention attracted by the third link in the chain of the captain's chandelier. Watrous was seized with a convulsion of sneezing. Nolan himself saw that something was to pay, he did not know what. And I, as master of the feast, had to say:

"Texas is out of the map, Mr. Nolan. Have you seen Captain Back's curious account of Sir Thomas Roe's Welcome?"

After that cruise I never saw Nolan again. I wrote to him at least twice a year, for in that voyage we became even confidentially intimate; but he never wrote to me. The other men tell me that in those fifteen years he *aged* very fast, as well he might, indeed, but that he was still the same gentle, uncomplaining, silent sufferer that he ever was, bearing as best he could his self-appointed punishment—rather less social, perhaps, with new men whom he did not know,

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but more anxious, apparently, than ever to serve and befriend and teach the boys, some of whom fairly seemed to worship him. And now it seems the dear old fellow is dead. He has found a home at last, and a country.

Since writing this, and while considering whether or no I would print it, as a warning to the young Nolans and Vallandighams and Tannalls of to-day, I have received from Danforth, who is on board the *Levant*, a letter which gives an account of Nolan's last hours. It removes all my doubts about telling this story.

To understand the first words of the letter, the non-professional reader should remember that after 1817 the position of every officer who had Nolan in charge was one of the greatest delicacy. The government had failed to renew the order of 1807 regarding him. What was a man to do? Should he let him go? What, then, if he were called to account by the Department for violating the order of 1807? Should he keep him? What, then, if Nolan should be liberated some day, and should bring an action for false imprisonment or kidnapping against every man who had had him in charge? I urged and pressed this upon Southard, and I have reason to think that other officers did the same thing. But the Secretary always said, as they so often do at Washington, that there were no special orders to give, and that we must act on our own judgment. That means, "If you succeed, you will be sustained; if you fail, you

will be disavowed." Well, as Danforth says, all that is over now, though I do not know but I expose myself to a criminal prosecution on the evidence of the very revelation I am making.

Here is the letter:

"LEVANT, 2° 2' S. @ 131° W.

"*Dear Fred:* I try to find heart and life to tell you that it is all over with dear old Nolan. I have been with him on this voyage more than I ever was, and I can understand wholly now the way in which you used to speak of the dear old fellow. I could see that he was not strong, but I had no idea the end was so near. The doctor has been watching him very carefully, and yesterday morning came to me and told me that Nolan was not so well, and had not left his state-room—a thing I never remember before. He had let the doctor come and see him as he lay there—the first time the doctor had been in the state-room—and he said he should like to see me. Oh, dear! do you remember the mysteries we boys used to invent about his room in the old *Intrepid* days? Well, I went in, and there, to be sure, the poor fellow lay in his berth, smiling pleasantly as he gave me his hand, but looking very frail. I could not help a glance round, which showed me what a little shrine he had made of the box he was lying in. The Stars and Stripes were triced up above and around a picture of Washington, and he had painted a majestic eagle, with lightnings blazing from his beak and his foot just clasping the whole globe, which his wings overshadowed. The dear old boy saw my glance, and said, with a sad smile, 'Here, you see, I have a country!' And then he pointed to the foot of his bed, where I had not seen before a great map of the United States, as he had drawn it from memory, and

which he had there to look upon as he lay. Quaint, queer old names were on it, in large letters: 'Indiana Territory,' 'Mississippi Territory,' and 'Louisiana Territory,' as I suppose our fathers learned such things. But the old fellow had patched in Texas, too; he had carried his western boundary all the way to the Pacific, but on that shore he had defined nothing.

"'Oh, Danforth,' he said, 'I know I am dying. I cannot get home. Surely you will tell me something now? Stop! Stop! Do not speak till I say what I am sure you know, that there is not in this ship, that there is not in America—God bless her!—a more loyal man than I. There cannot be a man who loves the old flag as I do, or prays for it as I do, or hopes for it as I do. There are thirty-four stars in it now, Danforth. I thank God for that, though I do not know what their names are. There has never been one taken away; I thank God for that. I know by that that there has never been any successful Burr. Oh, Danforth, Danforth,' he sighed out, 'how like a wretched night's dream a boy's idea of personal fame or of separate sovereignty seems, when one looks back on it after such a life as mine! But tell me—tell me something—tell me everything, Danforth, before I die!'

"Ingham, I swear to you that I felt like a monster that I had not told him everything before. Danger or no danger, delicacy or no delicacy, who was I, that I should have been acting the tyrant all this time over this dear, sainted old man, who had years ago expiated, in his whole manhood's life, the madness of a boy's treason? 'Mr. Nolan,' said I, 'I will tell you everything you ask about. Only, where shall I begin?'

"Oh, the blessed smile that crept over his white face! And he pressed my hand and said, 'God bless you! Tell me their names,' he said,

and he pointed to the stars on the flag. 'The last I know is Ohio. My father lived in Kentucky. But I have guessed Michigan and Indiana and Mississippi—that was where Fort Adams is. They make twenty. But where are your other fourteen? You have not cut up any of the old ones, I hope?'

"Well, that was not a bad text, and I told him the names in as good order as I could, and he bade me take down his beautiful map and draw them in as I best could with my pencil. He was wild with delight about Texas—told me how his cousin died there; he had marked a gold cross near where he supposed his grave was; and he had guessed at Texas. Then he was delighted as he saw California and Oregon. That, he said, he had suspected partly, because he had never been permitted to land on that shore, though the ships were there so much. 'And the men,' said he, laughing, 'brought off a good deal besides furs.' Then he went back—heavens, how far!—to ask about the *Chesapeake*, and what was done to Barron for surrendering her to the *Leopard*, and whether Burr ever tried again—and he ground his teeth with the only passion he showed. But in a moment that was over, and he said, 'God forgive me, for I am sure I forgive him.' Then he asked about the old war—told me the true story of his serving the gun the day we took the *Java*—asked about dear old David Porter, as he called him. Then he settled down more quietly, and very happily, to hear me tell in an hour the history of fifty years.

"How I wished it had been somebody who knew something! But I did as well as I could. I told him of the English war. I told him about Fulton and the steamboat beginning. I told him about old Scott, and Jackson—told him all I could think of about the Mississippi, and New Orleans, and Texas, and his own old Ken-

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tucky. And what do you think he asked? 'Who was in command of the Legion of the West!' I told him it was a very gallant officer named Grant, and that, by our last news, he was about to establish his headquarters at Vicksburg. Then, 'Where was Vicksburg?' I worked that out on the map; it was about a hundred miles, more or less, above his old Fort Adams, and I thought Fort Adams must be a ruin now. 'It must be at old Vick's plantation, at Walnut Hills,' said he; 'well, that is a change!'

"I tell you, Ingham, it was a hard thing to condense the history of half a century into that talk with a sick man. And I do not now know what I told him—of emigration, and the means of it—of steamboats, and railroads, and telegraphs—of inventions, and books, and literature—of the colleges, and West Point, and the Naval School—but with the queerest interruptions that ever you heard. You see, it was Robinson Crusoe asking all the accumulated questions of fifty-six years!

"I remember he asked, all of a sudden, who was President now. And when I told him, he asked if Old Abe was General Benjamin Lincoln's son. He said he met old General Lincoln, when he was quite a boy himself, at some Indian treaty. I said no, that Old Abe was a Kentuckian like himself, but I could not tell him of what family; he had worked up from the ranks. 'Good for him!' cried Nolan; 'I am glad of that. As I have brooded and wondered, I have thought our danger was in keeping up those regular successions in the first families.' Then I got talking about my visit to Washington. I told him of meeting the Oregon Congressman, Harding; I told him about the Smithsonian, and the Exploring Expedition; I told him about the Capitol, and the statues for the pediment, and Crawford's Liberty, and Greenough's Washington. Ingham,

I told him everything I could think of that would show the grandeur of his country and its prosperity; but I could not make up my mouth to tell him a word about this infernal rebellion!

"And he drank it in and enjoyed it as I cannot tell you. He grew more and more silent, yet I never thought he was tired or faint. I gave him a glass of water, but he just wet his lips, and told me not to go away. Then he asked me to bring the Presbyterian 'Book of Public Prayer,' which lay there, and said, with a smile, that it would open at the right place—and so it did. There was his double red mark down the page. And I knelt down and read, and he repeated with me, 'For ourselves and our country, Oh, gracious God, we thank Thee, that, notwithstanding our manifold transgressions of Thy holy laws, Thou hast continued to us Thy marvellous kindness'—and so to the end of that thanksgiving. Then he turned to the end of the same book, and I read the words more familiar to me: 'Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold and bless Thy servant, the President of the United States, and all others in authority'—and the rest of the Episcopal collect. 'Danforth,' said he, 'I have repeated those prayers night and morning, it is now fifty-five years.' And then he said he would go to sleep.

"He bent me down over him and kissed me, and he said, 'Look in my Bible, Danforth, when I am gone.' And I went away.

"But I had no thought it was the end. I thought he was tired and would sleep. I knew he was happy, and I wanted him to be alone.

"But in an hour, when the doctor went in gently, he found Nolan had breathed his life away with a smile. He had something pressed close to his lips. It was his father's badge of the Order of the Cincinnati.

"We looked in his Bible, and there was a slip

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of paper at the place where he had marked the text:

“‘They desire a country, even a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.’

“On this slip of paper he had written:

“‘Bury me in the sea; it has been my home, and I love it. But will not some one set up a stone for my memory at Fort Adams or at Orleans, that my disgrace may not be more than I ought to bear? Say on it:

“‘*In Memory of*

“‘PHILIP NOLAN,

“‘*Lieutenant in the Army of the United States.*

“‘He loved his country as no other man has loved her; but no man deserved less at her hands’”

THE VENUS OF ILLE*

BY

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

I WAS descending the last slope of the Canigou, and though the sun was already set I could distinguish on the plain the houses of the small town of Ille, toward which I directed my steps.

"Of course," I said to the Catalan who since the day before served as my guide, "you know where M. de Peyrehorade lives?"

"Just don't I!" cried he; "I know his house like my own, and if it were not so dark I would show it to you. It is the finest in Ille. He is rich, M. de Peyrehorade is, and he marries his son to one richer even than he."

"Does the marriage come off soon?" I asked him.

"Soon? It may be that the violins are already ordered for the wedding. To-night perhaps, to-morrow, or the next day, how do I know? It will take place at Puygarrig, for it is Mademoiselle de Puygarrig that the son is to marry. It will be a sight, I can tell you."

I was recommended to M. de Peyrehorade by my friend M. de P. He was, I had been told,

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an antiquarian of much learning and a man of charming affability. He would take delight in showing me the ruins for ten leagues around. Therefore I counted on him to visit the outskirts of Ille, which I knew to be rich in memorials of the Middle Ages. This marriage, of which I now heard for the first time, upset all my plans.

"I shall be a troublesome guest," I told myself. "But I am expected; my arrival has been announced by M. de P.; I must present myself."

When we reached the plain, the guide said, "Wager a cigar, sir, that I can guess what you are going to do at M. de Peyrehorade's."

Offering him one, I answered: "It is not very hard to guess. At this hour, when one has made six leagues in the Canigou, supper is the great thing after all."

"Yes, but to-morrow? Here I wager that you have come to Ille to see the idol. I guessed that when I saw you draw the portraits of the saints at Serrabona."

"The idol! What idol?" This word had aroused my curiosity.

"What! Were you not told at Perpignan how M. de Peyrehorade had found an idol in the earth?"

"You mean to say an earthen statue?"

"Not at all. A statue in copper, and there is enough of it to make a lot of big pennies. She weighs as much as a church-bell. It was deep in the ground at the foot of an olive-tree that we got her."

"You were present at the discovery?"

"Yes, sir. Two weeks ago M. de Peyrehorade told Jean Coll and me to uproot an old olive-tree which was frozen last year when the weather, as you know, was very severe. So in working, Jean Coll, who went at it with all his might, gave a blow with his pickaxe, and I heard *bimm*—as if he had struck a bell, and I said, 'What is that?' We dug on and on, and there was a black hand, which looked like the hand of a corpse, sticking out of the earth. I was scared to death. I ran to M. de Peyrehorade and I said to him, 'There are dead people, master, under the olive-tree! The priest must be called.'

"'What dead people?' said he to me. He came, and he had no sooner seen the hand than he cried out, 'An antique! An antique!' You would have thought he had found a treasure. And there he was with the pickaxe in his own hands, struggling and doing almost as much work as we two."

"And at last what did you find?"

"A huge black woman more than half naked, with due respect to you, sir. She was all in copper, and M. de Peyrehorade told us it was an idol of pagan times—the time of Charlemagne."

"I see what it is—some virgin or other in bronze from a destroyed convent."

"A virgin! Had it been one I should have recognised it. It is an idol, I tell you; you can see it in her look. She fixes you with her great white eyes—one might say she stares at you."

One lowers one's eyes, yes, indeed one does, on looking at her."

"White eyes? Doubtless they are set in the bronze. Perhaps it is some Roman statue."

"Roman! That's it. M. de Peyrehorade says it is Roman. Oh! I see you are an erudite like himself."

"Is she complete, well preserved?"

"Yes, sir; she lacks nothing. It is a handsomer statue and better finished than the bust of Louis Philippe in coloured plaster which is in the town-hall. But with all that the face of the idol does not please me. She has a wicked expression—and, what is more, she is wicked."

"Wicked! What has she done to you?"

"Nothing to me exactly; but wait a minute. We had gotten down on all-fours to stand her upright, and M. de Peyrehorade was also pulling on the rope, though he has not much more strength than a chicken. With much trouble we got her up straight. I reached for a broken tile to support her, lest she should tumble over backward all in a heap. I said, 'Take care,' but not quick enough, for Jean did not have time to draw away his leg——"

"And it was hurt?"

"Broken as clean as a vine-prop. When I saw that I was furious; I wanted to take my pick-axe and smash the statue to pieces, but M. de Peyrehorade stopped me. He gave Jean Coll some money, but all the same, he is in bed still, though it is two weeks since it happened, and the

physician says that he will never walk as well with that leg as with the other. It is a pity, for he was our best runner, and, after M. de Peyrehorade's son, the cleverest racquet-player. M. Alphonse de Peyrehorade was sorry, I can tell you, for Coll always played on his side. It was beautiful to see how they returned each other the balls. They never touched the ground."

Chatting in this way, we entered Ille, and I soon found myself in the presence of M. de Peyrehorade. He was a little old man, still hale and active, with powdered hair, a red nose, and a jovial, bantering manner. Before opening M. de P.'s letter he had seated me at a well-spread table, and had presented me to his wife and son as a celebrated archæologist who was to draw Roussillon from the neglect in which the indifference of erudites had left it.

While eating heartily—for nothing makes one hungrier than the keen air of the mountains—I scrutinised my hosts. I have said a word about M. de Peyrehorade; I must add that he was activity personified. He talked, got up, ran to his library, brought me books, showed me engravings, and filled my glass, all at the same time. He was never two minutes in repose. His wife was a trifle stout, as are most Catalans when they are over forty years of age. She appeared to me a thorough provincial, solely occupied with her housekeeping. Though the supper was sufficient for at least six persons, she hurried to the kitchen and had pigeons killed and a number broiled,

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and she opened I do not know how many jars of preserves. In no time the table was laden with dishes and bottles, and if I had but tasted of everything offered me I should certainly have died of indigestion. Nevertheless, at each dish I refused they made fresh excuses. They feared I found myself very badly off at Ille. In the provinces there were so few resources, and of course Parisians were fastidious!

In the midst of his parents' comings and goings M. Alphonse de Peyrehorade was as immovable as rent-day. He was a tall young man of twenty-six, with a regular and handsome countenance, but lacking in expression. His height and his athletic figure well justified the reputation of an indefatigable racquet-player given him in the neighbourhood.

