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NARKA, THE Nihilist.

By KATHLEEN O'MEARA. CHAPTER XVI.

Ivan Gorff arrived punctually at Koenigsberg, and proved the kindest and most efficient escort. He was one of those rare persons whose entire simplicity and selfishness make you feel perfectly at ease; his companionship imposed no effort; he made use of nothing; he only asked for much for him, suspecting rightly that he cared too much for her, had grown quite fond of him by the end of the tele tele journey.

On arriving in Paris he found her very pretty lodgings in the Rue Chailoit, with a salon that overlooked gardens and beyond them the river. Ivan thought them expensive, but he made no observations that was her affair.

Narka was soon at home in her new abode. She had that gift peculiar to any woman of making beautiful any place where she dwelt. Her rooms were very simply furnished, but her grand Fyvel piano, covered with its Turkish cloth, a rich piece of Muscovy embroidery in gold and silver and many colored silks, flowers and plants set on every available spot lent it an aspect of refinement, and books spread about on the tables suggested that intellectual interest which was never absent where Narka was.

Basil was to meet her here, and as the frame sets off the picture, so would she borrow some additional charm from the help of harmonious surroundings.

Sibyl had not said a word to her of his nomination to the Russian Embassy. "She means to let it come on me as a great surprise," thought Narka, with a pleasant consciousness of being herself much deeper in Basil's secret.

Sibyl's absence from town at this juncture was rather a relief, but Narka was impatient to see Marguerite, and her first expedition was to the Rue du Bac. She learned to her disappointment that Sour Marguerite had been sent to Havre a month ago, and it was quite uncertain when she would return.

Narka found herself, consequently, as much alone in Paris as if she had strayed into the Sahara; for Ivan Gorff, as soon as he had done everything that was within his power for her, went back to Russia.

The weather was intensely cold; the winter was an exceptionally severe one; and Narka now understood Sibyl's apparently incredible assertion that in Paris the cold was more cruel than in Russia. In Russia you were protected against it by thick walls and fires that were like furnaces; but here in Paris the wind that blew with a shrill blast from the north pierced the thin walls, too porous to keep it out, and whistled through the cracks in the doors and windows, until it seemed to blow as hard in-doors as out.

a person who had ever been dead and buried.

"They sat down near the fire; Narka threw on a fresh block, and made a hospitable blaze.

"How pretty your room is, and what a splendid view of the sky you have!" said Marguerite, glancing toward the windows, and round at the flowers and the home-like touches visible everywhere. Then, with a sudden change from gay to grave, "Oh, dear Narka," she exclaimed, "what you have suffered since we met! Many a time I have wondered how you lived through it."

"Yes, it is wonderful what we can live through, some of us. I must be very hard to kill, I suppose."

"That time in the prison! The very thought of it turns my life into a horrible dream. I used to go about my work as if I were in a nightmare. Dear, I do believe that I prayed for you with every breath. I drew all those dreadful months."

Narka's features contracted with pain; she opened her lips as if to speak, but they quivered and closed again. After wrestling for a moment with herself, she burst out laughing. "What theology! Did you ever read of a saint who was sanctified by having everything his own way? For that is what you understand by happiness? Oh, Narka, what a dreadful doctrine! Why, surely you know as well as I do that suffering is the road to God; that the more we suffer, the greater our likeness to our Lord Himself?"

"In that case I am as like to Him as any saint ever canonized," said Narka, with a ring of passion in her voice, "for I have suffered as much as any saint you pray to; but it hasn't sanctified me, not that I know of, unless, perchance, it be part of divine justice to make suffering meritorious, without consent or merit in the sufferer."

Marguerite was silent a moment. "I'm not sure but it may be so," she said, musingly; "I sometimes think that the mere condition of suffering has a saving power of its own." She remembered Narka's father and brother cruelly murdered, her mother's heart broken, and then that dungeon that was "like being wounded" she could not argue with Narka like these. Neither, perhaps, would God. A great poet says, "Aimer, c'est la moitié de croire." It would have been nearer the truth if he had said, "Souffrir, c'est la moitié de croire."

