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A Power of Good physically, and I feel like a new and free man. Previously, I had tried a good many different times to stop smoking, and to regain my health, but I was unable to accomplish the former, so that my attempt for the latter was each time a failure.

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A new home treatment known as the "Dyke Cure" by which every victim of the liquor habit can be permanently cured.

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CURES cold in the head in ten minutes. CURES incipient catarrh in from one to three days.

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NARKA, THE NIHILIST.

BY KATHLEEN O'MEARA.

CHAPTER I.

It was All-souls Eve. The winter was setting in early, and threatened, or perhaps we should say promised, to be a severe one; for a hard winter was not looked upon as a misfortune at Yrakow, the ancestral home of Prince Zorokoff.

A group consisting of young Prince Basil Zorokoff, his brother in law, M. de Beaucriillon, and three ladies were assembled in an old-fashioned tapestried room of the castle.

Sibyl, Comtesse de Beaucriillon, the daughter of the house, was as blond as a Scandinavian, with light blue eyes and fair hair; her hands were so small as to be almost out of proportion with her figure, which was tall and full; they were round and dimpled like a baby's, with the delicate nails and pink finger tips that one seldom sees in perfection except in babies.

Marguerite de Beaucriillon was just below the middle height, but she looked tiny beside her stately sister-in-law. She had no pretensions to beauty, yet her face was pleasanter to look at than many a beautiful one; her clear olive skin, her warm color, her wistful bright brown eyes, her dimples, and her glossy hair were suggestive of youth, health, and happiness, and these natural advantages were set off by the most becoming toilets; for Marguerite had a French girl's taste and principles about dress, and considered it seriously as one of the daily duties of life.

Narka Larik, the adopted sister of Madame de Beaucriillon, was the tallest of the three women, and cast in altogether an ampler mould. If her figure had been less perfectly proportioned, it might have seemed too large; her great luminous blue-black eyes, sometimes quite blue, sometimes quite black, were soft as velvet, but under the softness there lurked intimation of a fiery vitality ready to awake and emit sparks at the slightest touch; her mouth was perhaps a trifle too full for classical perfection, but its curves were so exquisite, the sensitive play of the lips so lovely, that you never thought of that; the clear tint of her complexion was like the whiteness of some white flower; her hair, of that warm red gold beloved of Titian, was knotted in thick coils at the back of her head, and fell in rippling waves over her low square forehead.

He drew her arm through his, and led her off, excited and only half reluctant. The others had all stood up before them, and were already grouped in the deep mullioned window at the further end of the gallery, the only one that was in shadow, for it was a brilliant night, and the full moon, riding high in the heavens, sent as her larges broad bars of silver light through the row of eight windows on one side of the gallery.

"Where is the brute sneaking?" said Basil. "He can't be far off," said Narka. "The last howl was very close."

"It looks like it," Basil replied, uneasily. "I will get my gun."

"So will I," said his brother-in-law. And they hurried away together. Presently the wolf turned his head toward the house, moved forward a few steps, and glared up with his red eyes.

To Marguerite there was something delicious in the combination of horror and a sense of comfortable safety that she experienced in looking down at the ferocious animal from behind thick stone walls.

"Do you think he heard us speaking?" she asked, almost under her breath.

"Narka's fear and Sibyl's was that he had heard something else. What an age the gentlemen were in bringing their fire-arms! They had in reality been away about two minutes."

"Oh, here they come!" said Sibyl. "Open the window as quickly and quietly as you can," said Basil. But before there was time to obey, the wolf

gifted in many ways than Sibyl, and yet she felt as much her inferior as the lowly born maid in mediæval times may have felt herself below the noble demoiselle in whose train she was brought up.

"I wish I could hit upon something that would combine everything," Marguerite said, putting her head on one side with a pretty bird-like motion very characteristic of her, and which always amused Basil Zorokoff.

"Why don't you consult me, cousin?" he said, holding out his cigarette between his first and second fingers and gazing steadily at Marguerite; but the twinkle in his blue eyes belied the extreme seriousness of his handsome face.

"Well?" said Marguerite, with another bewildering turn of her head from left to right.

"Little Red Riding Hood would suit you to perfection. The color would be becoming, and your eyes would shine like diamonds under the scarlet hood, and you would look like a Lilliputian Venus in the short petticoats."