On that evening he was dressed in an elegant manner—that is to say, he was an exact copy of a fashion-plate in the last number of the *Journal des Modes*. But he seemed to me ill at ease in his clothes; he was as stiff as a post in his velvet collar, and could only turn all of a piece. In striking contrast to his costume were his large sunburnt hands and blunt nails. They were a labourer's hands issuing from the sleeves of an exquisite. Moreover, though he examined me in my quality of Parisian most curiously from head to foot, he only spoke to me once during the whole evening, and that was to ask me where I had bought my watch-chain.

As the supper was drawing to an end, M. de

Peyrehorade said to me: "Ah! my dear guest, you belong to me now you are here. I shall not let go of you until you have seen everything of interest in our mountains. You must learn to know our Roussillon, and to do it justice. You do not suspect all that we have to show you—Phœnician, Celtic, Roman, Arabian, and Byzantine monuments; you shall see them all from the cedar to the hyssop. I shall drag you everywhere, and will not spare you a single stone."

A fit of coughing obliged him to pause. I took advantage of it to tell him that I should be sorry to disturb him on an occasion of so much interest to his family. If he would but give me his excellent advice about the excursions to be made, I could manage, without his taking the trouble to accompany me.

"Ah! you mean the marriage of that boy there," he exclaimed, interrupting me; "stuff and nonsense, it will be over the day after tomorrow. You will go to the wedding with us, which is to be informal, as the bride is in mourning for an aunt whose heiress she is. Therefore, there will be no festivities, no ball. It is a pity, though; you might have seen our Catalans dance. They are pretty, and might have given you the desire to imitate Alphonse. One marriage, they say, leads to another. The young people once married I shall be free, and we will bestir ourselves. I beg your pardon for boring you with a provincial wedding. For a Parisian tired of entertainments—and a wedding without a ball at

that! Still, you will see a bride—a bride—well, you shall tell me what you think of her. But you are a thinker, and no longer notice women. I have better than that to show you. You shall see something; in fact, I have a fine surprise in store for you to-morrow.”

“Good heavens!” said I; “it is difficult to have a treasure in the house without the public being aware of it. I think I know the surprise in reserve for me. But if it is your statue which is in question, the description my guide gave me of it has only served to excite my curiosity and prepare me to admire.”

“Ah! So he spoke to you about the idol, as he calls my beautiful Venus Tur; but I will tell you nothing. To-morrow you shall see her by daylight, and tell me if I am right in thinking the statue a masterpiece. You could not have arrived more opportunely. There are inscriptions on it which I, poor ignoramus that I am, explain after my own fashion; but you, a Parisian erudite, will probably laugh at my interpretation; for I have actually written a paper about it—I, an old provincial antiquary, have launched myself in literature. I wish to make the press groan. If you would kindly read and correct it I might have some hope. For example, I am very anxious to know how you translate this inscription from the base of the statue: CAVE. But I do not wish to ask you yet! Wait until to-morrow. Not a word more about the Venus to-day!”

"You are right, Peyrehorade," said his wife; "drop your idol. Can you not see that you prevent our guest from eating? You may be sure that he has seen in Paris much finer statues than yours. In the Tuileries there are dozens, and they also are in bronze."

"There you have the saintly ignorance of the provinces!" interrupted M. de Peyrehorade. "The idea of comparing an admirable antique to the insipid figures of Coustou!"

'How irreverently my housekeeper
Speaks of the gods!'

Do you know that my wife wanted me to melt my statue into a bell for our church. She would have been the godmother. Just think of it, to melt a masterpiece by Myron, sir!"

"Masterpiece! Masterpiece! A charming masterpiece she is! to break a man's leg."

"Madam, do you see that?" said M. de Peyrehorade in a resolute tone, extending toward her his right leg in its changeable silk stocking; "if my Venus had broken that leg there for me I should not regret it."

"Good gracious! Peyrehorade, how can you say such a thing! Fortunately, the man is better. And yet I cannot bring myself to look at a statue which has caused so great a disaster. Poor Jean Coll!"

"Wounded by Venus, sir," said M. de Peyrehorade, with a loud laugh; "wounded by Venus, and the churl complains!"

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'Veneris nec præmia noris.'

Who has not been wounded by Venus?"

M. Alphonse, who understood French better than Latin, winked one eye with an air of intelligence, and looked at me as if to ask, "And you, Parisian, do you understand?"

The supper came to an end. I had ceased eating an hour before. I was weary, and I could not manage to hide the frequent yawns which escaped me. Madame de Peyrehorade was the first to notice them, and remarked that it was time to go to bed. Then followed fresh apologies for the poor accommodations I would have. I would not be as well off as in Paris. It was so uncomfortable in the provinces! Indulgence was needed for the Roussillonnais. Notwithstanding my protests that after a tramp in the mountains a bundle of straw would seem to me a delicious couch, they continued begging me to pardon poor country people if they did not treat me as well as they could have wished.

Accompanied by M. de Peyrehorade, I ascended at last to the room arranged for me. The staircase, the upper half of which was in wood, ended in the centre of a hall, out of which opened several rooms.

"To the right," said my host, "is the apartment which I propose to give the future Madame Alphonse. Your room is at the opposite end of the corridor. You understand," he added in a manner which he meant to be sly—"you understand that newly married people must be

alone. You are at one end of the house, they at the other."

We entered a well-furnished room where the first object on which my gaze rested was a bed seven feet long, six wide, and so high that one needed a chair to climb up into it.

Having shown me where the bell was, and assured himself that the sugar-bowl was full and the cologne bottles duly placed on the toilet-stand, my host asked me a number of times if anything was lacking, wished me good-night, and left me alone.

The windows were closed. Before undressing, I opened one to breathe the fresh night air so delightful after a long supper. Facing me was the Canigou. Always magnificent, it appeared to me on that particular evening, lighted as it was by a resplendent moon, as the most beautiful mountain in the world. I remained a few minutes contemplating its marvellous silhouette, and was about to close the window when, lowering my eyes, I perceived, a dozen yards from the house, the statue on its pedestal. It was placed at the corner of a hedge that separated a small garden from a vast, perfectly level quadrangle, which I learned later was the racquet-court of the town. This ground was the property of M. de Peyrehorade, and had been given by him to the parish at the solicitation of his son.

Owing to the distance, it was difficult for me to distinguish the attitude of the statue; I could only judge of its height, which seemed to be about

six feet. At that moment two scamps of the town, whistling the pretty Roussillon tune, *Montagnes régala des*, were crossing the racquet-court quite near the hedge. They paused to look at the statue, and one of them even apostrophised it aloud. He spoke Catalanian, but I had been long enough in Roussillon to understand pretty well what he said.

"There you are, you wench!" (The Catalanian word was much more forcible.) "There you are!" he said. "It was you, then, who broke Jean Coll's leg! If you belonged to me I'd break your neck."

"Bah! What with?" said the other youth. "It is of the copper of pagan times, and harder than I don't know what."

"If I had my chisel" (it seems he was a locksmith's apprentice) "I could as easily force out its big white eyes as I would pop an almond from its shell. There are more than a hundred pennies' worth of silver in them."

They went on a few steps.

"I must wish the idol good-night," said the taller of the apprentices, stopping suddenly.

He stooped and probably picked up a stone. I saw him unbend his arm and throw something. A blow resounded on the bronze, and immediately the apprentice raised his hand to his head with a cry of pain.

"She threw it back at me!" he exclaimed. And my two rascals ran off as fast as they could. It was evident that the stone had rebounded

from the metal and had punished the wag for the outrage he had done the goddess. Laughing heartily, I shut the window.

Another Vandal punished by Venus! May all the desecrators of our old monuments thus get their due!

With this charitable wish I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was broad day. On one side of my bed stood M. de Peyrehorade in a dressing-gown; a servant sent by his wife was on the other side with a cup of chocolate in his hand.

"Come, come, you Parisian, get up! This is quite the laziness of the capital!" said my host, while I dressed in haste. "It is eight o'clock, and you are still in bed! I have been up since six. This is the third time I have been to your door. I approached on tiptoe: no one—not a sign of life. It is bad for you to sleep too much at your age. And my Venus, which you have not yet seen! Come, hurry up and take this cup of Barcelona chocolate. It is real contraband chocolate, such as cannot be found in Paris. Prepare yourself, for when you are once before my Venus no one will be able to tear you away from her."

I was ready in five minutes—that is to say, I was half shaved, half dressed, and burned by the boiling chocolate I had swallowed. I descended to the garden and saw an admirable statue before me. It was truly a Venus, and of marvellous beauty. The upper part of the body was nude, as great divinities were usually represented

by the ancients. The right hand was raised as high as the breast, the palm turned inward, the thumb and two fingers extended, and the others slightly bent. The other hand, drawn close to the hip, held the drapery which covered the lower half of the body. The attitude of this statue reminded one of that of the *mourre* player which is called, I hardly know why, by the name of Germanicus. Perhaps it had been intended to represent the goddess as playing at *mourre*. However that may be, it is impossible to find anything more perfect than the form of this Venus, anything softer and more voluptuous than her outlines, or more graceful and dignified than her drapery. I had expected a work of the decadence; I saw a masterpiece of statuary's best days.

What struck me most was the exquisite reality of the figure; one might have thought it moulded from life—that is, if Nature ever produced such perfect models.

The hair, drawn back from the brow, seemed once to have been gilded. The head was small, like nearly all those of Greek statues, and bent slightly forward. As to the face, I shall never succeed in describing its strange character; it was of a type belonging to no other Greek statue which I can remember. It had not the calm, severe beauty of the Greek sculptors, who systematically gave a majestic immobility to all the features. On the contrary, I noticed here, with surprise, a marked intention on the artist's part

to reproduce malice verging on viciousness. All the features were slightly contracted. The eyes were rather oblique, the mouth raised at the corners, the nostrils a trifle dilated. Disdain, irony, and cruelty were to be read in the nevertheless beautiful face.

Truly, the more one gazed at the statue the more one experienced a feeling of pain that such wonderful beauty could be allied to such an absence of all sensibility.

"If the model ever existed," I said to M. de Peyrehorade, "and I doubt if heaven ever produced such a woman, how I pity her lovers! She must have taken pleasure in making them die of despair. There is something ferocious in her expression, and yet I have never seen anything more beautiful."

"*C'est Venus tout entière à sa proie attachée!*" cried M. de Peyrehorade, delighted with my enthusiasm.

But the expression of demoniac irony was perhaps increased by the contrast of the bright silver eyes with the dusky green hue which time had given to the statue. The shining eyes produced a sort of illusion which simulated reality and life. I remembered what my guide had said, that those who looked at her were forced to lower their eyes. It was almost true, and I could not prevent a movement of anger at myself when I felt ill at ease before this bronze figure.

"Now that you have seen everything in detail, my dear colleague in antiquities, let us, if you

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please, open a scientific conference. What do you say to this inscription which you have not yet noticed?" He pointed to the base of the statue, and I read these words:

CAVE AMANTEM.

"*Quid dicis doctissime?*" he asked, rubbing his hands. "Let us see if we agree as to the meaning of *cave amantem!*"

"But," I replied, "it has two meanings. You can translate it: 'Guard against him who loves thee,' that is, 'distrust lovers.' But in this sense I do not know if *cave amantem* would be good Latin. After seeing the diabolical expression of the lady, I should sooner believe that the artist meant to warn the spectator against this terrible beauty. I should then translate it: 'Take care of thyself if *she* loves thee.'"

"Humph!" said M. de Peyrehorade; "yes, it is an admissible meaning: but, if you do not mind, I prefer the first translation, which I would, however, develop. You know Venus's lover?"

"There are several."

"Yes; but the first is Vulcan. Why should it not mean: 'Notwithstanding all thy beauty, thine air of disdain, thou wilt have a blacksmith, a wretched cripple for a lover'? A profound lesson, sir, for coquettes!"

The explication seemed so far-fetched that I could not help smiling.

To avoid formally contradicting my antiquarian friend, I observed, "Latin is a terrible lan-

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guage in its conciseness," and I drew back several steps, the better to contemplate the statue.

"Wait a moment, colleague!" said M. de Peyrehorade, catching hold of my arm; "you have not seen all. There is another inscription. Climb up on the pedestal and look at the right arm." So saying, he helped me up, and without much ceremony I clung to the neck of the Venus with whom I was becoming more familiar. For a second I even looked her straight in the eyes, and on close inspection she appeared more wicked, and, if possible, more beautiful, than before. Then I noticed that on the arm were engraved, as it seemed to me, characters in ancient script. With the aid of my spectacles I spelt out what follows, and M. de Peyrehorade, approving with voice and gesture, repeated each word as I uttered it. Thus I read:

VENERI TVRBVL.

EVTYCHES MYRO.

IMPERIO FECIT.

After the word "Tvrbl" in the first line it looked to me as if there were several letters effaced; but "Tvrbl" was perfectly legible.

"Which means to say?" my host asked radiantly, with a mischievous smile, for he thought the "Tvrbl" would puzzle me.

"There is one word which I do not yet understand," I answered; "all the rest is simple. Eutyches Myron has made this offering to Venus by her command."

"Quite right. But 'Tvrbl'—what do you make of it? What does it mean?"

"'Tvrbl' perplexes me very much. I am trying to think of one of Venus's familiar characteristics which may enlighten me. But what do you say to 'Tvrblenta'? The Venus who troubles, agitates. You see I am still preoccupied by her wicked expression. 'Tvrblenta' is not too bad a quality for Venus," I added modestly, for I was not too well satisfied with my explanation.

"A turbulent Venus! A noisy Venus! Ah! then you think my Venus is a public-house Venus? Nothing of the kind, sir; she is a Venus of good society. I will explain 'Tvrbl' to you—that is, if you promise me not to divulge my discovery before my article appears in print. Because, you see, I pride myself on such a find, and, after all, you Parisian erudites are rich enough to leave a few ears for us poor devils of provincials to glean!"

From the top of the pedestal, where I was still perched, I promised him solemnly that I would never be so base as to filch from him his discovery.

"'Tvrbl'—sir," said he, coming nearer and lowering his voice for fear some one besides myself might hear him, "read 'Tvrblneræ.'"

"I understand no better."

"Listen to me attentively. Three miles from here at the foot of the mountain is a village called Boulternère. The name is a corruption of the Latin word 'Tvrblnera.' Nothing is more com-

mon than these transpositions. Boulternère was a Roman town. I always suspected it, but I could get no proof till now, and here it is. This Venus was the local goddess of the city of Boulternère; and the word Boulternère, which I have shown is of ancient origin, proves something very curious—namely, that Boulternère was a Phœnician town before it was Roman!”

He paused a moment to take breath and enjoy my surprise. I succeeded in overcoming a strong inclination to laugh.

“‘Tvr̄bvlnera’ is, in fact, pure Phœnician,” he continued. “‘Tvr,’ pronounced ‘tour’—‘Tour’ and ‘Sour’ are the same word, are they not? ‘Sour’ is the Phœnician name of Tyr; I do not need to recall the meaning to you. ‘Bvl’ is Baal; Bâl, Bel, Bul, are slight differences of pronunciation. As to ‘Nera,’ that troubles me a little. I am tempted to believe, for want of a Phœnician word, that it comes from the Greek *γῆρὸς*—moist, marshy. In that case, it is a mongrel word. To justify *γῆρὸς* I will show you at Boulternère how the mountain streams form stagnant pools. Then, again, the ending ‘Nera’ may have been added much later in honour of Nera Pivesuvia, wife of Tetricus, who may have benefited the city of Turbul. But on account of the marshes, I prefer the etymology of *γῆρὸς*.”

He took a pinch of snuff in a complacent way, and continued:

“But let us leave the Phœnicians and return

to the inscription. I translate it, then: To Venus of Boulternère Myron dedicates by her order this statue, his work."

I took good care not to criticise his etymology, but I wished in my turn to give a proof of penetration, so I said:

"Stop à moment, M. de Peyrehorade. Myron has dedicated something, but I by no means see that it is this statue."

