

"You were not an orphan, nor a burden on the State; you did not fall within that law. It was by the great, by the divine clemency of the Czar that ukase was issued, to save the children whom every Polish household would have welcomed, to relieve the State of a burden which did not exist. But the order did not effect you, and if I had known of it I should not have been disturbed. You were safe, safe with your mother, and she was safe among her own people, the women who knew her and loved her.

"As the order was issued it had to be carried out, and the soldiers were sent to find orphan children, begging their bread, and a burden on the State. But there were none; yet the order must be obeyed. So they began to carry off the children they could find, whether they were orphans or not, whether their mothers wept and shrieked, or whether they sat silent, struck with the mad stupor of a misfortune greater than they could bear.

"When Herod slew the infants in Bethlehem, there were some thirty killed. When Nicholas murdered the innocents in Poland, there were thousands. Perhaps, when one crime becomes as well known as the other, that of the Czar will take its proper rank.

"In the afternoon, when the day was sinking, there came clattering up to the village where your mother had taken refuge a long cavalcade of carts, horses, and cavalry. In the carts were infants;—it was a day of winter, and the snow was lying over the fields and in the branches of the pines. The carts were covered, it is true, and within them the children cried and moaned, huddled together against each other for warmth; some mere infants in arms; some five or six years of age, who carried the smaller ones; some little toddling things of two. They had spread rough blankets on the floors of the carts; but still the helpless babes were cold. And their only nurses were the soldiers who had small pity.

"The women of the village came out crying over the poor children, bringing them bread and milk. With them they carried their own. They had better have stayed indoors; better still have fled into the woods, and hidden there till the Cossacks went away. For presently, the soldiers began picking up the children of the village and tossing them, too, into their carts. Among them, led by an older child, wrapped in furs, was a little boy of two years old—you, Ladislas Pulaski.

"You were straight-backed then, poor boy; straight and comely, like your father—

"When they rode away, the carts lumbering along the roads, the children crying, the soldiers swearing, they were followed by a stream of women, who shrieked and cried, and first among them all ran and cried your mother—the Lady Claudia. Yes—she was brave when her beautiful home was burned with all the sweet things she had grown up amongst; but when she saw the boy torn from her, she became, they told me, like a mad woman. They were all mad women.

"It was twenty-four hours later when I returned and heard what had happened. The carts had all that much start of me; also I had to be careful, because near the village I might be recognized and arrested. I followed on the high road when I could—through forests when I could find a faithful guide—anyhow so that I followed. After two days of pursuit, I found—courage, Ladislas—courage, boy—so—drink this water—lie down for a moment—sob and cry—it will do you good as it did me, when I found her—the tale is almost told.

"I found her lying cold and dead in the road. She was bareheaded, and her long hair lay blown about her beautiful head; her face was looking, with its pale cold cheeks and closed eyes—looking still along the road in the direction of the carts—one arm was bent under her, one hand upon her heart; one lay extended, the fingers clutched in the snow as if she would drag herself along the way by which she could no longer creep; her shoes had fallen from her feet, she was frozen;—in the night she had fallen, and, too weak to rise, must have died in the painless sleep that swiftly closes the eyes of those who lie down in our winter snow. I lifted her and bore her to the edge of the forest, where, because I could not dig her a grave, I made a hole in the snow, and covered her over with branches to keep off the wolves. I knelt by her dead form and called Heaven to witness that such revenge as I could work upon the people who had killed her I would work—it is a vow which I have renewed from day to day; and, after many years, the time has come at last. It always comes to those who have faith and patience.

"When I had buried your mother, I hurried along the road still in pursuit of the train of children. These trains do not move quickly, and I knew that I should come up with it—sooner or later. The roads were very still and quiet; it was not only the snow that lay on the earth, but the dread and terror of the Cossacks. Death was in the air; in the woods lay the bodies of the men; in the villages lay the women weeping; on the cold roads lumbered the long lines of kibitkas that carried away the children. Somewhere on that road marched the train of convicts manacled wrist to wrist, your father among them.

"Presently—it may have been a day, it may have been an hour, after I left your dead mother—I heard far off the dull dead sound of the carts, the cracking of whips, and the curses of the drivers. Then I stopped to think. If they saw me I should be shot, and that would be of no use to any one. Now, if I lost sight altogether of the train, how could I help you, who were in it?"