"And you would play the wolf and howl at me?" "And crunch you up; that I should do with great satisfaction!"

"How many wolves' skins would it take to make a costume for you, I wonder?" said Marguerite, measuring the tall young fellow's height with a glance of saucy impertinence.

"At this time of the year?" said M. de Beaucriillon. "You were just now telling me that they never came till the snow was deep?"

"No more they do," replied Basil. "I never before knew, except when I was a child—"

"There it is again!" interrupted Sibyl, "and this time quite close. Let us go up to the gallery."

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed Marguerite, who seemed too horrified to move. "If he were to dash at the windows and break in!"

"He certainly would if he saw you, little cousin," said Basil; "but as he can't, we have nothing to fear. Come along up to the gallery, and see what a live wolf looks like."

"Who is Larchoff? He is our neighbor, and dates his descent from Peter the Great, who gave the family a title. He is a liar and a hypocrite, as cruel as a tiger and as greedy as a wolf, cowardly as a rat and dishonest as a Jew; he has all the bad instincts of man and beast combined; he is only fit company for the devil, and that is where the curses of good men are speeding him night and day."

"Ah! but that is wicked!" said Marguerite, with a shudder. "They ought to pray for him that he might repent."

"Pray for Larchoff!" Basil threw back his head with a low laugh; the notion of anybody praying for Larchoff was immensely funny to him.

"If the prayers were heard, and that fiend were to repent and enter the kingdom of heaven, I hope I may go somewhere else! He has done more evil and made more men and women miserable than any man of his generation, unless, perhaps, his master the Czar. You know about old Larchoff, this fellow's father? No? Sibyl never told you? Well, listen. Jacob Larik, Narka's father, was a Jew; they are a vile race, but Jacob was an exception; he was honest, and very rich. He traded in furs, and he was clever and industrious, as the Jews mostly are. He lived in one of Larchoff's villages, unluckily. One day Larchoff, who, like his son, was always in want of money, went to Jacob, and said he must pay down fifty thousand rubles or pack up. Of course Jacob paid them. At the end of six months Larchoff came down on him for another fifty thousand. Jacob paid again; and so it went on until there was no more blood in the stone. Then Jacob fell on his knees and besought Larchoff, for the sake of the God of Abraham, to spare him and give him time to gain the money, and he would go on working and paying while he could; but Larchoff spat on him and mocked him, and then went off and denounced him as deep in a plot against the life of the Emperor. The poor wretch was seized and flogged and tortured to make him confess; and as he could not confess, he was sent to Siberia. Fortunately he died on the road."

"Oh my God! And Narka?" "Narka was a small toddler at the time. She and her brother Sergius and Madame Larik came to live with us. Narka was educated with Sibyl, Sergius with me; he was such a dear good fellow, and so clever! He wanted to be a physician, and just after old Larchoff died he passed his examinations brilliantly. We were all proud of him, and everybody made much of him; all the people in the district invited him and made a fuss over him. It was very foolish, for it enraged Larchoff's fiend; he knew that his father had been hated for the murder, as it was called, of old Jacob, and that he himself was hated as much as his father. He resolved to be revenged on us all by ruining Sergius. He went and denounced the poor fellow. Oh, it was a damnable piece of work!" said Basil, with suppressed passion.

"What happened him?" "Sergius? He was sent to Siberia." "And is he there still?" "Yes—his bones are there. He lived three years at the gold diggings, and then luckily he died. Poor Sergius!" "And his mother, and Narka?" "They lived through it, as people do. It broke their hearts; but people live with broken hearts, as they do with broken legs. We were all very fond of them—Sibyl and Narka are like sisters. My mother always spoke of Narka as her adopted child, and after her death the two were inseparable."

"And that cruel, horrid man stays on here? Does anybody speak to him?" "Speak to him! They cringe to him, they lick his feet." "You never speak to him?" "I spoke to him no later than this afternoon."

"Oh!" in a tone of shocked astonishment. "My child, if I offended Larchoff, in spite of my father's present influence at court, he would never rest till he had sent me and all belonging to me after the Lariks."

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"Is it possible? Why, he must be the devil." "My sweet cousin, I began by telling you he was."

"And is there nothing to protect people against him? Is there no law in Russia?" "Yes; there is the law of might and cunning."

