

NARKA, THE NIHILIST.

By KATHLEEN O'MEARA.

CHAPTER XL.

Ivan Gorff had deemed it more prudent, both for Narka and for himself, not to be present at the trial, where there was sure to be a large contingent of Russian spies as well as French detectives. But when the day of the trial came he found it hard to keep away. The suspense and anxiety were almost unbearable. It was not possible to stay quietly in-doors, so he went out and walked about the streets like a troubled spirit, going from one haunt to another, as was wont to do Narka, and threw light on the unknown authors of her arrest. The more he thought of it, the stronger grew his fear, that Schenk had betrayed her. The idea, which had at first been repulsed as a groundless suspicion, took shape when he found that Schenk had left town the day before the arrest; and then, as the days went by, and he neither came nor wrote, suspicion grew and hardened into conviction. Ivan had quickly detected the German's passion for Narka, and shrewdly suspected that Schenk had declared it, and if so, he had of course been scornfully rejected. As Ivan paced the streets he pictured to himself the scene; Narka startled into indignant surprise, answering him with two flashes of lightning from her dark eyes, and Schenk, goaded out of his cold-blooded sleepiness, pressing his suit; then perhaps threatening— for she was in his power to an extent. Ivan's blue eyes scintillated with inextinguishable laughter as he clenched his hands, swinging heavily by his side, and stamped on the ground with his feet, and partly obeying the blind impulse that prompted him to pursue his aimless march, he walked on to La Villette and to Narka's house. The place looked just as if nothing had happened; she might have been sitting inside at her work; the door on the street stood open as usual. Ivan stepped in. It was dark in the narrow entry after the brilliant sunshine, but there was light enough for him to see a man standing at the door of the landlady's rooms, opposite to Narka's, as if waiting to be let in. Ivan at a glance recognized Schenk.

"The two were equally surprised to meet. "Oh, it is you!" said Schenk, coming forward, and held out his hand. "Ivan fell back a step. "How much money did they give you for it?" he said, hissing out the words between his teeth. "What do you mean?" demanded Schenk. "You know what I mean. How much did they give you for selling Narka Larik to the police here?" "Look here," said Schenk, and he came a step nearer, fixing his green eyes on Ivan's, that were blazing like a tiger's; "take back that lie, or I'll knock it down your throat!" Ivan clenched his hand, and hit out at him; but Schenk, stepping aside in time, avoided the blow, and Ivan struck the wall with his might, breaking his knuckles with the violence of the collision. The pain blinded and maddened him for a moment, and before he had recovered his senses Schenk drew his cane-sword and ran him through the body. Ivan staggered, and then fell heavily to the ground.

Schenk knelt down, wiped his blade carefully in his victim's coat, slipped it back into the cane, and walked away. In five minutes a crowd had collected; in five more the commissary of police arrived, taking down the procs verbal. Before he had finished, the doctor arrived. "Life is not extinct," said the medical man, after putting his ear to Ivan's heart. "Is there a room where he could be taken, close by, here on the ground-floor?"

Some one ran to the concierge and got the key of Narka's door, and Ivan was lifted in and laid upon the bed. Then restoratives were quickly applied and the wound was attended to. Gradually consciousness returned. Ivan carried his blank gaze round the room, and began to realize where he was. "Have they condemned her?" he asked, in a faint voice. "Ah! it was, then, a woman?" said the commissary, and out came his pencil to add this point to the procs-verbal. "Do you know her?" Could you identify her vacantly. "The woman who stabbed you," he explained. "Try and remember. We found you lying in the entry badly wounded. Do you know who stabbed you?" But the wounded man turned his head away and moaned impatiently. At a sign from the doctor the commissary collapsed. "He is too weak; he has lost a deal of blood. I must go down to the Sisters

and get some one to come up and attend to him," said the medical man.

"Sœur Marguerite!" Ivan said, with an effort; "tell Sœur Marguerite to come to me."

Every body at La Villette knew that Sœur Marguerite was away at the trial. "I will ask for Sœur Marguerite," replied the doctor; "but she may not be in the way; I must take whoever is."

"No, no; Sœur Marguerite," Ivan insisted. "If she is still in the court, send and say I want to see her; I have something to say, and there is no time to lose. Be quick!"

The commissary, guessing that the something was connected with this attempt on his life, hurried out and called again, and drove to the court, where, as we know, he found Marguerite, and took her back with him. The errand had been done with great haste, but Ivan's feverish impatience had found the time never-ending.

"Ah! you are come—thank God!" he exclaimed, the moment she appeared. "Get a pencil, and write what I am going to tell you."