"Are you, dear? Well, I suppose the martyrs on the rack would have said they were very happy if the pagans had questioned them."

Marguerite laughed. "I can't tell what the martyrs would have said, not being one myself, any more than you are a pagan. I only know that I am as happy as the day is long."

"Nothing on this earth!" She opened her hands, palms upward, with an emphatic gesture.

"Yet the life you are leading is that of a common servant!" Narka said, in a tone of incredulity. "Sibyl told me the Sisters themselves described the hardships as dreadful."

"Your God, perhaps."

"Oh, Narka! Then tell me, if God gave you happiness, everything you desire, would that make you believe in Him, in His goodness?"

"I suppose it would help me. Everybody is a better Christian for being made happy."

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"I wish I could, but—one can't become a child again. To ask me to believe in love as the factor that governs the world is like asking me to believe in the fairies."

"How strange!" Marguerite murmured. "Not to believe in love is like not believing in God; for God is love."

licious baby, just now moist and scarlet from its sleep, but not a bit cross; it crowded and gurgled to Narka, and let itself be cuddled and kissed without struggling away, as is the habit of babies.

Narka was satisfactorily enthusiastic over the paragon, and Sibyl was radiant. But the baby, having played its part, intimated a wish to retire, and had to be carried away. Then M. de Beaurillon was inquired for, and Sibyl's health dispensed, and the two friends found themselves face to face, conscious as people are who are full of feelings they must not betray, and of thoughts they must not put into words.

"Dear Narka," Sibyl began, throwing back her lace sleeves and clasping her hands, "I have a wonderful piece of news to tell you; it is about Basil."

"Ah!" said Narka, and she blushed. "Oh, good news," Sibyl added, quickly. "He is coming to Paris, and—he is going to be married!"

Narka said "Ah!" again, accompanied with a pantomime of surprise.

"Yes. Poor Basil! after all the worry he has gone through, he is going to be happy at last. You remember Marie Krinsky, who used to take dancing lessons with us at St. Petersburg?"

"I have been thinking of her lately," said Narka, "but she is not in Paris now. She is nearly eighteen, a dear little thing, pretty, accomplished, and her fortune is enormous. This is a great blessing, for, with all the drains he has on himself, my father can't do much during his life for Basil."

"And they are engaged?" said Narka, speaking calmly.

"Not yet officially; but he made his court at St. Petersburg, and my father spoke to Prince Krinsky, who was delighted, and immediately asked that Basil might be appointed secretary to the Embassy here. The Empress was very unwilling to part from him; but when she heard of the marriage she at once consented, and was most kind. As to the Empress, he could not have been kinder if Basil had been a member of the imperial family. I am so happy I can hardly believe it is all real."

A valet brought in the tea-tray, and Sibyl, voluble and excited, sat down before it, and busied herself with the preliminaries for dispensing the fragrant hospitalities of a Lilliputian silver pot.

"I have been ruminating a little plan in my head ever since I heard this great news—that three days ago," she went on, popping the sugar into cups. "I thought to make a feast that day to introduce her to my fiancée to our friends. I wonder what would be best—a ball, or a soiree musicale? What do you think?"

M. de Beaurillon came in and cut short the tête-à-tête.

M. de Beaurillon had not liked Narka at Yrakow; but he met her now with the most cordial warmth. There was more than courtesy, there was genuine kindness, in the way he raised her hand to his lips, and held it in his firm grasp while he bade her welcome to his home.

"I called on you an hour ago, hoping to carry you back with me," he said; "but you had just gone out."

Narka felt her self-respect raised by the deferential kindness of this knightly gentleman. He called her Narka, which he had never done before.

"He will be a friend to me," she thought, remembering how soon she might have to put his friendship to the test.

TO BE CONTINUED.

RELICS OF CATHOLICISM IN ENGLAND.

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These relics of Rome's spiritual connection with England are strewn heavy and thick upon British soil. Upon the market-place in that imperial Latin city the wants of England were brought to the attention of the Pontiff, Gregory, when he beheld the youthful British slaves with the fair hair and eyes of blue of their northern ancestors.

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