

HIS LAST LETTER.

A Story of the Russian and Japanese War.

This was the first time that Sophia Pavlovna was not gladdened by a letter from her husband...

With trembling hands she took the large envelope from her small writing table, opened it with an effort...

Terror was mirrored on her face; her eyes filled with tears, and her hand holding the letter fell down.

To read it was to look into a dark abyss, dark as the grave. And in that grave lay what was but a little while before her bright Present, now the Past.

Sophia Pavlovna, staggering, advanced a few steps and sat down on the corner of the couch. She sat there as petrified—a picture of grief...

Sophia Pavlovna understood this distinctly, and setting her teeth firmly, she sat motionless, without moving her eyes. There, beyond the wall, she could hear the happy and careless lisping of her daughter...

"She must not, she must not hear me sob," thought the mother. "Let her keep on laughing and playing. Now, when I am alone I can weep."

Sophia Pavlovna sat thus for a long time. Her fingers quivered, and in that nervous quiver the paper of the fatal letter rustled.

The poor, crushed woman could not muster the courage to begin to read it. The letter was "from there." It was a voice from another world.

Ever since she had been notified that her Andruska had been killed, there was but one thought in her mind. "He is no more. I will never again hear his voice, never again feel his caresses; I will not even hear him from afar."

Suddenly, now, when her mind was growing somewhat reconciled with the horrible thought, came a reminder. There was the trace of his hand, the trace of his thoughts, of his feelings, now extinct!

Would it give her at least a ray of hope that her Andrey is alive, that the news of his death was an error, a terrible misunderstanding, and that all she had experienced during these ten painful days and sleepless nights was but a nightmare?

Suddenly the child became quiet beyond the wall, and presently her brisk footsteps resounded from the corridor; and Katya's voice was heard from the other corner of the house.

Sophia Pavlovna lifted a handkerchief to her lips in order to suppress the sobs which would break forth as soon as she would start to read the familiar words of her loving husband.

As always, he wrote to her "My priceless friend, Sonichka! My treasure, my dove!"

No, she could not bear these caressing words now. Bitter tears, full of despair, streamed from her eyes. The terror with which the letter had filled her now disappeared. The thin sheets of paper waited into her heart the warmth of a living human feeling.

mory of my heart has created for me amidst this vast world of the horrors of war a separate bright little world full of recollections and dreams.

True, over this world soars a vague phantom of death, threatening every one of us here. But this phantom is so great, it has stretched itself over all, and it does not terrify me quite so much as it would if its death-dealing wings were to touch me alone.

You remember that I once fought a duel. Just think of it, then, standing at the barrier I experienced more fright than now, when I stand on the battery. Then one revolver aimed at me, and me alone, seemed to be more terrible than hundreds of shrapnel hurled at us by the Japanese.

I was afraid, I did not want to die when all people about me lived, amused themselves and worked, feeling secure and confident about the present, not thinking of death.

But my pen ran off into the domain of the psychology of war. Here I do not fear death, and the knowledge of its proximity does not poison my mind quite so much as this accursed distance of 10,000 versts which separates me from you.

This distance is our most terrible enemy, more terrible than Japan. It weighs heavily upon the entire government, upon the national soul and upon the soul of each man separately.

You remember how I always feared that the necessary suggestions, orders and fortifications would be too late; that Kuropatkin, Skridloff and the others would come here too late.

Hasten hither by the Siberian express, I was not the only one to fear lest we should be too late for the battle of Liaoyang.