"What!" he cried, "was not Myron a famous Greek sculptor? The talent was perpetuated in his family, and it must have been one of his descendants who executed this statue. Nothing can be more certain."

"But," I replied, "on this arm I see a small hole. I think it served to fasten something—a bracelet, for example—which this Myron, being an unhappy lover, gave to Venus as an expiatory offering. Venus was irritated against him; he appeased her by consecrating to her a gold bracelet. Notice that *fecit* is often used for *consecravit*. The terms are synonymous. I could show you more than one example if I had at hand Gruter or Orellius. It is natural that a lover should see Venus in a dream and imagine that she commands him to give a gold bracelet to her statue. Myron consecrated the bracelet to her. Then the barbarians or some other sacrilegious thieves——"

"Ah! It is easy to see you have written romances!" cried my host, helping me down from the pedestal. "No, sir; it is a work of Myron's

school. You have only to look at the workmanship to be convinced of that."

Having made it a rule never to contradict self-opinionated antiquarians, I bowed with an air of conviction, saying:

"It is an admirable piece of work."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed M. de Peyrehorade, "another act of vandalism! Some one must have thrown a stone at my statue!"

He had just perceived a white mark a little above the bosom of the Venus. I noticed a similar mark on the fingers of the right hand. I supposed it had been touched by a stone as it passed, or that a bit of the stone had been broken off as it struck the statue and had rebounded on the hand. I told my host of the insult I had witnessed, and the prompt punishment which had followed it.

He laughed heartily, and, comparing the apprentice to Diomede, wished he might, like the Greek hero, see all his comrades turned into white birds.

The breakfast bell interrupted this classical conversation, and, as on the preceding evening, I was obliged to eat enough for four. Then came M. de Peyrehorade's farmers, and, while he was giving them an audience, his son led me to inspect an open carriage which he had bought at Toulouse for his betrothed, and which, it is needless to say, I duly admired. After that I went into the stable with him, where he kept me a half-hour, boasting about his horses, giving

me their genealogy, and telling me of the prizes they had won at the county races. At last he began to talk to me about his betrothed in connection with a gray mare which he intended for her.

"We will see her to-day," he said. "I do not know that you will find her pretty. In Paris people are hard to please. But every one here and in Perpignan thinks her lovely. The best of it is that she is very rich. Her aunt from Prades left her a fortune. Oh! I shall be very happy."

I was profoundly shocked to see a young man appear more affected by the dower than by the beauty of his bride.

"You are a judge of jewels," continued M. Alphonse; "what do you think of this? Here is the ring I shall give her to-morrow."

He drew from his little finger a heavy ring, enriched with diamonds, and fashioned into two clasped hands, an allusion which seemed to me infinitely poetic. The workmanship was antique, but I fancied it had been retouched to insert the diamonds. Inside the ring these words in Gothic characters could be discerned: *Semper ab te*, which means, thine for ever.

"It is a pretty ring," I said, "but the diamonds which have been added have made it lose a little of its style."

"Oh! it is much handsomer now," he answered, smiling. "There are twelve hundred francs' worth of diamonds in it. My mother

gave it to me. It is a very old family ring—it dates from the days of chivalry. It was my grandmother's, who had it from her grandmother. Heaven knows when it was made."

"The custom in Paris," I said, "is to give a perfectly plain ring, usually composed of two different metals, such as gold and platinum. The other ring which you have on would be very suitable. This one with its diamonds and its clasped hands is so thick that it would be impossible to wear a glove over it."

"Madame Alphonse must arrange that as she pleases. I think she will be very glad to have it, all the same. Twelve hundred francs on the finger is pleasant. That other little ring," he added, looking in a contented way at the plain ring he wore, "that one a woman in Paris gave me on Shrove Tuesday. How I did enjoy myself when I was in Paris two years ago! That is the place to have a good time!" And he sighed regretfully.

We were to dine that day at Puygarrig with the relations of the bride; so we got into the carriage, and drove to the château, which was four or five miles from Ille. I was presented and received as the friend of the family. I will not speak of the dinner, or the conversation which followed. I took but little part in it. M. Alphonse was seated beside his betrothed, and whispered a word or two in her ear now and then. As for her, she hardly raised her eyes; and every time her lover spoke to her she

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blushed modestly, but answered without embarrassment.

Mademoiselle de Puygarrig was eighteen years of age. Her slender, graceful figure formed a striking contrast to the stalwart frame of her future husband. She was not only beautiful, she was alluring. I admired the perfect naturalness of all her replies. Her kind look, which yet was not free from a touch of malice, reminded me, in spite of myself, of my host's Venus. While making this inward comparison, I asked myself if the incontestably superior beauty of the statue did not in great measure come from its tigress-like expression; for strength, even in evil passions, always arouses in us astonishment and a sort of involuntary admiration.

"What a pity," I thought, on leaving Puygarrig, "that such an attractive girl should be rich, and that her dowry makes her sought by a man quite unworthy of her."

While returning to Ille, I spoke to Mme. de Peyrehorade, to whom I thought it only proper to address myself now and then, though I did not very well know what to say to her: "You must be strong-minded people in Roussillon," I said. "How is it, madam, that you have a wedding on a Friday? We would be more superstitious in Paris; no one would dare be married on that day."

"Do not speak of it," she replied; "if it had depended on me, certainly another day would have been chosen. But Peyrehorade wished it,

and I had to give in. All the same, it troubles me very much. Supposing an accident should happen? There must be some reason in it, or else why is every one afraid of Friday?"

"Friday!" cried her husband, "is Venus's day! Just the day for a wedding! You see, my dear colleague, I think only of my Venus. I chose Friday on her account. To-morrow, if you like, before the wedding, we will make a little sacrifice to her—a sacrifice of two doves—and if I only knew where to get some incense——"

"For shame, Peyrehorade!" interrupted his wife, scandalised to the last degree. "Incense to an idol! It would be an abomination! What would they say of us in the neighbourhood?"

"At least," answered M. de Peyrehorade, "you will allow me to place a wreath of roses and lilies on her head: *Manibus date lilia plenis*. You see, sir, freedom is an empty word. We have not liberty of worship!"

The next day's arrangements were ordered in the following manner: Every one was to be dressed and ready at ten o'clock punctually. After the chocolate had been served we were to be driven to Puygarrig. The civil marriage was to take place in the town-hall of the village, and the religious ceremony in the chapel of the château. Afterward there would be a breakfast. After the breakfast, people would pass the time as they liked until seven o'clock. At that hour every one would return to M. de Peyrehorade's at Ille, where the two families were to

assemble and have supper. It was natural that, being unable to dance, they should wish to eat as much as possible.

By eight o'clock I was seated in front of the Venus, pencil in hand, recommencing the head of the statue for the twentieth time without being able to catch the expression. M. de Peyrehorade came and went about me, giving me advice, repeating his Phœnician etymology, and laying Bengal roses on the pedestal of the statue while he addressed vows to it in a tragi-comic tone for the young couple who were to live under his roof. Toward nine o'clock he went in to put on his best, and at the same moment M. Alphonse appeared, looking very stiff in a new coat, white gloves, chased sleeve-buttons, and varnished shoes. A rose decorated his button-hole.

"Will you make my wife's portrait?" he asked, leaning over my drawing. "She also is pretty."

On the racquet-court of which I have spoken there now began a game which immediately attracted M. Alphonse's attention. And I, tired, and despairing of ever being able to copy the diabolical face, soon left my drawing to look at the players. There were among them some Spanish muleteers who had arrived the night before. They were from Aragon and Navarre, and were nearly all marvellously skilful at the game. Therefore the Illois, though encouraged by the presence and advice of M. Alphonse, were

promptly beaten by the foreign champions. The native spectators were disheartened. M. Alphonse looked at his watch. It was only half-past nine. His mother's hair, he knew, was not dressed. He hesitated no longer, but, taking off his coat, asked for a jacket, and defied the Spaniards. I looked on smiling and a little surprised. "The honour of the country must be sustained," he said.

Then I thought him really handsome. He seemed full of life, and his costume, which but now occupied him so entirely, no longer concerned him. A few minutes before, he would have dreaded to turn his head for fear of disarranging his cravat. Now he did not give a thought to his curled hair or his fine shirt-front. And his betrothed? If it had been necessary, I think he would have postponed the wedding. I saw him hurriedly put on a pair of sandals, roll up his sleeves, and, with an assured air, take his stand at the head of the vanquished party like Cæsar rallying his soldiers at Dyrrachium. I leaped the hedge and placed myself comfortably in the shade of a tree so as to command a good view of both sides.

Contrary to general expectation, M. Alphonse missed the first ball. It came skimming along the ground, it is true, and was thrown with astonishing force by an Aragonese who appeared to be the leader of the Spaniards.

He was a man of about forty, nervous and

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agile, and at least six feet tall. His olive skin was almost as dark as the bronze of the Venus.

M. Alphonse threw his racquet angrily on the ground.

"It is this cursed ring," he cried, "which squeezes my finger, and makes me miss a sure ball."

He drew off his diamond ring with some difficulty; I approached to take it, but he forestalled me by running to the Venus and shoving it on her fourth finger. He then resumed his post at the head of the Illois.

He was pale, but calm and resolute. From that moment he did not miss a single ball, and the Spaniards were completely beaten. The enthusiasm of the spectators was a fine sight; some threw their caps in the air and shouted for joy, while others wrung M. Alphonse's hands, calling him the honour of the country. If he had repulsed an invasion I doubt if he would have received warmer or sincerer congratulations. The vexation of the vanquished added to the splendour of the victory.

"We will play other games, my good fellow," he said to the Aragonese in a tone of superiority, "but I will give you points."

I should have wished M. Alphonse to be more modest, and I was almost pained by his rival's humiliation.

The Spanish giant felt the insult deeply. I saw him pale beneath his tan. He looked sul-

lenly at his racquet and clinched his teeth, then in a smothered voice he muttered:

"Me lo pagarás."

M. de Peyrehorade's voice interrupted his son's triumph. Astonished at not finding him presiding over the preparation of the new carriage, my host was even more surprised on seeing him racquet in hand and bathed in perspiration. M. Alphonse hurried to the house, washed his hands and face, put on again his new coat and patent-leather shoes, and in five minutes we were galloping on the road to Puygarrig. All the racquet players of the town and a crowd of spectators followed us with shouts of joy. The strong horses which drew us could hardly keep ahead of the intrepid Catalans.

We were at Puygarrig, and the procession was about to set out for the town-hall, when M. Alphonse, striking his forehead, whispered to me:

"What a mess! I have forgotten the ring! It is on the finger of the Venus; may the devil carry her off! Do not tell my mother at any rate. Perhaps she will not notice it."

"You can send some one for it," I replied.

"My servant remained at Ille. I do not trust these here. 'Twelve hundred francs' worth of diamonds might well tempt almost any one. Moreover, what would they think of my forgetfulness? They would laugh at me. They would call me the husband of the statue. If it only is not stolen! Fortunately, the rascals are afraid

The Venus of Ille

of the idol. They do not dare approach it by an arm's-length. After all, it does not matter; I have another ring."

The two ceremonies, civil and religious, were accomplished with suitable pomp, and Made-moiselle de Puygarrig received the ring of a Parisian milliner without suspecting that her betrothed was making her the sacrifice of a love-token. Then we seated ourselves at table, where we ate, drank, and even sang, all at great length. I suffered for the bride at the coarse merriment which exploded around her; still, she faced it better than I would have expected, and her embarrassment was neither awkward nor affected.

Perhaps courage comes with difficult situations.

The breakfast ended when heaven pleased. It was four o'clock. The men went to walk in the park, which was magnificent, or watched the peasants, in their holiday attire, dance on the lawn of the château. In this way we passed several hours. Meanwhile, the women were eagerly attentive to the bride, who showed them her presents. Then she changed her dress, and I noticed that she had covered her beautiful hair with a befeathered bonnet; for women are in no greater hurry than to assume, as soon as possible, the attire which custom forbids their wearing while they are still young girls.

It was nearly eight o'clock when preparations were made to start for Ille. But first a pathetic scene took place. Mlle. de Puygarrig's aunt, a

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very old and pious woman, who stood to her in a mother's place, was not to go with us. Before the departure she gave her niece a touching sermon on her wifely duties, from which sermon resulted a flood of tears and endless embraces. M. de Peyrehorade compared this separation to the Rape of the Sabines.

At last, however, we got off, and, on the way, every one exerted himself to amuse the bride and make her laugh; but all in vain.

At Ille, supper awaited us, and what a supper! If the coarse jokes of the morning had shocked me, I was now much more so by the equivocations and pleasantries of which the bride and groom were the principal objects. The bridegroom, who had disappeared for a moment before seating himself at the table, was pale, cold, and grave.

He drank incessantly some old Collioure wine almost as strong as brandy. I sat next to him, and thought myself obliged to warn him. "Be careful! They say that wine"—I hardly know what stupid nonsense I said to be in harmony with the other guests.

He touched my knee and whispered:

"When we have left the table, let me have two words with you."

His solemn tone surprised me. I looked more closely at him, and noticed a strange alteration in his features.

"Do you feel ill?" I asked.

"No."

The Venus of Ille

And he began to drink again.

Meanwhile, amidst much shouting and clapping of hands, a child of twelve, who had slipped under the table, held up to the company a pretty pink-and-white ribbon which he had untied from the bride's ankle. It was called her garter, and at once cut into pieces and distributed among the young men, who, following an old custom still preserved in some patriarchal families, ornamented their buttonholes with it. This was the time for the bride to flush up to the whites of her eyes. But her confusion was at its height when M. de Peyrehorade, having called for silence, sang several verses in Catalan, which he said were impromptu. Here is the meaning, if I understood it correctly:

"What is this, my friends—has the wine I have drunk made me see double? There are two Venuses here——"

The bridegroom turned his head suddenly with a frightened look, which made every one laugh.

"Yes," continued M. de Peyrehorade, "there are two Venuses under my roof. The one I found in the ground like a truffle; the other, descended from heaven, has just divided among us her belt."

He meant her garter.

"My son, choose between the Roman Venus and the Catalan the one you prefer. The rascal takes the Catalan, and his choice is the best. The Roman is black; the Catalan is white. The

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Roman is cold; the Catalan inflames all who approach her."

This equivocal allusion excited such a shout, such noisy applause and sonorous laughter, that I thought the ceiling would fall on our heads. Around the table there were but three serious faces, those of the newly married couple and mine. I had a terrible headache; and besides, I do not know why, a wedding always saddens me. This one, moreover, even disgusted me a little.

The final verses having been sung—and very lively they were, I must say—every one adjourned to the drawing-room to enjoy the withdrawal of the bride, who, as it was nearly midnight, was soon to be conducted to her room.

M. Alphonse drew me into the embrasure of a window, and, turning away his eyes, said:

"You will laugh at me—— But I don't know what is the matter with me. I am bewitched!"

My first thought was that he fancied himself threatened with one of those misfortunes of which Montaigne and Madame de Sévigné speak:

"All the world of love is full of tragic histories," etc.

"I thought only clever people were subject to this sort of accident," I said to myself.

To him I said: "You drank too much Collioure wine, my dear Monsieur Alphonse; I warned you against it."

"Yes, perhaps. But something much more terrible than that has happened."

The Venus of Ille

His voice was broken. I thought him completely inebriated.

"You know about my ring?" he continued, after a pause.

"Well, has it been stolen?"

"No."

"Then you have it?"

"No—I—I cannot get it off the finger of that infernal Venus."

"You did not pull hard enough."

"Yes, indeed I did—— But the Venus—she has bent her finger."

He stared at me wildly, and leaned against the window-sash to prevent himself from falling.

"What nonsense!" I said. "You pushed the ring on too far. You can get it off to-morrow with pincers. But be careful not to damage the statue."

