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NARKA, THE NIHILIST. BY KATHLEEN O'MEARA. CHAPTER XLII.

Narka lay motionless, crouching in a heap on the ground, for some minutes after Basil and Marguerite had left the room. At last the silence assured her that they had gone. She rose to her knees and dragged herself up, and opened the door cautiously; there were the two chairs that Marguerite and Basil had been sitting in; they seemed to hold them still; the atmosphere of the place was suffocating. Narka felt she must get out of it to breathe; she made her way up to her own room, and sat down and tried to think what had happened since she had left it, only an hour ago. The whole world was changed to her, and yet in reality those words of Basil's which had flung her down as if stricken with paralysis had told her nothing new; she was conscious of having known all along that in those early days at Yrakow he had been in love with Marguerite, and on the night of the murder Marguerite had betrayed the secret of her love for him. But then had come the warrant and the ransom, and his declaration to herself; and what waves of passionate love and resentment had swept over their lives since then, obliterating the very trace of those early jealousies and uncertainties!

Narka was not so simple as to suppose that a man's love was not to be trusted because the virgin vintage of his heart had been thrown into the wine-press for another woman's feet to tread. She would not have felt a pang of jealousy or resentment if Basil had himself confessed to her that he had loved Marguerite first; but that he should never have said a word to her, and should now confess it to Marguerite—this stung her to the quick, and struck at the root of all belief in his love.

"If he loved me," she repeated to herself, "he would have been compelled by the very force of his love to tell me; he could not have kept it a secret." And she was right. For though we may sometimes wholly trust where we do not love, we can never wholly love where we do not trust. Basil, then, did not love her; not as she understood love, not as a man should love the woman he is going to marry. And if he did not love her, she could not keep him to his engagement; could she let him sacrifice himself to her from a sense of honor, of pity, of gratitude?

Schenk was right: Basil had never loved her. Narka interlaced her fingers, and straightened up her arms above her head in a gesture of intolerable anguish. "I will give him up—I will give him up!" she cried aloud, almost in a shout, and then she flung herself upon the sofa, and sobbed till it shook under her. When the paroxysm had subsided she stood up, and began to walk up and down the room. "If he were to confess the truth to me even now, I would believe him," she said, again speaking aloud to herself, and like a drowning man catching at a straw in her despair; "if he were to come to me now and say: 'I loved Marguerite in the old days before I learned to love you,' I could believe—' But she suddenly checked herself. Had he not told Marguerite that his love for her was a unique thing in his life? And then he had said that Narka should mind nothing, that he would be a loyal and loving husband to her, that he would pay back his debt as a man of honor. Oh God! was this the return she was to get for her passionate love! Could she take such pitiful payment of cold gratitude and duty in exchange for the love that had been burning like a fire in her heart all these years? No; it was intolerable. 'I will give him up,' she repeated, already with a stern quietness that bespoke a firmer will than her first violent outburst.

She sat down and tried to face the reality. She would give him up; this much was certain; she was resolved to give him up. And having made this tremendous decision, it seemed as if the necessity for it grew suddenly clearer. She saw distinctly, like something new that she had never glanced at before, what the consequences would be to Basil and to herself if he married her; he was going to make a complete sacrifice as a man could make for a woman; he was going to quarrel with his father; to give him up; to give up his whole fortune and position; to give up Sibyl too, for though she might feign to forgive the marriage, in her heart she would never really forgive it; she would hate the woman who had come between her and the brother of whom she was so proud. And what had Narka to give him in return for all this? If he had loved her—ah, if he had loved her! Narka knew with what supreme abundance love can satisfy the lover, and make all sacrifices as nothing compared to the plenary bliss it can bestow. But he did not love her. "I will not marry him; I will not see him again," she said; and her will took firmer hold of this determination, and it seemed to harden her heart and brace it for the sacrifice. Then, instinctively, her thoughts flew to Marguerite. There would be sympathy there and understanding. "I will tell her the truth; I

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will tell her everything," was Narka's reflection. But when she had told Marguerite, what was she to do? Where was she to go? She must take up life again with its difficulties and its inexorable necessities; she must go back to loneliness, without any sustaining hope to make it endurable. Suddenly she remembered Zampa, and the thought was like a flash of lightning showing her a way out of the darkness. She would go to Zampa; she would throw herself into the arms she loved, and enter at once on her career as a singer, and study with all her might, and become a great artist. A thrill of relief, almost of exultation, came with this resolution, and with the consciousness that she had within her the power to fashion her own destiny and conquer independence. She need not be an object of pity to any one; there was something in this. Narka stood up again, and as she did so there was a knock at the door. One of the maids, of course. She said, "Come in." The door opened, and it was Basil who entered.