"And now we are awaiting our squadron, and we are again afraid that it may come too late. The great distance separating us from you, rendering us here and you there helpless, unable to act in harmony, unable to help one another at critical moments—all this has called forth in many a sickly frame of mind. Our power of will is crushed. You know, my joy, that writing to you is my only rest. And yet now it is a torture. I know that you are waiting for my letters; that you are uneasy when you do not get them, and I force myself to sit down and write; but, beginning a letter, I cannot finish it. I tear it up. I begin another letter, and tear it up again. I delay it for next day. And then the same thing is repeated. I do not know what to write to you about so that my letter would preserve its freshness, its truth, after a month's travel. The war, of course, furnishes a great deal of material, but I wish to be cautious in my use of it. Facts belong to history, and therefore they must be told truthfully, even in a private letter. But the truth I can tell only of things I have witnessed, and what does an officer at the front see? Rumors? But there are so many of them, and they are so transient that a month later, when you read of them in my letters, these rumors are entirely forgotten here. My personal views on current events? These can only be transmitted by word of mouth, but it is rather early to fasten them in writing. The course of events here is so changeable. Besides, I have grown tired to think and speak and write of all this. I wish to forget myself, to go away, at least in my thoughts, from this world of suffering and unhuman hardships. I wish to find repose in conversing with you, as in days gone by. I wish to speak of our own life, which was so suddenly, so rudely interrupted, but which was not lost completely in this terrible event—in the war. I wish to caress you at least in my letter, my dearest, my beloved—and also to caress you, my dear little Katya. I wish to take up even here my share of our domestic cares, my share of the little joys and sorrows which we, ungrateful to fate, considered burdensome in the days of peace, and which now, in the storm of war, seem so empty and so pleasant. But when I recall that my letter would not reach you before a month from now, and that your answer cannot come before two months—my hands sink down. My God, how everything will change during this time! Life does not wait anywhere—and cares and sorrows and joys and impressions change—and our hearts do not beat together in moments of these joys or sorrows. And one of our hearts may perhaps cease beating altogether."

Sophia Pavlovna could not read any more. Painful sobs broke forth from her heart, and the letter, stained with her tears, fell from her hands.

Andrey Petrovich wrote: "You know, you believe, my dearest, how I yearn to see you, to hear your voice, to be with you at last through this spiritual communication, through these thin sheets of paper, which have the odor of your favorite perfume. And I see you in my reveries, and I hear your voice. It is in the memory of my heart. It is not drowned by the noise of the bivouac, nor by the roaring of our cannon, nor even by the terrible bursting of the enemy's shells. And I am happy because of this. This mes-

The terrible forebodings came true. And he was no more, his loving heart had long since ceased beating when his letter reached her. Why did it come?

Why? To tell her once more that he loved her? To emphasize all the bitterness of the loss of the dearest man? Oh, how cruel it was!

And Sophia Pavlovna kept crying, shedding tears filled with despair. Five days elapsed—and Sophia Pavlovna found another letter on her writing table from her husband. Her heart contracted painfully. She turned pale. Was she glad that it came or not? Of course, every reminder of her Andruska was dear to her! She could not part with a single thing that belonged to him. She saved them all, as though she expected him to come and ask for them.

But these letters from him, these letters in which he spoke as if he were alive, and to which there was no answer, why did they come? Why did they outlive him?

"Go, my child," she said to Katya, "go tell them to bring me a glass of water." The child glanced with alarm at her mother, lingered a while, as though fearing to leave her alone, then she turned and ran out.

"Nurse! Nurse! Nurse! Bring some water for mamma! Water! Water!" cried Katya. The servant brought a glass of water, placed it on a tray on the table, and, casting a glance at the "letter from him," walked out.

And instinctively she understood the dramatic of the situation, and she walked noiselessly, listening for the faintest sound from madam's room.

Silence reigned in the house. Katya was taken to her room, and the nurse began to tell her stories. Sophia Pavlovna opened the letter and read:

"My dearest friend, my beloved Sonia! Thank you, dearest, for your last letter, which was filled with precious details about Katya. May God grant health to our smart little girl. I really do not know whom of the two of you I love more. However painful our situation, it is not as bad as that of others. There are more helpless people than we are and their life is far more hopeless. A few days ago I read a letter to a soldier from his village. After the usual numerous greetings of relatives and acquaintances, his wife wrote him that life was miserable, and that their 'Vanushka' was forever coughing and tossing about in his bed at night and waking up with a scream. 'Our little boy is pining away,' added the woman. And I read these lines to the bearded soldier, who stood before me with lowered head, unable to utter a word, as though I was reading to him a verdict of death. What horror, what fear, what grief must reign in the soul of this man, this father and husband! I—I would have left my reason if I were in his place! God save us, and have mercy on us, sinners! But I have at least ways and means whereby to find out things—I would have overwhelmed you with telegrams. But this bearded soldier has no money for expensive telegrams—and there is no telegraph station in his village. And thus, receiving such news from home, my bearded soldier put it away in his heart, where so much has already been stored away, and he carries it, and serves and shoots and dies. * * * What a great martyr our people is. * * * Christmas is nearing and if I get to Mukden I shall send some Chinese toys for Katya's Christmas tree. * * * There are some fine ones."