"No, I tell you. The Venus's finger is crooked, bent under; she clinches her hand, do you hear me? She is my wife apparently, since I have given her my ring. She will not return it."

I shivered, and, for a moment, I was all goose-flesh. Then a great sigh from him brought me a whiff of wine, and all my emotion disappeared.

The wretch, I thought, is dead drunk.

"You are an antiquarian, sir," added the bridegroom, in a mournful tone; "you understand those statues; there is, perhaps, some hidden spring—some deviltry which I do not know about. Will you go and see?"

"Certainly," I replied. "Come with me."

"No, I would prefer to have you go alone."

I left the drawing-room.

The weather had changed during supper, and a heavy rain had begun to fall. I was about to ask for an umbrella, when a sudden thought stopped me. I should be a great fool, I reflected, to go and verify what had been told me by a drunken man! Besides, he may have wished to play some silly trick on me to give cause for laughter to the honest country people; and the least that can happen to me from it is to be drenched to the bone and catch a bad cold.

From the door I cast a glance at the statue running with water, and I went up to my room without returning to the drawing-room. I went to bed; but sleep was long in coming. All the scenes of the day passed through my mind. I thought of the young girl, so pure and lovely, abandoned to a drunken brute. What an odious thing a marriage of convenience is! A mayor dons a tri-coloured scarf, a priest a stole, and then the most virtuous girl in the world is delivered over to the Minotaur! What can two people who do not love each other find to say at a moment which two lovers would buy at the price of their lives? Can a woman ever love a man whom she has once seen coarse? First impressions are never effaced, and I am sure M. Alphonse will deserve to be hated.

During my monologue, which I abridge very much, I had heard a great deal of coming and going in the house. Doors opened and shut, and

carriages drove away. Then I seemed to hear on the stairs the light steps of a number of women going toward the end of the hall opposite my room. It was probably the bride's train of attendants leading her to bed. After that they went downstairs again. Madame de Peyrehorade's door closed. How troubled and ill at ease that poor girl must be, I thought. I tossed about in my bed with bad temper. A bachelor plays a stupid part in a house where a marriage is accomplished.

Silence had reigned for some time when it was disturbed by a heavy tread mounting the stairs. The wooden steps creaked loudly.

"What a clown!" I cried to myself. "I wager that he will fall on the stairs." All was quiet again. I took up a book to change the current of my thoughts. It was the county statistics, supplemented with an address by M. de Peyrehorade on the Druidical remains of the district of Prades. I grew drowsy at the third page. I slept badly, and awoke repeatedly. It might have been five o'clock in the morning, and I had been awake more than twenty minutes, when the cock crew. Day was about to dawn. Then I heard distinctly the same heavy footsteps, the same creaking of the stairs which I had heard before I fell asleep. I thought it strange. Yawning, I tried to guess why M. Alphonse got up so early. I could imagine no likely reason. I was about to close my eyes again when my attention was freshly excited by a singular trampling of

feet, which was soon intermingled with the ringing of bells and the sound of doors opened noisily; then I distinguished confused cries.

"My drunkard has set something on fire," I thought, jumping out of bed. I dressed quickly and went into the hall. From the opposite end came cries and lamentations, and a heartrending voice dominated all the others—"My son! my son!" It was evident that an accident had happened to M. Alphonse. I ran to the bridal apartment: it was full of people. The first sight which struck my gaze was the young man partly dressed and stretched across the bed, the wood-work of which was broken. He was livid and motionless. His mother sobbed and wept beside him. M. de Peyrehorade moved about frantically; he rubbed his son's temples with cologne water, or held salts to his nose. Alas! his son had long been dead. On a sofa at the other side of the room lay the bride, a prey to dreadful convulsions. She was making inarticulate cries, and two robust maid-servants had all the trouble in the world to hold her down. "Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "What has happened?"

I approached the bed and raised the body of the unfortunate young man: it was already stiff and cold. His clinched teeth and black face expressed the most fearful anguish. It was evident enough that his death had been violent and his agony terrible.

Nevertheless, no sign of blood was on his clothes. I opened his shirt, and on his chest I

found a livid mark which extended around the ribs to the back. One would have said he had been squeezed in an iron ring. My foot touched something hard on the carpet; I stooped and saw it was the diamond ring. I dragged M. de Peyrehorade and his wife into their room, and had the bride carried there.

"You still have a daughter," I said to them. "You owe her your care." Then I left them alone.

To me it did not seem to admit of a doubt that M. Alphonse had been the victim of a murder whose authors had discovered a way to introduce themselves into the bride's room during the night. The bruises on the chest and their circular direction, however, perplexed me, for they could not have been made either by a club or an iron bar. Suddenly I remembered having heard that at Valencia *bravi* used long leather bags filled with sand to stun people whom they had been paid to kill. Immediately I thought of the Aragonese muleteer and his threat. Yet I hardly dared suppose he would have taken such a terrible revenge for a trifling jest.

I went through the house seeking everywhere for traces of housebreaking, but could find none. I descended to the garden to see if the assassins could have made their entrance from there; but there were no conclusive signs of it. In any case, the evening's rain had so softened the ground that it could not have retained any very clear impress. Nevertheless, I noticed some

deeply marked footprints; they ran in two contrary directions, but on the same path. They started from the corner of the hedge next the racquet-court and ended at the door of the house. They might have been made by M. Alphonse when he went to get his ring from the finger of the statue. Then, again, the hedge at this spot was narrower than elsewhere, and it must have been here that the murderers got over it. Passing and repassing before the statue, I stopped a moment to consider it. This time, I must confess, I could not contemplate its expression of vicious irony without fear; and my mind being filled with the horrible scene I had just witnessed, I seemed to see in it a demoniacal goddess applauding the sorrow fallen on the house.

I returned to my room and stayed there till noon. Then I left it to ask news of my hosts. They were a little calmer. Mlle. de Puygarrig, or I should say the widow of M. Alphonse, had regained consciousness. She had even spoken to the *procureur du roi* from Perpignan, then in circuit at Ille, and this magistrate had received her deposition. He asked for mine. I told him what I knew, and did not hide from him my suspicions about the Aragonese muleteer. He ordered him to be arrested on the spot.

"Have you learned anything from Mme. Alphonse?" I asked the *procureur du roi*, when my deposition was written and signed.

"That unfortunate young woman has gone

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crazy," he said, smiling sadly. "Crazy, quite crazy. This is what she says:

"She had been in bed for several minutes with the curtains drawn, when the door of her room opened and some one entered. Mme. Alphonse was on the inside of the bed with her face turned to the wall. Assured that it was her husband, she did not move. Presently the bed creaked as if laden with a tremendous weight. She was terribly frightened, but dared not turn her head. Five minutes, or ten minutes perhaps—she has no idea of the time—passed in this way. Then she made an involuntary movement, or else it was the other person who made one, and she felt the contact of something as cold as ice: that is her expression. She buried herself against the wall, trembling in all her limbs.

"Shortly afterward, the door opened a second time, and some one came in who said, 'Good-evening, my little wife.' Then the curtains were drawn back. She heard a stifled cry. The person who was in the bed beside her sat up, apparently with extended arms. Then she turned her head and saw her husband, kneeling by the bed with his head on a level with the pillow, held close in the arms of a sort of greenish-coloured giant. She says—and she repeated it to me twenty times, poor woman!—she says that she recognised—do you guess whom?—the bronze Venus, M. de Peyrehorade's statue. Since it has been here every one dreams about it. But to continue the poor lunatic's story. At this sight

she lost consciousness, and probably she had already lost her mind. She cannot tell how long she remained in this condition. Returned to her senses, she saw the phantom—or the statue as she insists on calling it—lying immovable, the legs and lower parts of the body on the bed, the bust and arms extended forward, and between the arms her husband, quite motionless. A cock crew. Then the statue left the bed, let fall the body, and went out. Mme. Alphonse rushed to the bell, and you know the rest."

The Spaniard was brought in; he was calm, and defended himself with much coolness and presence of mind. He did not deny the remark which I had overheard, but he explained it, pretending that he did not mean anything except that the next day, when rested, he would beat his victor at a game of racquets. I remember that he added:

"An Aragonese when insulted does not wait till the next day to revenge himself. If I had believed that M. Alphonse wished to insult me I would have ripped him up with my knife on the spot."

His shoes were compared with the footprints in the garden; the shoes were much the larger.

Finally, the innkeeper with whom the man lodged asserted that he had spent the entire night rubbing and dosing one of his mules which was sick. And, moreover, the Aragonese was a man of good reputation, well known in the neighbourhood, where he came every year on business.

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So he was released with many apologies.

I have forgotten to mention the statement of a servant who was the last person to see M. Alphonse alive. It was just as he was about to join his wife, and calling to this man he asked him in an anxious way if he knew where I was. The servant answered he had not seen me. M. Alphonse sighed, and stood a minute without speaking, then he said: "Well! the devil must have carried him off also!"

I asked the man if M. Alphonse had on his diamond ring. The servant hesitated; at last he said he thought not; but for that matter he had not noticed.

"If the ring had been on M. Alphonse's finger," he added, recovering himself, "I should probably have noticed it, for I thought he had given it to Mme. Alphonse."

When questioning the man I felt a little of the superstitious terror which Mme. Alphonse's statement had spread through the house. The *procureur du roi* smiled at me, and I was careful not to insist further.

A few hours after the funeral of M. Alphonse I prepared to leave Ille. M. de Peyrehorade's carriage was to take me to Perpignan. Notwithstanding his feeble condition, the poor old man wished to accompany me as far as the garden gate. We crossed the garden in silence, he creeping along supported by my arm. As we were about to part I threw a last glance at the

Venus. I foresaw that my host, though he did not share the fear and hatred which it inspired in his family, would wish to rid himself of an object which must ceaselessly recall to him a dreadful misfortune. My intention was to induce him to place it in a museum. As I hesitated to open the subject, M. de Peyrehorade turned his head mechanically in the direction he saw I was looking so fixedly. He perceived the statue, and immediately melted into tears. I embraced him, and got into the carriage without daring to say a word.

Since my departure I have not learned that any new light has been thrown on this mysterious catastrophe.

M. de Peyrehorade died several months after his son. In his will he left me his manuscripts, which I may publish some day. I did not find among them the article relative to the inscriptions on the Venus.

P. S.—My friend M. de P. has just written to me from Perpignan that the statue no longer exists. After her husband's death, Madame de Peyrehorade's first care was to have it cast into a bell, and in this shape it does duty in the church at Ille. "But," adds M. de P., "it seems as if bad luck pursues those who own the bronze. Since the bell rings at Ille the vines have twice been frozen."

THE PRISONER IN THE CAUCASUS

BY

LYEV NIKOLAEVITCH TOLSTOY

I

A GENTLEMAN of the name of Zhilin was serving in the Caucasus as an officer. One day he received a letter from home. His aged mother wrote to him: "I am growing old and should like to see my dear little son before I die. Come to me, I pray you, if it be only to bury me, and then in God's name enter the service again. And I have found a nice bride for you besides; she is sensible, good, and has property. You may fall in love with her perhaps, and you may marry her and be able to retire."

Zhilin fell a-musing: "Yes, indeed, the old lady has been ailing lately; she might never live to see me. Yes, I'll go, and if the girl is nice I may marry her into the bargain."

So he went to his colonel, obtained leave of absence, took leave of his comrades, gave his soldiers four pitchers of vodka to drink his health, and prepared to be off.

There was war in the Caucasus then. The roads were impassable night and day. Scarce any of the Russians could go in or out of the

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fortress but the Tatars would kill them or carry them off into the mountains. So it was commanded that twice a week a military escort should proceed from fortress to fortress with the people in the midst of it.

The affair happened in the summer. At dawn of day the baggage-waggon assembled in the fortress, the military escort marched out, and the whole company took the road. Zhilin went on horseback, and his waggon with his things was among the baggage.

The distance to be traversed was twenty miles, but the caravan moved but slowly. Sometimes it was the soldiers who stopped, sometimes a wheel flew off one of the baggage-waggon, or a horse wouldn't go—and then they all had to stop and wait.

The sun had already passed the meridian, and the caravan had only gone half the distance. There was nothing but heat and dust, the sun regularly burned, and there was no shelter to be had. All around nothing but the naked steppe—not a village; not a wayside bush.

Zhilin had galloped on in front; he had now stopped, and was waiting for the cavalcade to come up. Then he heard a horn blown in the rear, and knew that they had stopped again. Then thought Zhilin, "Why not go on by one's self without the soldiers? I've a good horse beneath me, and if I stumble upon the Tatars—I can make a bolt for it. Or shall I not go?"

He stood there considering, and up there came

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trotting another mounted officer, called Kostuilin, with a musket, and he said:

"Let us go on alone, Zhilin. I can't stand it any longer; I want some food; the heat is stifling, and my shirt is continually sticking to me."

This Kostuilin, by the way, was a thick, heavy, red-faced man, and the sweat was pouring from him. Zhilin thought for a moment, and then said:

"Is your musket loaded?"

"Yes, it is loaded."

"Well, we'll go, but on one condition—we must keep together."

And they cantered on in front along the road. They went through the steppe, and as they chatted together they kept glancing on every side of them. They could see for a great distance around them.

The steppe at last had come to an end, and the way lay toward a ravine between two mountains.

"What are you looking at? Let us go straight on!" said Kostuilin. But Zhilin did not listen to him.

"No," said he, "you just wait below and I'll go up and have a look round."

And he urged his horse to the left up the mountain. The horse beneath Zhilin was a good hunter (he had bought it from the horse-fold while still a foal for a hundred roubles, and had broken it in himself); it carried him up the steep ascent as if on wings. He needed but a single glance around—there, right in front of them, not a furlong ahead, was a whole crowd of Tatars—

thirty men at least. He no sooner saw them than he turned right about, but the Tatars had seen him too, and posted after him, drawing their muskets while in full career. Zhilin galloped down the slope as fast as his horse's legs could carry him, at the same time shouting to Kostuilin:

"Out with the muskets! And you, my beauty"—he was thinking of his horse—"you, my beauty, spread yourself out and don't knock your foot against anything, for if you stumble now we're lost. Let me only get to my musket, and I'm hanged if I surrender."

But Kostuilin, instead of waiting, bolted off at full speed in the direction of the fortress as soon as he beheld the Tatars. He lashed his horse first on one side and then on the other. Only the strong sweep of her tail was visible in the dust.

Zhilin perceived that he was in a bit of a hole. His musket was gone, and with a simple sabre nothing could be done. He drove his horse on in the direction of the Russian soldiers—there was just a chance of getting away. He saw that six of them were galloping away to cut him off. He had a good horse under him, but they had still better, and they were racing their hardest to bar his way. He began to hesitate, and wanted to turn in another direction, but his horse had lost her head, he could not control her, and she was rushing right upon them. He saw a Tatar with a red beard on a gray horse approach-

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ing him. The Tatar uttered a shrill cry and gnashed his teeth; his musket was all ready.

"Well," thought Zhilin, "I know what you are, you devils; if you take me alive you'll put me in a dungeon and whip me. I'll not be taken alive."

Zhilin was small of stature, but he was brave. Drawing his sabre, he urged his horse straight at the red-bearded Tatar, thinking to himself, "I'll either ride down his horse or fell him with my sabre."

But Zhilin never got up to the Tatar horse. They fired upon him from behind with their muskets and shot his horse. She fell to the ground with a crash, and Zhilin was thrown off her back. He tried to rise, but two strong-smelling Tatars were already sitting upon him, and twisting his arms behind his back. He writhed and wriggled, and threw off the Tatars, but then three more leaped off their horses and sprang upon him, and began beating him about the head with the butt-ends of their muskets. It grew dark before his eyes, and he began to feel faint. Then the Tatars seized him, rifled his saddle-bags, fastened his arms behind his back, tying them with a Tatar knot, and dragged him to the saddle. They snatched off his hat, they pulled off his boots, examined everything, extorted his money and his watch, and ripped up all his clothes. Zhilin glanced at his horse. She, his dearly beloved comrade, lay just as she had fallen, on her back, with kicking feet which

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vainly tried to reach the ground. There was a hole in her head, and out of this hole the black blood gushed with a hiss—for several yards around the dust was wet.