He went quickly up to her and took her in his arms. "My Narka!" he cried, straining her to him. She suffered his embrace without responding to it; but Basil was too excited to notice this, and he felt that she was trembling. "I was here before," he said, "but you were resting. How are you, dearest? Let me look at you? You are tired and pale. No wonder. He kissed her forehead, "Sit down beside me," and he would have drawn her to the couch, but Narka did not move. "Tell me about Ivan," she said. "Have you seen him? Is he dead?" "No; he is still alive; but they don't think he will pass the day."

Basil now became conscious of something strange about her. It was natural that the horror of this tragedy should have scrambled all things to them both, that it should be uppermost in her thoughts, and have checked the overflow of her joy a little; but there was something beyond this in her manner. He tried again to draw her to the couch, but her figure stiffened itself against his arm, and she laid her hand upon his shoulder, as if gently putting him from her. "What is the matter, Narka? Are you not glad to see me?" he asked. "I have something to say to you," she said, and her great eyes looked steadily into his, and her voice did not falter. "There is an end of our engagement. You must leave me, and forget that you ever thought of marrying me."

Basil drew away his arm, and looked at her in amazement. "You are gone mad," he said. "Then, you are mad, wonder if you did, after all you have been going through, my poor Narka. But what has put this folly into your head?" "It is no folly. The folly was when we thought that our marriage could bring either of us anything but suffering and regret. Yes, let me speak out, Basil. Listen to me. If you married me, you would lose everything; you would be an exile all your life; your father would never forgive you, nor Sibyl; and Sibyl would hate me; and I could not live under that; it would kill me. I see it all now. We must part. You will marry some one who will suit you and make you happy; some one in your own rank. Marie Krinsky loves you; marry her, and give up playing at patriotism; you are not made for it. No, dear Basil, you are made to be what you are, and nothing else. If you broke with your kindred and your caste and married me, we should both regret it. You would try to hide it from me, but I should see it, and it would make me a miserable woman."

She said all this rapidly, as if she were in a hurry to get it all out before break- ing the seal of her lips. "You are mad, although I was nervous and vibrating, and she was so white that Basil feared she was going to faint; but her eyes still met his without quailing. What did it all mean? What had she heard to drive her to this extraordinary resolution? His conscience smote him; he remembered his words to Marguerite in the bondir where they could not have come back to Narka.

"Sibyl has been talking to you," he said; "she has persuaded you to this." "No, she has not; I have not had a moment's conversation with Sibyl since I have been in the house. She has had nothing whatever to do with my determination."

"Then what in Heaven's name has come to me? Have you ceased to care for me? It was only yesterday you swore to me you loved me as your life, and now you coolly turn me away, and throw me off without a word of explanation. I insist upon knowing what it means."

"I have told you," she replied. "We have been living in a fool's paradise. I was blind, and you were mad. But there is an end of it. We must separate. Don't be sorry for me, or afraid. I have courage; I will go my way safely."

"Good God! what are you talking about? What will you go if you do not come with me?" "I will go to Florence, and become a singer. My voice is better than ever it was. I am able to face the future without any fear."

She was still as white as marble. There was something marble-like about her altogether in the calm stone coldness of her manner to him. It was unnatural, incomprehensible, in so passionate a creature as Narka.

"You are talking mere nonsense, foolish," said Basil; and besides, you forget that I have a claim on you that is not to be set aside by any fanciful arguments or caprice of feeling; I am your debtor for fifty thousand roubles."

He knew how she loved him, and how she had suffered for him. This act of hers was the result of some heroic fancy, or else she had been stung to it by wounded pride. In spite of her denial, he suspected Sibyl was at the bottom of it; he would conquer and Sibyl, and the whole world; but there was no use in struggling any more with Narka now; opposition would only nerve her to more determined resistance.