After a moment's silence Marguerite said, in a confidential *sotto voce*, looking up at Basil: "I wonder why you don't make a revolution. If I were a Russian I should be a Nihilist—is not that what you call them?"

"Basil's eye flashed, and he made a sudden movement as if he would have caught her in his arms; but he checked himself, and said, with a laugh, "If you preach treason of that sort, *petite Francaise*, I will tell Larchoff, and you will be escorted to the frontier immediately, and perhaps get a whipping first."

While this conversation was going on in the deep recess of one window, Sibyl and Narka were talking confidentially in another.

"I wonder whether Basil thinks at all seriously of Sophie?" Sibyl remarked. "I do long to see him married and out of harm's way!"

"Are you sure that to marry him to the sister of Ivan Gorff would be taking him out of harm's way?" Sibyl did not answer.

"Supposing it were," resumed Narka, "I could understand your overlooking a good deal to make him settle down, as you say; but I can't see how the Prince should be anxious for such a marriage for his son. Paul Gorff was a trader and Ivan carries on his father's business—on a grand scale, it is true; still, he is in trade; and the daughter and sister of a trader is not the wife one would expect Prince Zorokoff to select for his son."

"It is hardly a selection. Who else is there to prefer to Sophie? She is the only girl in the district. Basil never goes to St. Petersburg except to pay his court to the Emperor and rush back. You know how he used to entertain us caricaturing all the girls he sees there. Then Sophie's mother was noble; it was considered a dreadful disgrace her making that *mesalliance* with Paul Gorff. Besides, she is sole heiress to her uncle's enormous fortune, and Basil, with all his indifference to money, knows very well that it is not a thing to be despised; for I suspect my father is melting down his fortune as fast as he can at St. Petersburg."

Narka did not reply. She knew well enough that the Gorff money-bags were the bait that was making Prince Zorokoff swallow his pride and court the trader's pretty daughter for his son. But would Basil prove an accomplice in the transaction?

"Basil is far too proud to make a *mesalliance* for money," continued Sibyl, contradicting her last words, for she felt instinctively what was in Narka's mind. "But he does admire Sophie. Besides, he is so chivalrous I believe he would make any sacrifice to deliver her from that brute Larchoff. Ivan says that Larchoff is trying hard to ingratiate himself, and Sophie naturally loathes the sight of him; but if he were to let Larchoff see this, the consequences might be awful to herself and Ivan. We know of what Larchoff is capable."

"Yes," replied Narka, in a level undertone; "but it would not be pleasant to have his vengeance turned upon Basil as a successful rival."

Before Sibyl could answer, M. de Beaucriillon interrupted them. "It appears the whole house is in a commotion about the wolf," he said. "My man tells me they are prophesying the most appalling events—fires, earthquakes, murders, and I know not what—on the strength of it."

"They are a pack of fools!" Basil called out, walking up with Marguerite through the checkered light. "That wolf came with the best intentions, solely to amuse Marguerite. To-morrow he will provide entertainment for you by giving us an opportunity to hunt him."

"Your Russian hospitality is sublime, *mon cher*," replied M. de Beaucriillon. "The very wild beasts are summoned to contribute to the enjoyment of your guests."

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CHAPTER II.

The excitement caused by the appearance of the wolf was increased rather than lessened next morning by the prospect of a hunt, which diverted the superstitious terrors of the household into more healthy sensations. It was a splendid day; the sky was clear as sapphire, and the frosty landscape glittered in the morning light. The news had been taken down to the village at daybreak, and when the ladies came down-stairs the hunt was assembled on the lawn, every available man in the household being present with his gun; the villagers and moujiks in their costumes and sheep-skins, the dogs in force, and all in high good-humor.

Narka and Sibyl entered into the prospect of the sport with keen gusto; but though Marguerite was alive to the picturesque side of the adventure, the idea of a close encounter with such ferocious game was too terrifying to admit of her entering into it with any sympathy.

"Why not set traps for the wolf, instead of exposing men's lives in going to hunt him?" she asked, as they watched the scene on the lawn.

"But then where would be the sport?" cried Narka. "Yes; that is what the men delight in," said Sibyl; "and that is what wolves are for—to make sport for them."

"It is the nature of men, I suppose, to like such sport," said Marguerite; "but I can't understand your liking it for them. Just think if the wolf were to turn on Gaston or Basil and kill either of them!"

