A LOST CAUSE

A STORY OF THE LAST REBELLION IN POLAND

BY

W. W. ALDRED

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A LOST CAUSE:

A Story of the Last Rebellion in Poland.

CHAPTER I.

INTERLUDE.

The days passed without Count Jagellon perceiving any abnormal change in his state of existence after the important step he had taken at Mr. Mentzel's shop.

It is true that he did not look out for any particular change in his condition, he looked out merely for certain letters in a certain handwriting. Perhaps they were not very interesting letters, certainly not interesting to the general world, but they were what he most desired at the moment.

He lived in a state in which realities were turned into vague dreams, and dreams into realities. Such things as conspiracies, and society, and

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politics were to him vain shadows, while such dreams as love, beauty, and liberty were real tangible things to him. Had it not been so, had he thought over his change in life and taken note of himself, he would have found that he was really changed in himself, and that other things were changed in their relation to himself.

For instance, if he dined at his club it was generally alone. For one thing he dined at irregular hours now, when his old acquaintances had finished or not yet begun their repast, and if they were there they only greeted him with a nod, a "How are you?" and sat down to dinner with some one else.

Women "cut dead;" they look straight in the face of their dearest friend of yesterday and fail to recognize her. Men are not so bold; they still keep up the semblance of an acquaintance with people they wish never to speak to again.

So Jagellon knew that he was "tabooed," that the Cocoa Club did not want him, and he determined to leave it at the end of the year. Meantime, he endeavoured to coincide with the wishes of the members as far as he could; he thrust himself on no one; he dined alone and went away to smoke his cigar in his rooms; and he lived by himself in London amidst his old friends.
who had left him, in his club whose members thrust him from them, a social outcast from society.

Not that he was alone in the world though cut off from society—far less than he thought of. He had made unconsciously a number of acquaintances. Mr. Mentzel he seldom saw, it is true, and he only heard of him now and then in Madame Woronzow’s letters, but a number of other people knew him now, though he did not know them, even by sight. In the crowded streets singular-looking faces turned to look at him—to watch him as he went by. In a certain theatre where he went for occupation (not in expectation of any enjoyment) he was surprised at an act of politeness from a perfect stranger who sat near him. The stranger seemed to claim acquaintance with him, and insensibly they entered into conversation and talked nearly the whole time instead of attending to the piece. This person disappeared before the conclusion of the play, and Jagellon never saw any more of him; but he remembered with pleasure his companion of that evening, who was evidently a man of wide experience.

Then, again, he had frequent letters from the Countess while she was away from London—letters, as I said, of little interest to any one besides himself.
They told him a good deal about herself; one gave him a description of the difficulties she was under in writing to him; another said something about Mrs. Price. "She has left Lady-well," the Countess wrote, "and in fact she has stayed longer than she ought. She was of late rightly treated with coolness by every one. You may imagine that people began to think that she was herself to blame for her rencontre with you. I am told that Lord Uttoxeter has abandoned her. He left here three days ago rather abruptly. Really, I should feel sorry for her in the natural consequences of her continual follies, if she had not so recklessly vilified you. I can never forgive her for that."

But after a time I fear that Jagellon grew dissatisfied with only looking at her writing. It was very hard, he thought, not to be able to answer her letters or see the writer, and the letter which pleased him most was that announcing the Countess's return to London.

The announcement of this important event was made in the customary way. One morning (it was just after the Count's breakfast, and he had gone out for a stroll) Peter made his appearance at the house where Jagellon lived.

He was shown into the back parlour, where presently Mr. Watkins joined him. Watkins
was in musti with a loose black jacket on. He shook hands silently with Peter.

“How do you do, Mr. Watkins?”

“Thank ye, I’m middling. How’s yourself?”

“I am very well, I thank you.”

“Cold,” remarked Watkins.

“Ah, yes,” replied Peter as soon as he understood the remark. “I think that it will rain.”

“Not yet,” said Watkins; “as long as this ’ere east wind lasts it won’t rain. I know it don’t rain with a east wind.”

“No?”

“No.”

A silence of some minutes’ duration followed this word.

At length a happy idea seemed to occur to Watkins.

“Will you take anything now, Peter?” said he eagerly.

“No, I thank you.”

“Just a glass of sherry, and I’ll have one with you.”

“No, not to-day.”

“Well, you might as well drink one with me,” said Watkins. “Come now.”

“Well, I do not wish to be impolite.”

“All right,” and Watkins hastily quitted the apartment.
Presently he returned with a decanter and two glasses.
He poured out some into the latter receptacles.
"This is master's best sherry, mind you," said Watkins, with a wink.
"Oh!" exclaimed Peter, rather aghast at the liberty he was taking.
"Oh, it's all right," proceeded Watkins coolly, tossing off his glass. "He don't mind you drinking it, though I daren't give it anybody else, not I." Watkins spoke in a solemn manner.
"It is very kind in him, I am sure; my respects to you, Mr. Watkins," said Peter, sipping the sherry with evident relish.
"The same to you," replied Watkins, filling another glass.
They expatiated for some time on the excellence of the wine.
At last Peter asked, "When will you come over for a little talk, Mr. Watkins?"
"Well, I don't know—when 'll suit you, Peter?"
"I am rather busier just now, you see, Madame being at home."
"Yes, of course," said Watkins imperturbably.
"Would Sunday suit you, now?"
"Yes, thank ye."
"Come to a little tea."
"Very good."
"A quiet evening, you know."
"All right, Peter, I'll be there."

Then Peter went away.

As soon as Count Jagellon heard the news of Madame's arrival he at once started off to Rose Lodge.

Peter ushered him upstairs to Madame's boudoir. She had her bonnet on—a bonnet with white silk strings, which set off finely the slight flush on her cheeks—and she wore a dark sealskin jacket and gloves. Evidently she was just going out.

"I am so glad to see you," he said, squeezing the little gloved hand she held out to him.
"How well you are looking!"
"When did you hear I was in town?"
"Not half an hour ago. But are you going out? Don't let me keep you, I only wanted to see you."
"What about?"
"Oh, nothing particular, but I have lots to tell you about."
"Very well, sit down and tell me now;" so saying she quietly sat her down on the sofa.
"You know I am one of you, do you not?"
began Jagellon. "You wrote me that Mentzel had told you."

"Oh, yes, I know all about that," she said rather pettishly.

"I see Mentzel now and then," he went on; "but—you know I tell you everything that I think."

"Yes, well, what do you think?" she said smiling.

"Well, it all seems to me rather commonplace." (She laughed pleasantly.) "I have nothing to do, you see, and it seems to me that I am no different to what I was before. I do not see now what it all means."

"What?"

"Why, all this conspiracy and secrecy—what is the meaning of it? What are we conspiring against? Are we going to tipple all the sovereigns off their thrones, or are we going to kill somebody?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"Do you know I have never seen you in that sealskin before."

"Never mind about the sealskin, but answer my question."

"What was that?"

"Upon my word, I do not believe you care twopence for your country."
"Yes, I do really. But I am not doing much for my country at present. I suppose I shall fight for it some day, though."

She made no reply to this, but looked dreamily on the carpet.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked presently.

She looked up at him.

"It makes me feel miserable sometimes. Day after day we go on intriguing, and we seem no nearer to doing anything. But every day our countrymen are oppressed and enslaved. The other day I heard that a farmer near where I used to live—oh, I know him quite well—he has been arrested, condemned, carried off Heaven knows where—to Siberia, to some dreadful mines—somewhere where he is tortured and beaten. What can we do?" she exclaimed, clasping her hands.

"Help him to escape," said Jagellon promptly.

"Ah!" she said, her eyes sparkling; "no, it is impossible."

"It ought not to be; we ought to be doing something, I think. I don't believe in all this secret underhand business."

She looked at him curiously for a moment. Then seating herself by a sort of impulse
nearer him (he was seated to her right) she said, "Now, what do you think we ought to do?"

"Well, how many are we?"

"Hundreds."

"We ought to be thousands."

"Well, we are thousands—what then?"

"Then let us fight. War is all a chance; we may win or we may be beaten, but, for Heaven's sake, let us try something! If you try often enough the luck will be on your side at last."

"We want arms," she said.

"Buy them."

"But we have but little money."

"Well, borrow more."

"Yes, there is something in what you say. I think myself that we are too slow and cautious; a little more daring would be more likely to succeed. Don't say anything about this, my dear Jagellon. I tell you what I think, but we must not make dissensions in our party. And you must not say all you think, mon ami."

"I have no one to tell them to but you. It is so nice to talk to you."

"Is it?"

"I should like to go on talking and listening to you all day long."

"Would you?"

"Shall I tell you what I think?"
"Well, what?"
"I think you are the loveliest and greatest woman that ever lived."
"The tallest do you mean?"
"No, no, the cleverest, wisest, most beautiful—"
"You have said that before."
"Have I?—well, it's true."
"There, there, now we are talking nonsense, and I must be off to Mentzel. I am going to tell him to put you under my orders."
"Do!"
"And you will have to come here to receive them."
"Oh yes, how often?"
"Oh, now and then."
"When shall I see you again?"
"Oh, er—"
"This afternoon?"
"No, no, I shall be busy."
"To-morrow?"
"Very well."
"At what time?"
"You can dine with me if you don't mind."
"Why, I should prefer it to dining with the Queen." And so he kissed hands and departed.
CHAPTER II.

AN IMPORTANT EVENT.

The period of half consent is perhaps the pleasantest in love. When everything is won, and when nothing can be added to the fulness of delight, one becomes either surfeited with excess or so intoxicated that one scarcely realizes the extent of the present happiness. But when there is still so much to ask and so much to give, it is delicious to linger over present pleasures, in the same way that one looks at beautiful fruit and imagines how luscious it will taste before tasting it.

Jagellon and the Countess had so much to gather from each other. He had come to love her, as it were, with great strides; at first sight, in occasional meetings, few and far between, so that he had had scarcely time to appreciate the value of what he prized. He had so much to tell her of himself, and so much to learn from and study in her.

On the other hand, she felt that she had at
AN IMPORTANT EVENT.

last a friend, a lover, or what you like, to whom she could tell her pent-up thoughts and enthusiasm. The men with whom she worked were rather the practical realities of her experience than the ideals of her imagination. Mr. Mentzel, for instance, however true and faithful he might be to his country, had already lost his youthful enthusiasm, and looked only at the practical side of things. The rest of the men with whom she was associated were probably hard practical men of the world, whose minds were occupied with political intrigues and the science of conspiracy. To none of these could a woman speak freely of her ideal liberty, of what was great and noble, and of her own pure and unselfish ambitions. Not even to Lucy could she dare to confide her thoughts; Lucy would have either not understood them or would have feared their boldness. But with her lover all this was different. She felt certain that what she said would be listened to and understood, or at least that there would be a strong desire to understand her. It must be confessed that Jagellon had joined the party of revolution rather from the enthusiasm of love than for the cause of liberty; but as we sometimes see a lover catch a trick of expression or a familiar gesture from his mistress, so I may say Jagellon soon
caught the trick of the Countess's love of her country. She poured into his greedy ears the stories of the deeds of some of the old Polish patriots. She told how his father had led his countrymen again and again into battle against impossible odds.

In her glowing descriptions his very defeats seemed glorious achievements—almost equal to those of the chivalrous crusaders who fought and died for the Cross. And these things, which are subjects of some interest to many people, when told by the lips of the woman he loved with all the ardour of enthusiasm, would have fired the most callous of men. And Jagellon was not a particularly callous man; nay, he had possibly in his veins some of the blood of his ancestors, the paladins of Eastern Europe who subdued the conquering Turks in the old days. He also wished to prove himself worthy of his lady fair, not exactly with sword and shield, or lance in rest, but with the same reckless daring as the knights errant of chivalry.

I say such intercourse between two such handsome young beings, in which friendship was tinged with the fire of love, was as near perfect happiness to them as one can attain to in the mixed realities of the world. The world passed by them and left them alone to enjoy each
other's companionship. They were at peace, for
they had nothing to trouble them. General
Bagrathion had gone to Paris to carry on his
political intrigues, and Mrs. Price was no more
heard of. Only Gus and a few acquaintances of
Madame's came to see her now and then, and
Gus spoke to Jagellon sometimes at the club.

They lived in a world of their own, an exist-
ence of love and freedom, and no one troubled
them; they were left to enjoy their happiness
for a little time, and happiness is none the less
happy because it is short-lived.

But all pleasant things have an ending, and
the end came unexpectedly on these two lovers.

One day, when Jagellon came as usual to see
his Countess, she began by saying,—

"I have something to show you here, but I
must ask you to keep it a secret for the present
from every one."

So saying, she handed him a telegram in
French to this effect:—

"My brother Nicholas died on Saturday from
apoplexy. I have taken all necessary steps for
funeral to-morrow. Do not come; there is no
necessity, and it would be inconvenient, affairs
are so complicated. I will write you fully as to
your late husband's will.

"Count Alexis Woronzow."
Jagellon read this message over twice. At first he did not realize that the Nicholas mentioned in the telegram was Madame Woronzow's husband.

Then his face flushed as he said to himself, "She is free!"

He stood looking at the piece of paper in silence, for he did not know what to say. To condole with her would have been a farce, to express his secret rejoicing would have shown a lamentable want of taste.

She also was silent for a while; she was reading his thoughts in his face, and she knew pretty well what was passing in his mind—so she also felt embarrassed. At length she spoke.

"I am sorry for him," she said simply; "he might have done better if he had tried."

"What shall you do?" he asked, after a pause.

"I shall stay here till I hear further from my brother-in-law. He has always been a friend to me and will tell me what to do."

"You may have to go to Russia."

"Perhaps so."

"Shall we be separated then?"

"We may be, for a time."

"Shall you suffer any loss of income?" he asked.
Why?"

"It will be very hard on you, if you have not the means—if you have to pinch to serve your countrymen."

"Oh, my income is assured me by deed of gift. There is only the house in Paris to give up."

"Oh, then it will do you no harm."

All this he spoke in a mechanical way, as if he was not really thinking about what he was saying.

Then they relapsed into silence.

Their free friendship seemed to have been broken. They had nothing more to say about the news equally important to both of them. At last, after several spasmodic efforts at conversation, Jagellon said—

"Well, I will not trouble you just now."

"Oh, it does not matter," she said.

"I will see you again soon. Let me know how you go on, and if I can do you any service, will you? Good day."

All this he said in the same mechanical way, and then he left her.

Their pleasant companionship was at an end, and they could never be in the same relationship to one another again.

For before he had loved her because she was...
so perfect and beautiful in his eyes, and so long as he could see her, and hear her, and learn from her, he wanted nothing. He did not ask for more because he would not have her less perfect than she was, and he never dared to hope that she could ever be altogether his. But now she was free, and with the chance of obtaining her, arose the sudden longing that she might be his.

He wished to love and worship her as he had hitherto done without hoping for more, and at the same time he longed for her to be all his own.

In this dilemma he did nothing; he went no more to see her; and I can best express his condition of mind by saying that he feared his fate too much.

Meantime society, through one of its journals, learnt the untimely decease of Count Woronzow, and excited itself for a day and a night in speculation as to the second favourite.

Gus called to condole with the Countess in a tone of congratulation. Miss Lucy Golding, far away in Italy, heard the news, and, seized with an unconquerable desire to see the dear widow again, persuaded her mother, who was now with her, to return home, and wrote a long letter of sympathy to Theodora.
Such was the light or loving way in which different people received the intelligence. But there were others who took a more serious and practical view of the subject. To her compatriots the existence of the Countess's husband, devoted as he was to the Imperial Government, had been a stumbling-block in their way. They had been in a constant fear lest he might, from his relations with the Countess, discover and reveal some of their secret intrigues.

But to none of them was this sudden death of such supreme importance as it was to General Bagrathion.

The summit of his ambition was suddenly within his reach. With the éclat of such a beautiful and distinguished wife he might expect that his position, and of course his power, would be raised tenfold. And now all his schemes seemed to be tending to a successful issue. Since he had left Ladywell he had been busy with politics on the Continent. The complications which Count Alexis Woronzow had spoken of in his telegram he explained in his letter to his sister-in-law to be ugly rumours of disaffection in Poland, and growing insubordination even in the Russian army, and these were his reasons for telling the Countess not to come to St. Petersburg. Though no revolutionist himself,
he was not in the favour of the Government. He was an old Russian opposed to the importation of Western ideas into his country.

These complications Bagrathion had been doing his best to foment from his vantage post in Paris. He was diligently gathering the threads of the conspiracy into his hands, and now fortune seemed to favour his schemes. Nor did he, like his rival in love, not dare to put it to the touch. True, his relations with the Countess were not quite all he could wish. He had, as he thought, forced her to give up her lover. General Bagrathion simply reckoned from outward facts. He knew Count Jagellon had been dismissed according to his demands; he had discovered no further correspondence between his rival and Madame Woronzow, and he had never thought of finding out whether the Countess secretly wrote a number of letters; nor, strange to say (for reasons which will presently appear), had he been told that Jagellon was a member of his own Secret Society.

So he believed that he had gained his end so far; if he had not a friendly and independent Countess on his side, he had at least compelled her, he calculated, to be his ally. He had now only to take up the attitude of those pious Nor-
mans who first subdued the Pope, and then fell at his feet.

He only waited a few days so that his fair conquest might become naturalized to her new state, and then, like a bold general as he was, returned to London to fight his decisive battle of love.
CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE.

"It will soon come to a head. Disaffection is increasing rapidly, Europe is on our side, and we only wait now an opportunity for striking a blow. We may not be directly successful, but we shall do enough to make it a European question, and that is all we want. Then, my dear Countess, we two shall be the most important people in Poland. You will be in a position that is worthy of you—you will—"

General Bagrathion was proceeding with his exordium when she interrupted him. Leaning with one arm on a causeuse (they were in the Countess’s drawing-room), dressed in her widow’s weeds, she looked suavely at him and said—

"Still I do not see how it would materially assist the cause if I were to become your wife—"

"Because we should work together more closely; because when success crowns our efforts, and we
stand before the world as the liberators of our country, it would be quite natural that we should have worked together if we were man and wife, otherwise our position would be naturally ambiguous."

"I assure you I do not care about getting any of the glory."

"But you cannot help it. Every one will proclaim you as the real leader of the enterprise, your country will bless you, and I shall be your willing slave at your feet. Ah, Countess, you know I have adored you so long—"

"Never mind that," she interrupted him, "let us first decide as to the expediency of the plan. It seems to me that we have done very well, and worked together very well, as simple members of the Society; then why wish to change anything? Should we not each of us lose our freedom of action if we were bound together by marriage."

The calm and suave way in which she discussed the subject of giving herself to him might have daunted a less bold man than Bagrathion.

"On the contrary, should we not encourage one another to persevere. Yes, I should then fight with renewed vigour, I should be always urged on to gain fresh fame for your sake."
"Or perhaps," she put in quietly, "you might rest satisfied with having gained in me one of the objects of your ambition, and might not exert yourself further."

"No, on my word of honour. Have I not done all I have done for your sake? Am I not still labouring to gain you? And if I lose you, now that you are free, how can you expect that I shall have any heart to continue the contest?"

"I do not want any fresh stimulus to continue in the cause of our country, why should you?"

"Because I love you," said Bagrathion boldly.

"Come, General, leave that badinage and talk seriously."

"I am serious—you know I love you—surely I have given you proofs enough."

"What proofs?" she asked in a careless tone.

"I know I have wronged you, and I know I have been insanely jealous, but are not those proofs of strong feeling?"

"They certainly are. Really, General, I am afraid of you; I do not know what you will do next."

"Love you and adore you always, if you will be my wife."
“No, General, I do not think I shall try the experiment again. We must go on as we have always done.”

She said this with a certain air of decision, while she sat up and smoothed the black folds of her dress, as if she meant to put an end to the interview.

“You must, you shall be mine,” he said hotly, rising and standing before her.

“I do not understand the words ‘shall’ and ‘must,’ as applied to myself.”

“Countess, you know the alternative; either you are my wife, or I will throw up the whole business.”

The General thought it time to play his trump card, it had answered so well on a former occasion.

“Those are not the alternatives,” she answered him. “I will tell you what are the only two courses you can pursue. I cannot, I must not marry you; it is inexpedient. I have already put the case before the Committee—do you understand?—and they are unanimously against it. The two alternatives then are, either you renounce altogether your project, or” (she lowered her voice) “you risk your life.”

“How?”
“How?” she repeated, regarding him so intently that she appeared to mesmerize him. “Have you forgotten what happened at Ladywell? Do you think that I feared you then? do you think that I fear you now? It was the consequences of your rashness I feared. It was for you I feared. I had never guarded against this danger; I never had supposed that you would turn traitor——”

“It is false!” he said, interrupting her.

“Is it? Did you not force me to the humiliation of begging—begging a gentleman, a man who was all but a stranger to me, to leave that house on my account, for reasons which I could not give him—in fact, to compromise myself with him? Did you not force me to this under the threat of betraying our schemes to the Russian Government?”

She paused an instant, but he did not answer her; he was, as it were, fascinated into silence.

“And did you suppose” (she went on) “that I should not take good care to prevent you having the slightest power over me in the future? Listen to me” (emphasizing her words with her hand). “I wrote to”—(mentioning Mentzel’s real name) “that very night. I told him you were not safe—you understand what I mean.” Bagrathion took one step forward and
THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE. 27

then stood rooted to the spot by a wave of her hand.

"I made an appointment to meet him and L—; I laid the case before them as touching the interests of the Society. They consulted about it—without your knowledge remember—and they decided that it was against their common interests that such a marriage should take place, and they determined that it would be best not to place any confidence in you in the present state of affairs—you know what that means. Perhaps you do not believe me," she added, coldly. "Look out of the window there and see if there is not a man walking up or down the terrace. Do you think, now, that you could send a letter, as you said, which would reveal all our secrets to the Government? Do you imagine that you know everything we are doing? You will only be able to reveal to the Government what you yourself have been doing, and it is doubtful whether they will credit your statement. In any case, you risk your life and reputation."

She ceased speaking and watched him. His face was livid, his forehead was damp with perspiration, and his eyes, heated with rage or excitement, glared at her fixedly.

For the first time in his life Bagrathion
knew what fear was. He had doubtless faced batteries of guns blazing out in his face, he had oftentimes led his soldiers through a hailstorm of bullets without thinking of fear. But it was another thing to be aware that his steps were dogged by spies or assassins; to know that he was watched night and day; to feel that an unconsciously suspicious action on his part, a word or deed, might be the unknown signal for his sudden death. This it was which made him fear; yes, fear the woman before him at that moment.

She sat watching him as a lioness fascinating her powerless prey. He appeared to make an effort to speak, but his dry lips and parched tongue refused their offices.

"Once for all, General, I tell you to choose which course you will take. I have told you before that you have taken a wrong turning in your life; you have forsaken your old ways. Turn back. Restore our confidence in you. I say, renounce this impossible project of yours, or you will inevitably doom yourself. I do not pretend," she added, "that I am indifferent which course you choose. I say I wish you to succeed in your plans, but there is only one way in which you can succeed."

She rose and stood before him. "I give you
time to think it over; but, beware, one false step and you are inevitably lost.”

So saying she motioned to him to go.

“I am not a traitor,” he muttered hoarsely, and then, in response to the motion of her hand, as a person mesmerized, he moved to the door and went slowly out.
CHAPTER IV.

GUERRE À OUTRANCE.

General Bagrathion is pacing to and fro, from corner to corner of the room, during the livelong night.

"Not poppy nor mandragora" can set his restless mind to sleep, for is not his ambition foiled, the castle of his fortunes which he had so laboriously built up fallen all to pieces, a desolate ruin? Suspicion, that law of revolution, is at his heels. He is no longer the leader of revolution, and the woman he loves (or hates—the passions of love and hate are so near of kin that it is hard to say of which Bagrathion is now possessed) he has lost for ever.

There is, to tell the truth, nothing remarkable about all this. Men toil on, year after year, at their aims and ambitions, and then a bank fails, a battle is lost, or a woman dies, and their long-sought happiness, ambition, riches are gone for ever.

Many men in such circumstances simply com-
mit suicide, by any means ready to hand; weaker men than General Bagrathion end it all in this way; nay, even your Frederick of Prussia carries a bottle of fine laudanum about him, and meditates seriously on the question whether he shall drink the contents thereof after the experience of Kunersdorf.

But Bagrathion was made of tougher stuff; besides, he was more accustomed to defeat, and then brandy was a better remedy in his estimation than laudanum.