"Narka, you are very cruel to play with me in this way," he said, "and I shall punish you for it some day. But you are tired and nervous, and you wait rest after all this terrible strain on you. I wish you could go to the country for a week. Perhaps if you went down to Beaurillon for a few days, it would do you good and bring you to your right mind."

"Perhaps," she said, looking at him with a smile that went to his heart's core; there was an expression in her eyes that was undefinable. Basil drew her to him, and held her to his breast, kissing her with a passionate, hungry tenderness. "You shouldn't fly from me," he murmured between the kisses; "I would follow you to the end of the world if you did. My love! my wife! my beautiful one!"

Narka let herself sink into the loved embrace. Now for the first time she was tasting the caresses of a true lover. Basil felt her clinging to him, and triumphed in his power over her, and silently rejoiced. A knock at the door made him start and release her. "Monsieur de Beaurillon desires to know if mademoiselle will come downstairs or receive him here?" said the servant.

"I will come down presently," Narka replied. But when the man was gone, she said to Basil: "I must be alone for a while. I cannot see any one. Don't let him come up." "I will protect you," Basil said; and he kissed her again, and went away. Narka waited till the sound of his footsteps on the stairs had quite ceased, and then she flung herself on her knees, and her tortured heart found relief in a flood of passionate tears, while her soul went up in a piercing prayer for pity and help. But it was not in her nature to indulge long in the luxury of grief, and to keep action waiting on motion. She rose and dried her eyes, and so colored what she had to do. The vital crisis had come and gone. She was glad to have seen Basil. That last caress had satisfied an intolerable craving of her heart, and given her courage for what remained to be done. Her last fears were now cast out; she felt armed against every attack from within and from without. She would have risen and gone away that moment, but for the fear of meeting Basil or M. de Beaurillon. Besides, she must write a farewell note to Sibyl, explaining her flight. This done, she put on her cloak and bonnet, and waited. After a while the bell clang, the gates were opened, and Sibyl's open carriage came wheeling into the court. Soon Narka heard a light step on the stairs, and there was a knock at the door, then a pause, and she heard the step descending. At the end of about half an hour there was a sound of wheels moving away. Narka, from a safe distance, looked through the lace curtains, and saw Sibyl and M. de Beaurillon and Basil driving off together. Basil had kept his promise of protecting her. She was free now to go. But instead of hurrying away, she sat down. It was not that her purpose faltered; she felt very strong and resolute, but extraordinarily exalted. A strange sensation came over her, something like what she had experienced in her prison; it was as if she had been lifted out of the world, beyond time and was looking back on all she had left behind, on the broken destiny she was running away from, as one looks back from a turn in the road at the house one has just left; but the mystery of life seemed suddenly illuminated with an altogether different meaning and purpose from what she had seen, or fancied, in that other vision; it was a cruel, cruel thing, a vision now bright with hidden possibilities of blessing and redemption; she saw Marguerite's ideal emerge in all its beauty amidst the storm and confusion of the world around it; and side by side with this she saw her own ideal overturned and dishonored; the things that she had worshipped had betrayed her; the love whose intention had transfused her whole life had melted like a shadow, and with it all her illusions had vanished; the insane theories, the wild enthusiasms, which had inspired and misled her, had suddenly evaporated with the great passion that had fed her belief in them. Only a little while ago the defeat of those hopes and dreams would have seemed the bitterest of life's reverses; but now she was content to let them go. And was everything gone? Was there nothing saved from the wreck? Yes; there was God and her fellow-creatures; there was all humanity to care for. She would open her heart to this larger love, and put her hand to what averse service of help came to it. In this supreme moment of her service Narka was beginning to taste something of the inebriation that comes to those who drink of the bitter cup with courage.

But it was time to be going. She rose quickly, and went down-stairs. It seemed only yesterday that she had walked up those crimson steps to greet by Sibyl in the bondir where a few hours ago she had heard the sentence that banished her. She was a servant in the hall; she passed him by, and went out into the garden to a gate that opened into the street. Narka knew the trick of the latch; she lifted it, let herself out, and then drew the gate that locked itself behind her.

