

My First Kiss.

By Maxim Gorki.

Once in the late fall my situation grew decidedly unpleasant. I arrived in Moscow, where I had neither home nor friends, without a copeck.

After selling all parts of my wardrobe that could possibly be spared without police interference, I found myself in the shipyard, which in summer time, are always full of life and people, men and women who work for their living and others. At this time, the beginning of November, the neighborhood was deserted—not a soul to be seen, not a dog or cat, even. I tramped about in all directions looking for remnants of food. Indeed, in spots I dug up the wet ground with my feet, hoping against hope to find perhaps some canned goods or a little barrel of salt fish. Suddenly as I bent over a box to make sure that nothing eatable escaped me, I saw a female figure, much the worse for rain and mud. The woman who turned her back upon me was digging with her bare hands at the side of the goods case.

"What are you doing there?" I asked, squatting down near her. There was an exclamation of surprise, of fear and indignation to her feet. When she stood up, regarding me with big, gray, anxious eyes. I saw a comely lass of my own age, with a face full of sweetness and poetry, but disfigured by three big black marks, one under each eye, another in the center of the forehead. "Only an artist could do it so symmetrically," I said to myself with the brutal humor of the tramp used to suffer by his own kind and others.

As the girl studied my face and ragged appearance, the look of alarm gradually faded from her eyes. Next she wiped the dirt from her hands, adjusted her calico headcloth, and said:

"So you are hungry, too? Well, go on digging. I believe that box there is full of good things. Some dayman must have dropped it. Hurry up, boy, may be there is sausage in it."

"Sausage?" I dug and dug and still I dug. After resting a bit, my new acquaintance crouched beside me and helped. We worked in silence. Whether I was thinking of the criminal code at the time, of good morals and the sacred rights of property—things we ought always to have in mind, according to wise and good men's notions of the properties—I can't tell now. But I do know that I was determined to get at the bottom and expected to find it full of sausage, bread, sweetmeats and macaroni; the latter I used to chew raw in those days.

Dusk found us still at work with the cold, damp, the flood of heaven's tears increasing. A sudden, louder rain-drops drummed on the boards of the goods cases. Somewhere in the distance a watchman's rattle was going.

"Has this box a bottom, or not?" asked my partner.

I gave it up. Few women have good ideas, but this one had.

"Let's break off the lock—we might as well go to jail for one thing as for the other," she said.

I broke the lock with a stone, and my friend crawled in.

She began stock-taking. "A basket of soda water bottles, an empty valise, a sun umbrella, a piece of carpet—"

"Nothing to eat?" I felt my hopes dashed to the ground. Suddenly she cried: "Hi, here it is!"

"What, the sausage?"

The bread rolled to the ground, and after it my comrade.

Seeing that I was lunching before she had a show, herself, she cried impatiently: "Let me have a bit, too, greedy." And then: "We can't stay here and live. What shall we do?" She looked inquiringly in all directions.

"I saw a turned-up boat on shore. I think I can find it again. Shall we try that?"

Instead of answer, my companion took me by the arm. I had hold of the bread, breaking off chunks as our mouths got empty.

The rain was increasing, the river howled, the wind alternately groaned and sobbed. Then a loud, ear-splitting whistle, the whistle of a full belly, surely, who didn't care a farthing for the sufferings of the starving. It hurt me, but didn't affect my appetite or the girl's.

"What's your name?" I asked at last, ashamed at working my jaws without interruption.

"Natascha," replied the girl, with a mouth full of bread.

III.

The rain beat incessantly upon the boat that sheltered us.

We sat silent and shivering; my eyes were heavy with sleep. Natascha leaned her head back against the side of the boat, making herself as small as possible in an effort to keep at least some warmth in her body. Her chin rested on her knees, round which her arms were drawn, while her wide-open eyes stared into space. She was stirred and her mute immobility had in it the shadow of awe. Half frightened, I thought of speaking to her, but didn't know what. She began herself.

"What a wretched existence the like of us lead!" It was not said in a spirit of complaint—there was far too much indifference in her tone for that! As I agreed with Natascha, I saw no reason for reply. "If one could only make an end of it all," she continued slowly and thoughtfully, again without a shade of regret. Evidently the girl, young as she was, had come to the conclusion that, to escape the hardships of life, it was best to give up life itself.