So during the night Bagrathion thinks and thinks over his fallen fortunes as he tramps up and down his room in the hotel, and ever and anon flings down his throat a wine-glass full of raw brandy.

He sees now that he has been outwitted by his own confederates. While he has been intriguing with Governments and diplomats, the Committee have been carrying out, unknown to him, their schemes of rebellion.

Even should he inform the Government of the plot what good would it do?

He could tell them but little of what they did not already know; he could only tell them what he himself had done, and explain the intrigues in which he had been engaged. And it might be too late.
What should he do? Should he yield to Madame de Woronzow and give way to her? No, a thousand times, no!

He drank off another glass of brandy and stood a moment looking out of the window at the black sky.

He is not watching alone all this time. There is another sleepless one who hears (though the General does not) every hour sounded by the neighbouring churches, built to inaugurate peace and goodwill towards men. The General’s secretary listens hour after hour, with ear laid on the floor over the General’s room, at the sound of his master’s movements beneath. So he has watched for the last month; perhaps he has been watchful ever since he was appointed the General’s secretary, until he has become a self-constituted spy on his master, and until this is the one thing he lives for—watching the other with morbid eagerness. It is astonishing how some men hate their masters, and loathe their servitude. Perhaps in this case Willaume was too much imbued with young ideas of liberty and equality to suffer with patience any sort of servitude. Also, it is possible that General Bagrathion was not the best of masters.

However this might be, there is no doubt that Willaume was the very best spy that could
have been chosen, for his pale face and quiet demeanour made him rather an object of contempt than of suspicion with his master.

So these two watchers passed the night, one listening the other plotting, till the people in the hotel began to move about, and the vague light of a London morning crept into the room.

Then Bagrathion flung open his window wide and leant out to cool his throbbing temples. As his body grew cooler, so his thoughts became more steady and practical. The desperate resolutions of the hot room were modified in the chilliness of the morning air, a lingering desire of life took possession of him as he watched the beginning of the day's life in the great city—the hurrying workman, a young man and woman strolling along the street, and the cheery coffee-stall, and the gossiping group around it.

And as Bagrathion watched these scenes his thoughts too began to work—bit by bit his scheme of revenge unfolded itself, and when he closed the window, and threw himself on his bed, to rest without sleeping, his resolution was taken, and his plans were worked out.

Then the hotel waked to its busy life, the tinkling of bells sounded along its corridors, and footsteps and voices were heard on its stairs and in its rooms.
Outside, there was the rumbling of heavy drays, the rattle of the night cabs going home, and the day cabs beginning their rounds, and soon the stream of omnibuses began to flow citywards. The whole city was bustling and teeming with life, and to move, to live even the worst of lives, were better than to lie rotting in a grave, dead and forgotten for ever.

General Bagrathion drank a cup of coffee for his breakfast, and then, calling a cab, followed the stream of the city's life Eastward. He directed the driver to the address of Rosencranz and Co., and on his arrival there, was shown into the banker's room.

They had a long conference together, during which the General made some disclosures to his banker.

"I have been enabled," he said, "to discover a formidable plot against the Government. There is to be an insurrection in Poland—in Russian Poland. Prussia, they say, will remain strictly neutral, and Austria they even hope will indirectly assist the movement; as to the other Powers, they are to play the rôle of bullying us, and humiliating the Government into compliance with the demands of the Poles. That is what I understand to be the main design of the revolutionists. Well, forewarned is forearmed."
I shall inform the Government of the conspiracy this very day, and we shall at once take measures to crush it down. Now what I want you to do is this. We shall want money—ready money—to move a large force instantly into Poland. Will you lend a million? Ask your own terms; we shall pay any price you like for it."

"Sp!" ejaculated the financier. "What price would you offer?"

"Say twenty per cent, repayable in five years, by instalments," negotiated the General.

"Two hundred thousand for five years," suggested the banker. "That is to say, they pay me four hundred thousand a year."

"Yes," said the General shortly, "do you agree?"

"H'm—it is risky. If the insurrection breaks out what will it cost to put it down?"

"The rebels are not ready yet, I tell you. We shall catch them asleep and smother them, provided we can act at once. Mind you, Rosencranz, I could get the money elsewhere, and perhaps (smiling grimly) at a less price, but you and I know one another, and I can trust to your carrying out the arrangement."

"H'm, yes," muttered Rosencranz.

"And there's another thing, Rosencranz, I
want you to exchange all my stocks for Russians."

"For Russians?"

"Yes."

They both looked at each other and were silent for a few minutes.

The offer was, to Rosencranz, a tempting one—cent. per cent. for his money; only there was some risk in the thing. If there should be an insurrection after all, it would probably cost the Russians a considerable sum of money to put it down, and that might affect his loan, as well as Russian stocks generally, in which securities the banker was largely interested. An idea occurred to him.

"Shall you have the command?" he asked.

"A command, certainly."

"And you are going in for Russians?"

"Yes. I shall back myself."

The General sat twirling his moustache with a nonchalant air, while Rosencranz drummed with his fingers, with an air of indecision, on the table.

"Well, I will think of it," he said at last; "when will they want the money?"

"This week."

"Very good, I could manage it."

"Do what you think best," said the General.
finally, "but, mind you, I think you will find it a profitable transaction. If I can’t beat those half-armed and unorganized Poles I must be a dunce."

"Ah, yes," said the banker, smiling, "I have every confidence in you, my dear General; and, besides, they are, you say, unprepared."

"I know they are," said the other emphatically. "Mind you, say nothing about this till you hear from me."

"No, no, certainly not."

Then they shook hands and out went the General.

He got into his hansom, which he had kept waiting for him, and, putting his mouth as close as he could to the hole in the roof of the vehicle, he said in a low voice, "Drive to the Russian Embassy. Here," he added, "is ten shillings for your fare. Drive quickly."

Then he handed the man the money through the aperture and sat down to await the course of events.

The cab made its way through the crowded streets of the city, and at length reached its destination.

General Bagrathion sprang out, ran up the steps of the house and knocked loudly. The
door was opened immediately, the General went in, and the door was closed again.

As the door was shut a man sprang out of another cab that had followed the one in which Bagrathion had arrived, and ran towards the house, but the door was already closed when he reached the steps. It was Willaume, the General’s secretary. He stood a moment irresolutely, then he turned back to his cab, directed the man to drive to a place in Holborn, and away he went.

About half an hour after he burst into Mr. Mentzel’s shop, where the old man was quietly making up some parcels.

“He’s gone!” he exclaimed.

Mr. Mentzel looked up at his face, pale with excitement. “Where?” he asked coolly.

“To the Embassy—I have just seen him go in.” And Willaume proceeded to relate the General’s movements during the morning.

The revolutionary leader, in his shirt-sleeves, listened to the story, with his eyes fixed on the young man. When the latter had finished he still continued to gaze at him, while his lips moved, and he now and then muttered a word, as he thought, to himself.

At length he said, “Has he taken anything with him—a bag or portmanteau?”
"No, they are all at the hotel."
"Seize them at once. Did he leave anything in Paris?"
"Yes, but nothing of importance."
"Everything is of importance; every bit of evidence against us that he can give them is of importance. Now listen to me. Drive back to the hotel. Stop a bit, have you any money?"
"About thirty shillings."
"Ah, I have three or four pounds, but I shall want them at once," he muttered to himself. "I have it!" he exclaimed. "Drive first to Count Jagellon's, at 18 Cambridge Street; you know it, do you not?"
"Yes, is he——"
"One of us, yes. Tell him to give you ten pounds. Then go to the hotel, pay the bill, take away all his things and drive to Victoria Station. Put the things in the cloak-room and wait for me in the station. I will then take the luggage out and secure them. Have you followed me?"
"Yes," said Willaume, and he repeated the directions.
"Very good; to make doubly sure, I will give you your instructions in writing. Wait here."
So saying he put on his coat, and went into the back parlour. Presently his assistant, the young foreigner, came in and demurely sat down behind the counter without saying a word to Willaume, who was restlessly walking up and down the shop. After a few minutes Mr. Mentzel returned, habited in hat and overcoat. He gave Willaume a letter addressed to Count Jagellon, and a sheet of paper containing the instructions he had already verbally given to him.

"Now let us go," he said; "do not lose a minute of time. Remember every second is worth a life; the quicker we are the more lives we shall save. Promise the cabman a sovereign if he is quick."

Then they both went out of the shop, turned down Vulture Street, and when they reached Holborn they separated, one going west the other east; the one to secure every vestige of General Bagrathion's papers, the other to telegraph in cypher to the adherents of the party all over Europe that General Bagrathion, their former leader, had turned traitor to the cause of revolution.

When a messenger came from the General to tell the people of the hotel, where he had been staying, to send his things to the Russian
Embassy, he was politely informed that his luggage had already been taken away by the General’s secretary.

So both sides knew that the contest had fairly begun.
CHAPTER V.

A CHANCE MEETING.

While these decisive events were going on around him—events in which he might at any moment become involved—Count Jagellon was still in the same vacillating and dubious state of mind. Had he been attentive to what was going on, and not thinking of other things all the time, he would have perceived that he was becoming more and more mixed up with the conspiracy of the revolutionary Society. For we have already seen that his purse was put into requisition, and a few days before he had been requested, or rather ordered, by Mentzel to watch General Bagrathion at his Club, whither, Mentzel told him, Bagrathion was expected to go on his arrival in London.

He saw very little of Bagrathion that evening, the General only staying a short time there with Lord Uttoxeter, and only noticing Jagellon with a cold “good evening” to him. In fact, Jagellon hardly spoke to any one now at the
Club. He only said a few words to Gus that evening. Gus was in too good a humour to behave coldly to Jagellon or any one else that day. He was going, as he told the Count, to meet Mrs. Golding and her daughter at Charing Cross Station early the next morning. Gus, I should mention, had been to see Lucy at Florence, and had spent a happy month there, and now he was going to get up at the uncomfortable hour of half-past five in the morning to welcome her home again.

Most men would have felt rather bored at having to perform such a service, but Gus had actually begged Mr. Golding to let him meet them, and now he was spending the previous evening in longing for the chill and cheerless morning to arrive.

Jagellon listened to the details of his plans for waking up in the morning or never going to bed at all (he afterwards decided on the latter course), and his calculations what time the mail train would arrive, and his determination to procure the travellers some breakfast at the hotel, I say Jagellon listened to all this with a feeling of envy. How smoothly, he thought to himself, does this man’s love run; the lady he loves is his, and all is easy and settled, “while as to me,” he reflected, “how will it all end?
Will she ever love me, and shall I ever be worthy of her?"

So men judge of things foolishly by their outward appearance.

Nevertheless, Jagellon felt lonely when Gus left him; he felt a sort of companionship with him, and, till then, he never had really known that he was cut off from society, for Gus left him without a word of excuse or adieu to go and talk to Mr. Hudson, and to drive off sometime afterwards with that gentleman homewards. No doubt Gus did not mean to behave cavalierly to the Count, but he knew that Jagellon was not a man to be much regarded now, and that he might speak to him or leave him alone as he pleased.

So Jagellon only grew more moody and timid every day, for the society and respect of his fellow-men add immensely to a man's stock of courage. And he was too much wrapped up in himself, as I said, to perceive that he was being drawn closer and closer into the society of his new acquaintances.

He went to see Mr. Mentzel, to tell him what he had seen of General Bagrathion—not much to tell—and then a day or two afterwards, when Willaume called suddenly on him and borrowed £10 from him, he went to see Mentzel again.
It will be understood that he went on the afternoon of the same day on which General Bagrathion turned against his old companions in politics, and it is not surprising, therefore, that he did not find Mr. Mentzel in his shop, so Jagellon walked back to his rooms, meditating as he went, not on Mr. Mentzel and politics and conspiracies, but merely on the woman he loved.

He walked on unconscious of the noise, the crowd, the people in greatcoats and furs, and the handsome shops just beginning to light up their splendid wares. But at one place where there was a stoppage, caused by opposing streams of people, a lady wearing a thick veil and a long sealskin cloak stopped straight before him. He looked at her mechanically, thinking she was simply waiting to let him pass her—then suddenly he thought he knew her. He stared at her for a moment, returning her gaze.

"Do you not know me?" said a voice he knew.

"Mrs. Price! I really did not recognize you," he said raising his hat.

In reply to that token of respect she held out her hand.

"I suppose you have forgotten me?" she said as they shook hands.

"No, but I have not seen you for a long time,
you know. I hope you are quite well, and your husband?’

She did not answer at first, but held down her head. At last she said—

“Have you not heard that—that I am going into the Court?”

“Through the Bankruptcy Court? Indeed!”

“No,” she said shortly. He understood her.

“I beg your pardon, I did not know; I am very sorry to hear it.”

“You are revenged, you see,” she said in a low voice. At this moment two gentlemen—if I may call them so—jostled against Mrs. Price, nearly sending her off the pavement into the roadway. Jagellon seeing this turned round and they walked on side by side.

“Upon my honour, Mrs. Price, I never had any such thought. I told you the whole truth at the time, you remember?” (She nodded her head in silent assent.) “I was very sorry for you, I can assure you, and I am still more sorry for you in your present misfortune.”

They walked on a little way in silence.

“Yes, I am ruined,” she said. “I have no friends now, and my relatives are too poor to do anything for me, even if I could ask them, and I cannot—I cannot.”

He could say nothing; he felt too much for
her, he sympathized too much with her. They were both outcasts from society, friendless and solitary.

She went on speaking while she looked up at him beside her.

“But I deserved it. I wronged you deeply. You know it was I who sent you away from Ladywell, do you not? I accused you falsely, can you forgive me? I will make you any amends I can to set you right with the world.”

“My dear Mrs. Price, I have nothing to forgive. The opinion of the world is not of the slightest consequence to me. Besides, you did not send me away from Ladywell. I should have gone in any case, and you only gave me an excuse.”

“I know; I heard something about it after you had gone. She told you to go, did she not?”

“Who do you mean?”

“I know who it is you are—you love.” She said the last words in a whisper.

“Who told you?” he asked.

“I guessed it after you were gone; it flashed upon me all at once, and then I remembered a number of little circumstances which I had been blind to before. Shall I tell you her name?”

“No, no.”

“She is very beautiful, I know—she is more
beautiful than I," she added almost to herself; but he heard the words, for they were now in a quiet street up which they had turned. "I cannot help hating her," she went on; "besides, I think she helped to ruin me."

"She? I really think you are mistaken."

"No. What I mean is that she made Lord Uttoxeter cut me; she ridiculed him till she obliged him to throw me over, and then my husband turned against me and trumped up some story."

Then they were silent again as they walked slowly along the street.

"Are you staying in town now?" he asked.

"Yes, the case comes on next week, and I must make some preparations for it. Not that I mean to make any defence; I have not the means for it if I would."

"But surely you ought to defend your character, if only for the sake of your family. Will you allow me to help you?" he said, forgetting that his money was no longer his own to dispose of.

"No, no, not now," she said hurriedly. "Thank you all the same. No, I am sick of it all; the sooner it is over the better, and then I can live in poverty and peace."

She stood looking sadly on the ground (for
they had reached the top of the street, and she seemed not to wish him to go further with her, probably because she was near her lodgings. She had raised her veil. She looked prettier than ever, her eyes were softer and sadder, and her mouth drooped pitifully. She had suffered, and, he thought with a pang of pity, she had suffered through him.

"Please let me help you in some way," he pleaded. "I feel—I think I was to blame. I did you wrong, though I did not mean to. Let me make you some reparation."

"No, no, I should be utterly shamed if I was to take anything from you now. Only say you forgive me, and I shall be at peace."

"I tell you I have nothing to forgive, only I am very sorry for you, and would do anything to help you."

"Thank you. I must say good-bye now."

"Where are you staying?"

She gave him her address. "But you had better not come to see me, it might bring trouble—I do not want you to be mixed up—"

"I understand. It shall be as you wish. Good-bye, then."

She looked up wistfully at him.

"Will you kiss me? perhaps we may never meet again."

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Tears were in her eyes. He was so sorry for her—he could not refuse. He stooped and kissed her.

"Good-bye," he said, and she wrung his hand passionately and walked hurriedly away, dropping her veil again over her face to hide the overflowing tears.

He stood looking at the dark and graceful figure retreating into the gloom of the evening fog.

When she was a woman of fashion he cared but little for her; she was something to play with—a mere toy to while away an hour with, or perhaps a day. But now that she was an outcast, shunned by the world which had but lately followed and admired her, he sympathized with her keenly. For he too was an outcast, whether unjustly or justly made little difference; he too loved, as he thought, hopelessly, and it was for that very reason that he pitied her.

And when he went home, he wrote out a cheque and cashed it at the bank, and sent the amount—a hundred pounds—to her with a note unsigned, requesting her to acknowledge receipt of it in a newspaper, and after that he felt that he had tried to do her some good. Let us hope that his gift did benefit her in her lost life, and in her future struggles with a harsh and Pharisaical world arrayed against her.
CHAPTER VI.

THE PLOT.

When Jagellon returned home that evening he found a note from Mr. Mentzel requesting, or rather ordering, him to meet him in Vulture Street at ten o'clock the following morning.

So Jagellon took a cab in the morning and drove down to Holborn, smoking a cigar and meditating, not on the conspiracy which was winding itself round him, but on Mrs. Price, or rather on what she had told him.

What puzzled him was her statement that Madame Woronzow had in some way induced Lord Uttoxeter to abandon her, and hence, it appeared, had arisen all poor Mrs. Price's troubles.

If this statement was true (and there was no reason for her telling a falsehood), why had the Countess gone out of her way to ruin a woman, who, even if her rival, was an unsuccessful one? Jagellon remembered that Madame had seemed strangely angry with Mrs. Price that night at
Ladywell when he told her that he was going, and that Rosencranz wanted him to leave on account of Mrs. Price. Yet she could not be jealous of Mrs. Price, he thought; the idea, however delicious to him, seemed absurd, for had he not rejected Mrs. Price absolutely, and had he not told the Countess plainly that she was the only woman he loved? Had Jagellon reversed their positions in his own mind he might have guessed the truth. If he had thought that there was any one who also loved the Countess, and who was a dangerous, or at least an unscrupulous rival, he might have discovered in his own feelings a key to the Countess's actions.

But, with love's proverbial blindness, he saw nothing of what was passing round him, and he was all unconsciously approaching nearer and nearer to the discovery of the whole truth; the scales would drop from his eyes, and he would then know the dangerous paths he had unwarily trod under love's guidance.

All he saw now darkly was that he was hopelessly in love with her, and that he could not, dared not, ask her to be his. She was, as she said, vowed to the cause of her country. Besides, could he be certain that she cared for him in return? To be refused, however sweetly—ah, he could not bear to think of it!
His meditations were interrupted by the cab stopping at the destination he had given to the driver, and he stepped out and walked to Mr. Mentzel's shop.

He found him busily writing in the parlour, and on his entry the old man gathered up his papers before stating the object of their interview. Jagellon noticed that he looked tired; there were dark lines under his eyes and ridges on his forehead. He wore the aspect of a soldier who has been marching continuously for some days, with scarcely the bare necessaries of sleep.

"I have very serious matters to tell you of," he began. "You remember, my dear Count, when you joined us, that I told you you should be free to leave us on certain conditions. But we must all take our share of the present peril which we are in, and I must ask you to give me proof that you are one of us, or leave us in peace."

"What do you wish me to do?" asked Jagellon, with a vague uneasiness.

"The facts are these," proceeded Mr. Mentzel. "General Bagrathion, who, I may tell you, was president of this Society——"

"Ah, I thought he was in it," interrupted the other.
"I did not tell you before—it is useless concealing it now; all the world will know it before long, and will know that he is a traitor to the cause he served."

"Is he? Ah, that accounts—by Jove!" ejaculated Jagellon, as he suddenly remembered some of the incidents at Ladywell. A first glimmer of light into his mind. "When did this occur?"

"Two days ago," replied Mentzel, who was watching the other closely.

"On Tuesday?" exclaimed Jagellon. "Then his secretary, what's his name?——"

"Willaume—discovered it," added Mr. Mentzel. "He has secured the General's effects with the help of the money you gave him—I will settle that matter with you presently."

"It does not matter. Where is he now?"

"Well, he took refuge at the Russian Embassy, and has since departed in disguise for Warsaw, we believe, doubtless in order to take measures against us. Already some arrests have been made there, most likely through his information, but I do not think any important seizures have been made as yet—our people were forewarned. However, he will, no doubt, endeavour to crush us completely for his own safety."
Under these circumstances we have resolved to undertake the enterprise at once. We have been arranging it for some time, we are now all but ready, and we think it is dangerous to hesitate now that our plans will be revealed to the Government. Now, my dear Count, will you join with us or not? You know I could, by the oath you signed, order you to go with us; but I told you I would leave you free, and I give you your choice now. If you do not consent, you are free to leave us, only I shall keep the paper you signed to protect myself, that is all."

Jagellon was leaning over the table with his head in his hands, while the other was speaking; he was endeavouring to fix his mind to the situation. It was hard for him, he felt, to have just at this time to take the decisive step, and declare himself a revolutionist. He had entered blindly into the schemes of the conspirators, for the sake of—not merely his own country, and to abandon it now would be dishonourable and cowardly. On the other hand, if he engaged in the enterprise, he must give up the woman he loved, so he said to himself, on account of the dangerous life on which he was asked to embark.

"When shall I have to start?" he asked.

"Well, I shall leave England myself in a
day or two, but the date of the attempt is not yet fixed. You will probably have to leave in a week's time."

"All right, that would be time enough. I should like to settle my affairs, you know, before I leave England."

"Oh, certainly. I do not wish to disguise from you the dangers of the enterprise, and therefore I leave you to decide."

Jagellon remained silent for a moment. He was thinking of Countess Woronzow. He might never see her again, he must give her up, he must separate himself from her. How could he now ask her to be his wife, when he might drag her into danger as well as himself?

He raised his head and looked at Mentzel, who was watching him, calmly. His eyes were sad and wistful, his face was paler.

"Will you give me till to-morrow?" he asked. "I do not wish to get out of the engagement I have undertaken, but I should like to think it over."

"Do so. Think it over and decide firmly. Let me know what you will do to-morrow morning; that will be time enough."

"All right." Jagellon rose and walked to the window, and stood there still thinking over what he was called upon to give up. What was
his country to him? Possibly he had not very much of the enthusiasm of a patriot, but then \textit{la patrie} was such a vague idea to him. He had never seen it, he knew nothing of it except its language.

Home and country were to him merely vague longings.

"Of course Madame de Woronzow knows of this?" he said, turning round abruptly.

"Certainly, she knows that the enterprise is to be undertaken."

"Exactly. Well, I will see you to-morrow then."

He shook hands, mechanically, with Mr. Mentzel, and went quickly out of the room and into the street.

And the old man, accustomed as he was to the wild scenes and the indifference to life of revolutions, stood gazing wistfully at the door through which the Count had gone. For he was his countryman, the son of his old leader, and young, handsome, and brave.

Could he hastily sacrifice him even for the sake of their common country?
CHAPTER VII.

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE.

Theodora Woronzow all this time was not feeling very happy in her release from General Bagrathion’s prosecution of his suit. She had beaten him, it is true; she had driven him from his proud position of leader of Revolution, whom Emperors might fear, and Ministers watch; he was running in fear of his life, and had lost all, or nearly all, which his ambition had sought for. Yes, she had gained a complete victory over him, and is not power one of woman’s chief pleasures? But then victory costs so much.

Your Trafalgar and your Waterloo cost you six hundred millions of pounds—a good round sum to pay, even for two such battles. And then what have you gained by them after all?—the suppression of the French Republic? Not a bit of it. The Republic is alive and kicking at the present day.

So it was with Theodora. She seemed to
have gained very little by her victory; her friends were now in imminent danger, in which she herself was also indirectly involved. And, besides, had she gained any fresh ally to support her in the contest?

Ah, this was the sorest loss of all! After having driven Bagrathion away, she might expect that his rival would be at her feet, and he had never been even to see her. It was cruel of him, and a fear sometimes came over her that his love was growing cold; but she would not entertain the doubt; she resisted the thought with all her might; she said to herself that she had so often doubted him and found that he was true, and she had vowed to herself never to doubt him again. Then she argued the other way round; he could not be false, he was too noble and true to be false. And then she thought, could he be waiting for her? He had already told her that he loved her, ought she to take the next step?