One of the Tatars went to the horse and proceeded to take the saddle from her back. She went on kicking all the time, and he drew forth a knife and cut her windpipe. There was a hissing sound from her throat; she shivered all over, and the breath of her life was gone.

The Tatars took off the saddle and bridle. The Tatar with the red beard mounted his horse and the others put Zhilin up behind him. To prevent his falling off, they fastened him by a thong to the Tatar's belt and carried him away into the mountains.

So there sat Zhilin behind the Tatar, and at every moment he was jolted, and his very nose came in contact with the Tatar's malodorous back. All that he could see in front of him, indeed, was the sturdy Tatar's back, his sinewy, shaven neck all bluish beneath his hat. Zhilin's head was much battered, and the blood kept trickling into his eyes. And it was impossible for him to right himself on his horse or wipe away the blood. His arms were twisted so tightly that his very collar-bone was in danger of breaking.

They travelled for a long time from mountain to mountain, crossed a ford, diverged from the road, and entered a ravine.

Zhilin would have liked to mark the road by

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which they were taking him, but his eyes were clotted with blood, and he could not turn round properly.

It began to grow dark. They crossed another river and began to ascend the rocky mountain, and then came a smell of smoke and the barking of dogs!

At last they came to the Tatar village. The Tatars dismounted from their horses, and a crowd of children assembled, who surrounded Zhilin, fell a-yelling and making merry, and took up stones to cast at him.

The Tatar drove away the children, took Zhilin from his horse, and called a workman. Up came a hatchet-faced Tatar of the Nogai tribe, clad only in a shirt, and as the shirt was torn the whole of his breast was bare. The Tatar gave some orders to him. The workman brought a *kolodka*—that is to say, two oaken blocks fastened together by iron rings, and in one of the rings a cramping-iron and a lock. Then they undid Zhilin's hands, attached the *kolodka* to his feet, led him into an outhouse, thrust him into it, and fastened the door. Zhilin fell upon a dung-heap. For a time he lay where he fell, then he fumbled his way in the dark to the softest place he could find, and lay down there.

II

ZHILIN scarcely slept at all through the night. It was the season of short nights. He could see it growing light through a rift in the wall. Zhilin

arose, made the rift a little bigger, and looked out.

Through the rift the high road was visible going down the mountain-side; to the right was a Tatar hut, with two hamlets close by. A black dog lay upon the threshold; a goat with her kids passed along, whisking their tails. He saw a Tatar milkmaid coming down from the mountains in a flowered, belted blouse, and trousers and boots, with her head covered by a kaftan, bearing on it a large tin pitcher full of water. She walked with curved back and head bent forward, and led by the hand a small, closely cropped Tatar boy in a little shirt.

The Tatar girl took the water to the hut, and out came the Tatar of yesterday evening, with the red beard, in a silken tunic, with slippers on his naked feet and a silver knife in his leather girdle. On his head he wore a high, black sheep-skin hat, flattened down behind. He came out, stretched himself, and stroked his bountiful red beard. He stayed there for a while, gave some orders to his labourer, and went off somewhither.

Next there passed by two children on horses which they had just watered. The horses' nozzles were wet. Then some more closely cropped youngsters ran by in nothing but shirts, without hose, and they collected into a group, went to the outhouse, took up a long twig and thrust it through the rift in the wall. Zhilin gave such a shout at them that the children screamed in chorus and took to their heels; a

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gleam of naked little knees was the last that was seen of them.

But Zhilin wanted drink; his throat was parched and dry. "If only they would come to examine me," thought he. He listened—they were opening the outhouse. The red-bearded Tatar appeared, and with him came another, smaller in stature, a blackish sort of little man. His eyes were bright and black, he was ruddy and had a small-cropped beard, his face was merry, he was all smiles. The swarthy man was dressed even better than the other; his silken tunic was blue and trimmed with galoon, the large dagger in his belt was of silver, his red morocco slippers were also trimmed with silver. Moreover, thick outer slippers covered the finer inner ones. He wore a lofty hat of white lamb's-wool.

The red-bearded Tatar came in and there was some conversation, and apparently a dispute began. He leaned his elbows on the gate, fingered his hanger, and glanced furtively at Zhilin like a hungry wolf. But the swarthy man—he was a quick, lively fellow, who seemed to move upon springs—came straight up to Zhilin, sat down on his heels, grinned, showing all his teeth, patted him on the shoulder, and began to jabber something in a peculiar way of his own, blinking his eyes, clicking with his tongue, and saying repeatedly:

"Korosho urus! Korosho urus!" (A fine Russian!)

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Zhilin did not understand a word of it, and all he said was:

"I am thirsty; give me a drink of water!"

The swarthy man laughed. "Koroshu urus!" he said again, babbling away in his own peculiar manner.

Zhilin tried to make them understand by a pantomime with his hands and lips that he wanted something to drink.

Understanding at last, the swarthy man went out and called:

"Dina! Dina!"

A very thin, slender girl, about thirteen years of age, with a face very like the swarthy man's, then appeared. Plainly she was the swarthy man's daughter. She also had black sparkling eyes and a ruddy complexion. She was dressed in a long, blue blouse, with white sleeves, and without a girdle. The folds, sleeves, and breast of her garment were beautifully trimmed. She also wore trousers and slippers, and the inner slippers were protected by outer slippers with high heels. Round her neck she wore a necklace of Russian half-roubles. Her head was uncovered, her hair was black, and in her hair was a ribbon, from which dangled a metal plaque and a silver rouble.

Her father gave her some orders. She ran out, and returned again immediately with a tin pail. She handed the water to Zhilin herself, plumping down on her heels, bending right forward so that her shoulders were lower than her

knees. There she sat, staring at Zhilin with wide-open eyes as he drank, just as if he were some wild animal.

Zhilin gave the pail back to her, and back she bounded like a wild goat. Even her father couldn't help laughing. Then he sent her somewhere or other. She took the pail, ran off, and came back with some unleavened bread on a little round platter, and again she crouched down, all humped forward, gazing at Zhilin with all her eyes.

Then all the Tatars went out and closed the door behind them.

After a little while the Nogai Tatar came to Zhilin and said:

"Come along, master! Come along!"

He also did not know Russian. It was plain to Zhilin, however, that he was ordering him to come somewhither.

Zhilin followed him, still wearing the *kolodka*. He limped all the way; to walk was impossible, as he had constantly to twist his foot to one side. So Zhilin followed the Nogai Tatar outside. He saw the Tatar village—ten houses, with their mosque which had a tower. Before one house stood three saddled horses. A tiny boy was holding their bridles. All at once the swarthy man came leaping out of his house, and waved his hand to Zhilin signifying him to approach. The Tatar was smiling, jabbering after his fashion, and quickly disappeared into the house again. Zhilin entered the house. The living-

room was a good one; the walls were of smoothly polished clay. Variegated pillows were piled up against the front wall; rich carpets hung up at the entrance on each side; arms of various sorts, such as pistols and sabres, all of fine metal, were hanging on the carpets. In one corner was a little stove level with the ground. The earthen floor was as clean as a threshing-floor; the front corner was all covered with felt; on the felt were carpets, and on the carpets soft cushions. And on the carpets, in nothing but their slippers, sat the Tatars: there were five of them, the red-bearded man, the swarthy man, and three guests. Soft bulging cushions had been placed behind the backs of them all, and in front of them, on a small platter, were boltered pancakes, beef distributed in little cups, and the Tatar beverage, *buza*, in a pail. They ate with their hands, and all their hands were in the meat.

The swarthy man leaped to his feet, and bade Zhilin sit down apart, not on the carpet, but on the bare floor; then he went back to his carpet, and regaled his guests with pancakes and *buza*. The labourer made Zhilin sit down in the place assigned to him; he himself took off his outer slippers, placed them side by side at the door, where the other slippers stood, then sat down on the felt nearer to his masters; he watched how they ate, and his mouth watered as he wiped it. When the Tatars had eaten the pancakes, a Tatar woman appeared in just the same sort of blouse

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that the girl had worn, and in trousers also; her head was covered with a cloth.

She took away the meat and the pancakes, and brought round a good washing-vessel, and a kettle with a very narrow spout. The Tatars then began washing their hands; then they folded their arms, squatted down on their knees, belched in every direction, and recited prayers. Then they talked among themselves. Finally, one of the guests turned toward Zhilin, and began to speak in Russian.

"Kazi Muhammed took thee," said he, pointing to the red-bearded Tatar, "and has sold thee to Abdul Murad," and he indicated the swarthy Tatar. "Abdul Murad is now thy master."

Zhilin was silent.

Then Abdul Murad began to speak, and kept on pointing at Zhilin, and laughed and said, several times, "Soldat urus! Korosho urus!" (The Russian soldier! The fine Russian!)

The interpreter said:

"He bids thee write a letter home in order that they may send a ransom for thee. As soon as they send the money, thou shalt be set free."

Zhilin thought for a moment, and then said:

"How much ransom does he require?"

The Tatars talked among themselves, and then the interpreter said:

"Three thousand moneys."

"No," said Zhilin, "I cannot pay that."

Abdul started up and began waving his hands, and said something to Zhilin—they all thought

he understood. The interpreter interpreted, saying:

"How much wilt thou give?"

Zhilin reflected, and then said, "Five hundred roubles."

At this the Tatars' chattered a great deal and all together. Abdul began to screech at the red-bearded Tatar, and got so excited that the spittle trickled from his mouth. The red-bearded Tatar only blinked his eyes and clicked with his tongue.

Then they were silent again, and the interpreter said:

"Thy master thinks a ransom of five hundred roubles too little. He himself paid two hundred roubles for thee. Kazi Muhammed owed him that, and he took thee in discharge of the debt. Three thousand roubles is the least they will let thee go for. And if thou dost not write they will put thee in the dungeon and punish thee with scourging."

"What am I to do with them? This is even worse than I thought," said Zhilin to himself. Then he leaped to his feet and said:

"Tell him, thou dog, that if he wants to frighten me, I won't give him a kopeck, neither will I write at all. I have never feared, and I will not fear you now, you dog."

The interpreter interpreted, and again they all began talking at once.

For a long time they debated, and then the swarthy man leaped to his feet and came to Zhilin.

"Urus!" said he, "dzhiget, dzhiget urus!" And then he laughed.

"Dzhiget" in their language signifies "youth."

Then he said something to the interpreter, and the interpreter said, "Give a thousand roubles!"

Zhilin stood to his guns. "More than five hundred I will not give," said he. "You may kill me if you like, but you'll get no more out of me."

The Tatars fell a-talking together again, then they sent out the labourer for some one, and kept looking at the door and at Zhilin. Presently the workman came back and brought with him a man—stout, bare-legged, and cheery-looking; he also had a *kolodka* fastened to his legs.

Then Zhilin sighed indeed, for he recognised Kostuilin. So they had taken him, too, then! The Tatars placed them side by side, they began talking to each other, and the Tatars were silent and looked on. Zhilin related how it had fared with him; Kostuilin told him that his horse had sunk under him, that his musket had missed fire, and that that selfsame Abdul had chased and captured him.

Abdul leaped to his feet, pointed at Kostuilin, and said something. The interpreter interpreted that they both of them had now one master, and whichever of them paid up first should be released first.

"Look, now," said he to Zhilin, "thou makest such a to-do, but thy comrade takes it quietly;

he has written a letter home telling them to send five thousand roubles. Look, now, he shall be fed well and shall be respected."

"My comrade can do as he likes," said Zhilin; "no doubt he is rich, but I am not rich. What I have said that I will do. You may kill me if you like, but you will get little profit out of that. I will write for not more than five hundred roubles."

They were silent for a while. Suddenly Abdul leaped up and produced a small coffer, took out a pen, a piece of paper and ink, forced them upon Zhilin, tapped him on the shoulder, and, pointing to them, said, "Write!" He had agreed to take five hundred roubles.

"Wait a bit," said Zhilin to the interpreter; "tell him that he must feed us well, clothe and shoe us decently, and let us be together—we shall be happier then—and take off the *kolodka*." He himself then looked at his master and laughed. And his master laughed likewise. He heard the interpreter out, and then said, "I will give you the best of clothing, a Circassian costume and good boots—you might be married in them. And I'll feed you like princes. And if you want to dwell together—well, you can dwell in the outhouse. I can't take off the *kolodka*—you would run away. Only at night can I take it off." Then he rushed forward and tapped him on the shoulder. "Thy good is my good!" said he.

Then Zhilin wrote the letter, and he wrote no

address on the letter, so that it should not go. But he thought to himself:

"I'll run away."

Then they led away Zhilin and Kostuilin to the outhouse, brought them maize-straw to spread on the ground, water in a pitcher, bread, two old Circassian costumes, and two pairs of tattered military boots. They had plainly been taken from off the feet of slain soldiers. At night they took off their *kolodki* and fastened the door.

III

ZHILIN and his comrade lived there for a whole month. And Zhilin's master was as radiant as ever. "Ivan," he would say, laughing, "thy good is my good—Abdul's good." They were badly fed all the same, getting nothing but unleavened bread, made from indifferent meal, and tough and doughy hearth-cakes.

Kostuilin wrote home once more, and waited for the money to be sent, in utter weariness. The whole day they sat in the outhouse and counted the days it would take the letter to arrive, or else they slept. Zhilin, however, knew very well that his letter would not arrive, and he did not write another.

"Where, I should like to know," thought he, "would my mother be able to scrape together so much money to buy me out? It was as much as she could do to live on what I sent her. If she had to collect five hundred roubles she would

come to grief altogether. With God's help, I'll get out of this hobble myself."

So he looked carefully about and devised every possible method of escaping. He would go about the village whistling, or he would sit down here and there and manufacture various sorts of little things, or model a puppet out of clay, or weave baskets from twigs. For Zhilin was a master at all sorts of handiwork.

Once he modelled a puppet with a nose, arms, and legs in a Tatar shirt, and put this puppet on the roof of the outhouse.

Presently the Tatar women came out to draw water. Dina, the daughter of the house, saw the puppet and called the Tatar women to look at it. They put down their pitchers, looked at it long, and laughed aloud. Zhilin took up the puppet and offered it to them. They laughed still more, but were afraid to take it. So he put the puppet on the roof, went into the outhouse, and watched to see what would happen.

Dina then came running up, glanced all around, seized the puppet, and ran away with it.

Next morning at dawn he saw Dina across the threshold with the puppet. She had already adorned the puppet with all sorts of parti-coloured rags, and was rocking it as if it were a child, singing a lullaby of her own invention. Then the old woman came out and scolded her, snatched away the puppet, smashed it, and sent Dina off to work somewhere.

Then Zhilin made another and even better

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puppet and gave it to Dina. Presently Dina came again, bringing with her a little pitcher which she put on the floor, and then sat down and looked at Zhilin, and, smiling all over, kept pointing at the pitcher.

"Why is she so delighted?" thought Zhilin. Then he took up the pitcher and began to drink. He thought it was water, but it was milk. He drank all the milk. "Khorosho!" (good) said he. How rejoiced Dina was then!

"Khorosho, Ivan, Khorosho," she repeated, and, leaping to her feet, she clapped her hands, snatched up the pitcher, and ran off.

And from thenceforth she, every day, brought him some milk privately. Now the Tatars used to make cheese-cakes out of goats' milk and dried them on their roofs, and these cheese-cakes she also supplied him with secretly. And once, when the master of the house slaughtered a sheep, she brought him a bit of mutton in her sleeve, flung it down before him, and ran off.

