

# THE STROKE THAT SAVED.

The great palace at Moscow was brilliantly lighted, and the opening ball of the festive season had brought wealth and royalty together at the winter home of the Czar.

In the salon all was magnificence. Gorgeously decorated and splendid flowers graced the room; costly mirrors threw back the light of a thousand candles, and the walls were beautiful with colored tapestries. The royal divan was unoccupied. Peter the Great had for the evening thrown off his mask of stern authority, and moved among the guests with courtly grace, greeting all with kind and pleasant words. The great Czar went slowly through the room. The quiet smile seemed to have erased the lines of care from his brow, but there was an anxious, watchful look in the deep gray eyes that told of the sleeplessness of his mind.

The rounds had been made. Everywhere he had been met with expressions of humble submission and thoughtful good will; but his mind was restless; he had a dim foreboding of some impending evil, and sank into a cushioned chair, a pray to unconscious and unhappy thoughts. How long he rested he knew not, but presently he was called back to his situation by a light touch on his knee and the whispering voice of his page: "They await you, sire." And with a hurried glance at the scene of gaiety and joy he slipped away.

Outside in the avenue all was different. Long lines of heavy carriages and graceful sleighs awaited the ending of the ball; horses stamped impatiently on the crisp, hard snow; and weary drivers muffled in their great fur coats, huddled in the protecting shelter of their carriages. Far off in the west wing of the palace there was but little sign of festivity. The great massive building loomed, a tower of black. One single window was lighted, and the slender ray that struggled forth seemed almost swallowed in the darkness. Figures passed repeatedly before it, and the drivers noted it and wondered.

Inside of the palace the ball was at its height; soft strains of music floated through the long suites of rooms; foreign ambassadors, stately nobles, young and dashing officers, chatted in little groups, danced with Russian beauty, or wandered aimlessly through the grand rooms.

Long since the Czar had slipped away, not unnoticed, for the watchful eyes of a pale young nobleman, who sat apart from the crowd, had marked it. The Czar had gone through a small door to the left, half hidden by hanging curtains, and through dark, narrow corridors up long flights of stairs to the little room to the left wing, where the solitary light peered out into the darkness.

His Majesty was expected, matters of state had called him away from the gay scene in the salon to the council chambers. As he stepped into the room every knee was bent, and when he had acknowledged the customary salutation, a sigh of relief passed from the lips of the councillors as they proceeded to their places around the central table. They were all old men, silver-haired nobles of great learning, men eminently worthy of the high offices they occupied. One alone in the room was not a councillor; young and handsome, tall and broad of shoulder, the Count of Bolshoy was there, by right of his position as captain of the Czar's bodyguard, to stand between his royal master and the dangers of secret enemies. And after a few whispered words from the Czar, he left the room and took his stand in the dark hallway.

Nihilists were strong in Russia, and the pale young nobleman who sat apart from the crowd in the gay salon, was the Count of Kharkov, of all the socialists the most powerful, fearless and dreaded. There was a wild, unnatural light in his eyes that seemed to tell of strange workings in his mind. He smiled to himself, but it was a dark, forbidding smile that boded no good. He was evidently waiting for something, for as minute after minute passed, he sat tapping his foot impatiently on the marble floor.

Finally, he arose, and, with forced calmness, quietly walked toward the half hidden door that led to the left wing. He entered unnoticed and waited in the darkness. Presently the door opened. A form entered noiselessly. Again and still again the door opened, and each time a new figure silently joined him, until twelve men were gathered there in the gloom.

Not a word was spoken; quietly the

dark eyes open to stare vacantly into the face above. "Quiet yourself, my son," says the old man. "You are safe, but can you recognize an old friend?" The eyes of the wounded man rest, for a moment on the kindly face, and with a groan of shame and grief he mutters in a half-choked whisper, "The Abbe Nonnory."

"Aye, my son," answers the priest, and with a quick sign he motions to his attendants to withdraw, and he is alone with the dying man.

"Father," the pale soldier whispers, "you know my sin?"

"Aye, my child," the old priest answers, "nor is it too late to repent. Some unknown cause has brought you, wounded and dying, to the door of a hunted and despised priest of God. Ah, it grieved me greatly to hear that you had preferred the honors of the world to the true faith; but repentance can make you once more a friend of the all-loving Father."

The stricken man was silent for a long time. A great struggle was going on in his soul; grace was fighting for mastery. The old man saw it and said nothing. The minutes crept on. Then slowly the young soldier raised himself off his knees, and with a contrition born of newly awakened love, he made a true and fervent confession at the feet of the old priest.

The strange pair, the white-haired man and the handsome, dying officer, talked on through the night. They talked of the deadly assault at the palace, of other and happier days, of the great festivity of the morrow and of the heaven that seemed so near to both.

