

the ruin He had foretold. And as He told them of the ruin of the city and the land, His thoughts wandered on to the great Day of God, when all things in this world shall come to an end. I don't suppose they understood it all; and we don't understand it all. But to be ready and watching, and praying and loving, and hearing and obeying, will make us happy and blessed whenever that day may come!

### A TALE OF RUSSIA UNDER NICHOLAS I.

In one of the splendid palaces of the Russian capital, a fair young girl threw herself upon the crimson cushions of a divan in the embrasure of a large window. Alarm and anxiety were depicted on her features, and she constantly clasped and unclasped her small hands, and nervously arose and looked out into the street, and then reseated herself as if waiting for some painful intelligence. It was the fair young Natalie Radetski, the beauty of the Russian court, upon whom nature and fortune had showered every gift, and for whom even the stern features of the Emperor Nicholas would relax into something like a smile as he looked upon her beauty and grace.

Hastily the door opened, and a young man advanced towards her.

"I am to bid you farewell, Natalie," he said in a voice broken by emotion.

"Oh, Alexis! what is it?" cried the young girl.

"I have displeased the Emperor, and he has ordered my arrest."

"The Emperor will pardon you—I will go to him," said she. "He will not refuse me. He has always been so kind to me."

"Alas! my Natalie. He will refuse you this. The Emperor believes me concerned in a conspiracy, and he never forgives. I am innocent, but he will not believe it. I know not what is to be done with me; but if I am sent to Siberia——"

"To Siberia! Oh, Alexis! it cannot be—it cannot be!"

For a moment neither spoke. At length, with a powerful effort at self-control, the young man said, "Natalie! let me place this ring upon your finger, and promise me that you will wear it always in memory of what my love has been to you. The Emperor will force you to marry. I do not wish the thought of me to make you always wretched."

He placed upon her finger a ring, in which was a single emerald of great brilliancy.

"Do not take it off, nor read the inscription, till you hear certainly that I have been banished," he said. A shiver of horror ran through her frame, but he went on firmly: "Then read it; it will comfort

you. Now I must go. The Emperor allowed me this interview, and the guards are awaiting me."

He clasped her convulsively to his breast, kissed her brow and lips, and laying her gently upon the divan passed out. In the street the guards awaited him.

The words of her lover did not deter Natalie from attempting to save him. She sent a petition to the Emperor, imploring an interview; but it was denied her. She waylaid the Empress.

"My poor child," said the Empress, kindly, "I would gladly take you to the Emperor, even at the risk of incurring his displeasure; but it is too late. Alexis Potemkin has been sent to Siberia for life."

Natalie heard it not.

"Lift her up," said the Empress; "she has fainted."

But Natalie had not fainted. Slowly, but resolutely, she rose, and made a gesture of respectful submission to the Empress, begged leave to retire.

When Natalie reached her own apartment, she drew from her finger the ring that Alexis had placed upon it, and read the inscription carved upon the inside in French—"Death is the only consoler," it said. "We shall meet in heaven!"

There is no place more dreary, more terrible, even in imagination, than the mines of Siberia.

Among the condemned, in a large quicksilver mine in the very heart of the country, thousands of *versts* from St. Petersburg, stooped at his daily toil a form whose tall and noble proportions even his coarse habit scarcely shrouded. His delicate frame, unused to labour, and exposed to the rigour of an Arctic climate, soon yielded to the unhealthiness of his occupation; and he was fast sinking under his trials. Yes, death would come, gentle death—and his heart leaped with a momentary joy.

The struggle was not long. A few days of confinement to a hard pallet, a few nights of suffering, and the fiat, which even an imperial decree could not stop, went forth. The victim was released.

Three months after this, the Grand Chamberlain of Russia, presented himself before Mlle. Radetski, and summoned her to the presence of the Emperor.

When conducted to the palace, His Majesty dismissed the gentleman-in-waiting, and signed her to approach. His stern features were contracted by an expression of deep displeasure.

"Why does Mademoiselle Radetski wear mourning?" he said. "Does she mourn for conspirators who would subvert the Government and bring destruction upon their country?"

"No, sire," she answered. "I wear mourning for one whom your Majesty saw fit to condemn, but to whom, by your express command, I promised my hand."

"We will not discuss the past," replied the Czar,