Occasionally there were heavy storms, and the rain poured down for a whole hour as if out of a bucket, and all the streams grew turbid and overflowed. Where there had been a ford there were then three ells of water, and the stones were whirled from their places. Streams then flowed everywhere, and there was a distant roar in the mountains. And so when the storm had passed over, the whole village was full of watercourses. After one of these storms Zhilin asked his master to lend him a knife, carved out a little cylinder

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and a little board, attached a wheel to them, and fastened a puppet at each end of the wheel.

The girls thereupon brought him rags, and he dressed up one of his puppets as a man and the other as a woman, fastened them well in, and placed the wheel in the stream, whereupon the wheel turned and the puppets leaped up and down.

The whole village assembled to look at them. The little boys came, and the little girls and the women, and at last the Tatars themselves, and they clicked their tongues and said, "Aye! Urus! Aye! Ivan!"

Now Abdul had some broken Russian watches. He called Zhilin, pointed at these watches, and clicked with his tongue. Zhilin said:

"Give them to me and I'll repair them!"

He took them to pieces with the help of his knife, examined them, put them together again, and returned them to their owner. The watches were now going.

Zhilin's master was greatly delighted at this, and brought him his old tunic, which was all in rags, and gave it to him to mend. What could Zhilin do but take and mend it? The same night its owner was able to cover himself with it.

From henceforth Zhilin had the reputation of a master-craftsman. The people used now to come to him from distant villages; one sent his matchlock or his pistol to Zhilin to be mended, another sent his watch or clock. His master

even gave him various utensils to mend, such as snuffers, gimlets, and other things.

Once one of the Tatars fell ill, and they sent for Zhilin to see him.

"Come and cure him!" said they.

Now Zhilin knew nothing at all about curing. Nevertheless, he went, looked at the man, and thought, "Who knows, perhaps he may get well by himself!" So he went back to the outhouse, got water and sand, and mixed them both together. Then he whispered something over the water in the Tatar's presence and gave him the mixture to drink. Fortunately for him, the Tatar recovered. Then Zhilin began to stand very high indeed in their opinion. And these Tatars, who had got used to him, used to cry, "Ivan! Ivan!" whenever they wanted him, and all of them treated him as if he were some pet domestic animal.

But the red-bearded Tatar did not like Zhilin. Whenever he saw him he would frown and turn away, even if he did not scold him outright. Now these Tatars had an old chief who did not live in the village, but up in the mountains. The only time when he saw Zhilin was when he came to pray to God in the mosque. He was small in stature, and a white handkerchief was always wound around his turban; his beard and moustaches were clipped short and as white as down; his face was red like a brick and wrinkled. He had the curved nose of a vulture, gray, evil eyes, and no teeth, except a couple of fangs. He used

to come in his turban, leaning on his crutch, and glaring about him like an old wolf. Whenever he saw Zhilin he began to snarl and turned away.

Once Zhilin went up the mountain to see how the old chief lived. As he went along a little path he saw a little garden surrounded by a stone fence with wild cherry and peach trees looking over it, and inside a little hut with a flat roof. Zhilin approached nearer, and then he saw beehives made of plaited straw—*ului* they called them—and the bees flying about and humming. And the little old man was on his tiny knees doing something to the hives. Zhilin raised himself a little higher to have a better look, and his *kolodka* grated. The little old man looked round, and whined aloud; then he drew a pistol out of his girdle, and fired point-blank at Zhilin. After firing, he hid behind a stone.

Next morning the old man came down to Zhilin's master to complain of him. Zhilin's master called him and said to him with a laugh:

"Why didst thou go to the old man?"

"I did him no harm," said Zhilin. "I only wanted to see how he lived."

Zhilin's master interpreted.

The old man was very angry, however. He hissed and gabbled; his two fangs protruded, and he shook his fist at Zhilin.

Zhilin did not understand it at all. All he understood was that the old man bade his master kill all the Russians and not keep

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any of them in the village. Finally, the old man went away.

Zhilin now began to ask his master who the little old man was, and this is what his master told him:

"That is a great man. He was our foremost warrior, and has killed many Russians; he is also rich. Once he had eight sons, and they all dwelt together in one village. The Russians came, destroyed the village, and slew seven of his sons. One son only remained, and he surrendered to the Russians. Then the old man went away, and surrendered himself also to the Russians. He lived with them for three months, found out where his son was, slew him, and ran away. From thenceforth he renounced warfare and went to Mecca—to pray to God. Hence he has his turban. Whoever has been to Mecca is called Hadji, and may put on a turban. He does not love me. He bade me slay thee, but I will not slay thee, because I want to make money out of thee; and, besides, I have begun to love thee, Ivan, and so far from killing thee, I would not let thee go away at all if I hadn't given my word upon it." He laughed, and then he added in Russian, "The welfare of thee, Ivan, is the welfare of me, Abdul!"

IV

So Zhilin lived like this for a month. In the daytime he went about the village, or made all

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sorts of things with his hands; and when night came, and all was silent in the village, he began digging inside his outhouse. Digging was difficult because of the rock, but he fretted away the rock with a file, and dug a hole under the wall, through which, at the proper time, he meant to crawl.

"If only I knew the place fairly well," he said to himself; "if only I knew in which direction to go. But the Tatars never give themselves away."

One day he chose a time when his master had gone away, and after dinner he went up the mountain behind the village, wanting to survey the whole place from there. But when his master went away he had commanded a lad to follow Zhilin wherever he went and not lose sight of him. So the youngster ran after Zhilin, and cried, "Don't go! Father didn't tell you to. I'll call the people this instant!"

Zhilin set about persuading him.

"I'm not going far," said he; "I only want to climb that mountain there. I want to find herbs to cure your people. Come with me! I can't run away with this *kolodka* on my leg. And to-morrow I'll make you a bow and arrows."

So he persuaded the lad, and they went together. The mountain did not seem far, but it was difficult going with the *kolodka*; he went on and on, and it taxed his utmost strength. When he got to the summit, Zhilin sat down to take a good look at the place. To the south, behind the outhouse, was a gully; a herd of horses was

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roaming along there, and another village was visible as a tiny point. Beyond this village was another and still steeper mountain, and behind this mountain yet another. Between the mountains was the blue outline of a wood, and there could be seen other mountains, rising higher and higher. And higher than all, as white as sugar, stood yet other mountains covered with snow. And one snowy mountain with a cap on stood out higher than all the rest. On the east and on the west were similar mountains; here and there smoking hamlets could be seen in the ravines. "Well," thought Zhilin, "all that is their part of the country." Then he began looking toward the Russian side: at his feet were the stream, his own village, and little gardens all around. By the stream, like so many little puppets, the women were sitting and rinsing clothes. Behind the village, somewhat lower down, was a mountain with two other mountains in between, and after that came woods; and between the two mountains, looking blue in the distance, was a level space, and far, far away in this level space some smoke was rising. Zhilin tried to remember where the sun used to rise and where it used to set when he lived at home in the fortress. And then he saw that "our" fortress must needs be on that very plain. Thither, then, between the two mountains, his flight must lie.

The sun was beginning to set. The snow-covered mountains turned from white to rosy red; the black mountains grew darker; the mist

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began to ascend from the gullies, and that very valley in which the Russian fortress needs must be glowed like a fire in the distant West. Zhilin looked steadily in that direction; something was dimly visible in the valley, like smoke coming from a tube. And he thought to himself that must be the Russian fortress itself.

It was getting late. The call of the priest to prayers could be heard from where they were. The flocks were being driven homeward; the cows were lowing. The little lad kept on saying, "Let's be going!" But Zhilin did not want to go.

At last, however, they turned homeward. "Well," thought Zhilin, "at any rate I know the place now, and must make a bolt for it." He would have liked to escape that very night. The nights just then were dark; the moon was on the wane. Unfortunately, the Tatars returned that very evening. They used to come in driving captured cattle before them in a merry mood; but on this occasion they drove in nothing at all, and brought along with them on his saddle a slain Tatar, the brother of the red-bearded Tatar. They arrived very wrathful, and gathered together to bury their comrade. Zhilin also came out to see what was going on. They wrapped the corpse in a piece of cloth without a coffin; then they placed it on the grass in the middle of the village under a plane-tree. The priest arrived, and they all squatted down together on their heels in front of the corpse.

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The priest was in front, behind him sat the three village elders in their turbans, and in a row with and behind them some more Tatars. There they sat with dejected eyes and in silence. The silence lasted for a long time, and then the priest raised his head and spoke:

"Allah!" he said. It was the only word he spoke. And once more they all cast down their eyes, and were silent for a long time. They sat there without stirring. Again the priest raised his voice:

"Allah!"

"Allah!" they all repeated, and were again silent. The dead man was lying on the grass, he moved not, and they all sat round him like dead men. Not one of them stirred. The only thing to be heard was the quivering of the tiny leaves of the plane-tree in the light breeze. Then the priest recited a prayer, and they all stood up, raised the dead man, and carried him away. They carried him to the grave. The grave was not simply dug out, but burrowed underneath the ground like a cellar. They lifted the dead man beneath the shoulders and under the legs, bent him a little inward, and slowly let him go, thrusting him in under the earth in a sitting position, and pulling his arms straight down close to his body.

The Nogai Tatars then brought green rushes, and filled up the hole therewith, strewed it with fresh earth, made it level, and placed an upright stone at the head of the dead man. Then they

stamped down the earth, again sat down round the grave, and were silent for a long time.

"Allah! Allah! Allah!" And they sighed deeply and stood up.

The red-bearded man distributed money among the elders, then he arose, took up his short whip, struck his forehead three times, and went home.

In the morning Zhilin saw them leading a fine mare out of the village with three Tatars following behind. When they got right out of the village, the red-bearded Tatar took off his tunic, tucked up his sleeves—what big, brawny arms he had!—drew forth his knife, and sharpened it on a piece of sandstone. The Tatars then drew forward the mare's head, and the red-bearded man came forward and cut her throat, flung the mare to the ground, and began to flay her, separating the hide from the flesh with his huge hands. Then the women and the girls came up and began to wash the entrails and the inside. After that they cut up the mare, and dragged the meat into the hut. And the whole village came together at the house of the red-bearded man to commemorate the deceased.

Three days they ate of the mare, drank *buza*, and commemorated the death of the victim.

All the Tatars were at home now, but on the fourth day Zhilin, after dinner, beheld them assembling to go somewhere. They brought their horses, made ready, and went off, ten men in all, and the red-bearded man went too. Only

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Abdul remained at home. There was a new moon just then, and the nights were still pretty dark.

"Now's the time," thought Zhilin; "now we must make a bolt for it." He spoke to Kostuilin about it, but Kostuilin was afraid.

"How can we run away? We don't know the road," said he.

"I know the road."

"But we shall never be able to get there in the night."

"Suppose we don't; surely we can pass the night in the forest? And look! I've collected some hearth-cakes. Why do you want to stick here? It's easy enough to send for money, but you see they haven't collected it. And besides, the Tatars are angry now because the Russians have killed one of their people. They have been talking together about killing us too."

Kostuilin thought and thought for a long time

"Very well, let us go," said he at last.

V

ZHILIN crept into his hole, and dug still deeper in order that Kostuilin also might be able to creep through it; then they sat down and waited till all was quiet in the place.

As soon as all the people in the village were quiet, Zhilin crept under the wall and forced his way through. Then he whispered to Kostuilin:

"You creep through too!" And as he did so

he loosed a stone, which made a great noise. Zhilin's master, however, had placed a guard at the door—a piebald dog, a vicious, a very vicious beast. His name was Ulyashin. But Zhilin had made it his business regularly to feed the animal for some time. As soon as Ulyashin heard them he began to bark and rushed up, and after him all the other dogs. But Zhilin merely whistled to him, and threw him a bit of hearth-cake. Then Ulyashin recognised him, wagged his tail, and ceased to bark.

But Zhilin's master had heard, and he now began to shout from out of the hut:

"Hold him! Hold him, Ulyashin!"

Zhilin, however, was busy scratching Ulyashin behind the ears, and the dog was silent, rubbed himself against Zhilin's legs, and wagged his tail.

They sat down behind a corner. All grew quiet again. All that could be heard were the sheep shuffling in their fold, and the water below bubbling over the stones. It was dark. The stars stood high in the heavens, the young red moon stood over the mountain with her horns pointed upward. In the valley gleamed a milk-white mist.

Zhilin arose and said to his comrade:

"Now, my brother, let's be off!"

Something stirred just as they were starting. They stopped to listen. The priest was chanting on the roof:

"Allah! Bismillah! Ilrakhman!" This signifies: "Come, people, to the mosque!"

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They sat down again, squeezing themselves against the wall. Long they sat there, waiting till the people should have gone by. Again all was silent.

"Now, then, in God's name!"

They crossed themselves and set out. They went through the courtyard, down the steep slope to the stream, crossed the stream, and went along the gully. The mist was thick and stood low, and over their heads the stars were dimly, tinily visible. Zhilin calculated by the stars which way he ought to take. It was fresh in the mist and easy going, but their boots were in the way and made them stumble. Zhilin took his off, threw them away, and went along barefooted. He kept leaping from rock to rock, looking at the stars. Kostuilin began to lag behind.

"Go more slowly!" said he. "These cursed boots of mine! But all boots hinder one so!"

"Take them off, then! You'll find it easier going."

Kostuilin also then went barefooted—and found it still worse. He was bruising his feet continually on the stones, and kept lagging behind more than ever.

"Lift up your feet more! Look alive!" said Zhilin. "If they overtake us they'll kill us, and that will be worst of all."

Kostuilin said nothing. He came on puffing and blowing. For a long time they went down hill. They listened, and heard dogs barking to

their right. Zhilin stopped, looking about him. He went to the mountain-side and felt it with his hands.

"Oh!" said he, "we have made a mistake; we turned to the right. Here is another village. I could see it from the mountain-top. We must go back—to the left—up the mountain. There is sure to be a road there."

"Just wait a little," said Kostuilin; "do give me time to breathe a bit; my feet are all bloody."

"Look alive, my brother! Spring a little more lightly—that's the whole trick!"

And Zhilin ran back to the left toward the mountain, and into the wood. Kostuilin lagged behind, groaning and gasping.

Zhilin kept urging him to be quicker, but went on himself without stopping.

They ascended the mountain. Yes—there, right enough, was the wood. They entered the wood, and all that was left of their clothing was quickly torn to bits. Then they hit upon a path in the wood, and went steadily on.

Stop! The sound of hoofs resounded on the road. They halted and listened. There was stamping as of a horse, and then it ceased. They moved on again; the stamping recommenced. They stopped still, and the stamping stopped. Zhilin crept forward, and looked along the road in the light: something was standing there. It was a horse, and yet not a horse, and on the horse was something odd, not resembling a man. It snorted—they listened. What monster could

it be? Zhilin whistled very softly. It scurried off the path into the forest, and in the forest there was a crashing sound. It flew like a tempest, breaking down the branches in its path.

Kostuilin almost fell to the ground in his terror. But Zhilin laughed and said:

"That was a stag. Hark how he smashes the wood with his horns. We are afraid of him, and he is afraid of us."

They went along farther. Morning was now close at hand. Where they were going, however, they knew not. It seemed to Zhilin as if the Tatars had brought him along by that selfsame path. As far as he could make it out, they had still some six or seven miles to traverse. But there were no certain landmarks, and it was night, so that there was no distinguishing anything. Presently they came out upon a little plain, and Kostuilin sat down and said:

"You may do as you like, but I shall never get there. My legs won't do it."

Zhilin tried to persuade him.

"No," said he, "I sha'n't go any farther. I can't, I tell you."

Zhilin then grew angry. He spat on one side, and bullied his comrade.

"Then I'll go on alone," said he. "Good-bye!"

Then Kostuilin leaped to his feet and went on. They now went on for four miles. The mist in the forest grew still thicker; they could

see nothing in front of them; the stars were barely visible.