Then she one day wrote a letter (it was a relief to write it all down), a long letter, which would have told him everything; but when she began to read it over again she blushed, and put it into the fire, watching the blazing sheets till they were a black tinder, lest a trace of her weakness should betray her.
The next day she thought she would write to him to ask him to call on her, and she actually directed and sealed up the envelope containing the letter, and then her pride stepped in and bade her tear it up. He should either come of his own accord, or she would suffer in silence. So she did nothing but passed the days in her loneliness; hoping each day that he would come, and that she would hear him say again the magic words, "I love you!" and fancying how she should answer him.

But day after day passed and he never came. Day by day she dressed herself with care—shall we confess it?—to please him if he came, but it was all lost labour.

Not that she was without visitors. Mr. Mentzel came to see her, but only to tell her that they were all in great danger on account of General Bagrathion's defection.

And then the day after she had rejected Bagrathion who should come to Rose Lodge, into the boudoir, but Lucy—Lucy newly arrived from Italy, with her cheeks delicately bronzed by the southern sun, and her eyes softened, perhaps with looking on the beautiful land. Otherwise not changed, as loving as ever, she flew like a bird into Theodora's arms, and then inquired affectionately about her.
"You are not looking so well, darling," she said.

Theodora explained that she had been much troubled lately, and Lucy looked at her earnestly, but only said, "Poor darling!" and kissed her again.

They talked about each other, Lucy related where she had been and what she had seen, and Theodora asked after Mrs. Golding and the others. The visit was occupied with these common topics. On the one subject which both of them were burning to talk about they were both, by instinct, silent. Lucy felt that something was amiss; she knew Theodora so well that she suspected it was about him; and, on the other hand, Lucy's presence had almost as much of bitter as of sweet to Theodora just then. She could not help feeling that she had wronged her, that she had betrayed her, that she had undertaken to bless her, and, behold, she had cursed her altogether! She would have liked to have thrown herself into Lucy's arms and whispered all the story to her, and asked her to forgive her. But somehow she did not see a chance of doing so; Lucy never alluded to the question, you see, and so they parted sadder than they had met, each feeling that there was division between them. Lucy, to puzzle and fret about her friend; Theodora, to
think of Lucy with a feeling of humiliation because she had been faithless to her.

She saw nothing but pain and humiliation before her, for if he was faithless how bitter it would be! If he asked her to be his, would she not by being true to him be false to her dearest friend?

Such were her thoughts as she lay restlessly on the sofa in her boudoir during the afternoon of the same day on which the interview between Mentzel and Jagellon took place. The house was still, only the sound of a distant muffin bell could be heard, and the faint rumble of a brougham passing along the terrace. She looked out of the window at the cold leaden sky and the leafless trees, and the flowerless plants on the balcony. There were no flowers now, and there was no sunshine; such things seemed to be memories of past days that could return no more—memories of days when she was loved; and well might the tears glisten in her eyes while thinking on those dear days. She was all weak now, she had no strength left her, she had spent all her force in her last victory, and now she could only gaze idly out of the window with tears in her eyes.

But was not that a ring at the front door? Oh heavens! if it should be he—and in her
helplessness she had forgotten to make herself
as handsome as she could for his coming.
She waited—perhaps—
Peter knocked at the door and gravely an-
nounced, "Count Jagellon is below, Madame."
It was too late now to readorn herself, and
she was impatient. She said, "Show him up
here."
What did it matter where she saw him?
He came in quickly; he held out his hand
and said, "How do you do?" in an odd voice, as
if his tongue could not articulate rightly. He
looked at her an instant, and in that instant his
eyes took in all her beauty, and then he turned
his eyes to the ground. For the liquid beauty of
her eyes, and the faint blush on her cheeks, and the
half-timid smile on her lips, and the lock of hair
which had escaped from her black tresses and lay
across her forehead—ah! how lovely she was!
After shaking hands they stood a moment
silent. At last she said, "Will you not sit
down?" putting her hand on a chair.
"No. I will not detain you long. I wanted
to let you know before deciding on—on what I
was going to do."
She opened her eyes. A vague alarm came
upon her; what was the matter?
Again a silence, she was waiting to hear more.
"You know, I think," he proceeded, "that General Bagrathion has deserted us?"
"Yes."
"It has been decided on this account to begin the insurrection at once."
Her heart began to beat fast.
"I am going to join them, and——"
He paused a moment to make his last effort, his eyes cast down. He went on again in a low and constrained voice——
"I came to say good-bye. I may not see you again, perhaps, and will you remember me a little, and——"
"Good-bye," she said, and held out her hand.
He looked up at her somewhat in surprise. There she was, holding out her hand with a peculiar smile curving her lips and dimpling her cheek. She looked so provokingly malicious and happy, that in his utter dejection he threw his arms round her neck like a schoolboy, saying, "Oh, dear, dear Countess, I am so fond of you, I cannot bear to lose you!" Taken aback by his sudden attack, she made an effort to free herself from his strong arms, but he held her quite fast.
"Do say you love me a little," he implored, "now that I am going away!"
He looked so unhappy, and he seemed so fond of her, that she felt bound to comfort him. "Don't be unhappy," she said. She said no more, for in some way their lips met.

After some time it occurred to him to ask:

"Will you really be my wife?"

"If you like."

"I loved you the very first time I saw you. That is old news, is it not?" he said as he saw her smile. "I have told you so over and over again, have I not?" She made no reply, nor did he seem to expect any.

They remained silent for a little while.

"Is it really true that you are fond of me?" he asked again. "Do you really like me? I cannot quite believe it yet. Is it true, darling?"

"I have told you already," she said.

"No, I don't think you did. You did not actually say you loved me, did you? Or I did not hear it. Say it again, do."

"What am I to say?"

"Say, 'I am very fond of you, I love you better than any one else in the world.'"

"Am I to confess all that? I admit I like you a good deal. I am very fond of your eyes. Your voice gives me—oh, great pleasure! And your hair I love, and your moustache, and—and your lips!"
"Then kiss me again."

"Oh, my dearest, I would not tell you for the world how fond I am of you! You must imagine it."

"You cannot possibly be as fond of me as I am of you. I reproach myself that I do not care for any one else in the world. Really, if any one of my acquaintance were to die suddenly I should regard his end with perfect indifference."

"Ah, yes, I do not care for friends now, for I have given myself wholly to you. Ah, dear love, you will not run into danger now, will you? You must live for my sake." And she began stroking his brown head caressingly.

"What does it matter, darling? I have got you, it is all I desire. Let the fates dispose of the rest."

"Oh, but if I were to lose you?"

"Do not be afraid. Fate is not so unkind. Come, darling, I must not shirk this now I have won you. I must get more worthy of you instead of less."

"Oh, but if any harm were to come to you, and it was all my fault?"

"How do you mean?"

"Ah, it is all my fault, and now I am to lose you just as I have given myself to you. If
anything were to happen to you, ah, how should I bear it! I wish you would not go. I feel already as if I was the cause of all this business. I cannot bear to think that people are going to fight and be killed, and all through me.”

“Why, darling, what have you done?”

She shook her head in silence; she had said too much already.

“Has he anything to do with it?” he asked quietly. She remained silent.

“Ah, Theodora, you are keeping something from me. Won’t you tell me?”

“No, no, I cannot tell you all. I wish you wouldn’t go. Don’t go, dearest, for my sake.”

She bent over him and laid her head against his beseechingly.

He was perplexed. He could not refuse her, he would have given up honour and life at her bidding, but he wondered what it all meant.

“I will do what you please; I won’t go if I cannot leave you safe. And now, darling, if you trust me tell me what troubles you.”

She thought over rapidly the whole story. No, she could not tell him.

“Not now, love, not now.”

He looked at her a little reproachfully

“As you please, dearest,” he said. “Tell me
only this—you are in no danger from any one, are you?"

"No, I am in no danger."

"Then I will do what you wish; I know you will tell me to do what is best."

She was silent for a moment, then she said quickly.

"Come and sit by me and I will tell you all about it, and you shall decide for yourself. Do you remember," she went on, "that night at the ball?"

"Yes," he said promptly.

"I met General Bagrathion there unexpectedly, and there he told me that he—well, loved me." There was a singular sneer in the way she pronounced the word.

"That night?" asked Jagellon.

"Yes, before I ever saw you; remember, I saw you when I was leaving the house."

"I remember every word you said," he answered, "as if it was a play learnt off."

"Well, I gave him a doubtful answer, and he renewed his offer by letter, which I will show you."

Jagellon frowned as if he did not understand.

"I was married then, true," she explained, "but, as he pointed out, I might at any time be divorced."
She paused a moment; probably the recollection of her married life, if it can be called so, made her pause.

"Never mind telling me if you do not like to," he said.

"Wait," she said. "I agreed to marry him on certain conditions."

Jagellon started and let go her hand, which he had hitherto held. She went on, perfectly calm.

"I agreed to marry him in case our plans succeeded, and provided I could not avoid a divorce. I did so because he threatened that unless I agreed he would abandon or betray the cause for which I lived. I saw you again, I—I—let me see—"

"You showed me what my duty in life was, and you showed me how perfect and how beautiful you were."

"I thought it best for you to marry honourably and well. You refused my proposal."

"Because I loved you—you!"

"I—I was not sure."

"Ah, you were blind, or you would have seen how I worshipped you even then, before I half knew you."

"I know I was, and I repent of it, bitterly."

Then with her hand in his she went on with her story.
"Well, General Bagrathion promised me that he would accept my conditions, and would wait patiently for the success of our cause. He broke his word."

He turned and looked at her.

"You remember the Equality Club? He gave that banquet for a purpose" (she hesitated, while his eyes were riveted on her face): "it was in order to — he intended to — he attempted to commit a crime" (Jagellon let go her hand) "which would have forced me to be his wife."

"Good heavens! and—and—"

"You rescued me."

He put his arm round her, and while she continued her story he took pleasure in looking at the lines of her face in profile, and the softness of her cheek.

"You know the rest of that day's story," she continued, "better than I. I forgave him; I met him at Ladywell, but I gave him to understand that all was over between us. But he was blinded; I think he had a sort of—of ambition to gain me. He suspected you; he heard us in the library that day when you *unjustly* upbraided me on his account."

"I knew nothing, I only loved you."

She paused a moment.
"He heard you and Mrs. Price. He suspected the truth from what you said. He met me secretly the day after, and he demanded that I should renounce you and send you away, or he would betray me and the rest to the Russian Government, and I consented to send you away."

"Oh, Theodora!"

"I was not prepared for such a thing; he would have betrayed my country and brought death and imprisonment on my countrymen."

The excuse did not satisfy him. He had not loved him as he had loved her, for he would, and had, given up everything for her sake. She read his silence accurately, as if he had expressed that very idea to her in words. It was hard to be obliged to confess everything to him, but she saw she had to do it now. He was looking at her almost reproachfully, waiting for the rest. She put her arm round him.

"Do not look at me," she said.

He did not understand her, he was so amazed.

"Please."

He slowly turned his face away.

"I did not know till then that I loved you beyond all control, and that I could not bear your absence, and I vowed to myself that I
would be yours if you wished me rather than lose you altogether."

"My dearest love!"

"Now you know everything. Was I blind, so were you. No, you were generous; you loved me as I wished only to be loved—how could I resist you? Do you love me still? Are you quite as fond of me now?—Tell me, quick!"

"You are mine now," he answered. "I can love you for ever. You cannot leave me."

Then he said in an indifferent tone—

"How did it end? I suppose he has turned traitor, like a fool, to ruin you and your cause?"

"Yes," she answered. "He asked me again two days ago to marry him, but I had already warned Mr. Mentzel against him, and I refused him point blank."

"I see it all now," he said. "Well, let him do his worst. We are ready, so Mentzel says; let us fight it out."

"And you will go, then?" she asked, timidly.

"Do not be afraid, dearest. We shall win yet. And if we do not, what better end could I wish for than to die for you and your country?"

"Do as you wish" (she put her arms round his neck), "my own love."
CHAPTER VIII.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

"Hail, Muse!" et cetera. The rest of the quotation is somewhat inapt.

There is no doubt that some Muse ought to be invoked ere I attempt to describe the moving incidents of war and battle, but who the proper goddess is, I do not know. Perhaps Euterpe might do. To the popular mind war is always associated with the horrid blare of trumpets, the disagreeable beating of drums (which also constitute the popular concerts of the music-loving negroes), and the fearful squeaking of fifes. But these are rather the accompaniments of the military in times of peace, than of soldiers in the midst of battle. Then, indeed, there is a species of music of a different kind, and one which we must trust will never take the place of the irritating but harmless bands of music and mechanical contrivances which at present make music in our streets.

I fear, therefore, to invoke the gentle Euterpe.
But, whatever the proper Muse may be, I pray that she may inspire me to describe the battles, the slaughter, the ravages, the miseries and hardships, the victories and the defeats, which make up that which is expressed by the word War, and that I may describe these events with the gusto, the sensational effects, and the invention of a war correspondent, or a description of a murder in the Daily Telegraph.

Without such assistance I feel that the subject is beyond my powers.

War is such a grand thing. It is the principal occupation of emperors, ambassadors, ministers, and great people of that sort. It ought to be, I think, a point of international law that no one below a marquis or a count should be qualified to bring about a new war.

Besides, war is the trade—or profession, to speak more politely, though in a certain sense no doubt war is a trade; it has a great deal to do with money, and a great many people make money by it. But the men whose profession is war are not mere merchants, but real marshals, and field-marshals, and generals, who are arrayed in beautiful vesture, with gold braid, and gold epaulets, with golden helmets, or beautiful furry hats adorned with flowing feathers. Their dresses are of scarlet, and pink, and white, or of
blue or gold, and other lovely colours most costly. They are as finely dressed as ladies at
court or in a ball-room, and with this advantage,
that they can parade their finery in doors or out
of doors, while the ladies can only show off their
best dresses in their houses, which is a decided
drawback to every one.

For if a lady were to appear out of doors in
her ball-dress she would be mistaken for some-
thing else, and therefore it is only a few privi-
leged persons who can see and admire a fair
woman at her best. Besides, a marshal or a
field-marshal always rides on a splendid
thoroughbred horse, is seated on a saddle
which is covered with the finest cloth and the
softest leopard or other skin, and wears the
most expensive boots in the world, with gold
spurs fastened on them.

Such are the men who wage war, and it is
not for us common people to meddle with such
a grand and important matter as the military
art, except, of course, if we are, like the poor
people on the continent, chosen by lot to go and
be killed.

For all these reasons it will be understood
that I feel rather diffident of success in relating
and describing such important events, and I
certainly should not dare to compete with special
correspondents in the description of some of those tremendous battles in which about five hundred thousand men are engaged on each side. In the present case I may say, like Lot, "it is but a little one," a mere skirmish, a few outpost affairs, which any fool could describe.

One word of caution I would give, however, to any timid souls amongst my readers, and that is,—Do not read this part of my story. You may just as well end at the last chapter, and after this it is nearly all blood and thunder. On the other hand, I hope my bolder readers will fill their mind with bloodthirsty thoughts and warlike ardours; while, as to myself, I will repeat this invocation—

"Come, you spirits,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty."

To proceed with my story.

I am afraid I am not equal to an attempt at describing in any detail the loves of these two young creatures, videlicet, Jagellon and Theodora. Such matters can only be described properly by a poet or a lover, and I beg to state I am neither the one nor the other. Besides, poets, as a rule, are not understood, and lovers, in the description of their beloved ones, are
rather bores, so that I may be congratulated on not being able to enter into details on the subject of love. The whole thing may safely be left to the imagination of those who run and read. Let it, then, be supposed that the Countess Woronzow no longer exists—that there is instead a certain Theodora Jagellon.

By the bye, it seems to me that here my story ought to end. The hero and heroine, after playing hide-and-seek with one another in, what I hope is, the most approved fashion, have all at once discovered that they love each other in the most hero-and-heroine-like manner, and so it all ought to end properly, and they ought to live happy ever after, and the reader ought to turn over the page and find—nothing but advertisements. But then the story does not end at this point. I have something more to tell which he (or she) who hath ears to hear may hear or not as he pleases; in the latter case it is open to any one to stop at the seventh chapter of this volume.

And, on the whole, it is better not to turn over the leaf; we had better not look into the "happy ever after." Let us drive away the fancies which will arise when we come to the "Finis," fancies of whether she ever makes the "happy" discovery that her hero is merely a stereotyped
man, or even a fool, and that—and that with the other one she might have been happier; or, on the other hand, whether he loses sight of his best friend and his jovial old comrades, and whether a "happy thought" does not enter his mind that his wife's relations are, as he really always thought—only he overlooked it—simply beastly, and that his wife has a certain resemblance to her family. Yes, I feel it is a bold thing to turn over the leaf, but what am I to do? There is no grand marriage to end with, there is no third cousin once removed to die and leave large investments in the funds. There was nothing of that sort in this case. They were married in indecent haste; no wedding-cakes, no breakfast, no bridesmaids, no best-man, no carriages, or slippers, or rice—nothing. It is only fair to Theodora to say that she tried very hard to induce her tyrant to leave her free a little longer, till she could put off her weeds, till they could be settled comfortably—she made several excuses, but all would not do. He was inexorable; he simply said that he might have to leave her soon, that time was short and he had waited so long for her, and, to cut the matter short, said that she must marry him at once, and so she submitted. How they were married I don't know; that they were legally
married is indisputable, but they certainly did not look like it.

Jagellon still lived nominally in his rooms, and Madame still resided at Rose Lodge. Only one person besides themselves knew that they were married, and that was Theodora’s little German maid Amalia. Even Peter was hoodwinked. He suspected, perhaps, that something was going on, but nothing of the truth. Watkins had also very precise suspicions about his master—suspicions which were the exact opposite to the truth.

And then they had the most extraordinary honeymoon that ever was passed by married couple. They bolted off to Brighton clandestinely, travelling in separate carriages, and driving to the same large hotel, where they passed as Mr. and Mrs. Watkins!

The hotel people regarded them with cool indifference; they were "No. 54," that was all. The waiter and the chambermaid had a certain air of respect mixed with familiarity (don’t you know?) which delighted Madame excessively; there was a feeling of naughtiness about it all that was delicious. They would sneak out quietly after dinner on to the parade and pretend to listen to the band, or pretend to feel great interest in the man with the telescope, or
pretend to listen sentimentally to the sad sea, and laugh when they found each secretly looking at the other. They were objects of interest to the milliners' and haberdashers' assistants, who gracefully lounged about the parade in the evening. Madame was particularly pleased with one youth whom she heard saying to another, "There's a fine woman!"

In the daytime Madame would go by herself for a drive in a pony carriage, and be greeted by acquaintances as Madame de Woronzow, while Monsieur walked off to the "Ship," or the shooting ground, and then they laughed at one another when they found they had both of them hurried back to the hotel to wait for each other.

And sometimes they would ride out into the country, meeting outside the town, and join some neighbouring harriers and astonish the country folk with their exploits in the chase.

Well, to return to the thread of my story, a few days after they had told each other their hearts' desires—I do not know how many days elapsed—no more did they. Time does not "amble withal" in the case of such lovers as they; nay, they knew not how long they had known and loved each other; they lived in an eternity where there was no past or future, where the present was all in all to them. And
yet their heaven was only the existence of a few days, perhaps only a week; then came a telegram from Mr. Mentzel summoning Jagellon to London immediately.

Theodora turned pale at the telegram, and the tears came into her eyes as she thought that their honeymoon was to end; but her husband kissed the tears away, and told her not to fret, and then they flirted and laughed together and began to pack up gaily.

They were now quite indifferent to all these political conspiracies; they were as little children, unmindful of such things, and only loving each other.

So they travelled back to London together, chatting to one another as the train rushed on in the darkness, comfortably seated in a carriage to themselves. And immediately on his arrival in town Jagellon proceeded to Mr. Mentzel’s shop.

I have, while talking idly about the loves of these two young people, inadvertently omitted to mention that the Count had seen Mr. Mentzel and agreed to join in the projected rebellion.

It may readily be supposed that the Polish leaders found that they were not prepared to commence operations as speedily as they could have wished.

VOL. III.
Mentzel was detained in London several days longer than he had reckoned on, being occupied with the despatch of a consignment of arms or some such matter, and this will account for Jagellon having sufficient time to get married and even enjoy a few days' honeymoon before having to set off for Poland.

Now, however, everything was ready, and Jagellon had been summoned to a final meeting of the Committee in London. When he came into the shop, Mr. Mentzel let him in and brought him upstairs to a room where the other members of the Society were. It was about eleven o'clock at night.

To these men Jagellon was formally introduced, for he had never met any of them before, except one, whose face he recognized as that of the man with whom he had conversed in the theatre.

But though the rest were strangers to him, he seemed to know their faces; they were those which one sees in the streets, or in a theatre—faces of men wearied out with some vicious pleasure. You would not have said they looked like criminals; they were not the sort of men who appear in the docks of our police courts. You would have said they were simply vicious men. There was a Frenchman there, for in-
stance, with a refined ascetic sort of face, thin cheeks and prominent cheek-bones, and with the quiet calculating eyes of a gambler. There was another man with a complexion as of yellow wax, an opium eater perhaps, and there was a third with the cynical look of a debauchee, a face with the owner of which you instinctively feared to be at enmity. They all had one thing in common—an air of callous indifference to human life, to human interests, to the common pleasures and sorrows and business of men, women, and children.

They were indeed the products of their own times; they had none of the enthusiasm of a Faliero, or the passion for reckless intrigue of a Sforza or a Borgia. They seemed to feel that they belonged to a lost cause, and their aim was not to succeed, but to inflict as much damage as they could on the existing social order of things. They were old in years, or at least they appeared to be old, and their hopes, their enthusiasms, and their energies were already dead within them. By their side Jagellon appeared out of place—it was putting new wine into old bottles, and his easy manner and insouciant bearing seemed to take all meaning out of the desperate enterprise.

They were now met together to discuss their
final plans, preparatory to setting up the standard of revolt.

Some delay had taken place in beginning the enterprise, but they might still hope to spring a mine on their enemy, whose preparations were probably in as backward a condition as their own.

It had been decided—so Mr. Mentzel explained to the assembled conspirators—to organize the principal attack from the south of Poland, for the special reason that they would have less difficulty in conveying arms and supplies through Galicia.

"The secret committee will continue its operations in Warsaw," said Mr. Mentzel, "and it is necessary that we should communicate our plans fully to them. It is this special mission that I wish you to undertake," he continued, turning to Jagellon. "You are at present absolutely unknown to our enemies; could you not therefore get a passport properly visé to Warsaw? You know some one in the English Foreign Office, do you not?"

"Yes, I dare say I could manage it," replied the Count. "But I do not see what excuse I could give."

"Simply say you want to see the place; they will not dare to refuse you, for fear of spreading
an uneasy feeling as to the state of affairs there; or you can go as a newspaper correspondent if you like. You know the language, do you not?"

"Yes. Supposing I was to get a passport through to St. Petersburg, and go by Warsaw. I know some one at St. Petersburg" (alluding to the prima donna who had gone there recently), "and I could plead a little affair with a woman you know," said Jagellon with a smile.

The rest did not seem to see anything comical in this naïve idea; only the Frenchman remarked coolly—

"That will do as well as anything."

"You have only to get fairly into Poland," said Mentzel, "and you will be all right then, as nearly every one is an adherent of the cause there"

"But how can I tell who is your adherent and who is not?"

"Oh, by simply pronouncing the word 'Liberté.' They will either ask you a question, or you can ask them, and the reply will be that word. I will give you full directions; but really you will not need them. Once you are safely in Poland any one will guide you to our committee in Warsaw."

There was a moment's silence, and then one of the men observed—
"Is it, then, finally agreed that Count Jagellon should go?"

"Yes, I'll risk it," said the Count.

Then Mr. Mentzel proceeded to unfold the plans of the rebellion for Jagellon's information; for it was intended that he should inform the Central Committee of the plans of the main army, and having concerted measures with them, should return to the army with instructions from the leaders in Warsaw.

During the discussion Bagrathion's name was mentioned.

"He is in Warsaw," said Mentzel. "He will take the command, I hear, of one of the divisions."

"If he lives," quietly observed the Frenchman.

"If he lives," repeated Mentzel. "He may be shot any day, of course."

At last, when everything had been settled, they all rose to go. All, except Mentzel and Jagellon, were to depart on the following morning, and they shook hands with these two.

Not that there was any emotion or enthusiasm at parting; they went off as if they were going to their daily business.

"I hope to meet you again in Poland," said Jagellon's old theatre acquaintance to him as they shook hands.
“Yes,” replied Jagellon, “the sooner the fighting begins the better, I think.” Then they went out of the house one by one, and Jagellon hurried down to Holborn, hailed a lingering cab and drove back to his wife.