"But you are too weak; I had better wait," she urged, gently.

"No, no; there is no time. I have strength enough, if only there be time. Write."

Marguerite drew her big pocket-book from her sleeve, and held her pencil ready.

"You remember that All souls eve at Yrakow?" Ivan began. "My sister Sophie was coming through the wood in the afternoon. She met Larchoff. He stopped her, and— a splash passed over Ivan's face; he struggled for a moment with some violent pain or emotion, and having mastered it, went on: "I saw her flying across the road toward our gate; she was half mad. . . . I went straight into the sacristy, and took Father Christopher's gun. . . . I knew where he kept it, and I knew it was loaded. . . . I hurried back to the forest, and overtook Larchoff, and shot him."

Marguerite uttered a cry, and dropped the pencil; she picked it up, and Ivan continued: "As God hears me, my first thought was for Sophie. I wanted to screen her; if it was known I had killed Larchoff, it would have led to suspicion. . . . After I fired the shot, Father Christopher passed; he was hurrying through the wood to get back to the confessional; I saw he might have seen me, and if he had, I knew he would suspect me. I went on to the sacristy, and put back the gun where I had found it. And then— oh, my God, how shall I tell it!— then I went into the chapel, and knelt down in the confessional and confessed the murder. Then I was safe. I knew that this sealed his lips—that he must let himself be put to death rather than utter a word against the merit of the confessional. . . . The next day I went into X— and denounced him as the murderer."

Marguerite could bear no more; she burst into tears, overcome with horror and compassion.

"Ah! I have suffered for my crime!" Ivan went on; "ay, the torments of the damned! It so chanced—God in His judgment so decreed—that I was passing when the police were carrying him away. . . . I saw him driven on between the two policemen. Oh, my God! my God! the look he gave me! . . . it has haunted me like a dead man's eye. . . . I felt sure at first that the prince would have obtained his release; when that failed, I did what I could. I spent my whole fortune trying to purchase his escape, to bribe the judges, trying to get alleviations for him. I have lived in poverty. . . . my life has been a hell of remorse. . . . And now I am lying accused and unforgiven, murdered myself. . . . It is just! it is just!"

Marguerite dropped on her knees, shaken to her soul with pity for the miserable man who had sinned and suffered so terribly. But her strong sense and habit of self-restraint quickly brought her back to the practical question of how to make this confession available for Father Christopher. She had presence of mind enough to remember that either it must be made verbally before another witness, or Ivan must sign what she had written in the presence of a witness.

"Is it any good my confessing now?" said Ivan, as if he guessed what was in her mind. "Will it help to set Father Christopher free, do you think?" If it did, if he knew that before I died, it would make hell less horrible to me."

"I have not a doubt," replied Marguerite, "but that as soon as your statement is known to the authorities, they will liberate him at once; but you will have to repeat the confession, or else sign the presence of another person. May I send for the commissary?"

"Yes, yes; send for as many as will come. I will swear before the whole world that I committed the murder, and conferred it to Father Christopher." Marguerite went out, intending to send for the commissary. She found him in the entry, surrounded by the cure, the doctor, several police officers, and others who had been attracted by the news of the murder. She told rapidly what had happened, and when the commissary, accompanied by the cure and the doctor, came in, Marguerite read aloud what she had written, and then asked Ivan if it was correct, and if he would swear to the truth of the story.

"Yes, I swear, as a dying man, that what you have written is true. So help me God! Get me up that I may sign it!" They lifted him, and put a pen in his hand, and he wrote his name; the others then added their signatures. The commissary was putting away the paper when Ivan made a sign that he wanted it again. They gave it to him, and he clutched it fondly. It was Narka's pen. He remembered seeing it on her little writing-table.

"What have they done to her?" he asked. "To Narka Larik; what is the sentence?" "She is acquitted on all points," replied the commissary, who had heard it from a police-officer just come from the court.

"Thank God!" muttered Ivan, and his face brightened; then, changing suddenly, a look of hungry, wolfish hate came over it. "Now let them catch Schenk!" he said. "It was Schenk's doing—it was Schenk that stabbed me. I would die easy if I knew they would hang him!" He fell back exhausted on the pillow.

CHAPTER XLII. The verdict of acquittal was received with loud and general applause, the vil-

lette element making itself conspicuous in the chorus by yells of triumph, which might have easily been mistaken for howls of rage. When M. de Beauverillon and Sibyl led Narka out of the court, half fainting, she hardly knew where she was going, and allowed herself to be assisted into the carriage without asking where they were taking her. It was only when she found herself before the steps of Sibyl's house that she realized where she was. It was then too late to protest, even if she had had strength to do it.