At last they heard something like the trampling of a horse in front of them. They could hear the hoofs clattering against the stones. Zhilin lay down on his stomach, and began to listen with his ear to the ground.

"Yes," said he, "it is as I thought. A horseman is coming toward us."

They quitted the road in haste, sat among the bushes, and waited. Zhilin presently crept forward toward the road, and saw a mounted Tatar coming along, driving a cow before him, and muttering to himself. After he had gone, Zhilin turned to Kostuilin, saying:

"He's gone by, thank God! Get up, and we'll go on!"

Kostuilin tried to get up, but fell down again. He was a heavy, puffy fellow, and began to sweat profusely. The cold mist of the forest, too, had given him a chill; his feet were lacerated, and he went all to pieces. When Zhilin raised him to his feet with an effort, he cried out:

"Oh! it hurts!"

Zhilin almost had a fit.

"What are you howling for! The Tatars are quite close to us—don't you hear?" But he thought to himself: "He really is almost done for; what am I to do with him? One can't leave a comrade in the lurch; it wouldn't be right."

"Well," said he, "get up on my back. I'll carry you, if you really can't walk yourself."

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So he put Kostuilin on his shoulders, gripped him under the knees, took the road again, and staggered onward..

"Only, my good fellow," said he, "don't grip me round the throat, but lay hold of my shoulders."

It was a heavy load for Zhilin. His feet also were all bloody, and he was tired to death. He felt crushed, tried to get into an easier position, hitched his shoulder so as to get Kostuilin to sit higher—and flung him into the road.

It was quite plain that the Tatar had heard Kostuilin yell, for as Zhilin listened he could hear some one coming back while uttering a peculiar cry. Zhilin threw himself into the bushes. The Tatar seized his musket, fired it, hit nothing, whined in Tatar fashion, and galloped down the road again.

"Well, my brother, he has gone, anyway," said Zhilin; "but the dog will at once collect all the Tatars he can find, and pursue us. If we don't do our three miles, we're done for." But he thought to himself, "What devil put it into my head to take this blockhead with me! Had I been alone, I should have got off long ago."

"You go on alone," said Kostuilin. "Why should you come to grief all through me?"

"No, I will not go alone. It is wrong to desert a comrade."

So he took him on his shoulders again, and went on. In this way he covered a mile. The forest stretched right on, and there was no sign

of an outlet. The mist was beginning to disperse; little clouds—or so they seemed—fared along; the stars were no longer visible. Zhilin was puzzled.

A spring, set among rocks, crossed the road. Here Zhilin stopped and set down Kostuilin.

"Let's have a rest," said he, "to give me breathing-time. I want a drink, too, and we'll have some hearth-cakes. It can't be much farther now."

No sooner had he drunk his fill, however, than he heard the trampling of hoofs behind them. Once more they crept into the bushes on the right, beneath the steep cliff, and lay at full length.

Soon they heard the voices of the Tatars, who stopped at the very spot where they had turned off from the road. They talked a good deal among themselves, after which they put the dogs they had brought with them upon the scent. Zhilin and his comrade listened. There was a crashing of branches in the thicket, and straight toward them came a strange dog. When he saw them he stood still and began barking.

Then the Tatars also crept through the bushes. They were strange Tatars whom they had not seen before. The Tatars seized them, bound them, put them on horseback, and took them off.

They went along for about three miles, and then they met Zhilin's master, Abdul, and two other Tatars. These said something to the

strange Tatars, transferred the captives to their own horses, and brought them back to the village.

Abdul laughed no longer, and said not a single word to them.

They brought them into the village at break of day, and set them down in the public street. The children came running up, beat them with stones and whips, and jeered at them.

The Tatars gathered together in a circle, soon being joined by the elder from the mountain-side. They began talking, from which Zhilin understood that they were trying them, and debating what was to be done with them. Some said they should be sent farther away into the mountains, but the elder said that they ought to be killed. Abdul, however, objected to this. "I have paid money for them," said he, "and I am going to get a ransom for them."

"They'll never pay anything at all," replied the old man, "but will only do harm. It's a sin to feed Russians. Kill them, and have done with it!"

After they had separated, Zhilin's master came to him and began to talk to him.

"If they don't send me your ransom in a fortnight," said he, "I'll whip you to death. If you try to run away a second time, I'll kill you like dogs. Write a letter, and mind you write a good one!"

Paper was brought, and they wrote the letter. Then the *kolodki* were fastened to them again,

and they were taken to the mosque. Here there was a hole in the earth five ells long, and into this hole they were cast.

VI

THEIR life was now hard indeed. Their *kolodki* were never taken off; nor were they ever allowed a breath of fresh air. The Tatars flung them bits of uncooked dough as if they were dogs, filling a pitcher of water for them from time to time.

The heat of the hole was stifling, and it was damp and stinking. Kostuilin became downright ill. His limbs swelled and twitched all over, and he groaned continually except when he was asleep. Zhilin also was dejected; he saw they were in evil case. But how to get out of it he had no idea.

He would have begun mining again, but there was no where to hide the earth, and then, too, his master had threatened to kill him.

One day he was squatting in the hole thinking of life and liberty, feeling very miserable. Suddenly, right upon his knees fell a hearth-cake, and then another, followed by quite a shower of wild cherries. He looked up, and there was Dina. She gazed at him, laughed a little, and ran away. "Now I wonder if Dina would help us," thought Zhilin.

He cleaned a little corner of the hole, dug out a bit of clay, and made a lot of puppets out of it. He made men and women, horses and dogs, and

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thought to himself, "When Dina comes, I'll throw them out to her."

But on the next day there was no Dina, though Zhilin heard the trampling of horses and the noise of people passing to and fro, and could hear that the Tatars had assembled at the mosque and were disputing and shouting and consulting about the Russians. He also heard the voice of the old man of the mountain. He could not make out very well what was going on, but he guessed that the Russians were drawing near and that the Tatars were afraid they might come to the village and find out what was being done with the prisoners.

After debating together, the Tatars dispersed. Suddenly Zhilin heard a slight noise above his head. He looked up. There was Dina squatting on her haunches, with her knees hunched up higher than her head; she was leaning forward, her necklaces were visible, and were swinging to and fro right over the hole. Her little eyes gleamed like tiny stars. She drew out of her sleeve two cheese-cakes, which she threw to him.

Zhilin took them, saying, "Why have you been so long gone? I have been making playthings for you. Look!" And he began to fling them to her one by one.

But she shook her head, and would not look at them. "I don't want 'em," she said. She sat silent for a while, and then she went on, "Ivan,

they want to kill thee," drawing her hand across her throat.

"Who wants to kill me?"

"Father. The elders have bidden him do it. But I'm sorry for thee."

"If you are sorry for me," said Zhilin, "bring me a long pole."

She shook her head to signify that it was impossible. He put his hands together beseechingly.

"Dina, I pray thee do it! Dear little Dina, bring it to me!"

"Impossible," said she; "they are all at home, you see!" And off she ran.

So Zhilin sat there all the evening, thinking, "What will come of it, I wonder?" He kept looking up all the time. The stars were visible, but the moon had not yet risen. The priest's shrill cry was heard—and then all was silent. Zhilin began to grow drowsy. "Plainly, the girl is afraid," he reflected.

Suddenly a piece of clay plumped down on his head. He looked up. A long pole was thrust into a corner of the hole. It waggled about, descended gradually, and began to work its way into the hole. Zhilin was delighted. He caught hold of it and drew it in. It was a good, strong pole. He had noticed this pole some time before on the roof of his master's home.

He looked up again. The stars were shining high in the heavens, and right above the hole the eyes of Dina shone as brightly as the eyes of a

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cat in the darkness. She leaned forward over the mouth of the hole and whispered:

"Ivan! Ivan!" and she kept on making signs and drawing her hands repeatedly over her face by way of saying, "Hush! Be quiet!"

"What is it?" asked Zhilin.

"They have all gone; there are only two at home."

"Well, Kostuilin, let us go," said Zhilin. "We will try for the last time. I'll help you to get out of it."

But Kostuilin would not even hear of it.

"No," said he, "it's quite plain that I can't manage it. I have not the strength to go quickly, whichever way we go."

"Good-bye, then! And think no ill of me for leaving you!" And he embraced Kostuilin.

Then he seized the pole, bade Dina hold it firm, and began to creep up it. Once or twice he fell down, for the *kolodka* hampered him. Kostuilin then supported him, and he worked his way some distance up. Dina dragged away at his shirt with her little hands with all her might, laughing all the time, but it was no good.

Thereupon Zhilin laid hold of the pole with both hands.

"Pull it, Dina!" he cried. "Seize hold of it well, and you'll see it will almost come to you of its own accord!"

So she pulled away at the pole, with the result that presently Zhilin found himself up at the mountain-side. He crept down the steep de-

clivity, seized a sharp stone, and tried hard to force the lock of the *kolodka*. But the lock was a strong one; he was unable to break it, though he was not unskilful. Then he heard some one running down the mountain-side and leaping lightly along. "That must be Dina again," thought Zhilin. And Dina it was. Up she came running, seized a large stone, and said:

"Give it me!"

She squatted down on her little knees, and began to try her hand at it. But her little arms, as thin as twigs, had no strength in them; she threw away the stone, and burst into tears. Then Zhilin himself had another try at the lock, while Dina sat down beside him, leaning against his shoulder. Zhilin glanced round, and saw on the left side of the mountain a burning red reflection: the moon was rising. "Well," thought he, "before the moon rises I must make my way through the gully and get to the wood." He rose and threw away the stone. *Kolodka* or no, go he must.

"Good-bye, little Dina," said he; "I shall always remember thee."

Dina clutched at him, and began to fumble about his sleeves to see if she could find a place wherein to stuff some pancakes. He took the pancakes.

"Thanks, my wise little woman," said he. "Who will make dolls for thee when I am gone, I wonder?" And he stroked her head.

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How bitterly Dina wept! Finally, she covered her face with her hands and ran away up the mountain like a wild kid. The clink of the coins in the long tresses of hair hanging down her back was audible in the darkness.

Zhilin crossed himself, seized the lock of the *kolodka* so as not to stumble as he went, and hobbled along the road, gazing constantly at the reflection of light where the moon was rising. He knew the road. He had to go straight on for about eight miles. If only he could get to the forest before the moon had quite risen! He crossed the stream; the light behind the mountain was growing brighter. He passed through the gully. On he went, glancing upward from time to time. Still the moon was not visible. The burning reflection was increasing, and everything on one side of the gully was growing brighter and brighter. A shadow was creeping along the mountain, coming nearer and nearer to him.

Zhilin went on and on, the shadow still continuing to advance. He hastened on, and the moon was working her way out even more quickly than he had anticipated; to the right the tops of the trees were already lighted up. He was now close to the forest, when the moon burst forth from behind the mountain. Everything was as light and bright as if it were day. Every little leaf on every little tree was visible. It was quite quiet on the illumined mountain-sides, as if everything had died out of existence. The

only thing to be heard was the gurgling of the stream below.

He reached the forest without anything happening. Zhilin chose the darkest spot he could find in the forest, there sitting down to rest.

After recovering his breath, he ate a hearth-cake. Then he took a stone, and again set about battering the *kolodka*. He battered it with all the strength of his arm, but could not break it. He arose, and went along the road. After going for a mile, he became thoroughly exhausted, when his legs tottered beneath him. Ten steps more he took, and then he stopped short.

"It's no use," said he; "all I can do is to drag myself on as long as I have the strength to do so. If once I sit down, I shall not get up again. I can never get to the fortress to-day, but as soon as it is dawn I will lie up in the forest, and at night I'll go on again."

All night he went onward. The only people he met were two mounted Tatars, and as he saw them at a distance he was able to hide away from them behind a tree.

The moon had already begun to wane, the dew was falling, it was close upon dawn, and still Zhilin had not got to the end of the forest. "Well," thought he, "just thirty steps more, and then I'll turn into the forest and sit down." He took the thirty steps, when he saw that the forest was coming to an end. He went out to the very fringe of it. There, quite bright before him, as if on the palm of his hands, lay the plain

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and the fortress, and to the left, quite close under the mountain-side, camp-fires were burning and smoking, and people were standing round the smouldering logs.

He gazed fixedly, and saw Cossacks—soldiers—and glistening arms.

Zhilin, full of joy, rallied his last remaining strength and prepared to descend the mountain-side.

“God grant,” thought he, “that a mounted Tatar may not see me in the open plain. Although I’m pretty near now, I’m not there yet.”

And the thought was no sooner in his head, when behold! on a little mound stood three Tatars, about two furlongs off. They saw him—and dashed after him. His heart absolutely died away within him. Then he waved his arms, and shouted with all the breath he had in his body:

“My brothers! My brothers! Save me!”

Our fellows heard him, and some mounted Cossacks galloped forward. They made for him in an oblique direction to cut off the Tatars.

The Cossacks were far off; the Tatars were near. But now Zhilin rallied all his strength, seized his *kolodka*, and ran toward the Cossacks, no longer remembering who he was, but crossing himself and crying continually:

“Brothers! Brothers! Brothers!”

The Cossacks were about fifteen in number.

The Tatars grew frightened. Instead of com-

ing on, they reined in their horses. And Zhilin ran right into the Cossacks.

The Cossacks surrounded him, and asked him who he was and whence he came. But Zhilin no longer remembered who he was, and burst out crying, babbling all the time:

"Brothers! Brothers!"

The regular soldiers next came running out, and crowded round Zhilin. One of them offered him bread, another broth, a third covered him with a mantle, a fourth broke up the *kolodka*.

The officers presently recognised him, and conducted him to the fortress. The soldiers were delighted, and his comrades gathered round him.

Zhilin told them all that had happened to him, and said:

"You see, I was going home to be married. But no; that is evidently not to be my fate!"

And so he continued to serve in the Caucasus.

As for Kostuilin, they only ransomed him three months later for five thousand roubles. They brought him in barely alive.

THE EXECUTIONER

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

THE clock of the little town of Menda had just struck midnight. At that moment a young French officer was leaning on the parapet of a long terrace which bounded the gardens of the castle. He seemed plunged in the deepest thought—a circumstance unusual amid the thoughtlessness of military life; but it must be owned that never were the hour, the night, and the place more propitious to meditation. The beautiful Spanish sky stretched out its azure dome above his head. The glittering stars and the soft moonlight illumined a charming valley that unfolded all its beauties at his feet. Leaning against a blossoming orange-tree, he could see, a hundred feet below him, the town of Menda, which seemed to have been placed for shelter from the north winds at the foot of the rock on which the castle was built. As he turned his head he could see the sea, framing the landscape with a broad silver sheet of glistening water. The castle was a blaze of light. The mirth and movement of a ball, the music of the orchestra, the laughter of the officers and their partners in the dance, were borne to him mingled

with the distant murmur of the waves. The freshness of the night imparted a sort of energy to his limbs, weary with the heat of the day. Above all, the gardens were planted with trees so aromatic, and flowers so fragrant, that the young man stood plunged, as it were, in a bath of perfume.

The castle of Menda belonged to a Spanish grandee, then living there with his family. During the whole of the evening his eldest daughter had looked at the officer with an interest so tinged with sadness that the sentiment of compassion thus expressed by the Spaniard might well call up a reverie in the Frenchman's mind.

Clara was beautiful; and although she had three brothers and a sister, the wealth of the Marquis de Leganes seemed great enough for Victor Marchand to believe that the young lady would have a rich dowry. But how dare he hope that the most bigoted old hidalgo in all Spain would ever give his daughter to the son of a Parisian grocer? Besides, the French were hated. The marquis was suspected by General Gautier, who governed the province, of planning a revolt in favour of Ferdinand VII. For this reason the battalion commanded by Victor Marchand had been cantoned in the little town of Menda, to hold the neighbouring hamlets, which were dependent on the marquis, in check. Recent despatches from Marshall Ney had given ground for fear that the English would shortly land on the coast, and had indicated the marquis

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as a man who carried on communications with the Cabinet of London.

