

a travelling-bag, and opening it, handed the parcel to the General saying :

"Your Excellency is conferring the greatest favor upon me. But, I trust, General, before leaving, you will accept a glass of wine—or—"

"Nothing, nothing whatever," interrupted the other hastily; "remember, then, you have but to come to me as soon as the gentlemen of the committee are in town. I wish you a very good-morning." And with quick military precision as he had come, the General moved toward the door, opened it, and closing it sharply behind him, Serge heard the spurred heels tramp noisily down the long corridor, and a moment later standing at the window, beheld his visitor seated in a handsome sleigh, drawn by two spirited dark gray horses, turn to the left, and disappear up the Nèvsky Prospèkt. Giving a sigh of relief, as he realized that he was now free, Serge stepped before the mirror that divided the two windows, and glanced anxiously at his reflection, and as he still stood gazing a subdued cough and discreet knock at the door made him turn sharply about.

"Who is there? Come in!" he called out impatiently; and then to his surprise saw the proprietor of the hotel, a wiry little Frenchman before him, and heard him say with a hesitating bow :

"Monsieur has had a visit from General G—."

"Why yes," assented the young man; adding somewhat hastily "you know him, I suppose?"

"Oh, of course! Who does not know our great Chief of police? But—" here stammering slightly and growing rather red, "I hope Monsieur is in no trouble; that is, in no difficult position, which would make him—make him—liable to—"

A sudden flash of light burst upon Pallen's mind, and perceiving how that episode might be interpreted by those unacquainted with the facts of the case, he said, smilingly: "Do not be alarmed, my friend, General G— had heard, though in what manner is a mystery to me, of my having brought a sum of one hundred thousand roubles to St. Petersburg. Now it happens that the gentlemen to whom I was to deliver this are both out of town,

and considering it unsafe for me to keep so large a sum about me, the General came to advise me to transfer it to some place of safety."

The sharp black eyes were observing Serge narrowly as their owner ejaculated: "And you?"

"I! Well, you see as he kindly offered to take charge of it for me until it should be needed, I begged him to do so. Of course it could be safer nowhere than with General G—!"

But there was an uneasy look in the little Frenchman's eyes as he said, half doubtingly: "you have a receipt for the money of course."

"A receipt! You do not imagine I insulted his Excellency by asking for such a thing; or that I have any doubt of the money's being perfectly safe in his keeping?"

"Oh no! certainly not!" interposed the other, hurriedly, though the look upon his face denoted clearly enough his disapproval of the course the younger man had followed. "All the same, it would be decidedly safer to have a receipt, but that, of course, can be very easily obtained, for if you were to go to the General's house I am very sure he would give you one immediately."

Serge, now thoroughly aroused needed no further urging, and scarcely heeding the little Frenchman's last words, was hurrying from the room. Upon reaching the hall below he called an *izvoschik*, whose horse was in better condition than the generality. "To General G—'s!" Go quickly and you shall have a good reward."

How interminable the Nèvsky Prospèkt seemed, despite the excellent speed made by the sturdy little Finland pony. At last the Admiralty (or Navy Department) was reached, and turning to the left they were soon at the General's door. Hearing from the *Schvetsar* that His Excellency was at home, Serge hurried up the broad stairway, and was ushered by an orderly into a room whose principal furniture was a vast writing-table, covered with papers of every description. Over the mantle hung a fine picture of Karazin's; and just as Pallen had all but forgotten his errand in the contemplation of his surroundings a deep voice close beside him said: