



LIFE OF VLADISLAV REMM

CHAPTER III.

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THEIR disappointment, however, was but a temporary one. The very next day a letter came from Remm addressed to the new Prezydent of the Fraternal Help. In short, abrupt, somewhat constrained sentences, the writer begged his former comrades' pardon for the manner in which he had received their deputation, withdrew the message which, through that deputation, he had sent to them, and assured them of his appreciation of their offers, which he now gratefully accepted, leaving it to the discretion of their committee as to when and where the banquet of reinstatement should occur.

Immediately the enthusiasm broke out afresh. The plans for the feting of their errant comrade went on with renewed vigor. Subscriptions to cover the expenses were solicited and received from all. Speakers were appointed; an entertainment was arranged.

The banquet was held a few days later. Eloquent speeches were made down both sides of the long table; enthusiasm waxed apace. They remembered Remm's undeniable talents; his genius for organization; his eloquence; his obvious capacities for the propagation of the cause. Each speaker was cheered to the echo as he praised Remm, and prophesied the ultimate success of the Revolution. The excitement was contagious; all, even the gravest, were infected by it.

One of the speakers had just seated himself amongst wild applause. The next orator in turn arose, and began, in a clear, ringing voice to speak. Immediately every head was craned; it was a woman who was speaking.

"Marinka Yolenta! Marinka Yolenta! Marinka Yolenta!" ran the low whisper, like a rippling wave, down each side of the long white board glittering with silver and cut glass, and adorned with a profusion of flowers. In a hushed silence they listened, gazing covertly, from time to time, at Remm, who, deadly pale, sat at the end of the long table in the place of the guest of honor. It was well known that he had been madly in love with Marinka Yolenta before the Degradation.

Marinka's speech was clear, forceful, at times rising even to eloquence. She spoke of the long oppression of their beloved Poland; of the cruelty, the

ruthlessness of their Russian governors; of the efforts of the many secret patriotic societies to combat the regime of terrorism which the tyrants had initiated and obstinately maintained. With tears in her eyes, she spoke of the martyrs of the Cause. Her voice trembled as she mentioned the names of various of their own comrades who had been executed; it seemed that she would break down when she mentioned, among those who had been condemned, for the rest of their natural lives, to forced labor in the mines of Siberia, the name of her own brother. Mastering her emotion, she turned toward Remm.

"Our friend and Kollega, Vladislav Remm, has returned to us from the damp and loathsome chambers of the Citadel," she said. "He, at least, has been spared to us, and his life and freedom, I declare to all, will be of inestimable value to the Cause. He departed under a cloud; he returns a hero! Henceforth his life and all his efforts will be devoted to the interests of our bleeding Fatherland. In the name of our Cause, in the name of our University and of the Fraternity, in the name of my own brother, his former friend and comrade, I welcome him back to our fold. I express to him our love and trust, and sympathy for the hardships—fortunately not of long duration—which he has been made to endure."

She was interrupted by a wild-faced, blond-haired boy of gigantic stature, who sprang to his feet.

"To the health of Vladislav Remm!" he cried, with a voice of thunder. "Standing!"

With ringing cheers, the banqueters rose as a single man. "Long live! Long live!" they cried, as they drank Remm's health. Then, leaving their seats, they crowded around him at the end of the table, clashed their glasses against his, insisted on shaking hands with him, clapped him on the back. The few girls present kissed him frankly and fraternally upon the cheek. The last to come was Marinka Yolenta; as she followed the example of the other girls, she whispered to him that she would like to speak with him privately as soon as a favorable opportunity occurred.

The banquet broke up; the table was cleared away and pushed back against the wall, and the floor made ready for dancing. Some of those present had, it is true, made the usual protest against dancing at a time when their friends and relatives were languishing in Russian prisons, sent to execution almost daily, but the sentiment of jubilation over Remm's release had prevailed. They had engaged an itinerant band of Roumanian musicians to supply the music as long as it was needed. Mazurka, Poloneska, Cracoviatz, succeeded one another in rapid succession. Later there would be patriotic songs and melodeclamations. Overflowing with enthusiasm, the students became noisy and uproarious; the whole hall resounded with their cries and laughter.

In a corner of the long room, Marinka Yolenta stood talking in low, earnest tones with the rehabilitated Kollega. Her eyes of soft brown agate, as they rested on his face, shone with loyalty and affection. She talked in a repressed, rapid voice; he, bending slightly over, listened to her intently. He was very pale still, and it seemed to Marinka, as she talked, that there was a strange gleam of suffering in his fine, dark eyes.

"And so," she concluded, "all will be well. I have, in your own name, given the money back. I gave the whole amount,—not a kopeck was missing. You will begin a new life. You have great talents; you will succeed. I believe that you will aid the Cause greatly; you will take the place of poor Boris."

Tears welled up into her beautiful, soft eyes; she turned away with a little sob, as she thought of the sufferings of the brother, who had been her all.

"You believe in me?" asked Vladislav, in a low, unsteady tone, gazing down at her strangely from his greater height.

"Believe in you?" repeated the girl, an unmistakable light leaping up into her eyes. "I always believed in you, Vladislav! Never have I doubted you—never; not even when my own brother talked against you; not even when they came to me, one after another, after your arrest, and prophesied that you would betray the Cause."

She placed both her hands upon his shoulders.

"I love you and trust you, Vladislav,"

she said, "with my whole heart! We will work together for our Cause. I will help you in all—I ask of you only one thing."

She paused, looking him silently in the eyes.

"And that—" he murmured, in a hardly audible voice.

"Never to deceive me, Vladek; that is all!"

Vladislav was silent. A strange, complex emotion flickered across his face. For a moment they stood there thus, together, gazing into one another's eyes, as though they would read each other's very soul. Then, with a reckless laugh, Vladislav seized her around the waist, and whirled her into the wild tumult of the Cracoviak (national Polish dance).

CHAPTER IV.

MORE than once, during the following five years, Remm's associates had occasion to congratulate themselves upon his rehabilitation. To the front rank he again had forged after his return, by virtue of the same qualities which had won for him in former days the leading place. His talents, his personality, were tremendous. Extraordinarily handsome of form and feature, he was a brilliant musician, an eloquent speaker, a scholar and accomplished linguist, a writer with a pen of flame and fire. Brochure after brochure written by his hand was circulated secretly among the people. He became known, then famous, as a writer of short stories, in which the social and economical conditions of his distracted country were painted in an allegorical, symbolic form. His poetic drama, "Mozart," was presented in St. Petersburg with great success. His creations spread like wildfire all over Polish Russia, then into Germany. He enjoyed the intimate friendship of such men as Pieszkoff, Andreieff, Korolenko; he was in constant correspondence with the inspired seer of Jasnaya Polyana. It was said that his life and talents were of inestimable value to the Revolutionary Cause. Strangely enough, however, unlike two, at least, of the above named writers, he was rarely molested by the Police. Perhaps it was because of this immunity, real or fancied, that his audacities seemed to know no end. Now he would make a wildly passionate plea for revolution at a public lecture; now he would publish a story in which the Tsar, the Government, the Police, were lashed with the bitterest scorn, stigmatised with the vilest opprobrium. It was only when he went beyond all bounds that he was, sometimes it seemed as though for the form, taken into custody, but almost immediately released; he passed through the prison doors more wildly and enthusiastically popular than before. It was whispered that he was not only the leading spirit still of the Fraternity, but of various other underground activities of which the police had no official knowledge. He was now married; it was a girl of good family whom he had chosen, one Marinka Yolenta, sister of a revolutionary agitator who had been tried and convicted of conspiracy against the Governor-General's life (in an incredibly short time) and deported to Siberia. He had one child. And Marinka—what of her? What had been her lot during these five years which had made of her husband a famous man?

She sat, one late afternoon, at the window of her room overlooking the Vistula. The street lamps lining, like files of soldiers, the long Embankment, were already lighted; they cast a pale yellow glow upon the cold, gray current that sluggishly flowed by. The Embankment was generally deserted at this time of the afternoon; here it was her custom to sit as the twilight fell and, lost in thought, gaze out, as now she gazed, across the wide, gray slab of water that seemed to cut itself equilaterally out of the darker land on either side. It was lonesome and depressing to behold the mist gathering and creeping, like a ghostly hand, along the surface of the sluggish stream. From time to time a *doroszka* would clatter by over the rough cobbles of the Embankment street; the *doroszkan* lashing his bony

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CANADIAN PICTURE FOR ST. LOUIS' ART GALLERY.—"Milking—Evening," by the celebrated Canadian painter, Horatio Walker, was recently sold in New York to the City Art Museum of St. Louis, Mo. It represents a typical scene on the Island of Orleans, near Quebec, where Mr. Walker does most of his work.