In spite, therefore, of the welcome which the marquis had given him and his soldiers, the young officer, Victor Marchand, remained constantly on his guard. As he was directing his steps toward the terrace, whither he had come to examine the state of the town and the country districts intrusted to his care, he debated how he ought to interpret the friendliness which the marquis had unceasingly shown him, and how the tranquillity of the country could be reconciled with his general's uneasiness. But in a moment these thoughts were driven from his mind by a feeling of caution and well-grounded curiosity. He had just perceived a considerable number of lights in the town. In spite of the day being the Feast of St. James, he had given orders that very morning that all lights should be extinguished at the hour prescribed by his regulations; the castle alone being excepted from this order. He could plainly see, here and there, the gleam of his soldiers' bayonets at their accustomed posts; but there was a solemnity in the silence, and nothing to suggest that the Spaniards were a prey to the excitement of a festival. After having sought to divine the offence of which the inhabitants were guilty, the mystery appeared all the more unaccountable to him because he had left officers in charge of the night police and the rounds. With all the impetuosity of youth, he was just about to leap

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through a breach and descend the rocks in haste, and thus arrive more quickly than by the ordinary road at a small outpost placed at the entrance of the town nearest to the castle, when a faint sound stopped him. He thought he heard the light footfall of a woman upon the gravel walk. He turned his head and saw nothing; but his gaze was arrested by the extraordinary brightness of the sea. All of a sudden he beheld a sight so portentous that he stood dumfounded; he thought his senses deceived him. In the far distance he could distinguish sails gleaming white in the moonlight. He trembled, and tried to convince himself that this vision was an optical illusion, merely the fantastic effect of the moon on the waves. At this moment a hoarse voice pronounced his name. He looked toward the breach, and saw, slowly rising above it, the head of the soldier whom he had ordered to accompany him to the castle.

"Is that you, commandant?"

"Yes; what do you want?" replied the young man in a low voice. A sort of presentiment warned him to be cautious.

"Those rascals down there are stirring like worms. I have hurried, with your leave, to tell you my own little observations."

"Go on," said Victor Marchand.

"I have just followed a man from the castle who came in this direction with a lantern in his hand. A lantern's a frightfully suspicious thing. I don't fancy it was tapers my fine

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Catholic was going to light at this time of night. 'They want to eat us body and bones!' says I to myself; so I went on his track to reconnoitre. There, on a ledge of rock, not three paces from here, I discovered a great heap of fagots."

Suddenly a terrible shriek rang through the town and cut the soldier short. At the same instant a gleam of light flashed before the commandant. The poor grenadier received a ball in the head and fell. A fire of straw and dry wood burst into flame, like a house on fire, not ten paces from the young man. The sound of the instruments and the laughter ceased in the ball-room. The silence of death, broken only by groans, had suddenly succeeded to the noise of and music of the feast. The report of a cannon roared over the surface of the sea. Cold sweat trickled down the young officer's forehead; he had no sword. He understood that his men had been slaughtered, and that the English were about to disembark. If he lived, he saw himself dishonoured, summoned before a council of war. Then he measured with his eyes the depth of the valley. He sprang forward, when just at that moment his hand was seized by the hand of Clara.

"Fly!" said she. "My brothers are following to kill you. Down yonder at the foot of the rock you will find Juanito's Andalusian. Quick!"

The young man looked at her for a moment, stupefied. She pushed him on; then, obeying the instinct of self-preservation which never forsakes even the bravest man, he rushed down in

the direction she had indicated. He leaped from rock to rock, where only the goats had ever trod before; he heard Clara crying out to her brothers to pursue him; he heard the footsteps of the murderers; he heard the balls of several discharges whistle about his ears; but he reached the valley; he found the horse, mounted, and disappeared swift as lightning. In a few hours he arrived at the quarters occupied by General Gautier. He found him at dinner with his staff.

"I bring you my life in my hand!" cried the commandant, his face pale and haggard.

He sat down and related the horrible disaster. A dreadful silence greeted his story.

"You appear to me to be more unfortunate than criminal," said the terrible general at last. "You are not accountable for the crime of the Spaniards, and unless the marshal decides otherwise, I acquit you."

These words could give the unfortunate officer but slight consolation.

"But when the emperor hears of it!" he exclaimed.

"He will want to have you shot," said the general. "However — But we will talk no more about it," he added severely, "except how we are to take such a revenge as will strike a wholesome fear into this country, where they make war like savages."

One hour afterward a whole regiment, a detachment of cavalry and a convoy of artillery were on the road. The general and Victor marched at

the head of the column. The soldiers, informed of the massacre of their comrades, were filled with extraordinary fury. The distance which separated the town of Menda from the general quarters was covered with marvellous rapidity. On the road the general found whole villages under arms. Each of these wretched townships was surrounded and their inhabitants decimated.

By some inexplicable fatality, the English ships stood off instead of advancing. It was known afterward that these vessels had outstripped the rest of the transports, and only carried artillery. Thus the town of Menda, deprived of the defenders it was expecting, and which the sight of the English vessels had seemed to assure, was surrounded by the French troops almost without striking a blow. The inhabitants, seized with terror, offered to surrender at discretion. Then followed one of those instances of devotion not rare in the Peninsula. The slayers of the French, foreseeing, from the cruelty of the general, that Menda would probably be given over to the flames and the whole population put to the sword, offered to give themselves up. The general accepted this offer, inserting as a condition that the inhabitants of the castle, from the lowest servant to the marquis himself, should be placed in his hands. This capitulation agreed upon, the general promised to pardon the rest of the population, and to prevent his soldiers from pillaging or setting fire to the town. An enormous contribution was exacted, and the

richest inhabitants surrendered themselves as hostages to guarantee the payment, which was to be accomplished within twenty-four hours.

The general took all precautions necessary for the safety of his troops, provided for the defence of the country, and refused to lodge his men in the houses. After having formed a camp, he went up and took military possession of the castle. The members of the family of Leganes and the servants were gagged, shut up in the great hall where the ball had taken place, and closely watched. The windows of the apartment afforded a full view of the terrace which commanded the town. The staff was established in a neighbouring gallery, and the general proceeded at once to hold a council of war on the measures to be taken for opposing the debarkation. After having despatched an aide-de-camp to Marshal Ney, with orders to plant batteries along the coast, the general and his staff turned their attention to the prisoners. Two hundred Spaniards, whom the inhabitants had surrendered, were shot down then and there upon the terrace. After this military execution the general ordered as many gallows to be erected as there were prisoners in the hall of the castle, and the town executioner to be brought. Victor Marchand made use of the time from then until dinner to go and visit the prisoners. He soon returned to the general.

"I have come," said he, in a voice broken with emotion, "to ask you a favour?" •

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"You?" said the general in a tone of bitter irony.

"Alas!" replied Victor, "it is but a melancholy errand that I am come on. The marquis has seen the gallows being erected, and expresses a hope that you will change the mode of execution for his family. He entreats you to have the nobles beheaded."

"So be it!" said the general.

"They further ask you to allow them the last consolations of religion, and to take off their fetters; they promise not to attempt to escape."

"I consent," said the general; "but you must be answerable for them."

"The old man also offers you the whole of his fortune if you will pardon his young son."

"Really!" said the general. "His property already belongs to King Joseph; he is under arrest." His brow contracted scornfully, then he added: "I will go beyond what they ask. I now understand the importance of the last request. Well, let him buy the preservation of his name, but Spain shall remember forever his treachery and its punishment. I give up the fortune and his life to whichever of his sons will fulfil the office of executioner. Go, and do not speak to me of it again."

Dinner was ready, and the officers sat down to table to satisfy appetites sharpened by fatigue.

One of them only—Victor Marchand—was not present. He hesitated for a long time before he entered the room where the haughty family

of Leganes were in their agony. He glanced sadly at the scene before him. In this very room, the night before, he had watched the fair heads of those two young girls and those three youths as they swung round in the lively mazes of the dance. He shuddered when he thought how soon their heads must fall, struck off by the sword of the executioner. Fastened to their gilded chairs, the father and mother, their three sons, and their two young daughters sat absolutely motionless. Eight serving-men stood upright before them, their hands bound behind their backs. These fifteen persons looked at each other gravely, their eyes scarcely betraying the thoughts that surged within them. But profound resignation and regret for the failure of their enterprise had left a mark upon the features of some of them. The soldiers likewise stood motionless, looking at them, and respecting the affliction of their cruel enemies. An expression of curiosity lighted up their faces when Victor appeared. He gave an order to unbind the condemned, and went himself to loose the cords which fastened Clara to her chair. She smiled sadly. He could not refrain from touching her arm and looking with admiring eyes at her black locks and graceful figure. She was a true Spaniard; she had the Spanish complexion and the Spanish eyes, with their long, curled lashes and pupils blacker than the raven's wing.

"Have you been successful?" she said, smiling

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upon him mournfully with as much girlish gaiety as still lingered in her expression.

Victor could not suppress a groan. He looked, one after the other, at Clara and at her three brothers. One, the eldest, was aged thirty; he was small, even somewhat ill made, with a proud, disdainful look, but there was a certain nobleness in his bearing; he seemed no stranger to that delicacy of feeling which elsewhere has rendered the chivalry of Spain so famous. His name was Juanito. The second, Felipe, was aged about twenty; he was like Clara. The youngest, Manuel, was eight. A painter would have found in his features a trace of that Roman steadfastness which David has given to children's faces in his episodes of the republic. The old marquis, his head still covered with white locks, seemed to have come out of a picture by Murillo. The young officer shook his head. When he looked at them, he was hopeless that he would ever see the bargain proposed by the general accepted by either of the four; nevertheless, he ventured to impart it to Clara. At first she shuddered, Spaniard though she was; then, immediately recovering her calm demeanour, she went and knelt down before her father.

"Father," she said, "make Juanito swear to obey faithfully any orders that you give him, and we shall be content."

The marchioness trembled with hope; but when she leaned toward her husband, and heard—she who was a mother—the horrible confidence whis-

pered by Clara, she swooned away. Juanito understood all. He leaped up like a lion in its cage. After obtaining an assurance of perfect submission from the marquis, Victor took upon himself to send away the soldiers. The servants were led out, handed over to the public executioner, and hanged. When the family had no guard but Victor to watch them, the old father rose and said:

"Juanito!"

Juanito made no answer except by a movement of the head, which was equivalent to a refusal; then he fell back in his seat and stared at his parents with eyes dry and terrible to look upon. Clara went and sat on his knee, put her arm round his neck, and kissed his eyelids.

"My dear Juanito," she said gayly, "if thou didst only know how sweet death would be to me if it were given by thee! I should not have to endure the odious touch of the headsman's hands. Thou wilt cure me of the woes that were in store for me; and, dear Juanito, thou couldst not bear to see me belong to another. Well?"

Her soft eyes cast one look of fire at Victor, as if to awaken in Juanito's heart his horror at the French.

"Have courage," said his brother Felipe, "or else our race, that has almost given kings to Spain, will be extinct."

Suddenly Clara rose; the group which had formed round Juanito separated, and this son, dutiful in his disobedience, saw his aged father

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standing before him, and heard him cry in a solemn voice, "Juanito, I command thee!"

The young count remained motionless. His father fell on his knees before him; Clara, Manuel, and Felipe did the same, instinctively. They all stretched out their hands to him as to one who was to save their family from extinction. They seemed to repeat their father's words: "My son, hast thou lost the energy, the true chivalry of Spain? How long wilt thou leave thy father on his knees? What right hast thou to think of thine own life and its sufferings? Madam, is this a son of mine?" continued the old man, turning to his wife.

"He consents," cried she in despair. She saw a movement in Juanito's eyelids, and she alone understood its meaning.

Mariquita, the second daughter, still knelt on her knees, and clasped her mother in her fragile arms; her little brother, Manuel, seeing her weeping hot tears, began to chide her. At this moment the almoner of the castle came in; he was immediately surrounded by the rest of the family and brought to Juanito.

Victor could bear this scene no longer. He made a sign to Clara, and hastened away to make one last effort with the general. He found him in high good-humour, in the middle of the banquet, drinking with his officers; they were becoming uproarious.

An hour later, a hundred of the principal in-

habitants of Menda came up to the terrace, in obedience of the general's orders, to witness the execution of the family of Leganes. A detachment of soldiers was drawn up to keep back these Spanish burghers who were ranged under the gallows on which the servants of the marquis were still hanging. The feet of those martyrs almost touched their heads. Thirty yards from them a block had been set up, and against it gleamed a cimeter. The public headsman also was present, in case of Juanito's refusal. Presently, in the midst of the profoundest silence, the Spaniards heard the footsteps of several persons approaching, the measured tread of a squad of soldiers, and the faint rattle of their muskets. These sounds were mingled with the merriment of the officers' banquet, just as before it was the music of the dance which had concealed preparations for a treacherous massacre. All eyes were turned toward the castle; the noble family was seen advancing with wonderful dignity. Every face was calm and serene; one man only leaned, pale and haggard, on the arm of the priest. Upon this man he lavished all the consolations of religion—upon the only one of them doomed to life. The public executioner understood, as all the rest did, that for that day Juanito had undertaken the office himself. The aged marquis, his wife, Clara, Mariquita, and their two brothers, came and knelt down a few steps from the fatal spot. Juanito was led thither by the priest. As he approached the block, the executioner

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touched him by the sleeve, and drew him aside, probably to give him certain instructions.

The confessor placed the victims in such a position that they could not see their executioner; but like true Spaniards they knelt erect without a sign of emotion.

Clara was the first to spring forward to her brother. "Juanito," she said, "have pity on my faint-heartedness; begin with me."

At that moment they heard the footsteps of a man running at full speed, and Victor arrived on the tragic scene. Clara was already on her knees; already her white neck seemed to invite the edge of the cimeter. A deadly pallor fell upon the officer, but he still found strength to run on.

"The general grants you your life if you will marry me," he said to her in a low voice.

The Spaniard cast a look of proud disdain on the officer. "Strike, Juanito," she said in a voice of profound meaning.

Her head rolled at Victor's feet. When the marchioness heard the sound, a convulsive start escaped her; this was her only sign of distress.

"Am I placed right so, dear Juanito?" little Manuel asked his brother.

"Ah, thou weepest, Mariquita!" said Juanito to his sister.

"Yes," answered the girl; "I was thinking of thee, my poor Juanito; thou wilt be so unhappy without us."

At length the noble figure of the marquis appeared. He looked at the blood of his

children; then he turned to the spectators, who stood mute and motionless before him. He stretched out his hands to Juanito, and said in a firm voice:

"Spaniards, I give my son a father's blessing. Now, marquis, strike without fear, as thou art without fault."

But when Juanito saw his mother approach, supported by the confessor, he groaned aloud, "She fed me at her own breast!"

His cry seemed to tear a shout of horror from the crowd. At this terrible sound the noise of the banquet and the laughter and merrymaking of the officers died away.

The marchioness saw that Juanito's courage was exhausted. With one bound she threw herself over the balustrade, and her head was dashed in pieces against the rocks below. A shout of admiration burst forth. Juanito fell to the ground in a swoon.

"Marchand has just been telling me something about this execution," said a half-drunken officer. "I'll warrant, general, it wasn't by your orders that——"

"Have you forgotten, gentlemen, exclaimed General Gautier, "that next month there will be five hundred French families in tears, and that we are in Spain? Do you wish to leave your bones here?"

After this speech there was not a man, not even a sub-lieutenant, who could drink another drop.

The Executioner

In spite of the respect paid him—in spite of the title of *El Verdugo* (the executioner), bestowed upon him as a title of nobility by the King of Spain—the Marquis de Leganes is a prey to melancholy. He lives in solitude, and is rarely visible. Overwhelmed with the burden of his famous crime, he seems only to await the birth of a second son, impatient to seek again the company of those shades who never cease to hover about his path.

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