

these poor

some European institutions is doubtless aright, but we had better save a little of our pity and lavish it right here at home. The American wife and mother who labors morning, noon and night, in the close confinement of the home is in some respects worse off than the abused Peasant-woman. The latter enjoys fresh air, sun-light and out-door exercise and retains that most precious endowment, her health.

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female troubles."

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NARKA, THE NIHILIST.

BY KATHLEEN O'MEARA

CHAPTER V.

Marguerite was very ill during the In the morning she sent to say she would not come down to breakfast. Sibyl went at once to her room.
"My poor darling," she said, laying

her cool cheek against Marguerite's hot's face, "to think of our bringing you all this way to frighten you into illness with wolves and murders!

Marguerite answered with a faint smile, and Sibyl, seeing that the girl was very nervous, and best left quiet and alone, kissed her and came away, and sent for the doctor.

Narka had gone out early to see her mother, who was sure to have heard of the murder, and likely, in her weak state of health, to be seriously affected by the shock.

Mrs. Larik was in truth greatly excited. "So God's vengeance has overtaken the man who murdered my husband and my boy!" she exclaimed, her face quivering. "Ah! the Lord God swore to avenge the widow and the orphan; the Lord God has kept

"The vengeance can't help us, or give back the dead," replied Narka. Don't rejoice in it, mother ; it can't help us.

But Mrs. Narik was not magnanimous enough to take this negative view of the event. She was a kindly soul : she would not have crushed a worm; but she was an injured woman, made a widow and sonless by Larchoff and his father, and it was not in human nature that she should not feel a thrill of satisfaction at this deed of venge ance wrought upon the enemy who had crushed the joy out of her life.

Narka let her talk on awhile, but seeing that she was exciting herself overmuch, she said, irrelevantly, "Marguerite wanted to come and see you yesterday; do you think you would be able to see her to day?"

"No, no; not to day. are sure to be very bad to day know they are always worse when my mind is worried."

"I thought it might help you to forget the pains and the worry a minute. She is very merry and pleasant, and

very nice to me."
"In a few days, when I have got over it a bit, but not to day, not today. I can't think how you could ask such an unreasonable thing, Narka, as to see a stranger to day.

"Then I shall make her wait, little mother; there is no hurry," said Narka, soothingly; and she arranged the pillows and fussed about the nervous, irritable invalid, and talked of household matters, and did what she could to cheer her and turn her mind to practical interests. Narka was not the same being with her mother and with the rest of the world; every tone, every touch, was full of deprecating tenderness; her strength became as the weakness of a little child when she was nursing and caressing and humoring the peevish, loving, broken-spirited widow who had only her left to care for. When M. de Beaucrillon said to Sibyl, "Your Narka is too grand and cold for me; she is not human enough; she is like a goddess made out of marble and gold," Sibyl replied, "If you saw her with her mother you

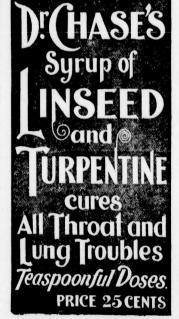
They were at breakfast when Narka got back to the castle. She had scarcely sat down when a servant came in to say that Pakol Pasgoiroiwitch, the Stanovoï's clerk, was outside, wanting to speak to Prince Basil.

the dog wait," was Daenthe dog wait," bees he ihink contemptuous reply. I am going to get up from my break-fast to attend to him?"

The servant looked as if he had something he wished to say-something that would explain; but after a second's hesitation he decided not to say it, and withdrew. He had hardly closed the door when Basil rose impuls-ively and went out after him. Pakol Pasgoirolwitch was standing in the hall; the door was ajar, and the voices were audible in the breakfast-room. Some words reached Sibyl and Narka which made them change color and Before they had time to exstart. change a word, Basil flung the door open and came back, followed by Pakol Pasgoiroiwitch.

Basil looked at the man as if order

ing him to speak.
"The murderer has been dis covered,," said Pakol Pasgoiroiwitch, with a stolid, neutral face, like a



An exclamation of impatient curiosity came from the two ladies. "Father Christopher is the man

who committed it! Sibyl almost screamed, and after

staring blankly at the dropped into her seat. Narka stood as if turned to stone.

"What is it?" inquired M. de Beaucrillon, curious and impatient. Basil explained. The man went on

to deliver his message, looking all the while as unmoved as a wooden figure might have done. Information had reached the authorities that morning the Father's gun was found loaded in the sacristy, with one chamber empty; the Father had been seen hurrying from the forest at the time of the mur der: all this evidence was substantiated.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed M. de Beaucrillon, when it had been trans-lated to him; "but you could not hang a dog on such evidence.'