Walking and running, I kept up close behind the train; as the night fell again, I could get so close as to hear the wailing of the children, who cried for hunger and for cold. And Providence befriended us, for while I went along the road, I saw something move in the moonlight,—and heard a faint cry. Ladislas, it was you. You had fallen from the cart, and they left you there to die. Perhaps they did not see you. Five minutes more and you would have died, like your mother, of that fatal sleep of frost.

"There is nothing more to tell—I had a long and weary journey from village to village before I reached the Austrian frontier, and found a friend who would help us over mountains and by forests to Switzerland. All Europe was full of our sufferings, and we made friends wherever we went; there were societies called 'Friends of Poland,' who helped us with money and work; had they given us soldiers and arms we should have asked no other help—we passed from Switzerland to France, and from France we came to England. Always the same kindness from the people; the same indignation; and the same help. I wonder, now, if they have forgotten the cause of Poland; perhaps, because it is twenty years ago.

"Well, as the days passed on, I noticed something. At first, it was not much, but as the time went on, I found that your back was round, and that you were—poor boy—deformed. It was done by the fall from the cart. Remember, Ladislas, that you owe that, as well as everything else—to the Czar. When you look in the glass, say to yourself, 'But for them I should be well and straight like my father; when you pass a rich man's house you may say, 'My house stood among woods fairer than these, with more splendid gardens; the Czar burned it, and took my broad lands.' When you stand upon the ramparts and see the lines of convicts working, silent, in single file, think of your father dying slowly in the Siberian mines—and every evening and every morning, look at the face of your mother and think of her rushing along the frozen roads, catching at the hands of the soldiers, crying and imploring—to fall at last for very weakness on the ground and die in misery.

"Hush, boy—hush—strengthen your heart—rouse yourself—think that your arms are strong, though your back is round; you can fire a gun; you can kill a Russian; you can fight, as men fight now; and you are a Pulaski.

"I thought, when I saw what you were, that Heaven had resolved to spare you the common lot of Poles. But that is not so—we must all go, now."

"Yes, Wassielewski—all must go. I among the rest."

"I knew you would say that, when you had been told all. Look me in the face, boy, and swear it."

"I swear it," I murmured, in a broken voice. "By the portrait of my mother, Wassielewski, I will go with you to Poland, when you claim my promise. You shall take me back to my own people: you shall say to them that I am poor and deformed; that I can neither march with them, nor ride, nor stand upright among their ranks; that I cannot even speak my own language; but that I have greater wrongs to avenge than any of them; and that I ask leave just to crawl among them and load my rifle with the rest."

"Good—boy—good." The old man's eyes had an infinite tenderness in their depths while he took my hand. "I am taking you to Death. That is almost certain. I pray God that we may die together, and that we may die upon a heap of Russians while the enemy is flying before our faces scattered like the chaff before the wind. Then I can take you by the hand and lead you to Heaven, where we shall find them both, waiting for us—Count Roman and Lady Claudia—and I shall say, 'My master and my mistress, I have brought your boy home to you. And he died for Poland.'

"It is not that I have done this myself," he went on. "For years a voice had been ringing in my ears which at first I could not understand,—it was only a voice, and indistinct. Gradually I began to hear and make out what it said. 'The time is coming,' it said, 'the time is coming. Prepare to end thy work. The time is coming.' That lasted for a long while, but I was patient, because I knew that it was the Lady Claudia who spoke to me at night, and she would have good reason for what she said. And now the voice says more. It says, 'Ladislas must be told; Ladislas must go with you; let Ladislas, too, fight for Poland.' We must obey a voice from Heaven, and so I have told you.

"Remember, I can promise you nothing,—not even glory, not even a name. You may be killed in a nameless fight upon a village green; you may follow your father to Siberia; I know not. I partly read the future, but not all. I see fighting. I hear the Polish Hymn; there are the accursed grey coats, there is the firing of guns, and all is finished. Among the patriots I do not see you, Ladislas, and I do not see myself.

"You have sworn, and I will give you, besides your father's cross, your mother's portrait. Take them with you to-night, put them in some safe place, pray with them in your hand, night and day. Remember, you are no longer a music master in an English town, you are a child of Poland, and you teach music till you hear your country's call. And now, farewell; wait and expect."

"Play something, Celia, my dear," said the Captain. "Soothe his spirit with music. Poor boy, poor boy! He should not have told you."