It was nearly two o’clock in the morning; the streets were deserted, the sky was overclouded, and a bitter north wind blew into the hansom cab as it passed by the corners of streets to the northward. Jagellon smoked a cigarette and thought over the events of the last week. The die was now cast—in a few days he would be irrevocably involved in this desperate enterprise. And it was scarcely a time just then to feel much enthusiasm for this venture. To tell the truth, he was very loth to leave his wife and home and all he loved best, and there did not seem to him anything very grand or heroic about the affair now that he was actually engaged in it. The only consolation was that it was her cause, it was for her country that he was going to fight, and, he said to himself, he would do, what would he not? for her sake.
CHAPTER IX.

LIGHTS AND SHADIES.

At length the day arrived when Jagellon was to set out on his mission into Russia. Everything was now ready; he knew what he had to do, and he had every means to do it, having procured a passport which would take him through the midst of the Russian police. He was to have the passport visé at the Embassy, for it was considered necessary to take every precaution, so watchful was the Russian Government against any inimical intruder in its dominions. Thus everything was prepared within a few hours for the desperate attempt, and in a day or two Theodora would be the only conspirator left behind, for Mr. Mentzel intended leaving immediately after Jagellon.

And meantime (to take a survey of the situation) it was known in every capital of Europe that the attempt was to be made, and that the Poles were to try once more to shake off the Muscovite yoke. I say it was known, but only under
the surface of the world; there was no outward sign of this agitation and excitement, it was all in secret—not a bubble from the turmoil below rose to the surface of the waters. Yet were there some indications of some abnormal movement in the world, for as in a human body an internal disorder gives out on the skin or the tongue some sign of its presence, so in the body of society there was on the surface a reciprocal agitation in sympathy with the same thing going on internally.

In Poland there were already indications of the coming disturbance. Numerous arrests were being made, Polish functionaries were dismissed and sent prisoners to a fortress or Siberia, and large bodies of troops were being moved into Poland. On the other hand, assassinations and robberies of arms became frequent, and young men were leaving their homes and occupations, disappearing no one knew whither; the rebellion was gathering force somewhere. Elsewhere the money markets, the stock exchanges, the centres of trade were all this time in an excited state, and this was mainly caused by the speculations in Russian Stocks. Daily, almost hourly, these bonds changed their value, now higher, now lower, but on the whole steadily rising in price. Definite rumours of the new
loan which Rosencranz had just negotiated were spread about. Rosencranz was having a busy time of it just now. His operations were growing more and more colossal; every day he grasped at fresh millions, and his commission on the Loan would, he calculated, bring him in a million sterling. The fabulous riches he was going to make almost bewildered him; and then the way in which he was courted by every one! Peers, baronets, and commoners besought his favour, and promised him their best interest in return. Two or three seats in Parliament were simply offered him as a gift, and great influence was being used to have him knighted at once—Sir Nathaniel Rosencranz would sound splendid. Little Rosencranz began to grow ambitious of a higher fame; visions of the Treasury bench, of the House of Lords, came into his dreams.

And what was at the bottom of this rise in Russian bonds and Rosencranz’s fortune? Why, the reason was known in every club in London and Paris; it was because that secret and widespread conspiracy which had continually troubled the Russian Government had been unexpectedly discovered, its leader had given in his submission, and a proclamation was to be shortly issued granting amnesty to all who unreservedly surrendered and confessed their political crimes,
and those who were contumacious were to be consigned to the scaffold or to Siberia. Such were the authentic rumours of the clubs, and on this rested the increase in business and speculation. And underneath this surface the secret agents of the revolution worked. To repeat the simile of the human body, all this monetary excitement was like the brilliant colour in the face of a feverish or consumptive person. And now to return to Jagellon. He was himself an embodiment of the prevailing excitement. Outwardly, indeed, he was cool and quiet in his demeanour. He astonished his fellow-conspirators by his ready suggestions, and by the methodical way in which he went about executing his plans. As I said, he had appointed to meet Gus on the day the events of which I am relating. He had talked the matter over with Gus, laughed about his renewed liaison with Mademoiselle Dash, and easily engaged him to come with him on the morrow to the Russian Embassy, where of course Gus’s introduction was invaluable—a man must have been raving mad to have suspected Gus of revolutionary projects.

And yet Gus himself was not quite a reasonable being at this time. He was in the position of Tantalus—rather a maddening situation. That which he thirsted for was there within his
reach almost, and he could not drink. He fretted over his prolonged engagement, and since Lucy's return he had again and again thought of throwing himself at her feet, so to speak, and imploring her to decide his fate at once.

If Gus was not in a reasonable mood what must Jagellon have been? I leave it to the imagination to fancy how he lived and moved during this busy and excitable time. Living under the sway of conflicting passions, it is not to be wondered at that he now and then gave way to some vagary in the midst of his ordinarily cool and methodical ways. And this is the only way of accounting for the fact that he was unaccountably late for his appointment with Gus early in the afternoon, and as a consequence he found that Gus on his side had gone to the Goldings (so he had left word), and would be back at half-past three.

Now it will be understood that Jagellon had seen absolutely nothing of the Goldings since he had bidden Lucy good-bye at the garden party, so that though his acquaintance with them had almost ceased, they had never actually "cut" him. This being the case, Jagellon did not hesitate, in pursuance of his purpose, to go and seek Gus at Park House. Arrived there he asked for Mrs. Golding, and was told that she
was at home, and then, to make certain, he asked if Mr. Fipps was there. Now the footman who opened the door was a new and stupid one, and Robert was on a short holiday, so the man, having about half an hour since let in Mr. Fipps, and not having seen him go again, replied at once that he was in the house, the real fact being that Gus had only just gone. For he had found Lucy very silent, and he himself being consequently embarrassed, he had cut short their tête-à-tête, and quietly gone away. The result of all this was that Jagellon was shown into the drawing-room, where Lucy was still seated musing by herself, and then the footman simply went downstairs into the kitchen without informing Mrs. Golding of the fresh caller.

I purposely make this explanation so that I may pass over the utter astonishment and wonder of Lucy when Jagellon walked in. She started to her feet trembling, she just managed to put her hand in his, without being able to say a word, and then she sat down again.

She could not think; she tried without success to form some idea of why he was there, and all she could do was to listen half unconsciously to what he said.

He on his side was perfectly cool, and did not notice her embarrassment. He looked
round the room, saw Gus was not there, and said—

"I am afraid I have come at an inconveniently early time. But Fipps left word that I should find him here, and I took the opportunity of a—"

"He has only just left," she managed to murmur. "Can I—is there any message?"

"Oh no, thanks. He promised to go with me to the Russian Embassy. They are so very particular about passports, you see."

"Are you going away?" She was on a sudden all attention.

"Yes, I am going to St. Petersburg."

"For the winter?" She said that at random, and he might just as well have answered with a lie, but for some unaccountable reason he could not tell a little lie to this girl.

"I don't know," was all he could say.

His last conversation with her in the arbour at Rose Lodge came into her mind. He was going altogether!

"Shall you be away for a long time?"

"I cannot say; I may be back soon, I may not"—"return at all," he was going to say, but stopped himself.

He did not like to tell her the whole truth, and he did not like to tell her a lie.
He was in his turn growing embarrassed.

"I do not know what may happen," he added. There was a tone of sadness in his voice, and a feeling of vague uneasiness came over her. She remembered something her father had said the previous evening about Russia—that affairs were in a critical state there.

Why was he so anxious about the passport? While she was thinking of these things, he was thinking of the risk he was going to run, and they were both silent.

Then in desperation she asked—"Is there any danger?"

He hesitated a second, and so answered her.

"Nothing particular," he said. "Things are in a bad state there, I believe—but I don't think—" he looked up and stopped. Her head was bent down, and she was crying.

He looked at her, silent with wonder, and she, knowing that he saw her, broke down utterly, leaning her head on the couch on which she was sitting, and sobbing piteously.

He came and stood by her.

"Miss Golding! have I said anything to hurt you? I am so sorry."

But his pity only made her cry the more.

"No, no," she sobbed out, "it is not that."

Then all at once he guessed the whole story.
For a moment he stood and looked at her as she sobbed helplessly, then he sat down by her side, and taking one of her hands held it in his own.

"Don't cry; listen to me and I will tell you all about it."

She obeyed him like a child, her sobs gradually ceased, and she listened to him, leaning her poor tearful face on the back of the couch.

"I am married," he said, "to some one you know very well. Shall I tell you her name?" he stopped a moment.

"No," she whispered.

"Even if it were not so I should not dare to look as high as you; for I am a sort of vagabond on the earth, Miss Golding. I have passed through a wild life, and I have been contaminated with the worst sets of society, and I am worth little. My life is only good to risk for the sake of others who are worthier. How could I, then, aspire to you, who are pure and guileless? how could I be so utterly base as to drag you down to my level? If we had met before, when I was young and you were young, it would have been different; perhaps you would have loved me then, and I should have loved you as you ought to be loved. But now it cannot be so: Forget me, Miss Golding,
or only think of me as I might have been, not as I am.”

He ceased speaking. She was sitting up now; it was all over, and she was as calm as despair itself.

“I shall never forget you,” she said firmly.

“Then remember me at my best. I am a Pole, Miss Golding; I have no country. My father strove to recover his country, and the only duty I have to do is to follow in his steps. That is what I am going to do now; you have my secret, and I trust to you to keep it. And it is for this, Miss Golding, that I am leaving all that is most dear to me, and perhaps I shall never see her again.”

His hand gripped hers so forcibly that he nearly crushed her tender fingers.

“You love her?” she asked.

“Yes, yes.”

“Oh, it is hard for you!”

“Yes, but it is always so. If you love, you must lose.”

“Yes,” she said simply.

They sat side by side for a minute or two, then he said, rising—

“Now I must go, Miss Golding; I shall think of you always.”

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"And I shall pray," she said, "that you may succeed—that you may be happy."

They were standing together as they spoke. He put out his hand and she gave him hers.

"Good-bye," he said.

"Good-bye." There was a sort of grave dignity about her as she looked up so sadly into his face, and as a last act of homage to her he bent down and gently touched her hand with his lips.

"Good-bye," and he went straight out of the room.

She stood still until she heard the front door shut, then she went softly, slowly, as one walking in sleep, out of the room, step by step up the stairs, into her bedroom, and she closed and made fast the door that she might be alone with her grief.
CHAPTER X.

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

Jagellon luckily found Gus at his rooms, and having proceeded with him to the Russian Embassy, soon disposed of his business there. The Russian secretary asked him a few questions as a matter of form, and smiled when Jagellon, with well dissembling frankness, stated that there was a little entanglement, *galanterie oblige*, &c., and he said that he hoped his countrymen would successfully compete with him for the prize. Outside the Embassy Jagellon shook hands with Gus.

"Well, I will say good-by, then."

"Adieu! Suppose we shan't see you again till the summer?"

"No, I think not," replied the Count.

Gus would have had no objection to not seeing him again for a year or two, and, to tell the truth, was not ill-pleased to say good-bye to his rival, as he fancied him.

Gus was rather puzzled at Jagellon going
after his old prima donna, as he had declared it was his intention to do. He had fancied, from what he saw at Ladywell, that Jagellon's affections were fixed elsewhere. On the whole, he considered that he had better keep the whole affair a secret, and not tell Lucy or any one else anything about it, for he could not help thinking there was something wrong about the whole affair.

Meanwhile Jagellon proceeded to complete his arrangements for his departure the following morning.

He drove off to his lawyer, and executed a short and very simple will, and then went to Rosencranz's office and sold out all his Russian Bonds, making a pretty little profit out of the transaction; while the Baron, having bought them at about three pounds under the market price, considered he had done a good thing, and accordingly said adieu to the Count with much cordiality.

Having thus settled affairs abroad, Jagellon returned to his lodgings to settle with his landlord, and pack up his necessaries.

He had also to dismiss his servant, who was as yet in ignorance of the Count's intended journey. So, after paying his landlord, he called up Watkins.
"Look here, Watkins," he said, "I am going abroad, to Russia, so I shall have to do without you. I do not know exactly what wages I owe you, but," he added, fumbling with some bank-notes, "I will give you a hundred, and I think that will about settle it between us."

So saying he proceeded to count out the amount in notes of five and twenty pounds. All this time Watkins was shuffling his feet about uneasily, and looking out of the window in an aimless way.

"There, I think that is right," said Jagellon, handing him a bundle of crisp notes.

"I 'ope as I've given hevery satisfaction, my lord?" said Watkins in an inquiring tone.

"Certainly, I will of course give you an excellent character."

"I ain't got no objection to going abroad," said Watkins, shuffling his feet about more and more, and fingerling the bank-notes as if he had not the slightest idea of their value, and did not know what to do with them.

"Ah, but I am going to travel, a—probably for some time, and—a—I could not afford, you see, to have you with me."

Jagellon was thinking he ought to give the man some excuse for dismissing him.
Watkins was silent a moment, then he blurted out—

"Well, my lord, I think it is very hard, very hard I thinks it is, for to go and send away a man as has served you a long time, my lord; and I am sure as to t'money, it ain't no consequence, and—there's yer money, my lord;" so saying, Watkins placed the bank-notes on the table and proceeded to wipe his face, which had become rather heated during this speech.

Jagellon from where he sat looked up at his servant in surprise. He had always rather fancied that he had never quite paid Watkins his wages, and had consoled himself by considering that the man had a pretty easy time of it, and now he thought he had squared accounts between them by presenting him with a hundred pounds. So the idea of his servant wanting to stop with him rather embarrassed him.

"But, my good fellow," he said, "I shall have a hard life of it where I am going, in Russia and, a—elsewhere. And—well, the fact is I may be imprisoned. It is a political affair."

"I ain't afraid of no danger," said Watkins indignantly. "I ain't afraid of no Roosians, nor no Proosians either." And I don't think he was; at least he looked intrepid enough as he spoke.
"I know that," said Jagellon, "but, you see, it's a very delicate business I am going to be engaged in, and it is no good getting you into trouble for nothing. Besides, I may be back soon, you see," added Jagellon as a happy idea.

"Oh, you are a-coming back, my lord?"

"I hope so; some time."

"Then I hope as you will take me back when you comes back, my lord."

"All right, if you have not got any place."

"I don't want any other place but this," said Watkins, again growing hot. "It suits me, that's all. I hope as you will kindly promise to let me continue in your service, my lord?"

"Very well, I will. But I will give you a recommendation as well."

So saying, Jagellon wrote a letter and enclosed it in an envelope addressed to "Countess Woronzow, Rose Lodge."

This done, he thought for a minute, and then proceeded to write another letter, which was as follows:—

"My dear Miss Golding,

"Will you permit me to recommend to your notice my old servant, whom I am obliged to dismiss?"

"He is, I can assure you, the most honest and
faithful of servants. Were he not so, I should not recommend him to your kindness.

"Will you grant this request as a last favour?

"Yours very sincerely,

"JAGELLON."

"There," he said, handing the two letters to Watkins, "I think you will not suffer with those recommendations."

"Thank you kindly," said Watkins, pocketing the letters and bank-notes. "Then you will take me back as soon as you can, my lord?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"Very good, my lord, very good," said Watkins, and then proceeded to help his master to pack with great alacrity.

At last Jagellon's luggage was ready and was all conveyed to a cab at the door. Then Jagellon shook hands with his landlord, and held out his hand to Watkins, who took it shyly in his rough one.

"Good-bye, Watkins, I hope I shall see you again, soon."

"Good-bye, my lord, and I hope so, too, my lord, and I hopes you'll have good luck, my lord."

And then Jagellon got into the cab, telling the driver to go to Rose Lodge.
It was a cold dark morning; outside a light drizzle was oozing from the clouds above, and soaking into everything that was exposed to its touch. It was a morning so drear that the dawn seemed to hesitate before it rose to such a dismal scene as the great metropolis presented. It was still dark, and there seemed no prospect of light for that day. The city was as a rule still asleep, nor could any one awake with gladness, one would think, on such a morning as this.

Jagellon and his wife were alone together, waiting for the time when they were to part, and watching the inexorable hand of the clock as it marked minute after minute.

"How dark it is!" she said, going to the window and trying to look out into the darkness from the light of the room.

"I wonder is that clock right; it must be earlier than we think, do you not think so?"
"We shall soon see; Mentzel will be here directly with the cab, if that time is right," he replied, looking up at the clock on the chimney-piece. He was sitting by the bright fire warming his hands mechanically. The remains of a small breakfast stood on a table at one side of the room. They were in Madame's boudoir.

She sat down by the window, looking out of it without seeing anything. She had on a beautiful dressing-gown of maroon silk, which lay in large folds on the carpet as she sat down. She turned to look at him by the fire.

"Are you cold?" she asked.

"No."

She got up and came and sat on the sofa near him.

"You did not shave this morning, did you?"

"No."

"Nor yesterday, I believe. Do you know your moustache is growing very long?"

"Is it?"

"I remember when I first saw you it was much shorter, and your hair was longer. Don't you remember how it dripped that evening at the ball? By the bye, I never knew how you got home that night."

"It was with Mentzel."

"Oh, so it was. I was glad to get home, I
know. Why, that is the only time I ever rode in your cab—how odd! It was a comfortable one, too. What have you done with it?"

"Never thought of it. It's at the stables; you can get it."

"I should like it, it will be quite a new idea to ride about in your cab."

She ceased speaking for some moments, which were ticked off by that terrible hand.

"You are burning your face. Have one of these screens." She rose and took down one off the chimney-piece.

"No, thanks."

"There, I can hold it for you."

The screen shut out the visions he saw in the fire, and he turned his weary eyes to look at her, but she was looking at the screen, and pretended to be engaged in holding it straight before his face.

His gaze then turned to the hand holding the screen, and the gold ring on the delicately-formed finger.

He looked again at her face, at the beautiful half profile, the clean-shaped nose, and the red lips he knew so well. She turned towards him and their eyes met.

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The cab stands at the door, everything is
ready for his departure, and Mr. Mentzel waits below to accompany him to the station. A few minutes more and the cab must go or it will miss the train; and life and death and the fortunes of hundreds hang on his catching the train.

But there is no sign of his parting from her. He stands holding her fast to him, with his hands round her head, which is thrown back that her eyes may look into his.

"It is as hard to leave you for one day as to leave you for ever," he whispers. "If I die—and I care not if I die—then I shall not feel my loss; but living away from you, and fancying I hear your voice, and thinking you are near me when you are really far away—how shall I bear it? And if I die will another love you? Will another win you? Will another hear the words I have heard, and know all I know? Ah! I should like to strangle you now, that you may belong to none but me." He actually gripped her head and neck tighter as he spoke, but she never flinched; her eyes looked into his with such an intensity of gaze that they never moved—never closed for an instant.

Her lips opened, and she whispered to him: "Why should you go at all? Nothing can be so bad as to part from you. Better that our country
should be ruined, than that I should lose you.”

"I cannot go back now."

"Yes, you can. They can easily find a substitute, I tell you. I will, myself, advise Mentzel not to send you; he will attend to what I say. Besides, is it necessary for you to go? They might send Willaume, for instance; he could tell them everything at Warsaw, and except for this special object your joining with the rest is of no consequence."

"Willaume is known. Besides, everything is in my hands, and who else can they send?"

"Why, I will go myself. I know what to do."

"You shall not. You may be suspected already."

"I will risk it; it is all chance."

"No, no, dearest, it cannot be; we waste time." He glanced at the clock. "It is time now. Come, come, kiss me."

"Go, go, go!" pushing him from her. "You do not love me; it does not matter to you whether you leave me—you prefer, I suppose, the excitement of danger—you are tired of me! Ha! ha! It is always the same thing; you have conquered me, you have amused yourself, and now I am stale—stale!"
He tried to take her hands, but she put them away from him.

"Yes, I go on obstinately loving you, I almost—God forgive me!—worship you. I have given all to you, I have been ruled by you, and have made myself yours to do what you like with, and now you may cast me away. Oh, God!"

She covered her face with her hands, then flung out her arms and threw herself on him.

"Oh, let me be with you a little longer, go a little way with you—only a day or two—and then I will leave you myself, and trouble you no more!"

"Oh, my poor darling!"

"Do you like me still?"

"Oh, we shall not be separated for long. Hope with me, darling. I shall be back soon. Bear it for my sake. It is time now. Come, my dearest."

"No, don’t go!"

"Good-bye!"

He wrenched himself from her and ran out of the room, without daring to look back, and with a wild cry she fell to the ground.
CHAPTER XII.

EN ROUTE.

The monotonous song of the train, that was the lullaby which sent Jagellon to sleep—a fitful sleep, broken ever and anon by the rattling of the train under an arch or through a tunnel.

The rhythm of the wheels, as they spun round, soothed him; the piston of the engine beating one regular perpetual time, which was kept by the chorus of the carriages behind, had a mesmeric sort of influence on his brain, already worn out and weakened by the strain of the last few days, and deadened by the weight of the loss of her he loved.

The swing of the carriage, the shuddering of the axles as the wheels flew round a curve in the line, rocked him to sleep. And sleep was so pleasant; to forget for even a minute that he was all alone, and that she was farther and farther away, was such a relief that he could have desired nothing better than to sleep on and on for ever.
But at length the train slackened its speed; it stopped; then went on again. The cessation of the motion woke him, and he had but time to gather his luggage in the carriage together, when he heard the hoarse murmur of the sea, and saw through the window a blank expanse of mist or water, with here and there a darker mass of grey, which might be a cloud, or might be a towering rock grey with mist.

It was certainly not a day on which one would choose to embark on a voyage. A drifting mist or drizzle, a ground swell, and a high sea, whose waves dashed against the pier, and dashed against the steamer, adding their spray to the mist.

The passengers were few—only men whom the desire of gain forced to travel at all seasons, and only a man and a woman who, from the scantiness of their luggage and by reason of an air of assurance and effrontery about them, one would conjecture had been obliged to choose this day to fly from the hands of their creditors.

Jagellon alone, of all the passengers, kept on deck, leaning over the rails in the stern of the boat, muffled up in his great coat, and smoking a wooden pipe. The spray of the waves, dash-ing against the paddles, swept over him, the sea-drift flew against him, wetting his hair and coat. But he took no heed of these discomforts; his
eyes, looking into the grey mist, saw only the face of the woman he loved; over and above the plashing of the waves, the sighing of the wind, and the sing-song of the crank, as it moved up and down to a perpetual tune, he heard her piteous cry.

He pictured her to himself lonely and weeping in the boudoir where he had left her lying. And who was to comfort her now? What friend could she find capable of consoling her for the loss of him? What was she doing at that moment? he thought to himself, and as he thought, he had a superstitious idea that she was just then thinking the same thing of him. In such thoughts, and pacing to and fro on the soaked deck, he passed the time on the dismal sea.

At last the port was reached; a melancholy dinner had to be eaten; a tedious delay, and again he was speeding on to the monotonous sound of the train.

Already the air seemed to be growing colder; the wind blowing from the north seemed to be a messenger of ice and snow; the spirits of the air seemed determined that the travellers should not enter the ice-bound lands of the north without a foretaste of due warning of what they had to expect. So rugs and furs began to fill
up the space in the carriages, and the travellers wrapped themselves up warmly as the train rushed on through the cold wind and rain.

At length they stopped at a large station—Brussels, with lights beginning to gleam from the city. The world was still wagging there; there were warmth, and gaiety, and pleasure, and vice going on there whether the weather was wet or fine; and the train sped on into the darkness and left them behind.

Then the douane was reached, and the passengers had to get out of their warm carriage into the cold night and the falling sleet to have their luggage and packages examined one by one by suspicious officials in caps with broad tops, with a scowl on their faces, and rude and unmannerly in their speech. These well-trained servants of despotism seemed to scent revolution in Jagellon's luggage. "To St. Petersburg," the very address aroused their suspicions, and they rummaged over his portmanteaus, and even in his rugs, in search of some suspicious articles or papers, and when they found nothing they vented their disappointment in leaving him to rearrange his things and refasten his portmanteau and travelling bags as best he could.

Jagellon took no notice of their boorish ways;
for one thing, he was used to them; and, besides, he cared little what happened to him so long as he reached his destination. So, after a tedious delay and an uncomfortable meal for the hungry travellers, they proceeded on their journey in the darkness.

Jagellon made a bed of the carriage-seat and slept restlessly, dreaming of fearful visions of Theodora lying pale and motionless, and of his stooping down to raise her and finding his hands covered with blood. Then he started up in a cold sweat of fear, and, lighting a cigarette, listened to the snores, out of unison, of two travelling companions, and to the perpetual music of the train.