"Who beat you?" I asked after a while.

"Who else but Pascha, my lover—we are to be married next spring."

"Was it the first time he beat you?"

"No, no," she replied, making haste to correct so foolish an impression. "He thrashed me every time he gets full of vodka." And she moved up closer. She was a servant out of work, he a baker, had a red moustache and played delightfully on the hurdy-gurdy. Clean he was; his Sunday clothes cost fifteen rubles, his boots had red tops; in short, he was a "prize." Natascha loved him and gave him all she earned. He accepted, got drunk and beat her. The beating she didn't mind, but that he flirted with other girls—that was unbearable.

"This afternoon I found him with that husky, Dunka, and upbraided him. He knocked me down. He trampled upon me, dragged me around the sidewalk by my hair. But that wasn't the worst. He tore my best suit of clothes—the only one left, for I had to sell the rest to live. Tore it to tatters, dress and jacket and headcloth. What am I to do?" she cried suddenly, out into the night. "I don't want to go to the police will arrest me. Now, what can I do?"

The wind blew faster and faster, colder and colder. As in the afternoon, when my stomach was absolutely empty, my teeth chattered. Natascha bent lower under the frost.

"Man is a beast, all men are beasts," she observed after an interval, in a matter of fact way, and her quietude, the absence of violent anger, or hatred, impressed me more than words can tell. There was the difference between witnessing death's agony and reading about it. I groaned and ground my teeth.

At that moment I felt two small, cold hands, one upon my neck, the other patting my face. An anxious, sweet, gently caressing voice queried: "What ails you?" Before I could say a word Natascha continued:

"Are you cold? May the Holy Mother of Ksan protect you from freezing. It's a horrible death, they say." Then, somewhat peremptorily: "Answer, Maxim; don't sit there like an owl. And again caressingly: 'Now confess, what's your trouble? Why did you lose your place? Was it for drunkenness, or did you steal something? A few coppers, perhaps, or a lump of sugar? You didn't do it? Of course not, Maxim, my boy; of course not.'"

And so she went on, consoling, encouraging me, saving my moral and physical life.

What irony, a philosopher of my imaginary magnitude soled and comforted by an ignorant servant maid, for let it be known, that period of my life I was extremely busy reconstructing society and changing the political and ethical aspects of the world being, at that same time firmly convinced that the future belonged to me and that I was preparing for a great historical role.

For awhile it seemed like a dream, but the rain drops gliding down my neck told another story. The wind, too, howled and roaring, the boat and kicking it with invisible great boots, and we both trembled with the cold.

But she continued speaking—spoke only as a woman can! Under the influence of her native and consoling words, I felt something burst within me—the icy crust of egotism that held my heart in bondage. Then I could cry and my tears washed away much stored up anger, a great amount of stupidity, sorrow and vain-gloriousness.

Natascha spoke again:

"Stop crying, dearest—believe me, better days are coming, the Holy Mother loves youth and I will pray for her on your behalf, yes, I will. You will get another job, you will want a suit costing fifteen, yes, twenty rubles, and high boots. You will be happy."

And then she kissed me—the first kiss from girlish lips I ever received. And as I was dozing away I heard her say: "All will be well—will be well, for God and the Holy Mother are with you—Maxim."

In the morning the sun rose bright and cheering. Natascha was at that season of the year, and Natascha and I said good-bye; never to meet again.

Flower Growing in June.

In the greenhouse carnations come in for attention. By the first of June plants should be placed in beds. Early June is not too late to take cuttings of chrysanthemums for growing single flowers to single stalks. Early made cuttings should be ready to go on to the benches by the first week in June, says Country Life in America. Gloxinias started in February should come in bloom this month and will fill in the interval until the showy chrysanthemums are in flower. Cuttings of hydrangeas can also be made in June, and are then best grown in a cool-house. A growing appreciation of calcareous as spring-blooming pot-plants leading to a much more general growing of them. For March bloom seed should be sown in shallow pans and placed in a cool-house or well-ventilated and shaded frame by the middle of June. Practically the same thing applies to cinerarias. Asparagus should be dried off from June to August. In the out-of-door beds an earnest warfare against the weeds must be waged. Watch the beds carefully that they get sufficient water. Watch for the bug, and spray with powder the bushes thoroughly.