I went home in a dream, bearing with me the precious relics which Wassielewski gave me. I think I was mad that evening. It was nine o'clock when I reached home, and Celia had waited for me all the evening. But I had no eyes for Celia, and no thought for anything but what I had heard. And then, in such language as came to me, with such passion and tears as the tale called up within me, I told my story and once more renewed my vow.

There was no sleep for me that night, but in the morning I fell into a slumber broken by unquiet dreams. There was the lumbering, grinding roll upon the frozen snow of the children's train escorted by the mounted soldiers; there was the figure of my mother, lying stone dead on a road of ice; there was the gang of convicts limping along a road which seemed to have no beginning and no end.

They would not let me go to my pupils; my hands were hot, my brow was burning. Celia came to sit with me, and we talked and wept together. I was fain to tell my story all over again. She held my hand while I told it, and when I had finished I saw in her face no wrath, none of the madness with which Wassielewski filled my soul the day before, but only a great sadness. I was still mad for revenge, but somehow I felt instinctively as if Celia's sorrow was a higher thing than the old Pole's thirst for revenge. And I was ashamed in presence of her sad and sympathizing eyes to renew my oath of vengeance.

"Poor Laddy!" she said, "What a tale of misery and wrong! Let us pity the soldiers who had to carry out such an order. Let us believe that the Czar did not know—could not know—how his order was obeyed. Do not dwell upon it, dear. Do not let cruel and revengeful thoughts grow out of the recollection. 'Vengeance is mine,' you know. Your mother's face—how beautiful it is!—does not make you think of revenge? See how calmly the sweet eyes look at you! And oh! dear, dear, Laddy, make no more rash vows, at least till Leonard comes home. And it wants but three days—three short, short, days, and we shall see him again, and all will go well with us once more."

The Captain said nothing, but in his sad face I saw that he sorrowed for me, and in his grave eyes I read the warning which did not leave his lips.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE DAY BEFORE.

They were very patient with me, the Captain and Celia, while the madness was in my blood. They let me talk as wildly as I pleased, and did not argue. But on the third day Celia put her foot down.

"I will hear nothing more, Laddy," she said. "You have spent three days in dreams of bloodshed and battle. Talk to me about your mother, if you please. I shall never tire of looking at her eyes. They are like yours—when you do not madden yourself with the recollection of that story. Let us picture the sweet life in the Polish village with the chateau beside it, and the girls dancing. Let us play their waltz, or let us go up to the wall and talk of Leonard. But no more battles."

It was a wise prohibition, and I had to obey. My thoughts were directed into a new channel, and the furies which had taken possession of me were, for the moment at least, expelled.

Four days, then, to the twenty-first. Four long, tedious days.

Then three. Then the days became hours, and at last we were only a single day—only four-and-twenty hours from the fixed time when Leonard should come back to us. "In riches or in poverty"—somehow, in spite of all obstacles—he was to return to Celia's Arbour on the evening of the twenty-first of June, 1858. How would he come back, and what would be his history?

"If he is changed, Laddy," said Celia, "he will find us changed too. You, poor boy, under a promise to go out and get killed for Poland. Not that you shall go in spite of the old patriot. And I—what am I, Laddy?"

"You are like Andromeda chained to the rock waiting for the monster to come and devour her. Or you are like an Athenian going out to the youth-devouring Minotaur. But patience; Perseus came to Andromeda, and Theseus killed the Minotaur. I fancy the Minotaur must have been a tall and rather imposing animal to look at, six feet high at least, with a heavy white moustache and a military carriage. And very likely he wore blue spectacles out of doors."

"And what was Theseus like?"

"I think we will call him Perseus, and our monster shall be Andromeda's terror. There is an ugly story; you know, about Theseus and Ariadne."

Cis flushed a sweet rosy red.

"Then tell me what Perseus was like."