Now and then they rattled through a deserted station; once or twice they stopped, lights flitted about for a quarter of an hour or so, and then on again; sometimes a man’s face appeared at the carriage window with a lantern, a weird apparition which disappeared ghostlike in the darkness.

Then the dawn appeared, revealing through the mist on the windows a bleak landscape, here and there melancholy forests of pine, and the falling sleet.

*Berlin.* Berlin, with suitable setting of stern grey clouds overhead, and a cold, clear
atmosphere. Here they had a long time at their disposal in which to breakfast, or rather dine, for it was prudent to make a thoroughly good meal while one could get it. And so Jagellon, hungry and tired, ate heartily and fell asleep after his full meal. He was, luckily for him, awakened just in time for the train by a pretty Prussian waitress (rara avis), who had, perhaps, been watching the wearied man in his sleep, and wondering, and thinking—— Pooh! love in methodical, sceptical Berlin? Ridiculous! Jagellon thanked her with a sad smile, and hurried off to the train.

Then on and on they journeyed, through the plain scenery of Prussia, where there is nothing to notice but thrifty farmsteads and monotonous cultivation, without the cosy appearance of an English landscape. Soon the sky darkens and night comes on.

Jagellon slept, to be awakened at the terminus of the railway. The ground was covered with snow after a recent storm, the air was bitterly cold, and the town seemed to be frozen to death, for it was all dark and still at that hour of the night. Only one or two officials came out with lanterns to attend to the passengers. There were no cabs here in waiting for the train, and Jagellon with difficulty induced one of the
porters to guide him to the inn from whence the conveyance for his further journey was to start in the morning. In this inn, situated in the central square or market-place of the town, Jagellon was accommodated with a place on the hearth of the parlour, before a hot fire of log-wood, and here he slept till six o'clock the next morning, when he was roused up by the landlord of the inn to make ready for his departure.

The vehicle which was to carry him to the frontier of Poland proved to be a miserable species of diligence supposed to hold four people, but which Jagellon found by experience was hardly large enough for himself and a stout Prussian farmer, his sole travelling companion. In fact, the postal officials who had the charge of this carriage seemed to be somewhat surprised that any one, except a native ignorant of the luxuries of civilization, should think of adopting this method of travelling, and they set him down, so far as Jagellon could understand, as one of the eccentric English travellers who are ever endeavouring to find out some new form of discomfort.

The diligence, harnessed to a raw-boned and incapable horse, started off at seven o'clock, and contrived to pass the whole of the day in jogging along the smooth snow-covered roads, with
frequent stoppages for the purpose of procuring a fresh horse, and of furnishing the travellers with a breakfast consisting of black bread and butter and raw bacon, and a dinner composed of various dishes of greasy viands. Anything more dreary and monotonous than this journey it would be difficult to imagine. There was the interminable waste of snow, broken up here and there by black and white forests of firs and pines, and besides there was the perpetual jolting of the vehicle, which made any one's bones ache, cramped up, as Jagellon was, in a position in which it was almost impossible to sit at ease.

As the journey continued eastwards, habitations became less frequent, and when dusk came on, the absence of any village or cottage gave a feeling of mournful desolation to the landscape. Jagellon's travelling companion had ended his journey before the diligence had proceeded more than half way on its road, so that by this time Jagellon was travelling in solitary state. It was but natural that his thoughts in his loneliness should turn for something to interest them to his wife. He began to think of what Theodora had told him concerning the careers of those singular men who had fashioned the revolutions of Europe, and he wondered to himself whether their lives were monotonous and uninteresting
to themselves—for all the world like this journey—without romance, without enthusiasm, and without the invigorating excitement of danger. If so, it must have been very hard work, he thought, but little pleasure, and with very little inducement to any one else to follow their examples. Not that there was no element of danger in this case.

By this time night had overtaken the diligence, and all was in darkness. The gloom increased to an absolute opacity as they passed through a dense forest of firs.

It was so dark that Jagellon could not discern any part of the interior of the carriage, and to obtain the blessing of a little light he was fain to smoke his pipe, which sufficed to shed a fitful radiance over the narrow interior. Not a sound could be heard, except now and then the ghostly creaking of the vehicle as the wheels ran silently in the snow; the horse’s hoofs made no noise as he trotted on his road. It occurred to Jagellon that it would be an easy thing to murder the driver, without any fear of detection, and, on the other hand, the driver might do him the same office.

Also, it was evidently a favourable opportunity for thieves, if there were any such in the neighbourhood, and in view of any such emer-
gency, Jagellon took his revolver out of his bag and carefully loaded and cocked it.

After jogging along for some time in this sort of valley of the shadow of death, the carriage suddenly came to a stop, and Jagellon, listened in expectation of hearing the peremptory voices of highwaymen. But nothing happened; the driver kept his seat in silence, and Jagellon, conjecturing that both horse and man had gone to sleep, got out of the carriage for the purpose of rousing them up.

He made his way in the darkness to the front of the diligence and laid hold of the driver, whereupon he was startled by the latter saying, in a gruff voice—

"It's the Zollhaus; they are asleep probably; you must wake them."

They were in Poland at last.
CHAPTER XIII.

IN MEDIAS RES.

Obedient to the suggestions of the driver, Jagellon proceeded to rouse up the inmates of the douane. Having struck a fusee, he discerned by the light thus afforded a low building on the left-hand side of the road. He went up to it and found his way by the aid of another match to the entrance, and after knocking for some time without gaining admittance he burst open the door with a kick.

He found himself in a long low room, the atmosphere of which from its intense heat nearly took his breath away after the bitterly cold air outside. The room, too, was clouded with smoke from the fire at one end, and a hot and fetid smell pervaded the whole place. The first object that Jagellon saw as he entered was a figure lying on a table in the centre of the room. This proved on a nearer view to be a woman fast asleep, and stark naked, except for a chemise which partly covered her, and served rather to
expose the indecency of her position than in any way to clothe her nakedness. Besides the table there were one or two rude chairs and a bench, on which was stretched a man in a condition of undress; the legs of another were just visible under the table. The whole place had an aspect of downright savagery about it that smacked rather of an Indian wigwam than the interior of a dwelling in civilized Europe.

The personage on the bench was by this time half awake, and was addressing Jagellon in a language which he did not in the least understand, but to which he replied in German, to the effect that he was travelling to Warsaw, and required accommodation for the night. Whereupon the man grunted something unintelligible and laid himself down again.

However, Jagellon was relieved from any embarrassment at this juncture by the entrance of the diligence driver, who began discoursing volubly in a mixed lingo of Russian and German, proceeding meanwhile to the fire (kicking en route the prostrate man on the hearth) and stirring up the hot embers, whereby he imparted a lurid light to the room.

The woman on the table was by this time awake, and had arrayed herself without any bashfulness in her one garment, over which she
threw a shawl. She now proceeded to light an oil lamp which she found on one of the chairs; after which she put a kettle on the fire, and procured some bread and bacon from a cupboard, together with a jug containing "kvass" and a bottle of brandy. The sight of something to drink finally roused the prostrate and sleepy men, and they laid violent hands on the jug and bottles, after which one of them proceeded outside to attend to the horse and carriage, not without sundry guttural words, probably of an objurgatory nature.

Some life was, however, put into the movements of everybody by the production on Jagellon's part of some coins, at the instance of the driver, and after the horse and carriage had been attended to and the post bag (an attenuated mail) brought in, the door was finally closed, and every one settled himself down in silence by the fire to smoke and drink or to sleep, the woman meanwhile squatting herself down in a corner of the hearth in her shawl and chemise, and looking for all the world like an Indian squaw with ragged hair as she warmed herself at the fire.

Curiously enough, the scene recalled to Jagellon that night at Rosencranz's ball. The smell and heat of the place brought back to him
the fervid atmosphere of the ball-room; the absence of a sense of decency here seemed to fit in with the cynical indifference to propriety in the house in Park Lane, and the advanced fashion of the ladies’ dresses there. All these things seemed as if they would have suited well with the surroundings of this wretched room, dirty, blackened with smoke, and altogether rude and uncivilized. And as Jagellon lay on the bench allotted to him, contemplating the scene, the thought not unnaturally occurred to him—was our civilization after all a delusion? Were we all really barbarians and savages? Were all the elegant phrases about the progress of the nineteenth century mere nonsense? Were we progressing indeed, but progressing, crablike, backwards into utter ignorance and anarchy? Had we never really attained to the wisdom and culture of the old Egyptians, and Greeks, and Romans, and were we in truth mere barbarians without the arts, the virtues, the manners and good breeding, which helped to make those old nations famous? This was rather a bitter thought. It was like suddenly doubting the truth of your religion when it is first suggested to you that your religion is a mummery, your deity a farce, and your morality ridiculous.

Jagellon turned from the horrible idea to
think of Theodora. Surely she was a true lady; surely she would compare with the beautiful women who lived long ago. There was something heroic in following such a woman—something of chivalry in fighting for such a fair lady. Yes, to fight for beauty and freedom's sake, those rococo ideas and watchwords, was something worth doing; there was a certain freshness and novelty about it.

"I wish it would begin though," he said to himself, "and put an end to all this wandering about. If we were all together, ready to fight, we might do something instead of perpetually plotting and intriguing. If she were only here."

At this moment the silence in the room was again broken by a noise at the door, as of someone trying to effect an entrance. The customs officer, who had exchanged the bench for the table, raised his head at this fresh disturbance; the woman by the fire ceased to nod her head; the driver discontinued smoking his bad cigar, and the remaining individual on the floor ceased his snoring. The door opened and in walked a tall man, in a long cloak and a slouched hat.

Now as soon as they caught sight of this intruder a feeling of suspicion seemed to pervade
the inmates of the room. No one greeted him, each one seemed to take up a defensive attitude, and had they been dogs instead of common human beings, Jagellon would have expected them to greet the stranger with low growls of disapprobation.

The new-comer was indeed rather formidable in appearance. His hat hung over his eyes, which were rather deep-set, and he had a rough moustache of a dusky colour, more like the whiskers of a Persian cat than the ordinary moustache of civilized beings. He looked round at the occupants of the room and said sharply in German—

"Has the post arrived?"

No one replied, so he repeated the question still more sharply while he walked to the fire. Thereupon the driver of the diligence replied shortly in the affirmative.

"Any letters for me?" asked the other, turning to the driver.

"No, none for here."

The stranger then turned to contemplate Jagellon, who continued smoking his pipe on the bench while he watched the scene.

"Well," proceeded the man, "when are you going to start? I want to go to ——" (naming a town on the road to Warsaw).
"To-morrow morning," said the driver.
"You won't be able to get on to-morrow, I expect," said the man. "Bands of insurgents have appeared in the neighbourhood to-day, and communication will most likely be stopped to-morrow. Better go to-night."

"Is there no means of getting on to Warsaw?" inquired Jagellon, now breaking into the conversation.

"What do you want to go to Warsaw for?" asked the man in reply.

"I am going through to St. Petersburg."

The other looked steadily at him on hearing this.

"Why did you come this way?" he asked. "Did you not hear any rumours of rebellion in these parts?"

"Yes. I wanted to see what was going on."

They were looking at one another steadily while they were speaking.

Jagellon was trying to find out what the man was. Was he a Pole or a Russian, an official or a rebel?

"Etes vous Français?" asked the stranger, suddenly.

"No, English," said Jagellon, speaking in French. "I am travelling for curiosity."

Then, as an idea occurred to him, "What is
the object of this rebellion?” he asked; “what are they fighting for?”

“Ah, liberté, voilà tout,” replied the man, coolly. He was leaning carelessly against the table, to the no small inconvenience of the custom-house official, who was lying thereon.

“Look here,” continued the Pole, “you had better start to night; I will take you.”

Then, turning to the driver, “I’ll deliver your letters for you at ——. I must take your carriage to-night, do you hear?”

The driver seemed to hesitate, whereupon the other coolly drew out a revolver from under his cloak. “You had better make up your mind; you see I can use force if necessary.”

Jagellon now got up from his bench and pulled out his weapon from a pocket. The man nodded approval.

“Come, look quick!” he said to the driver; “get the horse harnessed. Will you stay here, sir, and keep watch over these people?” he added, addressing Jagellon again in French.

“All right,” said the Count.

Then the mail bag was handed to him, and the Pole and the driver went out to get the vehicle ready for the journey.

The others looked on at these proceedings in sullen silence.
In a wonderfully short time the diligence was heard outside, the stranger re-entered, drank off a glass of brandy, Jagellon emptying his own flask at the same time, and then the two, Jagellon and the Pole, went out into the night together.

Outside. "Do you object to sitting on the box?" said the Pole, "we could then discuss matters as we went along."

"Not at all. Confound it, this is better than that stinking hole there."

So saying the Count mounted on the box, and buttoned his cloak round his throat; the other followed suit, and off they set at a steady trot.

Conversation then began as follows:—

"My name is Raczynski. I presume you are Count Jagellon?"

"Yes."

"We were informed of your coming. We have been waiting hourly for you. Everything is ripe—overripe. The insurrection has already begun in isolated cases. What are the plans agreed on?"

"The principal attack is to be made from the south. A number of bands will enter from Galicia, and there is a quantity of arms there."

"What about Warsaw?"
“Warsaw is not to be the centre of operations. We think the Government is too strong there, and they are very weak in the south.”

“Are we all to march southwards, then?”

“No. A force is to be organized in this part of the country, and is to operate against the flank of any force attacking us from Warsaw.”

“Good. We are organized already. Are you really going to Warsaw, then?”

“Yes, I have to arrange matters with the Central Committee.”

“Very good. I will guide you there. You will have to exchange your clothes.”

“I have no objection,” said Jagellon. “I put myself in your hands; get me into Warsaw, that is all I want.”

Then they fell to discussing the chances of the war. Jagellon could not help remarking on the energy and enthusiasm with which Raczyński spoke of the rebellion, and the hatred with which he spoke of their “oppressors,” as he called the Government. He was a very different sort of man from the conspirators with whom Jagellon had become acquainted in London. If Mr. Mentzel represented the sect of political intriguers, this man was the representative of a people roused to rebellion by ancient hatreds, and perhaps by new oppressions—a peo-
people newly awakened to a desire for freedom and autonomy. Instead of calculating the odds against him, this man only regarded the rebellion as an enterprise in which if he lost he was no worse off than before, and if he won he would gain everything he desired. He had all the passions and prejudices of a high-spirited and wilful people. He lived and moved and felt with his fellow-countrymen, not living afar off and pulling the strings of conspiracy from a distance. No doubt Mentzel was as thorough a lover of his country as this man, but his was not such a vivid patriotism as the latter's, in which all his heart and soul were warmly engaged.

Jagellon was astonished at the effect of the mere pronunciation of General Bagrathion's name, when he inquired the whereabouts of the General.

"Ah! the accursed traitor!" exclaimed Raczyński, his face reddening with passion. "The coward dare not show himself in Poland, but they say he is collecting his forces in Lithuania. Well, there is one comfort, he cannot live long. I tell you, sir, there are thousands of men longing to take his life—men who would willingly sacrifice their lives in exchange for his, and amongst so many one must at last succeed. He
thinks he can suppress Poland, he and his Cossacks! Let him try, that's all."

Their conversation was interrupted by their arrival at a small town, through the dark and silent streets of which they drove till they came to a certain house in a by-street. Here Raczynski stopped, and getting down told Jagellon to follow him, and went straight into the house. They entered at first a dark passage, where there presently appeared an old man with a light, who, having asked them the password, led them into a room at the back of the house. This personage turned out to be one of the principal men in the town and a considerable landowner. With him Jagellon and his companion fell to discussing the plans of insurrection, and it was resolved to make the attempt during the night. They were to secure the mayor of the commune, who, Jagellon was informed, was secretly favourable to the attempt, and having disarmed the gendarmerie they were then to sound the tocsin and proclaim the rebellion.

A messenger was therefore despatched to their known adherents, and in about half an hour's time the house was filled with a number of men variously armed with muskets, pistols, swords, and the famous scythes, or pikes.

A proclamation summoning the people to
arms was then drawn up, and Jagellon, taking a copy with him, proceeded on his journey in company with Raczynski, leaving the others to effect a rising. It was now about one o’clock in the morning and pitch dark; now and then a few flakes of snow settled on their faces. Jagellon had already travestied himself with a fur cap which came over his ears, and a long cloak lined with fur, in exchange for his English inverness coat and hat. They had proceeded about a couple of miles on their road in silence, both probably meditating on the enterprise in which they were engaged, when suddenly the distant sound of a bell broke the stillness of the night. Raczynski reined in the horse, and he and Jagellon both stood up on the box looking back on the road and listening.

They were just then ascending a hill, and the country being here somewhat flat they could see for some distance around. Behind them was a light on the horizon, in the direction of the town they had just left.

“Hurrah!” exclaimed Raczynski, “they have finished their work. Yonder is the bonfire signal.”

The sky glowed and flickered in the distance as the fire blazed up, and borne by the wind came the sound of the tocsin proclaiming rebellion.
“Let us get on,” said Raczynski, resuming his seat and whipping his horse; “the country will soon be up and we shall be delayed on our journey.”

Soon they came to a village where lights were visible in the cottages, and men and women were standing at their doors, having been aroused by the signals of rebellion.

“What is it?” “What has happened?” “Is it a fire?” were some of the inquiries as the diligence drove into the village.

“To arms, my brave men!” shouted Raczynski in reply, standing up as he spoke. “The War for Freedom has begun. Assemble at S—— (naming a town farther on the road); you will find men and arms there.”

Some shouts of “Hurrah!” answered him.

Then they drove through the village into the darkness again, and as they went along the country awoke in their track; round about them they could hear the tocsin, and here and there they could see a village lighted up with bonfires. Quicker than they, travelled the flame of rebellion.

Hark! there is the sound of musketry in the distance; the game of death has already begun. And see there! a brighter light than the blaze of a beacon shines in the sky. It glows; it
flares up; the very sky seems on fire, and ever louder sounds the musketry, as they hurry along the silent road paved with hardened snow.

"By Jove! they are fighting," says Jagellon; "hope we shall be in time."

"I don't think so," replies his companion. "They will make short work of the enemy."

At length they reach the outskirts of a town. Before them rise the flames of some large building; they can even hear the shouts of the combatants and occasional shots. As they enter the principal street of the town they perceive black figures hurrying to and fro and carrying torches in their hands, which cast a weird light on the houses and people.

Suddenly their horse's head is seized; the carriage is surrounded by men, some of whom are armed.

"Who are you?" ask voices in the Polish tongue. "Where are you going?"

"To Warsaw. Long live Poland!"

"Hurrah! drive on."

"Is the fighting over?" asks Jagellon.

"Yes; all our enemies are dead."

Presently, as they drive up the street, the carriage is violently jolted through the wheels passing over some obstacle in the way; it is only a dead body lying there unnoticed till
morning. They reach the market-place, the scene of the recent combat, now filled with men and women and children, and dead bodies lying here and there neglected on the ground.

Here all is light from a furiously blazing block of buildings on one side of the square, while in front of the fiery mass men and women are dancing and singing and shouting, verily a species of carmagnole! The flames shine on the houses and people and light up the ugly patches of reddened snow where men have bled and died. Now and then a shout and the report of firearms proclaim some fresh massacre, and while Jagellon and his companion make their way with difficulty across the market-place an unfortunate Russian is detected and stabbed to death before their eyes.

The day was dawning when Jagellon and his guide renewed their journey in a sledge drawn by two great Livonian dogs. They had delivered their tidings and informed the insurrectionary chiefs in the town what were the general plans of the rebellion.

In the square of the market-place men were being marshalled into companies and provided with arms; the dead bodies were being carried away by cowled monks and black-robed sisters of charity; the blackened ruins of the Govern-
ment offices were still smouldering in the grey light of the morning. The whole town was astir, and side by side with the men arming and marshalling were the market women selling their provisions to the young soldiers. And meanwhile Jagellon and his companion were flying along the white road, overshadowed by dark pine woods and a grey sky—swiftly ran the dogs, and the sleigh sped onwards to Warsaw, leaving behind it war and rebellion following on its track.
CHAPTER XIV.

AT HOME.

It is time, I think, having described the adventurous journey of Count Jagellon, that I should return to our London acquaintances.

The trajectio is indeed a somewhat abrupt one from Poland rushing into war, to peaceful and commercial London, the inhabitants whereof are merely anxious about the accumulation or the expenditure of money.

But it must be remembered that the eyes of all our acquaintances in the gigantic metropolis are eagerly bent upon the issue of events in Poland. In some cases, no doubt, this interest is of a somewhat selfish nature. For instance, Mrs. Hatton has followed the fashion, and has invested in Russian bonds, and induced her husband to do likewise. Firmly convinced, as Mrs. Hatton is, that Law and Order equally with Truth will conquer in the end, it was merely a proof of the general consistency of her conduct that she should, to use a sporting
phrase, back her principles. Therefore she had invested in Russian bonds, believing that the threatened revolt of Poland would be easily and perhaps finally suppressed, and that everything would go on as before.

It was singular (because as a rule she and her father had always agreed on financial matters) that in these speculative designs she had not the concurrence of her father. Old Mr. Golding, with his ancient ideas of trade and finance, persisted in viewing this system of money-making as illegitimate and risky. He, on his part, watched the outcome of affairs in Poland from a not disinterested motive, fearing lest his eldest daughter should suffer any loss by her speculations.

And these anxieties on behalf of his daughter he imparted to his wife. There is, no doubt, a certain comfort in having some one to sympathize with one's cares. The worst part of care is when it is merely known to the bed-curtains, and the window blinds and the early dawn peeping in at the window. Nay, there are some fire-grates and the red coals therein that learn (if they really have eyes, as they seem to have) some secrets which not another animate or inanimate thing has a knowledge of.

For instance, at four or five o'clock in January
it is almost, if not quite, dark, when the rain is falling steadily and drearily in the streets (I am speaking of London), and a fog engendered by the moisture of the air hangs over the city. Then there is no light in the room (I refer to the dining-room at Park House), save the warm and flickering light of the fire; in all the darkness and dreariness this is the only warmth and light, and is it not natural that one should find some sympathy in this friendly fire? and is it not the time of all others when those little coals, dancing and sputtering with a vain delight at their own brightness, should learn one's thoughts as one sits and looks at them, thinking of the days that are no more, or the brilliant future that will never come to pass?

The blinds have not yet been drawn down, the gas has not yet been lit, for it is too early as yet for the butler to make ready for dinner, and perhaps old Robert knows that Miss Lucy is there and will not disturb her.

She sits by the fire with her hands clasped on her knees, lost in thought, as she gazes at the bright embers.

Lying at full length at her feet on the Turkey carpet, Rollo is enjoying the luxury of a warm sleep; evidently so, for you can hear his
heavy breathing, the room being so still. There is no other sound in the room but the distant ticking of the ormolu clock on the mantelpiece, and the sound of the rain dripping outside the window.

Is it really only eight months since Lucy was cantering in the Park?

Is it only so short a time ago that the sun was shining and the green leaves were rustling in the summer breeze, and the flowers were arrayed in all their glory? And will the sun ever shine and the flowers ever bud again?

"Heigho! the wind and the rain."

This is the conclusion of our lives; they are made up of loves and pleasures, and then regrets?

Is this, I wonder, the tenor of Lucy's thoughts as she gazes into the fire?

Is this what the spluttering coals see in her blue eyes, as they flicker and flame between the bars of the grates.

Or, perhaps she is thinking of "them that's far awa',"—thinking of one who is fighting for his country, and who is engaged in a desperate contest, and hoping that he is alive and well, and that he will succeed and return in happiness to his friends.

Possibly it occurred to Lucy that she was not
the only one who was thinking anxiously of him who was "far awa'.” She was not the only one who had loved and lost; and, as I said before, there is some comfort in feeling that you have the sympathy of some one else in your cares.

So Lucy sits and thinks till the clock strikes five, causing Rollo to snort and nervously twitch one of his stretched-out legs. Soon after the butler enters to light the gas, pull down the blinds, draw the curtains, and prepare for dinner.

Lucy remains for a few minutes in the cosy room, while she strokes the dog's hot head, causing him to open his eyes, look fondly at her, and then go to sleep again with a wide-mouthed yawn.

Then she goes upstairs to dress for dinner.

Mr. Golding's return from the City was a daily event to which Lucy looked forward with some eagerness. He brought the Times home with him, and Mrs. Golding generally read it to him in the library after dinner, while he commented on the news and related the gossiping rumours of the day. On this occasion Mr. Golding returned rather late, and very tired and silent. No doubt affairs in the City had not gone very briskly; it is impossible for commerce to be very active in such gloomy weather, when
the work has to be done all day by the aid of gas-light, and the streets, muddy and wet, glisten in the melancholy light of the lamps.