Not in France," retorted Basil "but we are in Russia, and the Stanovoi thinks Father Christopher is

"He thinks nothing of the sort It's his business to think everybody guilty till he finds out who is. doesn't he suspect you and me? would find both our rifles with a couple of chambers empty. Bon Dieu! thing is beyond belief; it is monstrous

"Father Christopher!" Sibyl re peated, in a tone of stupefied amaze

ment.
"Have they arrested him?" asked Narka, who had remained rooted to the spot where she heard the news. "Yes; about an hour ago.

"You can go," said Basil, with haughty abruptness. The man bowed to his knees, and

withdrew. Everybody seemed struck dumb for a moment after the door had closed

Then Basil exploded in a muttered curse, and walked to the window. "What motive can any one have had in getting up such a preposterous

story?" asked M. de Beaucrillon.
"Oh! the motive is not far to seek, "The Father is hated by the Stanovoi, as he was by Larchoff both have been pursuing him unre lentingly ever since my mother's trying to entrap him into something that would give them a hold upon him; they have plotted late and arly to convict him of proselytizing, of being connected with the revolution ists. It was only the fear of my father's influence at St. Petersburg that held them at all in check, or the would have sent him to Siberia or the gallows long since. The Stanovoi has seized on Larchoff's murder now to serve his hate of the Father, and they will buy witnesses to swear to hi guilt

"We will outbid them ; we will do it if it costs every ruble in our possession and every acre of our land," cried Basil, coming up to her, both his bands clinched, his countenance set. "If papa were at home!" exclaimed

Sibyl, excitedly.
"Thank Heaven he is not!" retorted "He will serve us infinitely better at St. Petersburg. I must go to him immediately. We will do what is to be done there, and then my father

will come home and deal with the business here."
"Dear Basil, that is the best plan. But meantime they will have carried Father Christopher to prison at X. Do you think the Stanovoi will let you see him at the guard house before he goes?

It would be everything if you could see him and tell him to be or good "He is sure to be that, whatever befalls. I don't think they would let

me see him."
"Oh, try, Basil, try!" said Narka, in a tone of entreaty that was full of anguish. "Or if I went? Perhaps

they would make less difficulty about letting me in?" seemed pulled in different directions; but after a moment's hesita tion he said, "I will go myself," and

went out of the room "Would my going help?" asked M de Beaucrillon

" No; it would hinder, more likely said Sibyl. "Oh, Narka," she cried,

moving rapidly to and fro and wring ing her hands, "if they should find witnesses to swear away his life! She burst into tears. "They are sure to find them," Narka replied, in a level undertone

Sibyl knew what a strength of pas sionate feeling there was beneath the tense, calm manner, but M. de Beau-crillon did not, and the girl's apparent insensibility revolted him.

The Stanovoi politely but positively

refused to let Basil see the Father. He was profuse in his expressions of regre at not being able to obey his Excellency's desire, but he had himself received the strictest orders not to let any one near the prisoner, who was to be conveyed next day to X

"And who has invented this preci-ous lie against him?"

"Prince, I am here again under orders of secrecy, and dare not reveal the names of the witnesses. "There are several, then? I should

not have thought there was one man in the entire district who would have lied against Father Christopher."
"There is not a man in the district,

Excellency, who does not know that Father Christopher hated Count Larchoff. "There is not a man, woman, or

child in the district who did not hate Larchoff. If that be a proof, you can convict every muzhik on the land of the murder."
"We can't convict them of a more

faith, as Father Christopher has been of late years repeatedly charged with

"By whom was he charged with it? By Larchoff, who never could prove it in a single instance." "It will be proved now."
"What! Is Larchoff coming back

from hell to do it? Mind what you are about. I warn you the devil may overshoot his mark."

With this treat, emphasized by his uplifted stick, Basil turned his back on the Stanovoi and walked out. Ivan Gorff had seen him in the distance, and was waiting outside the

Mayor's house. They clasped hands. "This is a pretty business," said Ivan. "Whose doing can it be?" Basil, as if questioning himself.
"You don't believe it can have been

accidental? "I mean this arrest of Father Chris-

"The Stanovoi's, of course. Who else had any interest in getting him out of the way? But the Prince will be too strong for him. There is no likelihood of their prevailing against the Prince?

There's always a liklihood of lies

They went on some way without further speech. Ivan saw that Basil was desperately alarmed, and though he thought he overestimated the er to Father Christopher knew his friend too wel danger to say so, at this crisis at least. Basil was by nature and habit master ful and impatient of opposition; to con tradict him would only serve to exas perate his imperious temper, and pro voke one of those outbursts of violence which betrayed the weak point in his character-the lack of that strength which controls self, and is the surest test of power in controlling others.