"He was about as tall as the monster, perhaps not quite. He was very handsome, had curly brown hair, perhaps he had a moustache, he was about four-and-twenty years of age; he was greatly esteemed by everybody because he was so brave and strong; there was a mystery about his birth which made him only more romantic; there was, you know, about a good many of the ancients. Theseus, for instance, Achilles, Edipus—the dancels all fell in love with him because there was no one in all Greece or the Isles half so handsome; but he kept himself away from all of them; I believe there is a story about some Queen offering him half her throne if he

would marry her, but he would not,—declined in the most respectful, but unmistakable terms. When she received his answer, and sent half-a-dozen men to murder him—because terrible is the wrath of a woman whose beauty has been despised—he stood with his back against a wall, with his short sword held so, and with his shield held in the other hand, he made mincemeat of all those six murderers together, and went on his way without further molestation. There was a Dryad once, too, who met him in an Arcadian forest, and proffered him, in return for his love, half the balance of her life. She said she didn't know how much there was left to run, but she thought about fifteen hundred years or so, when she and her sister, and the great God Pan, would all be snuffed out together. Perseus told her that Love was immortal, and not a slave to be bought or sold. So he passed away, and the Dryad, sitting under a tree, slowly pined and pined till Orpheus found her at last changed into the strings of an Æolian harp, and sighing most melodiously when the western breeze blew upon it. Perseus—"

"Laddy, talk sense."

"I can't, Cis. I feel as if Leonard was coming home to lift a great weight from both our hearts. I do not know how. I feel it. Perseus, however, was not callous to female loveliness, only he had given his heart away five years before, Cis, five years before."

"Laddy, I forbid you to go on."

"It is not a made-up story, Cis. I am certain it is all true. Arthur and Barbarossa are coming some day, to remove the miseries of the people. Why not Leonard to take away our troubles? We had no troubles when he went away. Now we are hampered and fettered, by no fault of our own, and I see no way out of it."

"Does the Captain know that it is so near?"

"Yes, he has not spoken of it to me, and he will not, I am sure. But he knows, and is looking forward. Last night I heard his step for an hour in his room, after he had gone to bed. He was thinking of Leonard, and could not sleep. And this morning he told Mrs. Jeram that you were going to stay all night to-morrow."

"Did he? The kind old Captain!"

"And that there would be another guest, and she was to get supper, a magnificent supper. The other guest, he explained, was to have his own room, and you were to have the spare room. Then I interposed, and said that a better arrangement would be to put the stranger in the spare bed in my room, so that he would not have to turn out. He grumbled and laughed, but he gave way."

"So he knows—but no one else."

"No one else: not even poor old Mrs. Jeram." "We have gained a little time," said Celia, "Herr Räumer has not yet asked for my decision; but he has not given me up; and I am sure he will not. My father says nothing; but he starts if I come upon him suddenly. How will Leonard be able to help us with him?"

"How indeed? And yet somehow, he was going to help. I was quite sure of it."

"And how will Leonard help us?" I asked.

"It is no use hoping," said Celia. "Leonard cannot help either of us."

"He will help you somehow, Cis. Of that be very sure. But he cannot help me."

"He shall help you, Laddy. Do you think we are going to let you go off to be killed?"

(To be continued.)

ROUND THE WORLD.

THE famine in the northern Provinces of China continues.

A UNION of manufacturers and others has been formed at New York with the object of securing the representation of the United States at the Paris Exhibition.

PERSONAL.

O'DONOGHUE amnestied.

LIEUT.-GOV. CAUCHON arrived at Winnipeg safe.

EX-PRINCIPAL SNODGRASS has left Kingston for Scotland.

THE remains of Bishop Laval are to be interred in the chapel of the Seminary of Quebec.

ROUND THE DOMINION.

THANKSGIVING DAY was generally observed throughout the country with special services.

THE opening of a branch of Laval University at Montreal has been definitely decided upon.

THE track of the Montreal, Ottawa, and Occidental Railway has reached Hull.

GREAT destitution is anticipated among the Newfoundland settlers in Anticosti this winter, and applications for relief have been made to both the Dominion and Quebec Governments.

THE Government steamer *Newfield* sailed from Montreal on Wednesday week for Paris with goods for the Exhibition. Dr. May is preparing for the Exhibition a large collection of Canadian fish, game, and fruit.

THE City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Inspectors' Association of Halifax are taking steps to endeavour to secure an arrangement by which that city shall be made the winter port for the imports and exports of the West in so far as the Allan line of steamers is concerned.

READER! If you are SUFFERING from NERVOUS PROSTRATION, or your health is endangered by hurtful influences, such as unhealthy occupations, sedentary pursuits, and those which necessitate undue physical or mental strain, use a RELIABLE MEDICINE like

PHOSFOZONE!

and, though you may have tried other remedies a hundred times before without much benefit, you will bless the moment you read this and used PHOSFOZONE!