"Cherie, I'm not going to think anything so unpleasant," cried Sibyl. "You are a little coward, you French girl."

"Yes, I am; but at any rate I have the courage of my cowardice; I'm not ashamed to own it."

"There is no shame in being a coward for those we love," said Sibyl, caressingly.

Marguerite blushed up scarlet. "No; I dare say even Gaston would be frightened if he saw me going out to fight a wolf." She gave a little sudden turn of her head and looked away.

Narka saw the blush, and saw the movement to hide it. Did "those they love" include for Marguerite somebody besides Gaston? Girls don't blush violently at being suspected of cowardice on their brothers' behalf.

"Here comes Ivan Gorff," said Sibyl, as there emerged from round the clock tower a broad shouldered, loosely jointed, bushy-headed young man.

Basil broke from a distant group to go and greet him. As the two men walked up the broad gravel path they presented a striking contrast. Basil was the type of the polished, highly civilized Russian seigneur, very tall, with clear complexion, blue eyes, abundant fair hair, and golden mustache; his countenance was frank and full of intelligence, with a singular mobility of expression.

Ivan Gorff was by no means vulgar or ill-looking, but his large head and massive shoulders, his loosely built frame and his heavy, shuffling gait, showed to increased disadvantage beside the finely proportioned figure and noble bearing of the young Prince.

Ivan paid his respects to the three ladies, raising his hands to his lips after the chivalrous fashion of his countrymen, but he performed the ceremony with a brusquerie which was the result not so much of shyness as of an awkwardness that seems to be inseparable from a badly built human frame.

"What does the village say, Ivan Gorff?" inquired Sibyl. "It says that a pack of wolves, variously estimated from five to five-and-twenty, came down and kept up a howling round the castle from midnight till dawn," replied Ivan.

"That is how history gets written," observed M. de Beaucriillon. "What do they say brought the wolf down?" inquired Sibyl. "They say he came for no good; they are terrified out of their wits."

"They are a pack of idiots," said Basil. "I suspect some rogue has been trapping cubs in the forest, and the mother came down to look for them. The howl sounded uncommonly like the call of the she-wolf."

"That was the first thing that occurred to me," said Ivan; "but they all swore they knew nothing about cubs being trapped."

"They were sure to swear that anyhow," laughed Basil. "The wolf was near trapping a cub of the devil's last night. Larchoff came up with him on the road, and if he had not put a bullet through the brute in time, and sent him yelling away on three legs, he was a dead man."

"Whom did he tell that stunning lie to?" asked Basil. "Father Christopher. He met Larchoff this morning on his way to see some sick woman in the wood."

"I wish Father Christopher did not meet him so often," said Basil. "He may brave the fiend and my father may him out of his fan."

"Father Christopher of that," said Narka, "of sparing the fiend himself between cruelty. If it were Christopher, Larchoff alive, and morning to get breakfast."

"Oh!" Marguerite screamed. "She is only Basil. 'You say things before her to No; it is nerves,' observed He said it seriously but Sibyl suspected. 'The Father is marked. 'It was for everybody to conciliate Larchoff. 'Yes,' said Ivan, 'just my Lord Count a bit, it would be better.'"

"The Father is anybody," said such a vile thing as Pshaw!" said of wasting fine One talks to a folly, and one savage. The Father mistake too late his tactics toward cobbler heard them on the road not catch what they but Larchoff should keep you tongue up, said the Father start every day take the road to than about your tongue," Paul the wall, and he like a mad bull angry lion, his his white hair fly. "I wish the I keep out of the. "Yes, but then the devil's way, always about, so devour."

A horn sounded. "Come! let us said Basil. The three gentlemen presently the but the ladies were when Sibyl dow she missed. "She has gone not be devoured Narka, in answer of surprise.

"Does she care you think—I me. "She cares say a prayer for eney."

Sibyl sat down Narka stood looking down. "What a bluguerite!" said soft and long-drawling through Narka gave a were sighing to fall in love with. "I would help him Marguerite. Sials that would have everything gentle!"

"Are you sure what Basil you immensely. "He admires it does no suit him best that he could who would give plenty of charity will; she turns finger."

"I should not round his wife mistaken in fact lacks character, only French train married, and she will develop like that."

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