CHAPTER XLIII. It is now winter again at Yrakow. Sibyl and her husband and Basil are once more assembled in that tapasried room where we first saw them. Father Christoph is there too, aged and broken, his figure, formerly so erect, is now bent, and he walks like a man who is still carrying a load on his shoulders and dragging a chain; but this he declares is only a bad habit that his old limbs cannot get rid of; he says he is the happiest of men; and indeed the serenity of his countenance and his cheerful flow of spirits confirm this assertion.

Basil was engaged to Marie Krinsky, and the marriage was soon to be celebrated at the Winter Palace with all pomp becoming the presence of royalty and the rank of the bride and bridegroom. Sibyl longed to have been satisfied. And yet the old castle was empty of something that she missed at every turn. She was

grateful to Narka for having gone of her own free-will and set Basil free; but her absence made a void that nothing could fill. By tacit consent, the brother and sister never spoke of Narka; but each knew that she was deeper than ever to the other since they had lost her. This evening M. de Beaurillon was reading aloud the newspaper, when he came to a paragraph headed, "Milan—Extraordinary Scene at La Scala," and having read so far, stopped suddenly. Sibyl looked up from her embroidery frame. "What is it?" she said.

He hesitated a moment, and then, with a movement that seemed to say, "Why not?" read on: "Last night Mademoiselle Narka Larik made her debut in Norma, and no one who witnessed the performance will ever forget the scene. Her extraordinary beauty would alone have insured her a success, but this, joined to her incomparable voice and transcendent talent, won for her such a triumph as no audience simply went mad with enthusiasm. The King of X—, who was present with the Queen, rushed on the stage and conducted the beautiful artist, who was almost overcome with emotion, to the royal box, where the Queen embraced her, and drawing a costly diamond ring from her own finger, placed it on Mademoiselle Narka's. Cries of 'Evviva la Regina!' 'Evviva la Narka!' showed how the spectators rejoiced in this meeting of the two royalties of genius and rank. The prima donna is invited to a dinner given in her honor by their Majesties on the 20th instant."

A moment of intense silence followed the reading of this passage. Then M. de Beaurillon laid down the newspaper and said: "She is a noble woman. I hope some Crown Prince will fall in love with her and marry her!" THE END.

LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD An Historical Romance.

BY M. M'D. BOLKIN, G. C. CHAPTER I. A VERY VALIANT REBEL OF THE NAME.

Henry IV. Part I. "Swords out and tilting one at other's breasts in opposition bloody."—Orbello.

Through the long aisles of the great wood he came, riding slowly and cautiously. His chestnut thoroughbred, reined tightly in, and stepping short and high, danced lightly along the smooth sward. The trees stood well apart, and the soil beneath was close and short; but the great pillars of the wood stretched so high that their closing branches made a green sky overhead, through which the wearied eye strove in vain to pierce. The young horseman rode warily. He had caught up the scabbard close to his side lest its clatter should betray him. But concealment was impossible. A gay parrot might as well try to hide itself behind the wires of its cage. Every bird that fluttered through that high roof of translucent green, every beast that fled through the long arches, or slipped round the great pillars of the wood, saw him as he passed.

The sunbeams that here and there broke through the high roof lay in wait for him and caught him and brightened his scarlet uniform into a blaze, and struck flashes of light from his steel accoutrements. Let us have a good look at him while we may, for he is worth looking at. He has scarcely crossed the line that parts the boy from the man. The figure, though slight, is agile, and graceful as a leopard's. The brown hair and long silken lashes are like a girl's. But the quick, glancing grey eyes and resolute lips speak the alert courage of a man. It is a face to turn and gaze at. He seems rather a knight of the old days in quest of adventure, than the modern officer whose trade it is to kill or be killed in a fair fight.

A circle of sunshine at the end of the long vista warns the young horseman of an opening in the wood. As a river widens into a lake, the green tunnel through which he rode opened into a clear oval space walled round with high trees. Just as the bright scarlet uniform flashed into the open sunshine two scouts, who plainly had watched his movements, rode sharply out from the edge of the wood and barred his path in front and rear. They were a strange contrast to the brilliant young officer. They were clad in coarse grey uniform, and armed to the teeth; men meant for us, not showed. They drew their swords as they halted. The man behind spoke. "Resistance is useless, flight impossible. We are two to one, fully armed, and our comrades are close at hand."