"My God!" thought Sophia Pavlovna. "Is it possible that he had sent them? It would be beyond my power to hang them on the Christmas tree—these last gifts of the father!" * * * And the children will laugh and run and play around that Christmas tree, Sophia now waited with terror for the arrival of other letters, of the toys for the Christmas tree. She wanted to have no Christmas tree that Christmas, but Katya begged so much.

"Mamochka, dearest * * * make at least a little Christmas tree." And there was one, but the Chinese toys were not on it. That letter was his last—Vladimir Apushkin, in New York Evening Post.

It was in the Irish court that a man was called into the witness box not long ago, and, being old and just a little blind, he went too far, in more than one sense, and, instead of going up the stairs that led to the box, mounted those that led to the bench.

Said the judge good-humoredly. "Is it a judge you want to be, my good man?"

"Ah, sure your honor!" was the reply. "I'm an old man now, and maybe it's all I'm fit for!"

THE CARPIAD.

An Account of an Orangeman's Heroic Defence of His Home in the Days of the Fenian Raids.

Down near the Carp, that lovely villo, In days gone by there did reside A man most loyal to the crown; The "flag of old" was all his pride. He loved to sit at eventide And tell of William at the Boyne, And cheered aloud with holy joy Whene'er his children sung that rhyme.

"He rode the goat" in early days, When down of youth was on his chin, Ere yet he crossed the ocean wild Or did himself in life begin. He had quite off' been honored by A call to mount the horse of gray And ride afrent the "loyal men" On that "Immortal battle-day."

The drum would roll and life would sound, And Jack's stout heart would proudly swell, And every man would fill his glass And loudly drink the "Pope to hell"; But sons of Finn were in this land, Who hated black the crown and queen, And e'en revered the "Pope of Rome," Likewise their Fenian flag of green. The "Papists" all they were, they say, Who prowled around at dead of night In search of blood of loyal men, Who loved the queen and all that's right.

The brave and true were wont to go At eve, in numbers large and strong, To safely guard their dear ones there In one abode where all would throng. But Jack one eve had failed to join With wife and child the "customed" crowd.

'Twas all because his work was late, And low and dark hung every cloud. But he resolved that night to risk Himself and dear ones in his home; To guard with musket heavy charged His threshold from the "sons of Rome."

So well that night his door he barred With stoutest limbs of strongest tree, And made a couch upon the floor So that he might conveniently; To there await the dreaded foe, If he should dare that night destroy The peace that Jack and family were Accustomed to so long enjoy.

'Twas late indeed ere Morpheus came, For fancy stoutly held her sway, And threatened to maintain it, too, Until the break of coming day. But sleep at last made way with dreams And offered some hard sought repose; But 'twas not long, for noise disturbed His rest, and he forthwith arose.

He list' with care and heard the feet Of many tramping round his home; What horror filled his throbbing breast To think they were "the sons of Rome." His plans as quick as thought devised, As quickly, too, were carried out; He'd shoot the chief who led the way, The rest would soon then take to rout.

The musket old he levelled well Towards whence the noise of feet had come, And sure he felt with that report That Finn had lost a daring son. The wounded one did bellow loud, And fell in death upon the ground, While others who stood by took flight.

Soon as they heard the musket sound, Jack waited till the morn came round, In joy, to view the Fenian dead; For till the dark had left the earth, Outside he would not risk his head. In such suspense poor Jack did wait, Till rosy morn across the hill Shed forth her rays of grayish light, With joy the hearts of men to fill. At last the East in all her pride Brought forth the brilliant orb of day.

And Jack went out to view the scene Where sure he was his victim lay, But when, alas! the door he op'd, No Fenian there was to be seen, But woful day! his spotted cow Lay stiff and dead upon the green.

Art McMorrhough.

HOW THE LAW MAY OPERATE

The importance of having Catholic educational rights settled by enduring enactment is exemplified by the manner in which the English Education Act is made to operate against Catholic schools. Since the Act passed, the Education Committee have been engaged in a visitation and inspection of the voluntary schools throughout London. They have been testing them by the severest tests. The accommodation has been compared with the School Board accom-

FATHER KENIG'S FREE NERVE TONIC. A VALUABLE BOOK ON NERVOUS DISORDERS. Discusses a sample bottle to any address. Poor get this medicine FREE! KENIG MED. CO. 100 Lake St., CHICAGO. Sold by Druggists at 25c per bottle, 50c for 60.

The New York Review.

A Journal of the Ancient Faith and Modern Thought.

Arrangements have been made to issue, in the beginning of June next, the first number of a periodical to be called The New York Review.

The new publication has the approval of His Grace Archbishop Farley of New York. It will be issued every two months, and will be edited by Professors of the Diocesan Seminary at Yonkers.

The purpose of the Review is mainly apologetic, with special reference to present-day religious and scientific conditions. It is intended to be, as its sub-title indicates, "a journal of the Ancient Faith and Modern Thought." In character and method it will be positive and constructive. The objects in view in founding it are:

- 1. To treat in a scholarly fashion, yet in a manner intelligible to the ordinary cultured mind, topics of interest bearing on Theology, Scripture, Philosophy, and the cognate sciences.
2. To draw attention to the needs of the present intellectual situation in matters of religious belief.
3. To secure the united efforts of the most eminent Catholic scholars, lay and clerical, throughout the world, for the discussion and solution of problems and difficulties connected with religion.
4. To treat, by means of shorter studies, minor topics in Scripture, archaeology, etc.
5. To keep the readers informed on most recent developments of religious questions, by careful reviews or summaries of important books and publications.

The present need of such a publication in English will doubtless be readily granted by all thoughtful and well-informed persons. The strides made in scientific and historical research during the past half century, have forced upon us the consideration of new problems, and have rendered necessary the restatement of many theological positions.

The new issues thus raised cannot without ever-increasing harm, continue to be ignored by Catholics, as has too generally been the case in the past. They are currently discussed in reviews and newspapers by writers of every shade of religious opinion, and only too often the solution proposed is irreconcilable with any sane interpretation of historic Christianity.

It is true that many Catholic scholars, especially in Europe, are doing excellent work along the lines above indicated. But, as their productions are, for the most part, scattered through various reviews, many of which are not available for the average English speaking public, there will be a manifest advantage in bringing together in one special periodical the combined results of their scientific labors. The efforts made by the editors to secure the co-operation of the ablest Catholic writers have met with very gratifying success.

The annual subscription is three dollars. Checks should be made payable to John F. Brady, Managing Editor, to whom all business communications should be addressed.

'Old Hutch' and the Blackboard Boy.

(By G. P. Smyth, in Donahoe's for May.)

A man of iron frame and wonderful energy, Benjamin Peters Hutchinson daily visited the stock yards at daylight, got exact information as to shipments and receipts, walked the three miles back to the city, ate an enormous breakfast, and appeared fresh and alert on 'change while men young enough to be his grandchildren were still drowsy. He liked to be considered harsh and hard, even mean. A "blackboard boy"—his duty being to chalk up trade returns—who was the only support of his mother and two little sisters, died suddenly of pneumonia. "Go away!" gruffly said "Old Hutch" to a broker who approached him with a subscription list. "I have no patience with beggars. If the boy wasn't a fool he wouldn't have caught cold. What do I care about his mother?"

That broker and many others said and thought severe things about this refusal. But when the committee went out to attend the boy's funeral they found "Old Hutch" seated on the front steps of the house of death. He had paid all the funeral expenses, and, moreover, lifted a mortgage of \$450 which lay on the boy's home. "Give what money you have collected to the boy's mother; she will need it," he said to the man at whom he had stormed a day or two before, and without another word he arose and went his way.

Various small advertisements and notices on the left margin, including mentions of 'SOCIETY', 'BRANCH', 'MULAR', 'BAULT', 'LOUR', 'ING FLOUR', 'the Best', 'DRY', 'CO.', 'STREET', 'CO.', 'STREET', 'CO.', 'STREET'.