

The tears gushed in a sudden shower from her faded blue eyes and over her wrinkled cheeks, once round and fresh with the bloom of youth.

"My graves, my graves, if they had only let me have my graves! They would not let me come," she moaned. "They feared the memories they would call back would be too much for my old heart. It is many a long year since I have seen them. The young and strong have little thought beyond the busy, active world, in which they live. But the heart of old age is buried in the tomb, and the mind lives only in memories of the past."

Her tone had passed from passionate, protesting pain to the voice of one sunk in gentle reverie. She touched the small mound with a caressing hand:

"My baby lies here," she murmured, "my beautiful, dimpled, laughing baby, who would have been a strong man were he with me to-day on earth. Here my two daughters were laid side by side, their fair faces full of the promise of a noble womanhood. And there," pointing to the long, grassy mound with the tall, white stone at its head, "they placed my husband's body, washed ashore from the wreck of the Vulcan, twenty years ago. Ah, the grief was once so bitter, but Time has softened it, and I can look forward now to soon rejoining the dear hearts who are awaiting me."

The burden of the forgotten years had returned, but after the first shock had passed away the awakened memories brought only peace and healing, effacing all knowledge of the days of weakness which had intervened.

The old man sat with his chin resting in his hands. The look of vacancy had vanished from his face, and his eyes, fastened upon the inscription on the tall, white stone, sought to arrest some clue which eluded the clouded intellect. She followed the direction of his eyes.

"Yes, it was a worthy name. San Francisco never had a better citizen, nor California a State Treasurer more honest and incorruptible."

"Ah, yes; I knew him well," the old man responded, sadly. He remained absorbed in grave reflections for some moments. Then he arose and began to cull roses from the long branches which ran riot along the paths and embraced gnarled trees. He tastefully arranged them in bunches, mistily veiled beneath the silvery grasses which grew in wild profusion throughout the neglected spot. Returning to where he had left his companion, he presented them to her with a certain courtly grace and somewhat pompous air, in curious contrast with his bowed shoulders and tottering steps.

"Madam, I beg you will accept these flowers to beautify these sacred mounds. I doubt if you have recognized me, madam. I am John A. Meredith, former United States Senator. It can never be said that John A. Meredith, was deficient in a proper courtesy to the gentler sex, either in the days of his prime, when he wielded the sceptre of political power, or when he has reached the era of feeble old age, and the world which once did him homage has forgotten him."

As they turned to go she cast one loving glance back toward the neglected graves. At the gate he offered her his arm with an air of gentle breeding; she leaned heavily upon it, for her old feet had not traveled so far for many a year, and she was faint and weary.

The policeman who was idly leaning against a lamp-post outside, nodded intelligently to a richly-dressed woman who had just alighted from a carriage a block away, and was approaching in breathless haste. Her countenance brightened as she perceived the dignified, elderly couple who were coming through the gate.

"Well, Elza?" said the old lady in calm interrogation.

"Mother, mother! You don't know how we have worried about you. Why did you leave here and where have you been?"

"Madam," interrupted the tall, white-haired old gentleman in reverent tones. "We have been visiting the graves of our departed friends. Your mother is fatigued from her walk. Allow me to call your carriage."

The officer anticipated his movement. As they stood waiting on the sidewalk, the younger woman looked from one old face to the other, with moist eyes and tremulous inquiry. The old man saw her look and interpreted it aright.

"Yes, my dear," he replied. "It sometimes pleases the hand of Time to weave mists about worn and weary brains. But in God's good time the light returns, never again to wane until replaced with the glorious beacon of Eternity."—*Flora Haines Apponji, in Chicago Current.*

SOPHIE PEROWSKAJA.

Written by Joaquin Miller, on the execution of Sophie Perowskaja, who planned the assassination of Alexander II., Czar of Russia, in 1881. She met death unflinchingly, asking that no mercy be shown her, because she was a woman, and declaring that she was glad to die for the cause of liberty. —ED. JOURNAL.

Down from her high estate she stept;

A maiden, gently born.

And by the icy Volga kept

Sad watch, and waited morn;

And peasants say that where she slept

The new moon dipped her horn.

Yet on, and on, through shoreless snows

Stretched towards the great North Pole

The foulest wrong the good God knows

Rolls as dark as rivers roll,

While never once for all these woes

Upspeaks one human soul.

She toiled; she taught the peasant, taught

The dark-eyed Tartar. He,

Inspired with his lofty thought,

Rose up and sought to be,

What God at the creation wrought,

A man! God-like and free,

Yet e'er before him yawns the black

Siberian mines? And, oh,

The knout upon the bare white back!

The blood upon the snow!

The gaunt wolves, close upon the track,

Fight o'er the fallen so!

* * *

The storm burst forth! From out that storm

The clean, red-lightning leapt,

And lo, a prostrate loyal form!

Like any blood, his crept

Down through the snow, all smoking warm,

And Alexander slept!

Yes, one lies dead—for millions dead!

One red spot in the snow.

For one long damning line of red;

While exiles endless go—

The babe at breast, the mother's head

Bowed down, and dying so!

And did a woman do this deed

Then build her scaffold high,

That all may on her forehead read

Her martyr's right to die!

Ring Cossack round on royal steed!

Now lift her to the sky!

But see! From out the black hood shines

A light few look upon!

Poor exiles, see! from dark deep mines,

Your star at burst of dawn!

A thud! a creak of hangman's line—

A frail shape jerked and drawn!

* * *

The Czar is dead; the woman's dead;

About her neck a cord,

In God's house rests his royal head—

Hers in a place abhorred;

Yet I had rather have her bed

Than thine, most royal lord

Yea, rather than be the woman dead,

Than this now living Czar,

To hide in dread, with both hands red,

Behind great bolt and bar

While, like the dead, still endless tread,

Sad exiles tow'rd their star. —JOAQUIN MILLER.