The young officer cast one scornful glance behind him. He saw a man a little older than himself, but taller and broader, with an honest, kindly face, fair haired and blue eyed. Then his sword flashed out of its scabbard, he put spurs to the chestnut, and rode straight at the horseman in front. He made a quick, fierce cut at his head as he swept past. But the man ducked as the diver ducks at the gun flash, and the sword swept into empty space, nearly drawing the striker from the saddle by the force of his own blow.

So he escaped the sharp, downright stroke dealt in return. It fell short a couple of inches of his head, and the heavy steel bit deep into the leather and wood of the saddle. With a wrench of the reins the chestnut was wheeled right round on its hind legs as on a pivot, and the fight renewed. His second blow was parried, the third evaded. The return stroke almost broke through his guard. The foe was plainly not to be despised—a gaunt, grey man, with a hard face and a keen eye, and muscles as pliant as whalibone.

Skilfully and boldly the deadly game was played, of which life was the stake. The blows came thick and fast, and the quiet wood rang with the angry clash of steel. The young soldier was a brilliant swordsman—his blade played like sheet lightning about the head of his opponent. He assailed him now on the right, now on the left; but the other still turned resolutely to meet him. His quick eye seemed to anticipate each movement, and even the young soldier's sword cut into empty space or clashed upon opposing steel.

The fiery youth grew reckless at last, and almost paid with his life for his audacity. A sudden cut, that would have

shorn his head in two, was parried so closely that the sword's edge sliced his forearm up to the elbow. He reined the chestnut back in time to escape a second stroke, threw aside the long hair that fell across his eyes half blinding him; then, with uplifted sword, he dashed again at his foe. Just as they met, however, he dropped the point, and with a quick, straight thrust ran his enemy through the unguarded sword arm.

The older man made no sign or sound of pain. His closed, set lips never so much as quivered. His great sword, dropped from his disabled right hand, but with the left he drew a huge horse pistol from the broad belt he wore, and levelled it steadily at the young officer, who, carried ten paces past him by the impetus of his last charge, was now completely at his mercy. But just as his finger pressed the trigger, a sword blade struck the barrel down, and the bullet ploughed up the green sod at the horse's feet.

"For shame, Christy!" cried the voice of his comrade close beside; "for shame! It was a fair match, sword against sword, and he beat you. The lad must get fair play. Stand aside. It is my turn now. Without a word, Christy gave place. The young officer, flushed with his first victory, was nothing loth to engage a second foe. But this time he met his match, and more than his match, with the sword. Strike where he would, high or low, to right or left, his quick blows seemed to fall on a wall of steel, so true and steady was the defence. The newcomer made scarce an effort to return the blows that were showered so liberally on his ready sword. Once, indeed, he pierced the right shoulder, to give full impetus to the downward stroke. The guard was quick and true. But the great sword flashed down, sheer on the opposing steel, shivering it like an icicle.

Never did blacksmith's sledge strike starker blow on anvil. The young soldier's right arm was jarred to the elbow by the shock. The broken sword hilt dropped from his numb fingers on the grass. He was at the mercy of his enemy. "A rescue! a rescue!" he cried, shouting no mercy. He bowed his head and murmured a prayer as he waited for the second stroke that was to end him; but no stroke fell.

"Yield!" cried the conqueror, in a kindly voice, in which there was a touch of frank admiration. "Yield to Maurice Blake, Captain in the Army of the United States. You have made a good fight—it is no shame to yield to such a man. Be sure you will be honorably treated." The young soldier in his first skirmish would have thought it deadly disgrace to have been beaten by a regiment. Anger made him dumb. He could only bow his head in shame-faced submission. The sudden tramp of horses' feet made him look up, and the blood went surging back to his heart, leaving his face quite pale. "A rescue! a rescue!" he cried, gleefully. "Just in the nick of time."

From the wood's edge all round there broke a troop of horsemen in the scarlet uniform of England. Rapidly forming, they caught the conqueror and conquered in a narrow circle. The disarmed officer seemed half ashamed of the shout of joy into which he was betrayed at the first sight of his comrades. It looked so like an ungenerous triumph over a gallant foe. There was a tone almost of apology in his voice as, turning to the American captain, he said— "It is your turn to yield now. It is fortune of war—a hard fortune for you. I must confess, to lose the stake when you had won the game. Your sword, and I will give you my life for your honorable treatment."

