A BLOW FOR A BLOW.

Alexis Orlovski stood with folded arms, leaning against the low doorway of the hut that was his home—if a serf could have a home. For it was in the days of Russian serfdom, and he was a serf, but he had a soul above his station. He dreamed of great things: of achievements possible only to the free; ambitious thoughts filled his brain, and wild hopes swelled his heart, only to be crushed beneath the weight of some indignity or humiliation, such as others of his station had learned to bear unmurmuring. His proud spirit could not brook the humiliation of such a condition; it drove him mad to see men free, with no master but God, while he must wear the yoke of slavery.

His master was the Count Alvieroff, and the young serf hated him with a bitter hatred, born of the cruelty and injustice which had always characterized the count's treatment of him. Alvieroff was but a few years his senior, and even in their childhood, Alexis had been the sport and plaything of his cruel and heartless young lord. When such was his master's whim, the serf was well treated, but Alvieroff's whim was oftenest to abuse him, and Alexis had no choice save submission. It was only an outward submission, however; the proud heart of the serf rose up in fierce rebellion against his unjust lot, and often when his master thought him meekest, his mind was full of wild, vengeful thoughts, and his heart was burning hot with angry hatred.

Alexis was noble by nature, but years of oppression and servitude will crush the growth of generous virtues, and his once noble nature was becoming daily more warped and embittered by his many wrongs; he grew sullen, moody and fitful, and, avoiding the society of other men, drew more away from his kind, while he shut up within himself all the bitterness of his unhappy life.

For a few late years Alvieroff had been away, traveling, and Alexis had the benefit of his absence, in a respite from his abuse; but now he had returned, and, if possible, he was more insolent and overbearing than of old.

In mental gifts Alexis was far the count's superior, and had been educated as his clerk and superintendent of his estate, and this position brought him into daily contact with his lord, and exposed him, more than any of the count's many serfs, to his ill humors and evil moods.

On the day of which I write, Alexis, goaded almost to madness by the insults and indignities to which he had been subjected, grew wreckless and desperate, and answered the count with a bitter, angry retort; the enraged young noble turned upon him, and with the riding whip which he chanced to hold, deals the serf a shower of blows and ended with a brutal kick that felled him to the earth. And there he left him, with a threat of worse, if he should dare again to give vent to his outraged feelings.

Alexis rushed madly to his own hut, with a desperate thought of destroying his hopeless life; but the thought of another than himself, for whose sweet sake he could bear even so bitter a fate, restrained his rash intent.

Even slavery could be borne, since he knew that one fond woman's heart was full of and pitying love and sympathy for him.

The woman whom Alexis, the serf, had dared to love was none other than Nicoelle Franski, the poor but high-born cousin and ward of Count Alvieroff, and for his manly heart and handsome person the lady loved him in return, and told him so.

As he thought of her, Alexis' madly throbbing, angry heart grew soft and sad thoughts took the place of bitter ones, and as he leaned against his lowly door, thinking of her, hot, scalding tears stole out from his downcast eyes, and wet his brown cheek and fell upon his sternly-folded arms.

While he wept he did not hear the gentle step that drew near to his side until a white little hand was laid upon his arm and a sweet voice spoke his name.

"Alexis!"

"Nicoelle, my only comfort," he whispered, in a choked and husky voice, as he put out one brawny hand to clasp both of hers.

He did not look up, and with his other hand he covered his face to hide his tears; but she had seen them. She put her arms about his neck and laid her head upon his broad breast, and his tortured heart felt her silent sympathy. He uncovered his face, and drew both his arms around her slender form, murmuring with infinite love and tenderness:

"Nicoelle, my beautiful!"

Well might he call her beautiful; her lovely face and graceful form had turned the heads of half a score of rich and titled men, and Alvieroff had promised her hand to one of his haughty friends. But the proud noble sued in vain to the lady herself. Nicoelle had given her heart to her cousin's handsome serf, and if her hand might never follow it, no one else should ever call her wife.

And now she had come to her lover in the hour of the darkest despondency, with a wild, desperate, yet possible plan of freedom for him and love's fulfillment for herself.

But when she spoke to Alexis of hope, the word seemed to him like a mockery, and he almost laughed at the bitter jest.

"There is no hope of anything but misery for me, Nicoelle," he said, gloomily.

"But there shall be hope!" answered Nicoelle. "I will make it, Alexis, beloved; let us not give up happiness till we have tried to gain it. Let us escape from here, Alexis, and fly to America, where all are equal. There will be no one then to part us or torture you," and she smiled upon him, with her beautiful face full of hope.

