

NARKA,

THE Nihilist.

(Continued.)

"Ah! Margarette! look at those curious eyes!"

"I will tell you what it is about, my dear," said Narka, "and my colleagues came here to arrest a sounder named—Antoine Drex, but we have been hindered by you now. Now it is most necessary they should know this at once at the Prefecture, and send out a car to do it, or the fellow may get wind of the matter and slip through our fingers. You understand?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur," answered Margarette, "I understand. Margarette's heart was thumping so that she wondered the Commissary did not hear it and suspect. 'I don't think they would let me see you, M. le Prefet,' she said, turning the letter in her hand, 'and I don't believe you want one to be sent up here to you!'"

"No, my dear, would I see you to-morrow," he said, impatiently. "They will let you in at once, when you show my card with that written on it."

"It is impossible of anything very bad," said Narka, "but I am sure that this Antoine Drex is a very bad man, and that every minute's delay might help him."

"He is not suspected—he is known to be a dangerous villain. Go, my dear, and tell them to come here, but go!"

Margarette slipped the letter up her sleeve and went out. Once in the street she stood debating. It was a hard task that was set her. Must she execute it? Must she go? The house was so dimly lit that she was almost blinded by the light. But a voice whispered, "You are bound to obey the law." She heard it all the while. Suddenly another voice whispered, "Charity is the greatest commandment of all. Charity is the law of God." She agreed with this voice still she hesitated. But after a moment's delay she glanced quickly, furtively, up down the street, and then started off in the direction of the Prefecture. She was almost as fast as a deer, and quickening her pace to a run when she turned into the dirty lane that led into it. Antoine was sitting as she had left him, only smoking a pipe. His mother had gone to the lawyer, the idiot child, called to meet by Narka's song, was still asleep.

Margarette closed the door, and then, coming to her senses, she went to the door, unlocked it, and looked out. The Commissary was on his way when he met with an accident; he is now at the house, resting, and I can go to the Prefecture with this letter from him, and he will be sure to be sent to arrest you. Without waiting to see the effect of her information, she turned quickly away, and closed the door after her.

An hour later two police-officers drove up to the entrance of the house of the Commissary, and stepped out. The house where Antoine was lodging. They went up and knocked at the door, guided by the instructions contained in the Commissary's letter. Some one said, "Come in!" On opening the door, they found, instead of Antoine Drex, a young man, Margarette, kneeling by the window.

"Pardon, my dear," said one of the agents, taking off his hat; "we are looking for Antoine Drex. We have come to arrest him."

Margarette's heart was beating like a hammer on an anvil, but she looked at him, and said, composedly, "You had better go to the house and tell M. le Commissaire that you found me here. I am in the house, and I am waiting for you."

The two police-officers looked at her as if they doubted her sanity. Presently they began to understand. They were young, they were brave, they had hearts of men.

"My dear, I have the honor to salute you," said one of them.

They both bowed and walked out of the room, and she heard the sound of another carriage on the stairs.

But there remained now the Commissary to face. Margarette knew that there would be no sympathy laquer there. The Commissary, indeed, fell into a great rage when he heard the trick that had been played him, and sent for the Superior, and whipped Margarette on her unfeeling back; he threatened to denounce the community as accomplices of all the rebels and rascals of the district, to have the house shut up, etc., etc.

Margarette meantime had followed the agents to the house, and walked bravely in to receive her reward. She was very frightened, but she did not show it, and this assumption of coolness made matters worse.

"So, my dear, this is how you respect the law?" cried the angry Commissary, "before you went to the Prefecture you gave that sounder a hint to escape!"

"Margarette is a Communist, I am incapable of anything so mean," replied Margarette, "I told him plainly that I was going to the Prefecture with a message from you for his arrest."

"And you are not ashamed of helping a blackguard like that to escape the law?" cried the Commissary, "Antoine Drex is not a blackguard, Monsieur le Commissaire. He is an honest man; he has been very unhappy he was cruelly and unjustly treated, and he is exasperated. He was falsely accused of murdering his drunken wife, and kept ten months in prison with thieves and homicides before he was put on his trial and acquitted. He came out of prison with his health broken and his heart maddened, and he has never got back into his right heart since. The injustice and cruelty of the law turned him into a rebel, and he would have done you or me, M. le Commissaire."

"I'll tell you what," said the Commissary, "I will support you to the Minister as a rebel more dangerous than a score of Antoine Drexes." He was furious; but as he wanted his fury something in her young face, an expression of once timid and cautious, reproducible and beseeching, went to his heart. He turned away with an angry grunt, and remained silent, while Margarette picked up the money figure he made in his official disfigure by Roger Jeanne's attempt to drown and look aggrieved.

Narka had heard nothing of the event, not having left home since she had part-

ed from Margarette. At ten o'clock that night she was a little startled by some one knocking at her door. She supposed it was the commiserate with a letter; but when she opened the door she was there.

A voice that she did not recognize answered, "A friend of Monsieur Margarette's."

Narka drew back the bolt. She did not know what fear was, but she was conscious of an unpleasant sensation when she beheld a huge man, with his head and shoulders concealed by a shawl, step quickly in and close the door behind him. He threw back the shawl, and Narka recognized Antoine Drex. He told her what had happened, and how he had been hiding in a wood-yard all the afternoon and evening, and now implored her to shelter him till morning and give him some food. She felt that his head and shoulders concealed by a shawl, and he rolled an arm-chair into the little kitchen, which was the only addition to the main bedroom in her apartment. But Antoine declared he was lodged like a prince.

Narka was glad to have a hunted fellow-creature to give succour to the victim of that long-armed and cruel tyrant, the law. Very likely Antoine was depicted in plots against the government, but Narka was not the one to think of any man for that. Every political criminal was dear to her, and she was not the one to think of any man for that.

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LIFE IN THE SEVERED HEAD.

The Survival of Consciousness after De-

capitation Proven.

A volume has just been published at Paris in which Dr. Paul Loya, under the title of "La Mort par la De-

capitation," studies the question as to whether, after decapitation, conscious-

ness survives for a short time in the severed head, and whether suffering is

felt in both parts of the executed body.

Every time a head falls under the sword or under the executioner's ax,

says Dr. Loya, the imagination of the spectators has, in the physiognomy of

the victim, looked for proofs of the survival of will and consciousness.

The eyes turned, which was a sign of

life, the lips moved, which showed

that they wanted to speak; the mouth

opened, in order to spit, in a kind of

spasm, which has not been interpreted as

a mark of the continuation of feeling.

And even since the guillotine was

down the heads of multitudes during

the reign of terror, scientists have

stood around the scaffold, biding all

their humane faculties ready, and

contending their whole intellect on

the question, "Does consciousness

remain after the victim's head is se-

vered from the body?"

In the sequel to this belief Dr.

Loya quotes a terrible story told by

Paulin about an Ananias who was

executed by the guillotine in 1875 at

Paris. The place of execution was the

Place of the Bastille, a vast sandy tract,

where, for the purpose of the execu-

tion, the guillotine was placed, and

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