So Mr. Golding was silent and moody over dinner, notwithstanding a fresh bottle of port, which Robert was careful to have ready for him.

However, in the library, seated in his armchair before a warm fire, he told them some of the news of the day, in reply to the inquiries of Mrs. Golding, who was reading and commenting on the *Times*.

"They seem to think that affairs in Poland are more serious than the Government would have us believe," remarked Mrs. Golding.

"Yes," said her husband; and with a sigh, "I expect it will turn out to be a serious insurrection. I met Rosencranz to-day, and asked how things were going on. He was very cool about it, and said the Government had plenty of troops in hand, and intended to stamp out any insurrection by main force. 'The rebels have no chance,' he said."

"Poor things!" murmured Mrs. Golding.

"If they do rise against the Russian Government, it will be a great mistake, in my opinion."

"Has Barbara sold her bonds?"

"No. I wish she would. They are fluctuating most dangerously, I think."
"Had you not better go down and see her on Sunday, and tell her what you think?" suggested Mrs. Golding.

"H'm! I will see about it."

Lucy, meanwhile, had been listening attentively to this conversation, and when she heard her father's opinion (in which she was accustomed to trust in everything) of the coming struggle, she was seized with a great fear. They had no chance—so said the men who ought to know; and, oh! what would become of him and Theodora? She went out of the room soon after hearing this, leaving her father and mother to talk over Barbara's affairs; and she ran upstairs to her room, there to think of what might happen.

Where was he? Was he in Poland, already in danger, and engaged in a hopeless conflict? Then it occurred to her to obtain the paper secretly, and see for herself what was said about affairs in Poland, and what risk he was running. So she slipped downstairs into the drawing-room, and found her mother still reading one of the leading articles in the paper; and Mrs. Golding went on reading till it was time for Lucy to go to bed; so the latter was unable to learn anything further.

What should she do now? she thought to
herself, as she sat down in her own room trying to think how she could find out all about the affair. She knew that Robert would take away the paper in the morning, and she might not see it again; and, moreover, she dared not ask to see it. Then she heard her father and mother go to bed—they slept near her. She could hear them talking for some time after they entered their room; and when at length these sounds ceased, and an absolute silence reigned over the house, she thought to herself, could she not get the paper now?

For a long time she hesitated, fearing to go downstairs; but at last her fears and anxiety on the other side gave her boldness, and with infinite caution she unlocked her door, and stood outside in the passage.

After listening intently for some minutes, she noiselessly crept downstairs into the drawing-room, where she groped about carefully in the dark, till she put her hand on the newspaper. Then she hurried back with her prize, and locked her door to be secure while she read the news.

But, alas! the paper told her little or nothing of what she wanted to know. Bands of insurgents had appeared in the country, numerous arrests had been made, and reinforcements had...
been despatched to Poland. That was all the news. She was more perplexed than ever. Was the insurrection already a failure? and would he then have to return after all?

Disappointed in her object, she went to bed, to lie awake half the night thinking and conjecturing; and as she lay thinking a sudden inspiration came to her. She would go and see Theodora; probably she would know what was going on.

With this idea she went to sleep, and was waked the next morning by her maid, having, contrary to custom, overslept herself.

She ate a slight breakfast hastily, and having waited patiently till she could conveniently go out, she set out with the excuse of having to do some shopping, and hurried off to Rose Lodge.

The door was opened by Peter, whose face looked more than ordinarily grave; and he hesitated a moment on Lucy's inquiring if the Countess was at home, and then requested her to step inside, and he would see if Madame was in.

In a short time he came to her in the hall, and, saying that Madame was at home, led the way to her boudoir. Peter held the door open for her to enter, and, as she went in, the
Countess rose from the sofa where she had been seated reading some book. She looked pale and tired, and was dressed in black silk, with a lace collar round her throat, and a spray of violets in her bosom.

But she was, if anything, more beautiful than ever—at least, so Lucy thought. Her eyes had a melancholy softness in them, her mouth had a sort of pitiful pout about it, and, far from appearing negligent of her person, she seemed to have taken special care to set off her charms as much as possible. Her silky hair lay in regular waves over her forehead, and on one of her rosy-tipped fingers sparkled a splendid diamond ring above another of plain gold. She seemed dressed for some grand occasion; yet she visited no one, and was "not at home" to every caller.

Well, Lucy stood for a moment while she took in at a glance the aspect of the Countess. Then Theodora came forward gravely, they looked at each other, and the next instant Lucy was in her friend's arms, and Theodora was kissing her furiously.

"My darling! My dear darling!" she said, while Lucy was crying with the utmost freedom, and then, having laid her on the sofa, Theodora knelt by her side, and alternately kissed her and
wiped her tears away, occasionally doing the same office for herself.

"Come, darling, you must be brave and cheer up;" then, putting her pale cheek against Lucy's, "and tell me you forgive me, dear, for his sake."

And thereupon Lucy kissed her, and declared she loved her dearly.

So when they had kissed and hugged to their hearts' content, Lucy began to declare the main purpose of her visit.

"And now, Dora, dear," she said, "I want to know all about it."

"What do you want to know, darling?"

"Where he is—is he in Poland?"

"Oh yes, he left last Saturday."

"Oh, I had no idea he was going so soon. How you must feel his loss, Dora!"

"Yes," said Dora quietly, though her mouth seemed to tighten itself a little. "I have managed to keep up my spirits pretty well. The only thing is, Lucy, that I cannot sleep. I can get on during the day by reading and doing other things, and I have set to studying Latin again. But the night is my difficulty. The first night after he went away, you know——" then she stopped and looked down; her mouth was quivering.
"Oh, darling, how miserable you must have been."

"Yes, it was all I could do to swallow down my tears. I was determined not to cry, you know, because he would not like me to be crying and moping all day."

They sat without speaking for a few moments, both thinking probably the same thoughts.

At last Lucy said, "I wonder what he is doing now, Dora?"

"I don't know; I am afraid he will be fighting soon."

"Dora, have they any chance of succeeding?"

"I hope so."

"But the Russians have so many soldiers."

"That is true, but they are not on the spot yet, and we are all ready. Our hope is that we may hold our ground for a year, or even six months; then perhaps the other Powers will interfere. Public opinion is in our favour."

"How many men have we?" asked Lucy, adopting Theodora's phraseology.

"About forty thousand."

"As many as that?"

"Yes, but unfortunately they are not all armed, you see. I do not think we have more
than ten thousand men in all Poland properly armed."

"Oh, I hope they will win! Has the war begun yet?"

"Yes, I believe so, but I am expecting a letter every day from a friend in Cracow to tell me that the exiles have entered Poland."

"And will you let me know how they go on? One hears all sorts of rumours, you know, and I cannot tell what to think, but I shall know that you can tell me the truth."

"I will tell you all I know, dear."

"Yes, and we can chat and talk about it all—can we not?"

"Yes, and you must not fret, darling," added Theodora, putting her arm round Lucy’s slim waist. "We must keep up our spirits, and hope and pray that all will end right."

"Yes, Dora, dear."

So they talked together till Lucy said she must go, fearing lest her mother should be alarmed at her long absence. "I shall tell her where I have been, and ask her to let me see you as often as I can."

"Do come and see me often," replied Theodora. "You are the only friend I have left, and it is so nice to have you with me."

Lucy promised that she would come whenever
she could, and they went downstairs together and kissed again before they parted, Lucy going home to tell her mother of her interview and of some of the things which Theodora had imparted to her.
CHAPTER XV.

A PANIC.

It is Sunday morning. The bells of the churches are calling with a thousand throats the people of the grand city to worship in peace and quietness. It is the English Sabbath. There is no business to-day, and one can go to church or rest at home, according as one pleases. There is no tyranny here to tremble at; there is no conspiracy to be afraid of; there is no hideous crime lurking in secret places; there is no bold villany, rich and triumphant, stalking with brazen impudence in the light of day, to frighten timid souls from their Sabbath rest.

There is—there was a sort of rumour last night (it is that confounded telegraph which blabs these things), there was, last night, an airy rumour floating over the clubs as the members thereof came in for a bit of supper after the theatre, or a cigar after Lady So-and-so's reception. It was nothing tangible, nothing but a vague question—"By the bye, is it true that
there is a row in Poland?” And a vague answer: “Don’t know; rather bad for Rosencranz if there is.” Nothing positive was known; it was mere rumour. And to-day there is no business and nothing can be done, only the clubs this afternoon are filled with wild reports:—“Insurrection in Poland”—“Massacre of the Russians”—“Defeat of the Imperial Troops.” The clubs are filled with gossipers—what does it all mean? Is it a serious rebellion? Will the Powers interfere? Will there be a European war? Such were the questions mooted at the clubs in London this Sabbath afternoon.

In the meantime Paris had no Sabbath—business went on gaily and wildly in Paris. Those sharp and well-informed French newspapers had their tale to tell, and as a consequence of the information in their columns, within an hour of the opening of the Bourse thousands of pounds worth of Russian stock were thrown on to the market, and the principal Russian securities had fallen four per cent.

Poor Rosencranz! There was very little rest for him that day, with telegrams arriving every hour informing him that there was a panic on the Bourse, and that Russians were going down fast. He hurried to the Russian Embassy to learn what was amiss, but they gave him cold
comfort there. It was true there had been slight disturbances in Poland, but the attempts at insurrection had been put down, arrests had been made, and at present all was quiet in Warsaw.

The Baron hoped it was all right—merely a temporary scare in Paris, and he waited impatiently for Monday morning.

The morning came soon enough, and the newspapers gave him the first warning of what was coming. There was the heading in large type:

"Insurrection in Poland—Defeat of the Russian Troops."

And then followed several accounts—slightly exaggerated perhaps by the fears or fancies of the correspondents—of events such as I have already narrated. And it was scarcely a week since Rosencranz had handed over a million to the Russian Government!

Ten minutes after the Stock Exchange opened a buzzing crowd of men filled the room, eagerly inquiring the news and price of Russians.

Then stories began to pass from mouth to mouth. A hundred thousand pounds of Russian bonds had been sold in one hand at ten pounds
A PANIC.

below Saturday’s price; a revolution had broken out in Russia; the troops were not to be relied on.

The panic spread. Russian Stocks were got rid of at ruinous prices. Tick, tick, go the telegraphs. The room, the whole Exchange, is a mass of shouting human beings. Sometimes a rumour sends half the mob into the street to catch the latest news.

The newspapers help to feed the fire of panic. Second editions make their appearance about noon, then early editions of the evening papers, each one with direr accounts of rebellion and assassination. Also amateur speculators from the West End spring from rapid hansoms, and bolt into their City friends’ offices, and with wild tales of “the end of the Russian Empire, my dear fellow,” sell their bonds at any price they can get for them.

The panic is at its wildest, the roar from the Exchange can be heard from one end of the street to the other; men and boys, commissioners and telegraph messengers, run about hither and thither; and now a fresh rumour, a new panic, runs through the City.

A run on Rosencrantz’s Bank!

The Exchange is almost deserted for a time as its members run out to verify this report; and sure enough Cherubim Court is blocked up
with a shouting and hustling crowd; the doors of the bank are wide open, and a fierce struggle is going on between those who wish to get out and those who are striving to get in.

Room, room! Make way! Here is the Baron himself. Ghastly pale, the sweat streaming over his face, his hair hanging over his forehead, little Rosencranz makes his way by the sheer force of rage and despair through the crowd. He forces his way into his bank, which is choked up with men hoarsely yelling for their money. Over all the hubbub, Rosencranz's shrill voice is heard—

"Be quiet, shentlemen. Dere is no 'urry. Dere iss plenty off money."

The Baron's pronunciation failed him in his excitement."

"Ah, it is all very well talking in that way," says a well-dressed man; "let me see my money and then I'll be quiet."

"Your money!" returns Rosencranz. "What is your money? Vifty bound, a 'undred bound? Why I can bay you out of my own pocket. What is the use of talking about a mere trifle like that?"

"My accaount is one thousand two hundred and sixteen paound fifteen shilling," says the man angrily.

"Oh, is it indeed?" retorts Rosencranz. "Well
you needn't fear for your one thousand two hundred bounds. There is plenty of money for a small account like yours. Here, Schwartz, look up this shentleman's account," he shouted to one of the cashiers at the counter. "What is your name?" he asks of the man.

"Oh, you're Rosencranz, ain't you? Well, Mr. Rosencranz, my name is Mr. Brown, Gipsy Hill."

"John Brown, one thousand, etc.," shouts the clerk.

Rosencranz whips out his pocket-book.

"Now, then, give me your cheque. Here, one thousand, two 'undred, ten bounds, vive bound, and dirty shilling—vive shilling. There, that is your monish. Now get out of this place and never show your face here again."

And little Rosencranz points tragically to the door. The man makes his exit without a word, amidst some chuckles from the bystanders, who have been listening, forgetful of their own wants, to the colloquy between debtor and creditor.

After this the Baron marches off to his private office, to ponder over his losses.

I suppose everything has its tragic side; the circus clown may possibly be a tragic character, and so even the sordid money-grubbing City may
have its tragedy. Certainly the Baron is the very last person, one would think, who would suit the part; but, be this as it may, Fortune, amongst her other eccentricities, has chosen him for tragedy, and he must act the part as best he can.

I am afraid he does not do it very well; he whines and grumbles a good deal. That villain Bagrathion has ruined him; the Russian Government have grossly deceived him—swindled him; and So-and-so would not accommodate him, etc. But he struggled hard against fate; he worked as he had never worked before; he showed abilities for finance, such as he had certainly never brought into play on any other occasion, for his enterprises had been merely lucky throws which fortune had for some reason, or no reason, favoured.

The descent of Avernus is not always easy. You may ascend easily enough by the help of guides and donkeys, but when you begin to go down it is so steep that you cannot always keep your footing; your hands are hurt and scratched on sharp stones and prickly shrubs; you slip and fall and are all over dirt; you are breathless and your limbs ache, but you cannot stand still on account of the steepness of the place; you must keep going downwards, sometimes with a
painful run, always with jolts and jerks; and when at last you reach the bottom of the hill all you can do is to lie down and rest.

And now Rosencranz, arrived at the summit of his fortune, has begun the descent. His credit is gone in the space of an afternoon, and a few vague rumours have sufficed to shatter his plans and ruin his speculations.

Yes, merely vague rumours—that was the worst of it. Like every panic, there was no foundation for this scare.

At this very time, when the newspaper boys were calling out “Defeat of the Imperial troops,” Warsaw was quiet, and the Imperial troops under General Bagrathion and other capable officers were marching to the scenes of disturbance with a good hope of speedily reducing the rebels to submission. Next morning the papers would be duly announcing that the insurgents had been defeated, arrests had been made, &c., and the City of London would resume its old ways as if nothing had happened.

Only a few old maids who had foolishly entrusted their money in the Stock Exchange would be reduced to penury, a number of families would be reduced to starvation, and here and there a firm would be made bankrupt, the partners having rashly speculated in Russian
bonds, and their clerks would be turned into the streets to starve or steal.

Besides, there were, of course, losers whose yearly income had disappeared, and amongst these was our friend Mrs. Henry Hatton, who had dipped deeply in Russian bonds, notwithstanding the advice of her father, and now she had to pay for her venture.

But the man on whom the blow fell heaviest, the man who lost the most and fell the deepest, was the owner of Ladywell. There his brief reign was now over. No more would the blue and gold liveried footmen line the hall and the stairs, or glide about the sumptuous rooms, handing dainties to the guests of the house; no more would Rosencranz sit at the top of the mahogany table; and no more would pretty ladies smile to him and men be civil to him in the midst of his house and park. And those trips up the river, and those drives through his own park and lands, never more would Baron Rosencranz enjoy, or at least experience them.

And I wonder—when the sale took place the following summer, and the furniture, and the pictures, and the plate, and the house, and the park were all sold; when the pretty ladies and the handsome men drove and rode up to the house to share in the spoliation and speculate
amongst themselves when Rosencranz would "go," and auctioneers and Jews dawdled about the fine old house smoking their bad cigars,—I wonder whether the owls in the trees looked on grimly at the scene with a hoot of derision? I can almost fancy the stern aspect of those old chimneys as they looked down on the ephemeral existence of modern nobles, and I think I can almost hear those bats, as they flit round the deserted house in the perfect stillness of the summer evening, twittering, the flighty creatures, as if they were saying to one another—

"Ah, ah! so much for almighty gold, so much for modern enterprise and commerce, and so much for modern improvement!"
CHAPTER XVI.

SMALL TREASURES.

While Baron Rosencranz was ruining himself, and Mrs. Hatton was losing her money in speculation, Lucy and Theodora were seeing each other nearly every day, and consoling one another to the best of their ability.

It would be tedious and withal useless to relate any of their conversations, however interesting they might be to themselves, and it will suffice to say that Lucy was kept au courant of the insurrection in Poland, and found herself possessed of a knowledge of affairs in that country far superior to that of the world at large, while on the other hand Theodora found the value of some one to whom she could confide some at least of her thoughts and anxieties. In this manner they passed, I say, nearly every day in each other’s company, for Mrs. Golding had willingly allowed Lucy to go to her friend whenever she liked. I may say there were grades of knowledge of Jagellon’s affairs in the
family at Park House. Lucy knew everything, her mother knew some degrees less, and Mr. Golding was in a still lower grade; the result of all this being that Lucy was allowed to go to Rose Lodge as often as she pleased, and nobody troubled her with any questions concerning her visits there.

On one of these occasions, while Lucy was with her friend in her boudoir, an odd incident occurred.

The fact is that Watkins, to whom, it will be remembered, Jagellon had given a letter of recommendation addressed to the Countess Woronzow, happened to call on this day (it was about a fortnight after the panic in the City) to present his letter.

Watkins having stated his errand to Peter, by whom he was warmly received, was informed that Madame was engaged. But on Watkins showing his letter to Peter, the latter said that he would take it up to Madame, and that Watkins had better wait and see the result.

So, leaving Watkins in the porch, Peter went upstairs to Madame’s boudoir and knocked somewhat diffidently at the door.

Lucy was engaged in doing some tatting, while Theodora, with a Virgil in her hand, was alternately reading and talking to Lucy.
Peter, on making his appearance, stated his errand as follows:

"A man named Watkins wishes to speak to you, Madame," said he. "He has been recommended to you, Madame, for a footman's place."

"Oh, I will come and speak to him," said the Countess, rising at once.

Then said Peter, "He has brought a letter, Madame," and presented the missive which Watkins had given him. She took it and stopped a moment, looking at the address on the envelope.

Lucy meanwhile had ceased working, and was watching these proceedings with considerable curiosity.

Then Madame broke open the envelope and read the letter, smiling to herself as she read.

After hesitating a moment, she said to Peter, "I will come down to him," and was moving to the door when Lucy arrested her.

"Theodora, I think—that is, our footman is leaving," she said.

"Oh!" interrupted Theodora, turning to her, "wait a moment, Peter—a—I will come down, presently."

Peter departed and closed the door. No sooner was he gone than Theodora fell to kissing the letter.

"Oh, Lucy, it is the first letter I have had
from him since we were married. Heaven bless the man for bringing it!” and she sat down to read it over again. Then she handed it to Lucy.

It was simply a formal recommendation of Watkins.

“Isn’t it comical,” she went on, laughing, while some tears dropped on to the envelope she held in her hand,—“he addresses me as ‘Madame,’ and calls me the Countess Woronzow? I don’t know whether to laugh or cry, but I should excessively like to cry.”

“I feel inclined to laugh,” said Lucy. “It does seem so funny!”

“Is it not delicious? Can you do anything for the man?”

“Well, our footman is leaving, and I should think this man would do for the place.”

“At any rate, he can call and apply for it. I’ll just see him; or we might have him up here, and you can speak to him.”

“Yes,” said Lucy.

So Peter was summoned and told to bring Watkins upstairs.

Poor Watkins, on being admitted, presented rather a bashful exterior; and no wonder, on being put on an equality with some of the best people in society, in that he was permitted to
enter the Countess’s boudoir. Watkins stood fingering his hat before him, and endeavouring to grasp the situation.

"You have been recommended to me," said Madame, "as groom or footman. I cannot say that I am in need at present of any one, but perhaps Miss Golding here can do something for you."

"Yes, my lady—thank you kindly, my lady," stammered Watkins.

Then Lucy struck in—"Our footman is leaving, and perhaps the place might suit you. The work is principally indoors, but if you can ride you would have to accompany me on horseback."

"Yes, miss. I ride and drive, and have waited at table, miss. I understand all about horses, my lady," turning to Madame.

"Well, I do not think you can do better than apply for the situation," replied Madame.

"Thank you, my lady, I’m sure. Shall I call at Park House, miss?"

"Yes, you can come to-morrow morning, and I will speak to Mrs. Golding about you."

"Thank you kindly, miss."

"And I shall be glad to help you at any time, Watkins," said Madame.
“Thank you, my lady.” Then Watkins backed towards the door; “Good morning to you, my lady, good morning, to you, miss,” he said, and out he went.

In the hall he was joined by Peter.

“Peter, I’m an ass!” says Watkins, gravely.

“Why, what is the matter?” asked Peter; “you have not offended Madame?”

“Peter, my lady’s a regular good ’un, don’t you make any mistake about that,” replied Watkins, with emphasis. “I’ve been labouring under a mistake, Peter—I’m a bit puzzled now, but I see I am a fool, that’s all.”

“I can explain the whole thing to you in one word,” said Peter, quietly; “but,” he added, “not at present—at a future time, perhaps.”

“All right, I ain’t as green as a gooseberry, and I can see a thing or two, that’s all.”

“Well, and what are you going to do?” inquired Peter.

“I’m a-going to Muster Golding, Peter; lovely place, ain’t it? Nothing to do, and plenty to eat, and a little to do with th’ horses, mind that.”

Peter congratulated him on his prospects.

“Thank ye,” said the other, adding, “I’ve got something to do, first, though, and I must think how to do it.” Saying this he shook
hands with Peter and departed in a meditative mood.

The "something" Mr. Watkins alluded to was the other recommendation he had in his possession, and this he presented to Robert on making his appearance the next morning at Park House. Robert went with the letter into the library, and finding Lucy there handed her the letter, to her great surprise. She had the previous evening pleaded hard for Watkins with her mother. Mrs. Golding asked if Count Jagellon had definitely left England.

"Yes, mamma," said Lucy, rather timidly.

"And he is not likely to come back, dear?"

"I don't know. Theodora told me that he had gone to Poland; but it is a secret, mamma dear."

"Very well, dear," said her mother, after a pause, "I will see papa about it."

"Oh, but do promise you will do something for the man, mamma."

"Well, I will talk it over with papa, dear, and if he sees no objection, I will take the man."

And Mrs. Golding having consulted with her husband, they decided to give way, as usual, to their darling.

So Watkins, having been duly approved of,
was engaged, and a week after took up his abode at Park House.

And Lucy hid her letter where neither moth nor rust could corrupt, and kept it as the one secret of her young life.
CHAPTER XVII.

PARTANT POUR LA SYRIE.

One morning Lucy, on being admitted to Rose Lodge, was met by Theodora on the stairs with a letter.

"Come here, quick, Lucy," she exclaimed, and hurried her into the boudoir.

"He is safe and well, Lucy darling, only he has got a bad cold, he says. I have a long letter from him. They have been fighting; he says (he is in the cavalry), and he is unhurt. Oh, Lucy darling, I would give the world to see him for one moment! I will read to you what he says."

They sat down together on the sofa; Lucy impatient to hear the news, Theodora eager to impart it to her. Nevertheless, she began at the beginning of the epistle, and read a long way to herself before she began to peruse aloud. At last she read aloud as follows:

"'We have had some fighting already, that is, some skirmishes, but the enemy does not seem
particularly anxious to engage us. We have not got a bad force, mind you; at least the fellows have plenty of pluck, but they are awfully badly armed, most of them having nothing but those scythes, which are most ungainly-looking things. I would sooner have a rapier, myself, any day. I am in the cavalry; they only number about 200 sabres.

"The Dictator wanted me to command them, but I told him I had not the least idea how to manage them, so he appointed me second in command to another man, Colonel K——, who has been a Prussian Uhlan, and seems a smart sort of officer. We had a bit of a fight on our own account with those beastly Cossacks. They are an awful set of ragamuffins, with long spears, and some of them with a lot of pistols besides. We made short work of them, I can tell you. We simply rode right into the midst of them and slashed——'

"Oh!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Isn’t it splendid? I wish I had been with him."

"Was he not hurt?"

"No, he says not. I was afraid he must have been wounded, but you shall hear what he says: ‘and slashed at them till they turned their nags’ heads round and bolted. We went after them
for some distance, and then had to retreat, by K.'s orders. There was not much danger in it, and it's mere child's play, I fancy, to what we shall have soon." Here the reader broke off.

"Oh, dear, what will become of him? And I am sitting here quietly while he is in danger! Why mayn't I be at his side? Ah, it was very hard of him not to let me go with him."

"But what could you do, Dora dear? You couldn't fight, you know."

"No, but I could take care of him, and I could make him comfortable. He has to sleep out of doors, he says, and he has, of course, got a bad cold with it—he says he is as hoarse as an old Cochin hen. Oh, I am sure he is miserable, and here am I warm and comfortable and living well. I'll tell you what, Lucy, I shall live on bread and water and have no fire, for I will not be comfortable when he has to undergo such hardships. Oh, how I wish he had never gone away!"

Lucy sat silently meditating on the subject, and when Theodora had finished speaking, she said, as if to herself,—

"What poor creatures we are; we can do nothing. We can only eat and sleep and dress ourselves as prettily as we can. We are only like china, to be looked at and admired if we
are worth anything, and passed by if we are of no particular value."

"Yes, yes, that is all," replied Theodora, leaning back on the cushions. "We desire to be great, we wish to do something worthy, and there is nothing for us to do; we are weak and incapable—we can only love and be silent."

"Theodora, do you know I should like to be one of those sisters of charity. I have been seriously thinking of it lately. One could do some good then."

"No, my darling, you have other things to do. Think how it would grieve your father and mother and sister to lose you."

"Yes, but when—when they are gone, and when I am all alone, Dora, then I should like to do something for those who are miserable."

"My darling (throwing her arms round her), as long as I live you will not be alone. And if you leave me, and perhaps I shall be—oh, heavens, I do not know what may happen! Lucy, I dream such dreadful things sometimes. The other night I dreamt I was at Ladywell in bed asleep, and that I woke up and saw a dark figure by my bedside. He had a long cloak on, and he opened it, and I saw that his dress underneath was all bloody, and then I saw his face, and recognized him, Lucy, ghastly pale! I
shrieked, and woke myself. I could not sleep any more that night, and the dream seems to haunt me still."

"Poor dear!" said Lucy, kissing her. "I am sure you must suffer so much. I wish I could do anything for you, dearest."

"I cannot help it," Theodora went on; "I feel utterly miserable sometimes. And he knows it. He begs me to be happy, and tells me to go to parties and be as gay as I can. Then he says he is very jolly and I need not fret about him, and all the time I know he is not; he would not say so if he were really happy. I am sure he is as miserable as I am. Oh, what a hard fate ours is!"

She buried her face in the cushions, and began to sob pitifully.

Lucy put one arm round her, and her cheek against her head.

"Dora dearest, don't cry; I am so sorry for you."

"No, no, you are right, darling, I must be patient." Then she sat up and dried her eyes, and proceeded, with wonderful calmness, to read to Lucy some more extracts from Jagellon's letter, telling about Mentzel and about General Bagrathion, "who," he wrote, "is going to attack us soon, I fancy. He is advancing
rapidly against us.” “Ah, how I hate that man!” was Theodora’s comment on this paragraph.

They spent the rest of the day in discussing this letter and talking about the writer, so that it was late in the afternoon when Lucy left, promising to return next day.

The following morning, however, Lucy received a letter from the Countess to this effect:—

“Don’t come to-morrow, darling, I shall be very busy, but come and see me the next day as early as you can. I shall want to see you very particularly.”

When Lucy went to Rose Lodge on the day appointed, she found the whole house in confusion, and Madame’s boudoir littered with a travelling case or two.

“Theodora dear, are you going away?” she asked.

“Yes, dear, I am going to him. I cannot bear to be away from him any longer, Lucy; I feel that he wants me, and that I ought to be with him.”

“Oh, Dora dear, think what danger you will run; you may be killed.”

“God will protect me, dearest, and I feel that I am right; where my husband is, there I ought
to be, whether in danger—more if he is in
danger.’”

“Ah, but, Dora, he is in the midst of war—in
a camp filled with soldiers; what place can there
be for you there?”

“Every one knows me there, dear, and they
will respect me, and once there he will protect
me. Besides, I shall take my servant, Peter,
with me, who is anxious to go—nay, he wanted
to go before to fight for his country.”

“Dora, what shall I do without you? I shall
be so anxious about you that I shall be thinking
of you every minute of the day, for fear anything
dreadful should happen to you. Oh, Dora dar-
ling” (throwing her arms round the other’s
neck), “be persuaded by me. Write to him,
and ask him first what you are to do.”

“How can I write when I don’t know yet where
he is? No, no, my dear darling, I must go, I
must see him, I must be with him if he wants
me.”

“Oh, what shall I do?” exclaimed Lucy, sitting
down on the sofa in dismay.

“Do not be afraid,” said Theodora. “I will
write to you, dear, and let you know how I am.”

“Yes, do, dear, for I shall be so lonely without
you; I shall have no one to talk to, and no one
to think with me.”
Hereupon Theodora entwined her arms round her friend and, kissing her, said, "My dear darling, shall I ever forget you? Shall I not be thinking of you always, wherever I may be, and whatever I may be doing? And perhaps I may not be able to stay in Poland, and then I shall be able to write to you often."

“Oh, I hope it may all turn out well!” said Lucy, despondingly.

And Theodora consoled her as best she could, and at last they fell to discussing the plans for the journey—how Theodora was to get to Bohemia, then to Cracow, and then to find her way to the Polish army.

So they passed the morning and the greater part of the afternoon, Lucy going home to dinner, only to return accompanied by her maid after dinner to bid farewell to her dearest friend.

I will not attempt to describe the meeting between them, but will rather draw a curtain over the parting of two such faithful friends.

It must suffice to say that Lucy parted from Theodora at the very door of the house, and went home with her servant, who was herself moved to tears by the sight of so much affection.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

GUS MAKES AN ADVANCE.

Gus Fipps and Mr. Hudson were sitting in the bay window of the club in a condition of gossiping ennui.

Gus, during these exciting times of war and speculation, was engaged in playing, to use a "turfy" expression, a waiting game.

He had now a clear course before him, the race seemed to be all his own, and yet he feared to "put on a spurt," and still plodded on, watchful against any accident which might lose him his race of life. He visited Park House regularly, but saw as much of Mr. and Mrs. Golding there as of his intended wife. He knew that she was occupied in visiting Madame de Woronzow (as he called her), and did not attempt to interfere in those visits. He abstained from going to Rose Lodge, at least he only called to leave his card there, but he kept his eyes and ears open, and had already some shrewd suspicions of the facts of the case at Rose Lodge.
At present he was no worse off, though perhaps no better, than he ever was before, and he feared by any precipitate step to make his prospects change for the worse.

It were to be wished that we could give as favourable an account of his companion in the bay window.

Mr. Hudson was no longer the gay and stout man that he was when we last saw him at Ladywell.

An attack of delirium tremens and the loss of a considerable part of his estate had served to reduce the weight and condition of Mr. Hudson. At this time he was forbidden the use of spirituous liquors, excepting a limited number of glasses of wine, and was fain to quench his thirst with copious drafts of pure seltzer and soda water.

"Mrs. Price's case is to come on in November," he was remarking, filling up a considerable hiatus in the conversation.

"Is it? Queer case, is it not? I suppose our friend has arranged matters?"

"Uttoxeter, you mean?" lowering his voice a little. "Oh, I believe he and Price are on excellent terms. So a man told me."

"Price versus Price and Thomson, isn't it? Is that the same man who hunts in Bedfordshire?"
"That's the man. Hang it! I don't think she had much to do with him."

"Oh, he is the scapegoat, I suppose. Hullo! here's Lord Thryburgh," added Gus, as that nobleman entered the room, and came towards them.

"How are you, Hudson—better?" inquired my Lord.

"About the same, thanks. Deuced miserable!"

"Poor fellow! What's the news, eh?"

"You've heard about Mrs. Price?" asked Gus.

"Oh, ah!—so she's going to defend herself after all, I hear. By Jove! I'll back her now. I say, Gus, I fancy that man Jagellon has bolted to get out of the way, don't you think? It's my belief he ought to have been a 'co.'"

"Upon my word, I don't think there was anything between them," said Gus.

"How about that affair at Ladywell, then?" put in Hudson.

"Well, for my part, I don't think that was anything else but a mistake. I am almost certain that at that very time he was in love with some one else."

"Really?" said Lord Thryburgh, yawning and pushing his hat on the back of his head.

"A fellow can 'spoon' more than one woman at a time," remarked Hudson.
“Yes, but not in one house,” replied Gus, “especially when he wants to be off with the old love. But it’s my belief that he was never ‘on’ with Mrs. P.”

“By Jove! he looked like it,” said Lord Thryburgh.

“Yes, but it was all a blind, I think.”

“Well, who was the other one?” asked Mr Hudson.

“Ah, I would rather not say at present,” said Gus, mysteriously; “but don’t be surprised if you find old Jagellon married some fine day, and then I’ll tell you if I was right.”

“Good Lord!” ejaculated Lord Thryburgh, with another yawn.

Further conversation on this topic was then interrupted by the arrival of Lord Uttoxeter.

His Lordship had of late been indisposed, and had but recently returned from Aix-la-Chapelle, whither he had been ordered by his physician for his complaint—the gout, I think it was. He came slowly, limping a little with one leg, towards the window, where the others were sitting.

Having nodded with a “How do?” to Lord Thryburgh and Hudson, he addressed Gus.

“By the way, Gus, is it true that Langiewicz has beaten the Russians?”
“Where did you hear that?” asked Gus in return.

“Ponsonby told me just now. He says the report came from Paris?”

“I wonder whether it’s true,” said Lord Thryburgh.

“I believe those Russians will be licked, after all,” remarked Hudson, with an air of conviction.

“I don’t quite think that,” replied Lord Uttoxeter feebly, while he examined the shape of his finger-nails. “My idea is that Bagrathion will be equal to the occasion, you know. I have great faith in Bagrathion. I doubt if they can beat him.”

The four then proceeded to discuss the chances of the war in Poland, without any of them evincing any great interest in the subject, and when Gus declared that he had to go and dress, the others fell to discussing which was the prettiest débutante who had yet appeared this season.

Gus was going to dine en famille with the Goldings that evening; it was one of the little rewards he obtained for his assiduous attentions at Park House. Not that there was anything very entertaining in these dinners—at least not to most people. Gus, of course, merely went to see and say a word to Lucy, and with this he
was quite contented, and duly felt quite miserable the day after. For the rest, Mr. Golding was not a very entertaining host, for the old gentleman was growing more and more reserved and silent every day. His daughter’s (Barbara’s) affairs troubled him, and, besides, at the present time, all was not going well at the bank. The bank had losses as well as other houses and people.

So Mr. Golding was generally rather silent over dinner, and his wife, partly out of sympathy, had not much to say to Gus, though she was attentive to him always, and listened to his conversation.

Thus the responsibility of conversation fell on Gus’s shoulders, and it was not a very easy thing to acquit himself to his own satisfaction; that is to say, to interest Miss Lucy in his anecdotes and general news. So after he had discussed the affairs of the nation, and certain weddings, which had or were about to take place (in which subjects Lucy seemed to take some interest), Gus, in order to start a new subject, mentioned what Lord Uttoxeter had told him about the reported victory of the Poles.

He had addressed his remark to Mr. Golding, but was immediately attracted to Lucy opposite
him by the effect of his remark. She was quietly eating a meringue, but as soon as Gus uttered the words, "Langiewicz has gained a victory," she started so violently as to let her spoon fall with a clang on to her plate, and then recovering herself went on with her meal, blushing deeply the while. All this Gus noted, and feared he had made a faux pas.

"Ah, I must say I'm sorry to hear it," remarked Mr. Golding in reply to Gus. "It will only prolong the contest, and it is a hopeless one, I think—hopeless."

"The question is, will France interfere?" said Gus, and proceeded to discuss the political view of the question.

Whereupon Mrs. Golding took the opportunity of leaving the table with the object of relieving Lucy's evident nervousness.

Gus remained to talk politics and share a bottle of wine with his host, and this being finished, Mr. Golding excused himself, and sent Gus into the drawing-room to the ladies.

Similarly, Mrs. Golding, after Gus had been a short time in the drawing-room, went away, as she said, to speak to her husband, and left the young couple together. In these circumstances the young people generally talked together in an amicable fashion; or, sometimes, Lucy sang
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and played on the piano. On this occasion, however, Lucy suddenly said—

"Oh, is it true that there has been fighting—in Poland, I mean?"

"Yes, I believe so; Lord Uttoxeter told me," said Gus, looking rather astonished at Lucy's eagerness.

"And is anybody killed?" Gus looked still more puzzled. "That is—I mean—oh, Gus, she has gone there—Theodora, I mean—the Countess Woronzow! Don't tell any one, please. I am so anxious about her," and she began to cry.

Gus felt like a fool, and did not know what to do.

"I am so sorry," he stammered out; "really I did not know. Where is she, do you know?"

"With the Dictator, General Langiewicz, I believe," said Lucy, drying her eyes.

"Really? I have not heard any particulars of the battle. But, perhaps," added Gus, "I could get to hear something more."

"Oh, thank you. But, please, do not tell any one about it. It's a secret, but I thought you, that is——"

"'Pon my honour," said Gus, with emphasis, "I won't let any one know. You may trust me safely, I assure you."

"Thank you, very much."
"Have you heard from her since she went?" asked Gus.

"No, not once, though she promised to write, and it makes me so anxious."

"I fancy it is rather difficult to hear from anywhere in Poland," remarked Gus. "There is no post, of course, and each side cuts off the communications of the other. You know they say the Russians are in Langiewicz's rear."

"Oh dear, are they?"

"Yes, so that it would be difficult to hear from the Countess if she has really got there; and if she has been taken by the Russians the papers would, probably, hear of it."

"Then you think she is in the midst of the fighting?"

"I think so, as you have not heard from her."

"Oh, how dreadful!"

"But," proceeded Gus, "there has not certainly been much fighting as yet, and what Lord Uttoxeter told me is mere rumour, so you may conclude she is safe."

"Oh, I hope so!"

Then Gus asked when she went, and Lucy was proceeding to give him some particulars of the Countess's departure, omitting of course all mention of Jagellon, when Mrs. Golding returned, and the subject was dropped.
However, as he was leaving, Gus said softly to Lucy, "I will call to-morrow and let you know what I can hear. Don't say a word of what I tell you, that's all, you know."

"Oh no. Thank you, so much," she whispered. And Gus said good night, gave the little hand a squeeze, and departed in a state of high elation at being chosen to share so weighty a secret.
CHAPTER XIX.

THE END OF IT.

Gus duly called on the following afternoon, and having obtained a tête-à-tête with his fiancée he informed her of the result of his inquiries—which, it may be mentioned, he had prosecuted with extraordinary diligence during the morning in and about the Foreign Office. So far as he could gather, he said, there was little doubt that a battle had been fought, but which side had been victorious was not certain. "My idea is," he continued, "that the battle was a doubtful one, or, if anything, slightly advantageous to the Poles, because there is no intelligence of the battle from St. Petersburg, and they would certainly have told us if the victory had been theirs. On the other hand, had Langiewicz gained a decisive victory, he would have freed his communications, and we should be able to hear from him. Besides," added Gus, "there is a report from Ber-
lin that desperate fighting is going on now—but this is not confirmed.”

“Oh, how dreadful!” exclaimed Lucy. “What will become of her?”

“That reminds me,” rejoined Gus, “it is said that there is a lady in the Polish camp. I am afraid the Countess is there.”

“Yes, I feel sure she is. Oh! Gus, what shall I do? I cannot bear this suspense.”

Gus duly noted that this was the second time within the last few days that she had called him by his Christian name.

“We can only hope for the best, Lucy,” he replied (he pronounced her name rather timidly). “I am sure I hope myself she will come to no harm. What a plucky woman she is!”

“Oh! she has the most perfect courage, and would risk any danger for” (she checked herself) —“for her country’s sake.” Saying this she blushed a little, and Gus himself was rather embarrassed, for he had half guessed what she was going to say.

After a moment’s silence, Lucy added: “Thank you very much for the trouble you have taken.”

“It is no trouble, I assure you. I am very anxious myself about the Countess.”

Soon afterwards Gus went away, promising to
obtain all the information he could and impart it to Lucy.

The next day, Saturday, however, Gus came in the morning bringing with him the *Times*, which contained the fatal news of the defeat of the Poles. Lucy almost fainted away when he showed her the paper, and was so alarmed and shaken by the intelligence that she begged Gus to excuse her, and retired to her room to bewail her friends, whom she now gave up for lost.

It was, indeed, a very grave party which went to church the next morning from Park House.

Mr. Golding’s face seemed to become more careworn every day, and his wife was equally anxious about the cause of his care, which he had not yet confided to her.

So these three went to church silently and perhaps more gravely than had been their wont when Lucy was a fresh young girl, innocent of the wild passions that swept over the souls of men and women. Now, was she not a woman? Had she not already experienced the essence of the joys and sorrows which make up a woman’s life? And in church she sat with her veil down, or buried her face in her hands as she knelt to hide herself in her own thoughts, so to speak, and perhaps to conceal the tears that sprang from her heart as the young boy’s voice poured
forth its song, "As pants the hart for cooling streams."

So sweet was the voice, so closely did it chime in with Lucy's own feelings, that she was fain to bend down her head and let the tears fall gently. Others might be rejoicing (the majority of the world generally seems to be merry, especially to the person who is sad), but how can one rejoice when one has lost all one wishes for, and how can one sympathize in the general rejoicing when one's thoughts are fixed on one person?

So Lucy went to church and returned sadly home, retiring to her room to be alone, and to think of her dear ones far away.

Truly she had loved and lost—she would never see him again, so she believed; and perhaps it was as well she should not, that she might never feel the shame of meeting him who knew her love, and who could never be hers. It was well it was all over, and love and the joy of life were past; nothing now left her but plain hard duty to be done and borne.

How lonely she felt! And there was no one to comfort her, for she dared not tell her mother everything, for fear of breaking off definitely her engagement with Gus, which she would not yet finally relinquish.

It was, therefore, a gloomy Sunday in Park
House, and all the members of the household seemed to hurry off to bed to get rid of the day as soon as possible.

Monday morning came with its work and duties. Mr. Golding ate silently the breakfast Lucy provided for him, and departed Cityward. Then Lucy busied herself in the household, which had latterly been almost entirely under her care; she was becoming quite a young matron now.

Thus it happened after lunch that when she had to give a trifling order to Watkins (a matter of common occurrence), she was rather surprised when Watkins, having said his "Yes, miss," stood still, as if waiting for something else. She was about to repeat her order, thinking he had not understood, when the man said in a low voice, "Beg pardon, miss, could I speak to you a moment?"

"Yes, what is it?" said Lucy quietly, thinking the man wanted some favour granted him.

They were in the hall, Lucy standing by the stairs with one foot on the lowest step.

"If you please, miss, I saw Peter to-day. My lady has——"

"Oh!" exclaimed Lucy, turning pale and leaning against the banisters. "Is she—where is she?"
"She has come back, miss."
"Thank Heaven! and is she safe and well?"
"Yes, miss, she is all safe." Here Watkins stopped short and looked down on the ground with an embarrassed air, while he shuffled one foot to and fro.
"Is she alone?"
"Yes, miss," in a still lower voice.
"And she is well enough to see me?"
"Yes, miss."
"Thank you for telling me, Watkins; I will go to her at once."
"Yes, miss. If you please, miss, Peter said as Madame was much changed."
"Oh, poor dear! I will go to her at once."
And Lucy ran upstairs to put on her bonnet.
She just went to her mother to tell her that she was going to see Madame de Woronzow, who had come back, and then off she set.
On the door being opened by Peter at Rose Lodge, Lucy was so startled by his appearance as to hesitate before she inquired if Madame was at home. Instead of the plump, smooth, well-shaved face and neat figure which Lucy had been used to in this faithful servant, she beheld a lean, hollow-cheeked, ragged-bearded, and long-haired man, who, in a voice hoarse from cold, or perhaps privation, or possibly grief, informed...
Miss Golding that Madame was at home, but that he did not know if she would see Miss Golding, and if she would be so kind as to step inside he would announce her to Madame.

Lucy, in a state of alarm, bewilderment and pity, hardly knowing what she did or where she was going, walked up the porch, and went into the drawing-room. She was left alone in the room for some minutes.

At length the door slowly opened (although Lucy had not heard any one approach) and Theodora appeared. Heavens! was it Theodora? A woman with a face of marble, pale as marble and as stonily quiet, with passionless mouth, pale lips, and black hair scarce brushed. She came up to Lucy, who had risen, fearful and trembling, and held out her hand to her. But Lucy, wild with anxiety, suddenly seizing her hand in both hers, cried—

"Oh, Theodora, what has happened? Do tell me. What is it?"

Theodora coldly withdrew her hand and motioned to her visitor to be seated.

"What is it you want to know?" she asked coolly.

"Oh! who is victorious?—and, and where is he? how is——"

"Who, dear?"
“Count Jagellon, Dora! Is he safe and well?”

The other hesitated for about the space of three seconds. Then she said, quite quietly—

“He is no more. He was killed in battle.”

There was something almost inhuman in the way she said this. It was so sudden that Lucy at first scarcely comprehended what had happened. Then slowly her head drooped, the tears dropped on to her dress, and she hid her face in her hands and sobbed pitifully.

Theodora looked at her coolly.

“Don’t cry,” she said, but there was no sympathy in her voice.

“Don’t cry, my dear,” she repeated.

“Oh, Dora dearest, I loved him so much!”

The other turned on her like lightning.

“You! how could you love him? you were not his wife. You never knew him—you did not know how great, how noble he was; what it was to be loved by him, to hear his words, to be cared for by him, to feel so safe when he was by, to know that no one could harm me. What? ——Oh, accursed be the hand that shot him! may he——”

“Hush! hush! dearest,” said Lucy, frightened at the wildness of her looks.

“Ay, ay,” she muttered, rising and walking
restlessly about the room. “Who is accursed? who was it who slew him? Do you think” (suddenly addressing Lucy) “that wretched man who shot him in fair fight—unknowingly I dare say—was his murderer? No, I say it was I who caused his death! I am his murderer! I sent him to his death; it was for my sake he went to Poland! Ah!” (with a wild cry) “it is I who am accursed!”

She fell on her knees as if overwhelmed with her own judgment and hid her face in her hands.

Lucy came and knelt by her, putting one arm round her.

“Don’t grieve so, darling—it could not be helped,” she said.

But the other did not seem to hear her. She looked up at her wildly.

“When he was here last,” she said slowly, “I reproached him for his want of love for me. I gave him bitter words, and he left me sad and hurt. I believed he loved me just the same, but I was mad at losing him, and I never, never can expiate the doubt I had then! I know, I know now that he loved me! Oh, never was woman so loved! And he was my life—my world—everything to me! Oh, God, how can I live to bear it!” And then the pent-up tears broke
loose and, her face hid in Lucy's bosom, she wept bitterly.

There was something terrible in the appearance of the strong woman, weakened by sorrow and pouring out her grief to this young girl, while Lucy clasped her head to her breast as if to soothe and caress her friend.

They remained so for some minutes, for Lucy did not attempt to stop the other's weeping.

At length Theodora raised her face, stained with tears.

"Come and lie down, darling," Lucy said to her, and she tried to raise her gently from the ground. Theodora obeyed her; she rose and lay down on a couch, and then Lucy knelt down by her and wiped her tears away and kissed her, till at last Theodora ceased her convulsive sobbing, and then she flung her arms round the girl's neck and kissed her again and again.

"Dear, darling Lucy," she said, sobbing a little still, "you were the only one who cared for him besides me. I was his wife, darling, you know."

"Yes, I know," replied Lucy; "where is he—"

Theodora rose and took her by the hand.

"Come with me," she said, and together they
left the room and went upstairs to Madame's boudoir.

That room, no longer the rosy boudoir of old, was now shrouded in darkness, except for two candles which stood by the side of a dark object near the window.

It was growing dusk when Lucy was led into the room by Theodora, so that the gloom was not so startling as it would have been to any one entering from the full light of day; nevertheless Lucy felt as if her heart grew cold as she came into the chamber of death, and she felt yet more afraid when she found that Theodora also was trembling so much that she stopped in the middle of the dark room, unable to move farther.