Death hovered over the little room, and as the first bright rays of the sun peered in through the frosty panes, the head of the poor young officer drooped, the weak hand fell, and his noble soul went forth to spend a joyous and a happy eternity in a holier land.

Days passed, there was a great funeral, for all Moscow had turned out to honor the remains of the Count of Bolshoy, captain of the royal guard. Strange stories were told of his death; the people coupled it with the slaying of the Nihilist leaders who had been killed, but for political reasons Russia never knew the real story of his bravery. And of all the people that followed him to his grave, only one, a gray-haired man, could tell of the brave acts and the braver death of the dead hero.—The Dial.

Suddenly there is a signal from the room, it tells him that his master has escaped; and with a rapid thrust he clears a momentary passage through the circle of swords and is gone. Down the long hall, down the stairs, out into the chill night air he flees, with two of the baffled swordsmen at his heels. A sad smile passes over his bleeding face as he hears the hoarse cries of rage and disappointment from the room above. The Czar is safe and he is content.

Down the deserted streets the death chase continues, the stricken bleeding man who colors the fresh white snow with his life-blood at every step, and the two furious pursuers. Through street after street he flies. He cannot last long; his eyes are growing dim, but with a final effort he dashes down a narrow side street and turns to meet his death. He listens. Nearer and nearer come the pursuing footsteps. He shrinks into the darkest shadow of the houses. For a moment he scarcely dares breathe. Two panting men dash past and are gone. His mind becomes a blank; he reels and falls heavily upon the pavement.

## A SYDNEY CENTENARIAN.

There is at present in the home conducted by the Little Sisters of the Poor, Randwick, Australia, a hale and hearty old man who has passed his 103rd birthday. He was born on St. Patrick's Day, in 1802. His name is Patrick McGann, a native of Galway, and he is in possession of all his faculties. He has a wonderfully good memory, and speaks of events that happened when he was a boy as if they had occurred only yesterday. He was apprenticed in Galway to the tailoring trade, and remembers perfectly the day the news of the Battle of Waterloo reached that city, and the excitement it created. He was working in Bolton (Lancashire) when George IV. died, and can speak intelligently of matters that occurred when Victoria ascended the throne.

He has a most distinct recollection of Daniel O'Connell, and proudly refers to the fact that he attended several of his great meetings. McGann arrived in Australia thirty-seven years ago, and was one of the first who entered the home of the Little Sisters. He has been an inmate over nineteen years. He speaks in the most glowing terms of the devoted Sisters, and his appearance, as also that of the other aged inmates, bears eloquent testimony to the care and attention bestowed upon them by the noble and self-sacrificing women who have left the world to minister to God's poor. "We want for nothing here," said the old man. "We get everything that is necessary for our welfare."

He ascribes his longevity to a robust constitution and to his taking care of himself. His wife died seventeen years ago. They had a family of five children, two sons are now living, one in Forbes, and "my other boy is in Sydney," said the old man, "and is over eighty years of age." McGann is as active as many men of his age. He can read even without his glasses, and from present appearances has many years of life before him.

There is nothing easier to acquire than a fretful, complaining spirit. It is a foolish habit to borrow trouble, or meet it half way. Cultivate a cheerful mind and heart, and much imaginary trouble can be avoided.

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## CHAS. DESJARDINS & CIE.

## MAGNIFICENT CHARITY.

(Catholic Union and Times, Buffalo.) Philadelphia has her Mother Katharine—Miss Drexel; New York and Richmond their Mrs. Thomas F. Ryan, and Buffalo has her Sister of Charity—Mary Rose—Sister Servant at the "Providence Retreat," who have started the money-grabby world by the colossal sums they have given to charity.

Banker Drexel's daughter—now known as Mother Katharine—is well known, is devoting her life and fortune to the education and care of the negroes and Indians; and even a heartless, callous world cannot withhold their wonder and admiration.

Mrs. Thomas F. Ryan is rivaling the Philadelphia heroine in her magnificent donations to the same sacred cause; and avaricious little souls are astounded.

And now comes Buffalo's Sister of Charity—Mary Rose—who is giving the \$1,000,000 which she has inherited from her two wealthy brothers, to the sublime charity to which she is devoting her life.

We much fear we shall incur the deep displeasure of humble Sister Mary Rose for thus heralding the secret, which we have accidentally heard, of the noble way in which she is disposing of her family inheritance. But we do so thoughtfully, because we believe her munificence will redound to the honor of religion and may prove an inspiration to other hearts to detach themselves from the love of money that so abounds in these covetous days.