But he only sighed, despondently:

"You are an angel, Nicoelle, but you cannot compass impossibilities."

"But it is not impossible," she cried. "My plan is no sudden or hopeless one. See! the count departs to-morrow upon his hunting excursion. When he is gone there will be no one here but myself and old Uncle Petro, for Alvieroff will never dream of our intent, and uncle is as good as no one. I will take the carriage and go to the city, and no one will be surprised if I take you for my escort. Then, why will it not be easy to disguise you in my cousin's apparel and go to St. Petersburg, thence to America? There is a ship that sails soon, and I know her captain. He is English, and he would even help us if he suspected the truth."

She had spoken fast and eagerly, and Alexis could not help but catch the contagion of her hopeful spirit. He smiled faintly and asked, in still doubtful tones:

"And I? How can I pass unsuspected?"

"You shall be my brother," smiled Nicoelle. "And if we encounter any acquaintances of mine, you must be my cousin's friend, Baron Tchekerdorf, escorting me to Alvieroff's residence in St. Petersburg."

Alexis looked at her with glittering eyes.

"My glorious Nicoelle!" he murmured, "I will dare anything to escape from bondage, and call you my own in that land of the happy. We will try it, my beloved."

"I have money enough to take us to St. Petersburg," continued Nicoelle, "and I can sell my jewels if we need more."

And thus she awakened in the heart of her lover a glorious hope, that drove away the angry demon which had possessed it, and made him, for the time, the man that he might have been had he been free. Long they talked together of their plan, and when Nicoelle left her lover, it was in the dusk of the evening. She did not see, nor did Alexis, the dark form that glided away from a neighboring clump of trees, and followed her! Oh, dark would have grown their bright hopes had they known what ear heard all!

Count Alvieroff started next morning, on his two weeks' hunting expedition. Alexis was almost insane with mingled hope and apprehension until the hour drew nigh in which Nicoelle had appointed for their meeting and flight. Then he hastened to the entrance of Alvieroff's house, before which stood a close carriage, and beside it a saddled horse, which he was to ride. That happy thought filled the heart of the serf as he stood there, awaiting the coming of Nicoelle! How wildly beat his heart with joy so newly awakened in it! Poor heart! it little reeked of its coming doom.

Alexis waited very long, but Nicoelle did not appear, and at length he began to tremble with an undefined fear of evil to her. With an impulse which had no explanation in reason, he sprung forward and threw open the carriage door. His blood seemed dressing in his veins, and his heart turning into lead, as he looked straight into the wicked, sneering face of Count Alvieroff!

"What do you want, sirrah? do you seek me?" sneered the count with a grin of diabolical triumph.

Alexis stood for a moment silent, stunned with this sudden blow; then all the agony, the awful disappointment, the bitter despair of his soul, broke out in one groaning cry:

"Lost! O Nicoelle!"

"Dog! How dare you call the name of the Baroness Tchekerdorf!" cried the count, with a burst of mocking laughter. "My cousin was married this morning to my friend, the baron, and there she is, going away with her husband!"

Mechanically, the wretched Alexis turned his eyes to the extremity of the mansion, around which came another carriage, and in it sat Baron Tchekerdorf, and beside him, the drooping form of Nicoelle. The carriage was followed by a retinue of servants, and they wore bridal favors. Alexis comprehended the terrible truth at once; they had forced Nicoelle to marry the baron.

Like a broken flower, the poor girl sat beside her new-made tyrant, her fair head drooped upon her bosom, and she looked as lifeless as a stone. But she seemed to feel the presence of her lost lover, though her frozen lips uttered not a word—and lifting her head, she looked wildly into his agonized face. She made no sound, as her eyes met the heart-broken gaze of the man she loved, but extending her arms toward him, with a look of despairing love and sorrow, she fell swooning in the carriage. The next moment the baron's train, whirled away, and Alexis had looked his last upon the face of Nicoelle!

With a fierce, mad cry, as of an enraged animal, he turned upon the count, and would have torn him limb from limb; but Alvieroff's servitors were near, and at a signal from the count they fell upon Alexis, and bound him hand and foot, and then they bore him away to suffer the terrible torture of the knout.

It was weeks before Alexis Orlovski went again about his accustomed tasks. There was little alteration in him, then. Silent and gloomy before, he was perhaps a trifle gloomier and more silent, now, and indignities which once had brought the hot flush to his brow, and the angry flash into his eye, he now received in passive indifference, otherwise, there was nothing to show that his one hope in life had perished. He performed his duties with strict obedience and fidelity, and Alvieroff congratulated himself that he had broken the proud spirit of the serf. Sometimes, indeed, he caught the eye of Alexis upon him, regarding him with an expression so dark, and vengeful, that it made him shudder. But he never guessed how that eye was always on him, even when he thought himself most alone, watching his every movement, and reading his every thought; finding out his hidden motives, and discovering his deepest secrets.