So Ivan walked on, his loose, shuffl ing step keeping pace irregularly with the vigorous stride of his companion. When they reached the park gate, he stood. "I won't go in with you," he said: "I have to go on to X. this after-

said Basil, cordially. "I hope it's only the effect of the shock to her

nerves?" "The doctor says so; but he says she is on the brink of a nervous fever. I must take her for a change as soon as possible. I think I shall carry her off to Odessa in a day or two. We have an old aunt there who will take care of her. She wants to be taken care of.' "She does," replied Basil.

all do, those young girls; they ought all to have mothers to look after them. Well, present my best respects to Ma demoiselle Sophie. She may have left before I return. By the way, I did not tell you : I am going to start off to St. Petersburg. Nobody must know; I will say I am going to the dentist at X., and that I may be obliged to stay the night there. This will give me forty eight hours' start of these blood. hounds. A good deal depends on our being first in the field at St. Peters burg. It is a mercy my father has kept his footing at court. We have grumbled because he squandered so nuch money there, but now we are thankful for it.'

'Yes, it is an ill wind that blows nobody good," replied Ivan.

CHAPTER VI.

The doctor found Marguerite alarm ngly feverish; she seemed on the brink of a serious illness; for some days he could not say how it would turn. Narka longed to take possession of her, to be quite alone with her. If delirium came on, there was the danger of revelations which both she and Marguerite dreaded. The conscious ness of a secret between them-a terri ble fear, which, for being unexpressed, was none the less distinctly understood by both—had suddenly drawn the two girls together in a bond of no common sympathy, and Marguerite would have been happier to feel herself in Narka's safe keeping; but Sibyl had at once entered on the duties of nurse as hers by right, and was constantly by her edside.

Narka had not been alone with Basil for a moment since the announcement of the murder, and she had not even seen him since the news of Father Christopher's arrest. Of late her relationship with Basil had been undergoing a change. Imperceptibly the slipping from her, and she had felt creeping over her that kind of embar rassing sensitiveness that manifests itself in shyness: she felt, or she fancied, that her manner was not the same—free, direct, and simple—and the dread that Basil should notice the change made her shrink from being alone with him. But Basil noticed nothing. He was as unrestrained as ever in his brotherly familiarity. It had long been his habit to make fidante-to a certain point-of Narka He talked to her more unreservedly than to any one else. He could de nounce things to Narka, he could swear at the Czar, he could complain of his father's extravagance and absenteeism, more freely to her than to Sibyl; he had been thrown more entirely on Narka for this kind of sympathy since Sibyl's marriage, and he had been annoyed lately at culty he found in getting hold of her for confidential talks; she seemed to be always taken up with Sibyl, busy about something; but it never occurred to him that she was fighting shy of him.

This morning Narka had been wanting to meet him; she dreaded the interview, but some force was impelling heinous crime still, that of poisoning the souls of the Czar's subjects by her to seek it : she felt that she and Basil were in closer affinity at this modrawing them away from the orthodox ment than they had ever been before

-drawn into closer confidence than they had ever been in childhood, when every little joy and sorrow was common, when they bent over the same lesson, and conned the same story, and wandered together through the forest bird-nesting; whatever spell might come between them, it was to her that Basil was looking now for sympathy, and that silent understanding was as necessary to his morbid sensitiveness as food to his body. She had been up and down stairs a dozen times vithin an hour, now fancying that she heard his steps ringing across the hall, then that she heard the door of his room close or open; her heart leaped every time she thought he was going to appear, and sank again when the hope, or the dread—she could hardly say which-died away. She was cross ing the broad landing at the head of wide oaken stairs when Basil did finally appear in the hall below, and, eeing her, turned from his purpos of entering the drawing room, and

bounded up the stairs. "It was just you that I wanted to ee," he said. "Come in here a minsee," he said. He opened the door of his roomute. the room he was pleased to call his study—and Narka went in with him. He closed the door, and then turned to her. "What is the matter with Marguerite?" he said.

Narka could hardly believe her ears: the question was like a glass of cold water dashed into her face. "The doctor says her nerves have

received a shock. 'We did not want him to tell us that." Basil retorted, impatiently. "Does he say it is likely to be serious?"

"He hopes not; but she must be kept very quiet. Sibyl is with her." Basil turned brusquely away and

walked to the window. So this was what was uppermost in his thoughts, this was his paramount preoccupation when they were all waiting with bated breath to know the fate of Father Christopher, charged

with a crime that was punishable by death! Basil came back as brusquely as he had turned away.

"Narka, there is no time to be lost. I am going to start at once for St. Petersburg. No one must know it ex cept ourselves. Ivan is the only person I have told."

'Ah! Ivan is sure to be discreet," said Narka, with an imperceptible note of interrogation in her voice. "Ivan discreet? Where I am con-

cerned? Ivan would be flayed alive

to save me from a toothache. You and Sibyl don't do Ivan justice; he is the best fellow living. I wish you would both try and like him better." "We do like him," said Narka "and I know he is devoted to you but when secrecy is such a matter of life and death one dreads the very grass hearing . . . I didn't mean to doubt his loyalty. What hour do you I didn't mean to

leave? Have you ordered 'No. I will make Vasili pack up what I want to take with me, and then order it." He put out his hand to the

"Don't ring," said Narka, arresting

him: "I will put up your things."
The door of his bedroom adjoined his study, and stood open; she passed in, and proceeded with sisterly indiscretion to open the drawers and fill the valise that was always ready to hand for these sudden emergencies. Departures for distant journevs at a moment's notice were so common an incident in Basil's practice that his present expedition would probably have excited no surprise either in the castle or the village; it was conscience that was making a coward of him. He made no demur to Narka's offer, but went to his writing table and began putting away and destroying

some letters and papers.

Presently he came into the bedroom, and standing over Narka, who was on her knees laboring at the valise, he said: "You were down in the village this morning; what do they say? Do they think it was an accident?"
"No, they don't," she answered,

without looking up.

"Do they suspect who did it?"
"I did not hear; but if they knew, the secret would be safe with them. "What! even if they believed it to

have been deliberate murder? "They don't call it murder, I imagine. They had come to look on Larchoff as more dangerous than any wild beast; his death is no more a murder to them than the killing of a wolf or a man-eating bear.

After a silence Basil said, "And you agree with them?"

Narka did not answer at once ; she finished what she was doing, and then stood up." "And if I did agree with them? she said, her blue black eyes flashing with the passion that vibrated in her voice—"if I did agree with them? Do you expect me to call down vengeance on the man who rid the world of Larchoff? If you do, you expect more than God in heaven expects of me.

Basil positively quailed before the strength of passion that was making her tremble; yet he could not look away, or even drop his lids; her eyes held him with an irresistible fascination, and compelled his to meet them. "You would acquir the man who committed that murder?" he asked.

"I would; I do. It is no murder in the sight of God." "Would you - can you fancy a woman marrying the man who did it?" His voice dropped almost to a whisper. "If she had loved him before, why

not? "You think he might marry her, then, without confessing he had done

"That would be harder to forgive,

but if he loved her he would trust her ove, and not fear to tell her the truth Her voice had grown beforehand." tremulous and soft as a caress. Both were silent. There was a

troubled consciousness in his eyes; in hers a wistful questioning. Basil was going to speak, but he checked himself and turned away. A few minutes later he was on the road to X.

Narka contrived to get possession of Marguerite next day. She owed this as much to M. de Beaucrillon as to her own manœuvring. He was bored to such an extent that it took all Sibyl's tact and ability to keep him quiet She was almost sorry that Marguerite was not ill enough to frighten him a little. This would have been a stimu-lant, and kept him at least from yawning all day long. But unfortunately for Sibyl he shrewdly suspected, what the doctor had said, that the best thing for Marguerite would be to carry her back at once to France. Poor Sibyl with her hands full, had no time to spare in diverting him, but she contrived to make her many occupations help a little in that direction. were scores of letters to be written, invited guests had to be put off, and all the preparations for the intended festivities to be countermanded, not temporarily, as she had thought when the murder had thrown a bombshell into the gay programme, but definitely. She begged Gaston to help her when ever French would do instead of Rus sian, and he was too well-bred not to oblige a lady, though she was his wife But these little services were as pebbles thrown into the water: they stirred its surface for a moment, but the ripples passed away, and left it as dead a calm as before.

"Ma chere amie," he protested, "the dullness of your native land is sublime. In no other country under heaven do people yawn as they do in Russia. The ennui is beyond any name in any language. I feel as if I were being chloroformed.'

"Dear! oh dear! what an unreasonable being a man is!" Sibyl replied, with a sigh of despair. "In three weeks you have had a wolf come down and howl for you, then a mur der, and you complain of being chloroformed: "These shocks wake one up with a

start, but they don't keep one awake There is absolutely nothing to do. If there were even a neighbor with a pretty wife to make love to, that would wrong? Well, at any rate, it would be amusing; but I can't even try to make you jealous. Seigneur Dieu! what a country!'