The noted ceremony that occurred at the "Providence Retreat" last Saturday afternoon, on the occasion of blessing and placing in position the corner-stone of the new and much enlarged building of that institution, was kept to the secret of how Sister Mary Rose intends to spend her fortune. The new building, or rather series of buildings, with all their various up-to-date improvements, will be erected at the sole expense of Sister Mary Rose; and judging from the architectural plans and from what we could learn of the details, the new institution will not be second to any in the land.

We have heard incidentally from Bishop Colton that the O'Donnell brothers, of New York, who bequeathed their fortune to their sister in Buffalo, were in life most generous in their charities; and he particularly mentioned their frequent gifts to the late Father Drumgoole, for the great work of charity which he had established. So that charity comes to Sister Mary Rose as a blessed trait in the O'Donnell family.

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## DEVOTION OR DEGRADATION

If the Rev. Dr. Mowatt, or the editor of the Presbyterian Witness had seen Prince Louis of Battenburg salute the Victoria Cross on the breast of a butler waiting on the table at

## ONE OF THE FUNCTIONS WHICH HE ATTENDED.

either one of them would have thought that His Serene Highness, nephew of the King of England and brother-in-law to the Czar of Russia, had demeaned himself by so doing. Not a word would they have said about degradation or idolatry. They would have recognized that it was not the butler in himself, nor the piece of bronze upon his breast which the Prince and his officers were honoring but the Sovereign whose will it is that the gift by which he chooses to mark his appreciation of special heroism in his soldiers or sailors should be thus saluted. But when a Catholic drops on his knees at the passing of a priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament, which that Catholic believes to be the Body of our Lord, to be honored as the Apostles honored Him when they saw Him in the flesh, he is told by the Rev. Dr. Mowatt that this is "not devotion but degradation." The real quarrel which these gentlemen have with us is that we continue to believe in transubstantiation and they do not. Martin Luther and John Calvin could never entirely tear themselves away from the plain meaning of our Lord's word, but there are many at the present day who profess to regard these heresiarchs as their fathers in the faith, who have departed very far from the Lutheran and Calvinistic theology concerning the Eucharist.—The Casket.



**DO YOU KNOW THAT BACKACHE IS THE FIRST SYMPTOM OF KIDNEY TROUBLE.**

It is! and you cannot be too careful about it.

A little backache let run will finally cause serious kidney trouble. Stop it in time.

**TAKE DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS.**

They cure where all others fail. As a specific for Backaches and Kidney Troubles they have no equal. Here is what

**MR. GEO. H. SOMERVILLE,** of Stewarton, N.B., writes: "I was so troubled with a sore back I could not get out of bed in the mornings for over a year. I got a box of Doan's Kidney Pills and before I had them half taken I could see I was deriving some benefit from them, and before I had taken them all my back was O.K. and I have not been troubled since."

## A VETERAN PRIEST.

The correspondent of a Los Angeles paper, in his account of a round of the hospitals of San Diego after the horrible accident to the gunboat "Bennington," speaks feelingly of a man whom many visitors to Southern California have learned to admire and love, as do his parishioners—Father Ubach, pastor of St. Joseph's Church San Diego:

A man turned in at the driveway and walked quickly across the lawn. He wore a long beard of iron grey and his hair was flecked with white, yet the brown eyes were young, and the grasp of his hand had all the vigor of youth. It was Father Anthony D. Ubach.

"He was here almost all last night," said the policeman. "There is not a language on earth that he don't speak, and he goes about in there comforting every man in his mother tongue. He'll do 'em good if any preacher can. I'm not a Catholic myself, but I know a good man when I see one, and Father Ubach will do for mine."

And so the aged priest went from room to room now helping the nurses with the sick, and now dropping a few words into a conscious sufferer's ear. He was there to say the last word over the dying sailor, and the soft, Andalusian murmur was the last thing that many a dying ear heard that night.

Father Ubach, despite his German name, is purely Spanish in every respect: in his bearing and manner, every inch the grandee and the soldier; in his character and goodness, every inch the minister of God's altar.

If the world despises you because you do not follow its ways, pay no heed to it. But be sure your way is right.

A man about town, who is fond of good corn-pone and honey, visited a neighboring town on the "Eastern Sho" recently, and at one of the hotels he was served with some delicious corn-bread and honey. He enjoyed it so much that he told his wife all about it when he returned home.

On his next trip to the country she accompanied him. They visited the same hotel, and when the noon meal was being served he said to his wife that he hoped they had some more of that honey. It did not appear, however, and the man therefore beckoned to a waiter and said: "Say, Sambo, where is my honey?" He was almost paralyzed when that worthy grinned and replied: "She doan work here no mo', boss, she gone got a job at the silk mill."

The wife received a handsome new Easter dress before they returned home, after making a solemn promise not to tell the story.

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