Count Alvieroff never guessed that Alexis, the serf, whom he had so deeply wronged, knew the secret of his life, the disclosure of which would be his ruin; he never guessed that his wealth, his position, his reputation, his very life itself, were all at the mercy of his deadliest enemy!

For Count Alvieroff was a conspirator, a plotter against the jealous government he served, and Alexis Orlovski knew it and could prove it! Some accidental circumstance had first led him to suspect it, and relentless hatred had impelled him to seek out the whole. And now he was as fully in possession of Alvieroff's secret as was the count himself. One word from him could hurl the man he so bitterly hated down to the lowest depths of shame and misery. The hour of his vengeance had come at last, and death was not so inexorable as he.

He waited till he was sure there was no way of escape for Alvieroff, waited till he had wound his bolts so tight around his victim, that his doom was certain; and then, like a thunderbolt, his vengeance fell upon Count Alvieroff's head. In a day the count was ruined; stripped of his wealth and title, he lay in prison, waiting his fearful doom—the knout and Siberia! And thither came Alexis Orlovski—a free man now, for what he had done—to tell the ruined noble that this was his revenge. Stern and untouched, he looked upon the miserable man, and in cold, hard tones, he spoke:

"Revenge is sweet, Alvieroff; remember that, when you think of me and my wrongs. You shall suffer all that I suffered at your hands. I have been your abused and trampled slave; you shall taste the bitterness of a slavery worse than mine. You scourged and tormented me because I was human, and had human hopes and feelings; you shall writhe beneath the sting of the shameful lash, and no one shall pity you. You tore from me the woman that I loved, and put out the only light my life has ever known; you shall feel the bitterness of my loss—the agony of crushed hopes and outraged love! You shall suffer more than I, for you shall bear the coldness and the scorn of her who was to have been your bride; she, whose face you will never see again! This is my vengeance, wretch! Remember it when you think of me and my murdered Nicoelle!"

And without another look at the victim of his hate, Alexis Orlovski left the dungeon, and went forth to live, as best he might, the remnant of his wretched life. It was not long; for why should he live? Nicoelle was dead, of a broken heart; her murder, and his own wrongs were avenged—and he died.

Alvieroff was sentenced to drag out his existence in the mines of Siberia. Crime could not have had a more terrible punishment.

—James Cullen, Pool's Island, N.F., writes: I have been watching the progress of Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil since its introduction to this place, and with much pleasure state that my anticipations of its success have been fully realized, it having cured me of bronchitis and soreness of nose; while not a few of my rheumatic neighbors' (one old lady in particular) pronounce it to be the best article of its kind that has ever been brought before the public. Your medicine does not require any longer a sponsor, but if you wish me to act as such, I shall be only too happy to have my name connected with your prosperous child.

Malignant diphtheria prevails in and around Reading, Pa., to an alarming extent. Recently Rev. B. S. Small, of Kilbreville, lost three children, and between 25 and 30 deaths occurred in a short time within a radius of five miles of his residence.

Hat Improvement.

—The great drawback to the silk and stiff over hat is their weight and hardness to the head, giving the hatter trouble to sell besides being uncomfortable to the wearer. The trouble has been to make a light hat and have it stand and keep its shape. This has been accomplished by Smith, the hatter, by carefully selecting his materials and by use of the patent steel wire for the brims he has built a silk hat fitting as easy as a soft hat, and after a trial of six months there is not a man having worn one but that gives it the preference and praises the maker for introducing what has long been wanting. ed-x

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—Severe colds are easily cured by the use of Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, a medicine of extraordinary penetrating and healing properties. It is acknowledged by those who have used it as being the best medicine sold for coughs, colds, inflammation of the lungs, and all affections of the throat and chest. Its agreeableness to the taste makes it a favorite with ladies and children.

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—In the winter season ministers and congregations are disturbed by incessant coughing. Were there no remedy for this it would be excusable, but it is not so when a 25 cent bottle of "Hallamore's Expectorant" will obviate the trouble. All druggists sell it or can procure it for you from Lyman Bros., wholesale agents, Toronto.

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—This is fully exemplified in the increasing demand for "Hallamore's Expectorant." Although an old remedy, it has been recently brought advertised, and the success of the venture is most gratifying, as the sale of this famous cough mixture steadily increases. Why is it? Because it fulfils the expectations of those who use it. edx

—One trial of Mother Graves' Exterminator will convince you that it has no equal as a worm medicine. Buy a bottle and see if it does not please you.