A steam engine constructed in 1899, the oldest in the business, has been working continuously since that time. It is a Farmington, Rutledge, near Glasgow. It is a Newcomen winding engine.

Many of the persons arrested in connection with the Moscow riots are having in so unruly a fashion in jail, it is said, that they are to be distributed among the prisons of different towns.

Dr. S. A. Knopf, of New York, declares that 3,000 people throughout the world die daily from tuberculosis.

DO YOU SPEAK GOOD ENGLISH?

Some Blunders Made by Well-Educated Men.

A Story of Dwight L. Moody and His Early Struggles With His Native Tongue.

When 19 years old, Dwight L. Moody hid a pew in Plymouth Church, Chicago, and undertook to fill it every Sunday. It is said that he would hail young men of the street corners, visit them at their boarding houses, or even call them out of saloons to share his pew. Either on account of the novelty of his invitations, or because his remarkable earnestness and cordiality induced them to attend, many did so, and soon he was renting four pews, which he filled every Sunday with his strangely assorted guests.

"Your faith has works enough to keep it alive ten times over," said an old deacon, after he had listened to Moody's first testimony in a Plymouth Church prayer meeting; "but in my opinion you would serve God best by keeping still!"

"You certainly have zeal enough, and to spare," said another, "but you should realize the limitations of your vocation and not try to speak in public. You make too many mistakes in grammar."

"I know that I make mistakes," replied young Moody, "and I am doing a great many other things, but I'm doing the best I can with what I've got. Then, looking at his critic searchingly, he added earnestly:

"Look here, my friend; you've got grammar enough—but what are you doing with it for the Master?"

The point was well taken, for efficiency, after all, is the crowning excellence of language. The young evangelist did not always make his verbs agree with their subjects in person and number, or take care that his pronouns should correspond accurately with the nouns for which they stood, in the manner prescribed by Lindley Murray; but he was spirit-driven with a message which struggled for utterance, and he delivered it with all the force and fire of absolute consecration—with a soul-compelling, sympathetic earnestness which carried his rough but vigorous words home to the heart of every hearer. He tried with all his might to improve for he felt that his work could not be done too well, and by close study and observation he was at length enabled, in a large degree, to combine the grace of good diction with the rugged strength of native eloquence. Although, even in his later years, he would sometimes, in an impassioned plea, use "done" for "did," "come" for "came," "Israel" for "Israel," etc., his logic was so coherent, his words so simple, well chosen, and predominately Anglo-Saxon, and his sentences so clear, that no one could mistake that neither children nor mature scholars could mistake his meaning or thought of criticizing his use of the English language.

In such men, abundant excellence in other elements of oratory goes far to compensate for grammatical errors, here and there, but only by being correct in their use of words and sentences can simple and average ability hope to escape criticism.

Strange as it may seem, most of the young men and women of today who aspire to become influential orators or writers, even those who are graduates of high schools and colleges, find that, like Moody, they have not mastered grammar. For nearly twenty years, educators, almost without exception, have been trying, with but indifferent success, to make various sugar-coated language courses do the work formerly accomplished by old-fashioned grammars in giving students an accurate working knowledge of their mother tongue. One natural consequence of these attempts is that the number is comparatively much smaller than it once was of so-called well educated young people who can tell with certainty whether or not they speak and write just what they wish to express.

Thorough drill in formal grammar should be made a prominent feature in every school whose pupils are not less than ten years old or more than twenty-five. But inasmuch as this subject, as usually presented, is found to be very difficult and uninteresting for pupils under ten years of age, it may well be preceded by an elementary course in language lessons, which will kindle interest and prepare the mind for the solid work in words and construction which should follow.

The New York World of Monday, Feb. 10, 1902, says that a New Jersey board of health issued this notice:

"All persons who have dogs or cats running at large are hereby notified that they will be killed within 24 hours after the date of this notice."

This blunder was made by supposedly well educated men, as were also those given below, selected from a popular work on "Etiquette and English." Observe that their authors are not boys and girls, but a physician's wife, an alienist, a teacher, a clergyman, an editor and reporters:

"I know he will die because my husband is his physician."

"It was plain that the man was demented, as he would not eat himself or allow anyone else to."

"Students will not be allowed to throw stones at cows or other animals on a farm school."

"I protest against this quarrel in the interest of peace."

"My brethren, we will sing songs of joy ourselves this morning, because the choir is absent."

"The captain was dancing with a handsome lady in full uniform."

"He looked at the laborer as he shoveled the sand with a compassionate expression."

"On last Wednesday evening, as Stephen Jones was driving a young mule accompanied by his father-in-law, he suddenly commenced kicking, and the buggy being soon overturned, both were thrown heavily to the ground. He then endeavored to subdue the vicious brute, and he kicked him so severely that he was injured internally. He was at once driven home and everything possible was done to save his life, but all in vain, and he died about an hour after the accident. His loss is regretted by all. His father-in-law was not seriously hurt."

"Mr. Jones grabbed his typewriter and rushed for the street almost as soon as the fire-bell began to ring."

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A Mother's Praise.

Mrs. James Spencely, Pembroke, Ont., says:—"Any mother with a cross and restless child should get Baby's Own Tablets at once. When my baby was teething he was cross, feverish and so sleepless that I had to be up with him most of the night. The Tablets were recommended to me and after giving them to baby his fever was reduced, he became quiet, got refreshing sleep, and I was able to get sleep myself. I have since given him the Tablets both for constipation and diarrhoea and find them a cure for both these troubles. I do not know what I would do without the Tablets at times and I always keep them in the house."

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THE CANADIAN WEST

Will Be Able, In Five Years, to Supply the British Empire With All the Wheat It Needs.

Mr. Robert Meighen Upon the Condition and Prospects of the Northwest.

[From the Montreal Daily Witness.]

Mr. Robert Meighen, president of the Lake of the Woods Milling Company, is not indifferent to scenic or poetic effects, but it behooves him, chiefly, to have a clear, unclouded prospect, as head of a great milling corporation whose prosperity is bound up with the material development of the country.

Mr. Meighen has just returned from a trip to the Northwest and the Pacific coast, with faith stimulated in the future of this great country. He says, setting out from all parts of the world, he noted numbers from the other side of the line who had sold their lands, and who had determined to become settlers in the great Northwest, and who were ready to do opportunities for acquiring an independence; he saw towns extending and improving; he witnessed the beginning of new settlements which would rapidly become towns; and he made the calculation that if the influx of population continued at the rate which marked it at the present, the Northwest in five years from the present date would be able to supply the British Empire with all the wheat it needed.

In regard to the influx of American settlers, Mr. Meighen's rational view is that in many instances these people were really Canadians who had lived for years in the Western States, and who, finding that they could sell their land at a high price, had done so, and then bought lands in the Northwest equally fertile and at about one-third the price of those in the Western States. Coming back, then, to Canada, and occupying admirable lands, they would, with money in their pockets, from the sale of their former possessions, be in a position to become valuable settlers. The first year they would raise coarse grains, as he had seen, but the second year they would raise wheat, and thus the great wheat belt would go on extending.

Some had said that the influx of Americans into the Northwest may have the effect, sooner or later, of producing an annexation sentiment?

"I have enough faith in the justice and liberality of our country to believe that we will be able to persuade the Americans who come to us with the quiet content to remain British subjects, under conditions which give them perfect freedom and the opportunity to achieve an independence."

Mr. Meighen said he was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, and so he would not make predictions in regard to the next wheat crop in the Northwest, but all the signs were favorable. Next year, however, if the influx of population continued—and of course population was the great need of the country—there would be a very considerable extension of the wheat-growing lands, and in five years, as he said—and here he was bold to make prediction—the Northwest would grow enough wheat to supply the British Empire.

British Columbia was prosperous, all the signs were favorable. He did not go into the mining centers, in which, however, there was activity. He was proud to see the steamers at Vancouver which plied between this country and the Orient; proud to see the ships which connected the Dominion with the great island continent of Australia; and it was a consideration to him that it was a consideration which struck him with a sense of satisfaction that this connection with the Orient, this expanding trade with Australia had been the result of the work of the C. P. R., which asked no government subvention, and which has commenced and carried on this business of its own bat, so to speak.