Not a word the other answered, while the troops closed in slowly to make sure of their prisoners. Not a motion he made, either of surrender or resistance. The nearest soldier was not twenty yards off. "Now!" cried the American captain suddenly to his attendants, who watched him closely. "Follow me!" he cried, and he rode straight at the circle where the line was thinnest. Before a pistol could be plucked from a holster he was upon them. Two sweeping sword strokes to right and left sent two dragons sprawling down under the horses' feet. Straight through the gap in their line he galloped, followed by Christy, like his shadow, into the thick cover of the woods, where pursuit was useless, and might prove dangerous to strangers.

The troopers were so taken by surprise that he was gone before the quickest-witted amongst them thought of firing. Then there was a harmless splutter of pistol bullets in the direction in which the enemy vanished. But this silly performance was promptly checked by the elderly officer in command. "Cease firing!" he cried, angrily. "Do you want to signal our position to the whole rebel army?" he added, as he rode past a young ensign, who sat like a statue of astonishment, with a smoking pistol in his hand. "There is no sense left in the service."

He was still angry; yet there was a tone of admiration mingled with his anger as he turned to our first acquaintance, who sat quite still where the American captain had left him, ruefully contemplating the fragments of his broken sword on the grass. TO BE CONTINUED.

An Age of Substitution. Keeness of competition is the characteristic of the age. Not in old channels of routine is trade permitted to flow, but in channels newly hewn out of the solid rock of opposition by brains and energy. Good in its way is this. If, however, it give rise to dishonest methods, then an evil does it certainly become. An eminent physician had occasion recently to prescribe that well-known medicinal tonic, Maitino with Coca Wine. His patient an active public man, had gone all to pieces; nerves unstrung, sleepless, appetite and digestion sadly impaired—almost a total wreck. By failing to experience the doctor knew it to be the right thing. Well, this patient made no progress, and investigation established the fact that the druggist had substituted another preparation—just as good, of course—to secure slightly increased profit. The doctor saw that his patient secured the genuine Maitino with Coca Wine, with the exacting recipe, for his pain, improve from the start. Moral: Get Maitino with Coca Wine when you ask for it and do not be imposed upon. Sold by all druggists.

BROTHER

BY BILL

Andy McGon... That sounds... occurrence, but... Every one in... as particular as... Avenue as on... was at it again... littledrodders... to "Blind Jo... floor back, w... Mary. It was... had boasted the... decent; but, a... and man's use... "at it again,"... care or want of... the wreck he... strook of day... sewed inces... the bulk of the... in these teneb... have a roof over... nerly every one... mended coat of... to Mass; but I... purpose.

A pretzel, a... every mornin... The pretzel "was "so filling... one little luxu... lented herself... mitted toll an... ment of refo... loved so tende... shrunken fra... hands, and... Those poor fir... By constant a... the week she... thirty five ce... three pairs a... her income to... seven dollars a... was always s... seldom got a... than the "O... out of which... ejected at t... his sister, "I... There was... nationality... it proclaimed... (coming pop... warmed by the... faith and lov... fathers. The... ever, of the w... ness about... personal clea... was drawn, a... seven years, I... lary parted, dr... too high fore... walnut at the... But for all... ly attractive... sulte, so qu... were Tenny... prayer." Th... dark, confid... dog's, full of... As she ste... the poor, w... the little, of... friendly tho... had had him... her patient... But she did... ing, but sh... loosening h... with the bla... setting his... straw pillow... one the li... black tea, t... wakin' "I... for the nerv... alating O... no trouble... spared.

Week aft... better, and... She had go... and had e... poor frail A... it was her... priest's int... week went... sad old sto... him up as... sister never... momentarily... fastness the... more, and p... These in... cause of t... are a tho... every year... Has any... Does any... have been... Has any or... children w... How many... canizati... sorrow and... Only God... Lives lik... illies that... surface. I... made a c... for her se... through y... ment. Ho... him a m... society an... Communio... Sunday of... to her plea... for Andy... finger test... out of her... was urgi... more swal... "Sure... hand," w... brose whe... at the tho... wickedne... plaint and