—Medicines there are of many a kind,
All claim to be the best extant,
But king above them all I find,
Is "Hallamore's Expectorant."
My father took it days gone by;
My brothers, sisters for it cry.
It's safe and pleasant, always sure
The worst of coughs to quickly cure.
Try it and be convinced at once,
Its merits prove, here! now's your chance.
Your druggist keeps it: always will;
Take it and save a doctor's bill. edx

—Hard and soft corns cannot withstand Holloway's Corn Cure; it is effectual every time. Get a bottle at once and be happy.

—For the thorough and speedy cure of all blood diseases and eruptions of the skin, take Northrop & Lyman's Vegetable Discovery. Mrs. B. Forbes, Detroit, had a running sore on her leg for a long time; commenced using Northrop & Lyman's Vegetable Discovery, and she is now completely cured. Her husband thinks there is nothing equal to it for ague or any low fever.

Catarrh.

—Catarrh, on account of its prevalence in this country, is attracting a good deal of attention, more especially now when there is a probability of a fresh invasion. Catarrh, either is a muco-purulent discharge, such discharge forms a nidus very inviting to cholera germs, and very favorable for their reproduction in a more virulent form, thus placing sufferers from catarrh at a great disadvantage in the event of a cholera visitation.

Catarrh is a contagious disease. It is a muco-purulent discharge, caused by the presence of a vegetable parasite in the lining membrane of the nose. These parasites reproduce themselves in great multitudes, and each generation is more virulent. They spread up the nostrils and down the fauces or back of the throat, causing ulceration of the throat, up the eustachian tubes, causing deafness, burrowing in the vocal cords, causing hoarseness; usurping the proper function of the bronchial tubes, ending in pulmonary consumption and death.

The reason that catarrh has become so prevalent a disease is entirely due to the fact that it has not been understood. Physicians have been unanimous in treating it as a simple inflammation of the membrane and have signally failed to produce cures, but microscopic research has revealed the presence of the parasite, and now sufferers from this disease who appreciate the fact that it is by reason of its secondary effects a most deadly one, will be glad to learn that a wonderfully successful treatment has been formulated, whereby the most aggravated cases of catarrh have been permanently cured in from one to three simple applications. The interesting pamphlet descriptive of this new treatment, from which we glean the above, is sent free to all applicants on receipt of stamp by A. H. Dixon & Son, 305 King street west, Toronto, Canada. —The Star! 15

An excursion train on the Southern Pacific railway near El Paso, Texas, caught fire at night and was burned, the passengers escaping only with their lives.

TORONTO POSTAL GUIDE.

During the month of January mails close and are due as follows:

	CLOSE.		DUE.	
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
G. T. R. East	6.00	3.45	9.20	10.45
O. & Q. Ry	8.30	3.45	8.50	10.00
G. T. R. West	6.00	3.35	12.05	9.30
N. & N. W.	6.30	4.00	10.30	8.10
T. G. & B.	6.00	3.45	11.00	8.50
Midland	6.00	3.30	12.40	9.30
C. V. R.	7.00	3.15	11.40	5.35
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
G. W. R.	6.00	11.30		2.00
	p.m.	p.m.	8.40	4.40
	2.45	9.30	10.30	7.30
				11.30
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
U. S. N. Y.	6.00	2.45	8.40	
		9.30	10.30	4.40
U. S. Western States	6.00	9.30	8.30	4.40
				7.30

British mails depart as follows:

January 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28.

Time for closing English mails, 10 p.m. on January 6, 13, 20, 27 and 9 p.m. on all other days.

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Railway Office, Chief Superintendent,
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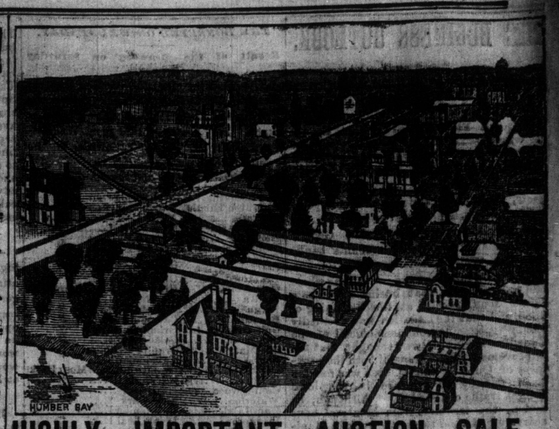

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