Sibyl took her upstairs, and put her to bed; she was kind and tender as a sister, and Narka, worn out in mind and body, submitted unresistingly to the ministrations. She was thankful to be at rest. She slept through the night from sheer exhaustion. Sibyl would have her lie in bed next morning; she forbade her to get up till the afternoon, and gave orders that Mlle. Narka was not to be disturbed, even if Sœur Marguerite came.

Immediately after the second breakfast Sibyl went out with Gaston. They were both anxious to see Marguerite, and learn the cause of her mysterious summons from court the day before. The moment they were gone, Narka rose and dressed herself, and slipped down to the bondoir. She could not be quiet in bed, when Basil might arrive at any moment, and call for her. She had not been long in the bondoir when a carriage drove into the court. It might be Basil! Narka started up and went to the window. A coupe was drawn up before the steps; the hall porter was parleying with some one inside. Presently he opened the carriage door and assisted a lady to alight. Narka recognized Marie Krinsky. The thought of meeting this girl, who loved Basil, who had been her rival, would have been intolerable; but it did not occur to her that Marie was coming upstairs; she was, no doubt, going to wait in the drawing-room, or perhaps to write a note in the library. It was only when the sound of silk rustling on the landing became audible that Narka knew the young Princess was going to appear. She glanced round for a way of escape. There was a panelled door that opened into a tiny closet, a sort of debaras where the tea-table, etc., were kept. There was just time to spring across the room and open this door and draw it after her, without daring to shut it, when Marie entered.

You will find everything here, Princess, said the servant, and soon the click of an opened instant, and then the noise of a pen scratching the paper, announced that Marie was writing.

The time seemed long to Narka, but in reality ten minutes had not elapsed when Marie started up, exclaiming: "Sœur Marguerite! I am so glad! I was writing a line for Madame de Beauverillon. We only returned from Fontaineau last night. You were at the trial; tell me about it. Was Narka Larik guilty? Did she conspire against the life of the Emperor?"

Marguerite lifted her eyebrows. "Why, did you not read the trial? It is all in this morning's newspapers. She was completely acquitted."

"Oh, I know that. M. de Beauverillon is rich enough to buy up the jury," said Marie, and she went on to do it; but she is guilty? Is she the dreadful woman they say? I saw the dreadful truth." She spoke earnestly, nervously.

"Narka is no more guilty than I am," said Marguerite, with the warmth of conviction. "She is a noble woman, and she has suffered cruelly."

"Ah! But now they say— Is it true, this story of Prince Basil being in love with her and wanting to marry her?" "Yes, it is quite true."

Marie grew pale, and Marguerite saw that the words had cut into her like a knife. Poor child! So she was to be a victim, through no fault of her own. She looked as if a touch would have overthrown her courage; but she struggled bravely, and kept up.

"I am glad she is good, since he is going to marry her," she said; "it would have been dreadful for Madame de Beauverillon; and I should have been sorry for her brother, who—"

Marie stopped short, blushed violently, and then grew white, and an expression between terror and defiance came into her eyes. Marguerite turned to see what had wrought the sudden change, and saw a gentleman advancing quickly toward the open door of the bondoir; he was unkempt and travel-stained, like one come of a journey; but Marguerite recognized Basil at a glance. He went straight up to her, and took her hand and raised it to his lips; he did not say a word, but his face, his whole manner, were eloquent with feeling. Suddenly, as if he had not noticed the presence of the young princess, he made her a low bow. Marie took up her parasol.

"I am not sending you away, I hope, Princess," said Basil.

"No; I was going." She shook hands with Marguerite, and then, looking Basil steadily in the face, "I am glad to be one of the first to congratulate you on your approaching marriage, Prince," she said. He read insolent contempt in her glance; but it was the defiance of desperation.

"Thank you, Princess," he replied, and held back the portiere with an ostentatious pretence of making wider room for her exit.

The girl's retreating footsteps made no sound on the soft carpet, and Narka did not know she had left the room when Basil spoke.

"Sibyl is out?" "Yes, I believe she is gone to La Villette," Marguerite replied, and she laid on the table a parcel that she took out of a basket on her arm. There was nothing so far to inform Narka that Marie was not still present. Marguerite looked tired, and Basil thought agitated; she sat down again with a certain hesitation in her manner. "A dreadful thing had happened," she said; "Ivan Gorff was stabbed yesterday during the trial."