"And as for the C. P. R. transcontinental system itself," said Mr. Meighen, "let me say, with all the al-

leged sins of omission and commission which have been charged to its account, it has been the great factor of making the Dominion what it is to-day.

"This is undoubted. You may criticize, but this fact remains—but for the C. P. R. this country could never have reached the measure of development which it at present enjoys and which is only a foretaste of the prosperity and expansion which will yet be witnessed."

"Are our people aware of what this country is doing? Have they thought what this trade with the Orient, this commerce with Australia, means? Are they aware that the C. P. R. takes the product of the Northwest from the prairies, brings it through the Rocky Mountains lands at the coast, and then ships it to Australia at the rate of 50 cents per hundredweight? That is something to think about and ponder over. No, the bulk of our people do not know what the C. P. R. is doing in this regard. But just consider the possibilities involved, when you can get your product taken from Winnipeg to Australia at the rate I have quoted?"

Mr. Meighen noted the signs of progress in Winnipeg, which is one of the most aggressive cities in the Dominion; observed the contented way in which the man who came yesterday and the man who had made a beginning; saw the foundations of new communities being laid, and returning convinced that the Northwest is being filled up at a wonderful rate both from Europe and the United States, he utters this strong word:

"Let Canada do all in her power to provide adequate transport for the increased yield of grain in the Northwest, a trade which the Americans are desirous of capturing—a trade, however, which we must bend every energy to control ourselves keeping pace with our facilities, with the influx of the people, who are always ready the second year to produce a wheat crop.

Life.

The poet's exclamation: "O Life! I feel that bounding in my veins," is a joyous one. Persons that can rarely or never make it, in honesty to themselves, are among the most unfortunate. They do not live, but exist; for to live implies more than to be. To live is to be well and strong—to rise feeling equal to the ordinary duties of the day, and to retire to overcome by them—to feel life boundless in the future. A medicine that made thousands of people, men and women, well and strong, has accomplished a great work, bestowing the richest blessings and that medicine is Hood's Sarsaparilla. The weak, run-down, or debilitated from any cause, should not fail to take it. It builds up the whole system, changes existence into life, and makes life more abundant. We are glad to say these words in its favor to glad to say these words in its favor to the readers of our columns. d&w

WIRE WOUNDS.

My mare, a very valuable one, was badly bruised and cut by being caught in a wire fence. Some of the wounds would not heal, although I tried many different medicines. Dr. Bell advised me to use MINARD'S LINIMENT, dilute at first, then stronger as the sores began to look better. Until, after three weeks, all the sores have healed, and best of all the mare is growing well, and is NOT WHITE, as is most always the case in horse wounds.

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The Doe and the Jackdaw.

In Savernake Forest I once witnessed a very pretty little scene. I noticed a doe lying down by herself in a grassy hollow, and as I passed her at a distance of about 50 yards it struck me as singular that she kept her head so low down that I could only see the top of it on a level with her back. Walking round to get a better sight, I saw a jackdaw standing on the turf before her, very busily pecking at her face. With my glass I was able to watch her movements very closely; he pecked round her eyes, then her nostrils, her throat, and in fact every part of her face; and, just as a man when being shaved turns his face this way and that under the gentle guiding touch of the barber's fingers, and lifts up his chin to allow the razor to pass beneath it, so did the doe raise and lower and turn her face about to enable the bird to examine and reach every part with his bill, says a writer in Birds and Man. Finally, the doe left the face, and, moving round, jumped on the deer's shoulders, and began a minute search in that part; having finished this, he jumped on to the head and pecked at the forehead and round the bases of the ears. The pecking done, he remained for some seconds sitting perfectly still, looking very pretty with the graceful red head for a stand, the doe's long ears thrust out on either side of him.

When you feel weak, run-down, nervous, unable to work or think as you ought, take Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills.

Thirty-six asteroids were discovered in 1901, all but one of them in Heidelberg by photography.

Minard's Liniment for sale everywhere. Gambling is now prohibited in cafes and other public places in Zurich, which is becoming the most moral town in Switzerland.

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