Sibyl admitted it was a hard case, but she appealed to his generosity, his kindness, to all his virtues in turn,

and adjured him to be patient. "I wish Basil had thought of taking Gaston with him," she said to Narka the third morning after her brother's departure. "It would have amused him to see St. Petersburg, and what a relief it would have been to us

"I should not care to give M. de Beaucrillon such an opportunity of comparing our criminal law with that of his own country," said Narka; but now that you are a French woman you are not so sensitive in that respect as when you were a Russian. "I wish, Narka, you would call Gaston by his Christian name," said Sibyl, with clever irrelevance: "It ounds ridiculous to hear you saying 'Monsieur de Beaucrillon.' a husband I should call him by his name, and expect him to call me by

mine. Narka's face beamed with one of her are, beautiful smil Sibyl with a glance of adoring admiration.

"Yes," continued Sibyl, with a pretty pout, "you are a disappointment to me, both of you — a most unsatisfactory pair of brother and sister.

The grace of the reproach was one of those delicate touches with which Sibyl was continually thrilling Narka's tenderness to the heart. Yet these tenderness to the heart. touches in some indescribable way brought home to her, as no external conditions of rank could do, the wide gulf which the accident of birth and race had sunk between them, and which Sibyl, with instinctive delicacy, bridged over, always seeming uncon-scious of any social difference between herself and her low born sister.

During these days of dreary ennui to Gaston and breathless anxiety to the other members of the family. was on the watch to avoid being alone with Sibyl. Her own constant attendance on Marguerite and Sibyl's multitude of occupations made this comparatively easy, but occasionally they were thrown together en tete a tete for a little while, and then, let Narka do what she would, the conversation fell on the murder.

Sibyl would not admit for a moment that the crime could be fastened on Father Christopher.

"I wonder what Ivan Gorff thinks about it?" she said one morning when M. de Beaucrillon had left the break fast table. "He ought to be back now. I wonder how Sophie is? I am sorry he carried her off in such a hurry, without letting us know she was so ill. I should have liked to see her; but I fancy they have been both a little shy with us all here since that kind of overture of my father's about Sophie which Basil did not follow up It was a mistake his speaking so soon. Not that I think there was really much likelihood of Basil ever making up his mind to ask Sophie. What a mercy my father is on the spot to work against the people here! We shall never complain again of his being such an absence. It is everything now his being well at court.

'Yes: if that obtains justice for Father Christopher, we need never complain;" assented Narka; "but, Sibyl, what a heinou the life of an inno hang on such a chang "It is never a cha reach the Emperor that is the happine one whose authority is no twisting of the or bribing, that can "But if one can't there is no redress as and the bribing." Sibyl remembered

ka had learned this

JUNE 26, 1897,

peror's paternal governeted her inconsider de Beaucrillon's en tune to them both. Sibyl, and went u The feverish symp disappeared, but br rite was as weak as more wan and wor illness seemed to days' suffering had such accidents are youth ; her complex vex. and her brown a ... t lustre that w in it's way than brightness. Poor the brightness was cent eyes had bee wide open summer ous , a seant of life, denly passed before horrow, a vision Narka continued t Marguerite, though necessity for consta confidences had pa but she felt that M ing to her as the to the swimmer. "Sibyl was say might venture on dear?" remarked "Oh no ; I don

guerite replied ; still when I walk morrow perhaps but not to-day. Narka stood lo small figure reclin looked half as sm up under an enor l will let you it this once more, is the last time. won't come of yo will get M. de You will

enough, don't be said, with a litt ment. "Are yo "No ; I am go ing down to my shall I see her taking Narka's by her side. " to spare you to u been nursing m

trength, or a pa

cheeks, until you

"The color V

have been with miss you!" Dear mother tender in an ins to let me be wit You do love "Yes I do l Marguerite fe she loved Nark expression of h

haps, expressed

bent down and head. At the park Gorff. "I tho Odessa?" she sa "I have con see you. I have " Ah! about " No : about

Narka stood, ability to go that she might age to ask. Ivan stood peated: "He have sent a m of meeting his I expect he i

across the from

this, and the r Perhaps it is They will ha catch him qui "What I said, when sh command su walk on. Somethin Larchoff's pa him; he is de

a plot to assas "I must not knowledge? You may he replied, c " The war arrest ?' " No ; but to-night.

Basil ?' 'At any nounced the will be back They wen Then anything? Basil bringi release?' hands thrus his furred o

lvan was skyward a expressed a

"Yet the prevail." But Iva