"Good God! Ivan! By whom?" "By a man named Schenk."

"Schenk!" Basil repeated, aghast. "My God! And is Ivan dead?" "He is dying. He sent me to make a confession—a terrible confession." Narka held her breath, while Marguerite paused, as if the words were hard to speak. Then, almost in a whisper, "It was Ivan who murdered Larchoff!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

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LESSONS OF THE AUGUSTINE CELEBRATION IN ENGLAND.

One by one the links of the past are being renewed. The force of tradition comes to the aid of logic in bringing back the British people to the old paths. The Ritualists have sought to stay their return by presenting to them mere fragments of Catholic truths and urging that they should be content with these. But tradition and historical memorials, as well as common-sense, plead too powerfully against a feeble and halting imitation of Catholicism, and non Catholics in growing numbers are coming to see that if the creed of the Church's early days, and the creed taught by the Apostle men who went forth to win the nations to civilization and Christianity is to be accepted, it must be received not piecemeal but in all its essentials. This is the lesson of the Augustine celebrations, and with what emphasis has it been preached. The brilliant and dignified ceremonies all seem to take us back to pre-Reformation days, and in witnessing them the Catholic could not but feel as if he were present at one of those glorious scenes depicted on so many of our historical monuments wherein reverence for the Church, and especially for the Holy See, is as conspicuous as pride in the vigor and stability of the State. The commemoration was indeed an exhibition of respect and love for Peter such as vividly recalls old English life. Everything in the scenes and incidents was suggestive of the Roman Pontificate. First of all, in a touching and encouraging letter the Holy Father conveyed the Apostolic blessing. Then the representative of the Holy Father, his Eminence Cardinal Vaughan, with a host of Bishops, priests and cures, visited the spot on the shores of Kent which were first followed by the tread of a band of missionaries sent from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great. And as a sign of that unity which binds together the Catholics of every land now as in the days of Augustine there was the presence of that learned and eloquent representative of the Church in France, his Eminence Cardinal Perraud, Bishop of Arles, the Superior of the Society of St. Sulpice, and other well known French priests. The celebration was thus a decisive step in the bridging of a chasm created through passion and prejudice.

The Anglican Bishops had in their own way already paid honor to the memory of St. Augustine in connection with the thirteenth centenary of his landing in England. But both they and their flocks might well have joined with the Catholics in expressing their gratitude for the blessings which the Holy See has been the means of conferring on this country through St. Augustine and many other agents of light and leading. It is not merely Catholics who are indebted to them but Protestants of all shades of doctrine, even those who are most aggressively opposed to the Roman See. The Protestants for the most part fail to realize their debts in this respect, and the act is scarcely surprising, for few are fully alive to the extent of their obligations towards those who have gone before them. The period of the Roman occupation of this island was comparatively brief, but even after so many centuries how numerous are the traces on the imperial power and genius of Rome. And if this be so in the matter of material records and memorials, how much more is it the case with regard to language. The Roman language crept in and inter-fused itself with the Saxon tongue. But how close and how great was the influence of the Holy See upon England, not in one, but in every feature of national life. Men nowadays dwell at no little length on what we owe to the British Constitution, yet they often forget to tell us that we owe the British Constitution itself largely to Catholics who acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman See and derived inspiration and guidance from it. The respective parts which the Celtic monks on the one hand and St. Augustine and his followers on the other played in the conversion of England cannot be easily defined. Roughly speaking the Celts converted the North and the Romans the South. Both the Celtic and the Roman missionaries recognized the supremacy of Rome, and it is for that reason that the Roman influence on England so readily ascribed the Celtic energy and so deeply affected the foundations of the State. We find it making itself felt at all the great crises, struggling for culture and refinement, steadily toning down the rough manners of fierce and rapacious barons, protecting the serf and ensuring him his daily bread, spreading discipline through Theodore, diffusing historical and literary lore through Bede, paving the way for representative government through ecclesiastical councils and synods, combating despotism through Anselm, laying down just laws through the good King Edward, and vindicating the rights of the people through prelates like Langton. It is not too much to say that the makers of England, the men who laid the foundation of its greatness, were sterling representatives of the Roman See and the Catholic faith.

Since England is under so many and such great obligations to the Holy See, how came it that spiritual allegiance to Rome was cast off and that the inhabitants of this nation were so long and so violently hostile to the authority of the Holy See? The rupture was not due to the English people. As Cardinal Manning was fond of remarking, they were robbed of their birthright. Despotism monarchs desired to follow their own wills without hindrance, and by violent persecution they

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