But Lucy, summoning to her aid all her remaining strength, grasped Theodora's trembling hand in hers, and together the two women tottered rather than walked to the bier, till close by it they both sank down on their knees.

A dark cloth of purple or black was thrown over Jagellon's last habitation, and on this was placed a pretty cross formed of different flowers—hyacinths, violets, and snowdrops. This slight ornament had probably been prepared by the Sister of mercy who sat by the head of the bier telling her beads, the little rattle of
which could be heard in the stillness of the room.

Lucy, when she knelt down, put one hand on the bier, and bending forward pressed her lips against the dark cloth with a long kiss, and this, mingled with the tears which dropped on the flowers of the cross, was her last farewell to her love.

Poor Theodora had quite broken down and was kneeling with her face in her hands, sobbing piteously, till Lucy, having paid her last tribute of affection to the dead, put her arm round her fellow-mourner, and this seemed to quiet her. Then the Sister, kneeling down by the other two, recited aloud her rosary, Theodora joining in the devotion with a voice interrupted by her sobs.

They remained a long time in the room till Theodora grew calm, being tired out with weeping, and then Lucy gently led her away. In the drawing-room Theodora laid herself down, completely exhausted with fatigue and grief. Lucy sat down by her side, watching her for a little while as she lay with closed eyes.

At last Lucy said quietly—

"I think I will stay all night with you, darling."

"Yes, if you like," said Theodora.
So Lucy went home and, having explained matters to her mother, obtained leave to stay at Rose Lodge, and returned thither as quickly as she could.

Her first care was to induce Theodora to take some food, for she learnt from Peter that Madame had only eaten a few biscuits during the last two or three days.

Having succeeded so far, she then put her patient to bed, undertaking herself the office of lady's maid. And then, when she had made the dear patient comfortable in bed, and had kissed her and told her to go to sleep, she sat down by her bedside to watch and wait till the other slept.

She was soon rewarded by seeing Theodora in a profound slumber, but she still sat for some time by the bedside, looking at the beautiful face asleep, pale, and with a deep shadow below the eyelids.

And Lucy, looking at the sleeper, thought all over again their love story—her own and Theodora's—its failure, and the blankness of life before her.
CHAPTER XX.

THEODORA'S NARRATIVE.

The next morning Theodora found herself very feeble, but more calm and resigned to her fate.

Lucy made her lie in bed during the morning, and prepared breakfast for her. In fact she took on herself the whole management of the household with Peter's assistance. She arranged with him the melancholy details of the funeral, she sent for the late Count's lawyer, and conferred with him as to the disposal of the effects of the deceased; in short, she relieved her friend of all the cares and the sad duties of her position.

Nor was Theodora insensible to the kind offices of her friend.

"You have done me so much good, darling," she said to Lucy, as she lay by the drawing-room window, Lucy by her side. "I could not cry before; I think I was going mad, and I don't want to go mad, Lucy."
Lucy herself had not been exempt from this fear on her friend's account, and she still feared lest Theodora, by brooding over her misfortunes (as she perceived was still the case), might be afflicted with a settled melancholy, and, for this reason, she thought it might not be amiss to satisfy her own curiosity, and induce her friend to relieve her mind by telling her all the adventures she had met with.

She gently led up to the subject, and having expressed a wish to know something of the manner of Jagellon's death, Theodora readily complied with her wish and spoke as follows:—

"I dare say you have heard, dear, how the Russian army, or rather armies, had attempted to surround us, and how we cut our way through."

"But tell me, Dora, how you got there, for you know I heard nothing from you."

"But indeed I wrote, though without much hope of the letter reaching you, for we were surrounded by Cossacks then. Well, dear, you must know that I got first of all to Cracow, after travelling night and day for three days. We only rested there a few hours till we had procured horses to take us over the frontier into Poland, or rather into the country called
Poland, for Cracow is as Polish as I am. We set off in the afternoon, so that we might reach the frontier when it was dark, and, in order to avoid any chance of being stopped by the Austrian authorities, we rode by unfrequented ways, making a slight detour, so that it was pitch dark when Peter informed me that we were no longer on Austrian territory. Peter, as you know, accompanied me, and acted as my guide and to a certain extent as my protector. Not that I required very much protection, for I had a good revolver safely stowed in one of the pockets of my cloak. You must know that I wore a long cloak like an inverness, which reached down to my ankles. I also wore my riding trousers; I had a fur cap on my head, and I rode astride of my horse, tucking up my other garments for the purpose. In fact to all appearance I was a man, like my servant Peter.”

“How odd you must have felt, Dora!” remarked Lucy.

“Riding in that way, you mean? Well, the strangeness of it wore off after the first hour, and it was only afterwards that I felt tired with the unaccustomed mode of exercise. Besides, I had very soon something else to think about. Peter knew the country where we were well
enough, but it was not easy to find our way in complete darkness.

"We wandered a considerable way out of our road, as we afterwards found. We had obtained as much information as we could from our friends in Cracow as to the whereabouts of our army, but we knew that the information was not very reliable, because the army, we were told, was constantly shifting its position, marching and counter-marching in order to avoid and divide the superior forces of the enemy. Moreover, we had been informed that the neighbourhood was infested with bodies of Cossacks, more or less numerous, who moved about the country for the purpose of destroying supplies of food which might be useful to the Polish army, and plundering the people of what they could carry away for the use of their own forces. This was indeed their plan of operations. General Bagrathion considered—by the bye, you knew General Bagrathion, did you not, dear?"

"Yes," said Lucy, "I saw him once or twice, though I was never introduced to him."

"Well, he commanded one of the enemy's divisions, nominally. In reality he was the director of all their movements. He was a most cautious and skilful commander, as I knew,
and he no doubt considered it dangerous to risk a pitched battle, even with his superior forces, against brave and desperate men who had everything to gain and nothing to lose. In short, my dear Lucy, his plan was to starve and tire us out. Well, as I said, we were in Poland, riding on under cover of the dark night in the direction, as far as we knew, of our army.

"After we had ridden in this way for some miles, we became aware of a faint light in the distance. Peter could not conjecture what the cause of this appearance might be. He did not know of any habitation on the road which he believed we were taking, and he could only guess that the light proceeded from some bivouac, either of our foes or friends. We halted for a few moments to consider the matter, and at length resolved to approach the light cautiously, and if possible ascertain whence it proceeded without being seen or heard. I remember I was urged to this course by the bitter coldness of the night, which made anything like a fire a tempting prospect.

"We rode on slowly, listening for every sound, until we found ourselves on the crest of a hill, whence we looked down on the place whence the light proceeded."
"In the valley below us were the smouldering remains of a village, containing perhaps a dozen or so houses. One cottage was still emitting spasmodic flames, and in one or two places we saw that the wind blew some embers into a flickering light. We stood for some time looking over the crest of the hill and listening for some sounds of life in the village, for we agreed that the Cossacks had been there, and might possibly be still on the spot. The wind, which blew towards us a strong smell of burnt straw and wood, wafted to us, however, no sound of anybody or anything stirring in the place. At last the silence was broken by the dismal howling, continued at intervals for some time, of a dog in the village below us, and Peter, conjecturing that there was no one in the place, resolved to go and reconnoitre on foot, while I stayed behind and held his horse.

"He departed on his errand, and returned in about a quarter of an hour to tell me that the village was deserted, and that there were no signs of an enemy near the place. On hearing this, I at once rode down to the spot. As we neared the village, the smoke from the burning cottage and the still smouldering ruins of the other habitations appeared to make our horses
restive. They sniffed up the air as if they scented an enemy, and as they manifested great repugnance to enter the place, we dismounted, and tying the horses to a gate at the entrance of the village, proceeded farther on foot.

"Ah, heavens! Lucy, what a sight met our eyes! The recollection of it makes me even now shudder. The flames from the still burning cottage threw a dreadful glare over—oh, fearful horrors! I cannot describe them; I cannot tell you what I saw. One glance was sufficient for me. I covered my face with my hands to keep out the sight of the horrible deeds which had been committed here, and I stood still, trembling with the horror and dread of these iniquities, whilst Peter, kneeling down in the solitary street, began to utter dreadful imprecations against the doers of these deeds. I was roused from my state of stupor by feeling something pulling at my cloak, and starting back in dismay, I discovered a shivering dog at my feet. The animal immediately ran off a little way and then stopped, whining piteously; I instinctively followed it along the street, looking neither to right nor left for fear of the dreadful sights which I might have seen in this valley of the shadow of death. I had already passed by the burning cottage, which shed a too
lurid light around me, when all at once I heard a low moan. I stood stockstill, too frightened to move. Peter, who was following me, began to pray fervently. I listened. I could only hear the crackling of the burning cottage behind me, otherwise the place was as silent as the grave.

“But in a little while I again heard a groan, which seemed to proceed from something at my feet. I looked down, but saw nothing. I perceived, however, that the dog, which I had been following, was standing by the door of the cottage or hut near me, and as soon as I made a step in that direction, it immediately disappeared through the door, which was open, or had been broken down in the ransacking of the place. Additional traces of the marauders, consisting of the debris of broken furniture and pottery, were strewed round the doorway. Inside the hut it was quite dark, and I vainly endeavoured to ascertain whence the groans, I had heard, proceeded, as I stood peering in at the door. I sent Peter, therefore, to procure a light from the burning cottage, while I listened, and endeavoured to make out some object in the darkness. Again I heard a distinct groan inside the hut, and as I had no doubt that somebody was alive there, I only waited till Peter brought me
a burning brand, and then I entered, holding the light before me to guide my steps. By the aid of this light we discovered a poor woman lying on the floor, in a dreadful condition. Her clothes were almost torn off her, and were stained with blood. Her hands had been tied behind her back by the cowardly savages who had maltreated her, so that she was utterly unable to move or help herself in her weakness. A red streak which came from a gash in her head showed itself across her pale forehead and down her wan cheek, and proved well with what cruelty she had been treated.

"A broken chair and table were overturned in the middle of the room; on the floor lay evidences of a drunken orgy in the shape of bottles and mugs and a battered kettle, and in one corner stood a disordered bed, on the coverings of which I could see the marks of blood-stained fingers. The only other occupant of the room, besides ourselves and the poor woman, was the dog, which stood by her licking her face, and apparently trying to revive her.

"I took off my cloak and covered the woman with it, then kneeling down I raised her head and wetted her lips with some brandy-and-water which I had with me. At first her teeth were shut so tightly that it was impossible to
force any of the liquid down her throat, but Peter got some water and bathed her face with it. This so far revived her that I was enabled to force open her mouth and pour in some brandy, and at last she opened her eyes and muttered some unintelligible words. Meantime, we had unbound her hands, and we now carried her as gently as we could to the bed, for she seemed to be in great pain; we laid her on it, covering her with a rough blanket and my cloak, and I then told Peter to keep watch outside while I attended to the poor creature.

"I lit a fire in the grate with the remains of the broken furniture, and then having taken off some of her clothes, and washed and bound up her head, I dragged the bed to the fire, so as to keep her warm. This, however, had an unfortunate effect, for as soon as she became warmer she began to bleed afresh from a wound which had been before stiffened and congealed, so to speak, by the cold.

"As soon as I discovered this, I did my best to stanch the bleeding, but I began to fear that all my efforts would be of no avail to save her life. Indeed, the poor creature begged me to kill her or let her die, saying that she was in great pain and could not bear to live. I comforted her as well as I could; I assured her that her enemies
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had gone, and that I would stay with her till I could see her in a safe place. She seemed to grow easier on my saying this, and asked me if I knew where her daughter was. I got her to describe the girl to me, and asked Peter to look for her—a disagreeable task, which he faithfully performed, for he examined, I believe, everybody he could find in the place. He told me he saw no such person as the woman had described, and we concluded that she must have escaped, as the woman said that the girl was out of doors when the brutal Cossacks arrived. This idea appeared to soothe her better than anything I had done, and she seemed to resign herself to her fate with great composure.

"She told me that her son was with the Polish army, so I asked her where the army lay, telling her that I was going to join it. She told me she believed the Poles lay to the north of Miechow, but she said I must not go in that direction, as the enemy occupied all that neighbourhood. Well, I stayed with her all night, and, as she grew weaker, the pain seemed to leave her. As the morning dawned she passed away very peacefully. I laid her out on the bed in the hut, for she had told me that some of the people would probably return after they found the Cossacks had gone. Then I and Peter
rode away from the dreadful place, following the direction given us by the woman.

"As I told you, it was now early morning, and quite light. We had helped ourselves, by the poor woman's directions, to some bread and cold bacon, so that we were able to keep up our strength, notwithstanding a sleepless night. Our horses also were rested, and in good condition. These were the favourable points of our situation. On the other hand, we were now obliged to ride in the open day, through a country infested by hostile marauders, and our minds, or at least my mind, was full of terrors and forebodings.

"I felt, Lucy, as if I was responsible for the dreadful scenes through which we had just passed. I felt as if I was guilty in intention, though not in act, like those fiendish Cossacks.

"For I, Lucy, have promoted and assisted in this rebellion, and, therefore, I have helped to bring all this suffering and misery on my country. I felt then, and I think the same now, that it would have been better that my countrymen should be oppressed than that they should become the prey of the savage troops who have been let loose on them. But I must return to my story. After we had ridden for about an hour, we suddenly came in sight of a troop of
Cossacks slowly wending their way to Miechow, no doubt after a day's plundering.

"They caught sight of us, and a number of them gave chase. We turned our horses' heads and galloped off. We were, luckily, much better mounted than our pursuers, and after riding for some time we lost sight of them altogether. We still, however, kept up a high speed, in order to enable us to double back, for during the chase we had gone considerably out of our way.

"We rode on, till my poor horse came to a standstill, dead beat, and then we dismounted and led our animals into a wood and gave them some water and grass. While they ate we sat down to rest ourselves, for we were worn out with fatigue and hunger and anxiety. We had a little bread and meat with us, which we had brought from Cracow, and this we devoured together with the remains of our brandy. Peter slept for an hour or so, but I was too anxious to follow his example, and besides too cold to sleep. After this delay, therefore, we again set off on our journey, and were fortunate enough to meet with a countryman who not only directed us on our way, but informed us that the Polish army was about fifteen miles away from us. Night overtook us as we rode wearily on, and we were
already discussing the advisability of dismounting and leading our worn-out horses, when on a sudden a voice called on us in the Polish tongue to halt, and we found ourselves close to a picket of our own army."

CHAPTER XXI.

CONTINUATION OF THEODORA'S NARRATIVE.

"We had only to ascend a low hill," continued Theodora, "and before us were the lights of the Polish camp. One of the soldiers was ordered by the officer in command of the picket (a young Parisian Pole, very polite) to lead us into camp. I had given them my name, together with a secret sign which we have, and that was sufficient. As we walked towards the camp—for we had dismounted—I inquired of the soldier where the cavalry lay, and requested him to lead us in that direction. I then asked with some trepidation if a Count Jagellon, so I phrased it, was there, and the man told me to my great joy that he was, and that he was alive and well. After this I felt that my troubles were at an end. We made a slight detour round the camp in order to reach the point I wished to arrive at. The soldiers were bivouacking on the open ground, for our guide informed us that the army had merely halted for a few hours, for the sol-
diers to eat their suppers and take a little rest. They had been marching all that day and the previous night to escape from the toils of the Russian forces, which had almost completely surrounded them. We saw as we passed through the camp the soldiers, seated, standing, or lying in groups before small and large fires. Some of them were still eating and drinking; others were asleep on the ground; while many were talking and laughing together. Presently we came upon a number of baggage waggons, and horses near them, picketed or tied to the vehicles. As we were threading our way between these waggons all at once I thought I heard the sound of a guitar and some one singing. There was a certain amount of noise in the place, which made it difficult to hear distinctly, but as we turned round one of the waggons I perceived the singer before me. Round a fire near one of the waggons was a group of men, sitting, or standing, or leaning against the waggon. The attitudes and expressions of these men were singularly picturesque. One man leaning against the waggon with folded arms and long coat, intently gazing at the fire; another lying full length on the ground with his head resting on his left hand, and in his mouth a long German pipe; a third squatted on the ground with his
hands over his knees, and looking up at the singer; all of them, in short, in different attitudes, with faces aglow with the light of the fire, made a very picturesque sight.

"Above all, the singer, seated on a box—a seat of honour apparently—guitar in hand, and singing to the accompaniment of this instrument a plaintive song, was a picture in himself. I motioned to my companions to stop, and we stood in the shadow of one of the waggons, watching the scene and listening to the singer. The fire threw a strong light on the singer, so that I could see his face distinctly from where I stood. It was my husband. The song was rather a melancholy one, with a refrain in it ending with a 'good night,' and the singer's voice was a little hoarse, either from emotion or from cold, poor fellow. In short, Lucy, I was ready to burst out crying on the spot.

"As soon as the song ceased, a total silence reigned amidst the group round the singer, and they continued to gaze at the glowing embers before them with a dejected and melancholy air. My husband, having laid down the guitar, was now sitting with his hands hanging listlessly over his knees, and his eyes fixed on the ground, and I was on the point of rushing into the midst of the circle, and flinging my arms round the
poor fellow's neck, but instead a strange whim suddenly entered my head. I exchanged the fur cap I wore for Peter's broad brimmed wide-awake. I pulled the hat well over my eyes, and turning up the collar of my coat so as to conceal the lower part of my face, I walked forward into the light of the fire, and, addressing the tall man, who was leaning against the waggon, I said, in a low voice, as much like a man's as I could make it—

"'Can you tell me where Mr. Mentzel is?' referring to one of the leaders of the rebellion, Lucy.
"'Colonel Mentzel, you mean,' replied the man, correcting me. 'What do you want him for?'
"'I want to see him on important business' I answered.
"'Where do you come from?' he asked.
"'From London,' said I.
"This answer effectually roused my husband, who had been eying me before with some curiosity.
"'From London!' he exclaimed, jumping up. 'Whom do you come from?'
"'That I can only tell Colonel Mentzel.'
"'Tell me,' he said, approaching me, 'do you know Madame de Woronzow? Is she well?'"
"I kept my head down, and pretended to be fumbling in my cloak.

"'No, I don't know the lady,' I replied coolly.

"'Not know the divine Theodora!' (for so they call me, Lucy,) 'then you must be a spy,' several men exclaimed.

"I thought matters were getting dangerous, so I answered that I had heard of her, of course, but I did not know her personally. He seemed much disappointed at this, and evidently did not know what to make of it. The others looked suspiciously at me. So I proceeded with my tale.

"'I was also to inquire for a Count Jagellon,' I said. That person interrupted me at once.

"'Yes, I am he,' he said. 'Good heavens! is anything amiss? Tell me what it is.'

"He came close up to me and peered into my face with anxious eyes, as I could see out of the corners of mine. I held my face down, and my back was to the fire, so that he could not see me. But I could not bear to keep him in suspense any longer. I told him I had some private news to tell him which I would impart to him alone. He gripped me by the arm, and took me aside. Whereupon, pulling off my hat,

"'What! don't you know your own wife?' I whispered. He started back in astonishment.
"'Hush! don't betray me,' I added, with finger on lip.
"Then he seized my hands.
"'Why, why, my dear, my dear Countess—Good heavens! my dear Countess.' This was all he could say as he gazed at me, breathless almost.
"The others, however, came to his relief when they saw me. They at once crowded round me; some hurrahed; some begged to kiss my hand.
"Peter now appeared on the scene, and the others commenced hugging, kissing, and shaking him by the hands and arms; other soldiers soon came running up to ascertain what the noise was about, and I was now surrounded by quite a large crowd of men, huzzaing and embracing one another. It was a very exciting scene. I wanted to throw my arms round my husband's neck, but I dared not do it before all, because I did not wish them to know the relation in which I stood to the Count, so in order to give him an opportunity of speaking to me alone, I proclaimed my intention of proceeding forthwith to head quarters, and I told the Count to conduct me thither. He immediately took me by the hand and led me away.'"

[At this point, Theodora ceased speaking, and appeared to be recalling to herself the scenes
through which she had passed. Some tears began to trickle down her thinned cheeks, and she breathed a heavy sigh, which was almost a sob. Lucy began to fear whether it was well to encourage her to relate her story, and therefore she also remained silent. For some minutes neither spoke.

At length Theodora looked up with another sigh and then continued her story.

"I thought he was with me even now. I seemed to hear his voice, and to feel that he was near me. Ah, Lucy! his voice will haunt me to my dying day. I cannot describe to you how we embraced, how I was locked in his arms. I have the feeling of it still, but I cannot tell you how it was. We were alone, I think; at least, we were out of sight of the group we had just left. Then he began to scold me gently for running so much risk—what if I had been taken prisoner? I showed him my revolver. I might have been killed, he said, and he vowed in that case that he would not have survived me. And he urged that there would be as great or perhaps greater risk in returning, and it would be difficult for him to accompany me. He might have to desert. I cut him short there.

"'I am going to stay here,' I said. At first he would not hear of it."
"'Think of the danger you would run, besides the hardships you would have to bear.'

"'Am I not worthy to share your danger?' I asked.

"He replied that my life was too valuable to expose to the dangers which every common soldier shared.

"I told him again that my life was of no value to me without him, and that there was only one hardship which I could not bear.

"In short, I was obliged to have recourse to the last argument, which I knew was irresistible, to convince him.

"I pleaded our mutual vow, and implored him not to send me away now that we were once more together.

"He could not resist this. He knelt down, and, kissing my hand, declared with great earnestness that he would never forsake me, and, in a word, repeated the vows which he had already made me. I was excessively moved by his devotion to me.

"I confessed my love for him without reserve. I complained of what I had borne in being separated from him, and told him that every moment that he was away from me gave me fresh pain.

"Then he told me he had been very miserable without me, and he began to joke and chaff me,
seeing me unhappy. We walked on towards head quarters, all the time he paying me compliments, just as if he was courting me, while I—I cannot think why it was—but I was as shy and silent as any young maiden. Well, I had an interview with the chiefs, and gave them what information I could about the enemy. Every one commended my resolution in joining the army, and at my request they handed me over to the care of Count Jagellon.

"I agreed with my husband that our marriage should still be kept secret, so that we had to behave with circumspection. However, our immediate care was to procure food and rest for myself. He got me a supper (I will tell you how presently), and he contrived to make me a bed in an ammunition waggon on the top of some powder chests and cannon balls. The waggon was covered with canvas, so that I had a comfortable little tent all to myself, the only restraint being in the matter of light, for I was not allowed to light a match for fear of blowing myself up.

"Having lifted me into my house, my husband bade me good night, and told me to sleep well, an injunction which I soon obeyed to the letter.

"I woke with a peculiar dream or sensation. I thought I was in this very house, and that
somebody had blown me up, but with so slow a fulminating powder, that my house was moved slowly and bodily from its foundations.

"I awoke in dismay. Sure enough the house was moving. I tried to pull aside my bed curtains, my hand encountered, instead of chintz hangings, the hard canvas of the waggon. Then I remembered where I was.

"But what were they doing to me and my abode? A continuous jolting convinced me that I was being carried off somewhere; some thin streaks of light through rents in the canvas walls of my bedroom proved that it was daytime, and a sensation of cold and hunger was evidence that I had slept for a considerable time. I threw aside the blankets which covered me, and tidied my tangled hair as best I could. Then I peeped out cautiously; then thrust my head quite out, pulling aside the curtains of my room for that purpose.

"I never saw so picturesque a sight. It was about eight o'clock in the morning (I had slept some nine or ten hours), with a grey sky and a bitter north wind. Before me, as far as the dark edge of a fir wood, stretched a long line of men on foot, marching.

"Immediately in front of me were three or four pieces of cannon, which were being dragged
along the rough road by men and horses. In advance of these was a body of men, four abreast, and dressed in blue, with French shakos on their heads; some of the men with grey overcoats, most of them without, and all carrying over their shoulders great scythes fastened on to a stout staff. This was a battalion of the scythemen or Kossiniaires, as they are called. As the column wound its way along the road, the scythes of the men crossed each other, forming most fantastic shapes. Beyond these men was a company of Zouaves in red, and farther on a regiment in white with red caps. At the head of these was an officer on horseback, with a tricoloured sash over one shoulder.

"The march was conducted in silence, at least you could only hear the rumbling of artillery and waggons, and the tramp of the soldiers.

"There was, perhaps, little of the pomp and circumstance of war in the scene; there were no glittering cuirassiers, or brilliant hussars, or gay lancer regiments, but there was a subdued colouring and a variety about the scene which would have better pleased an artist's taste than brilliant and glittering uniforms.

"While I remained gazing at this sight, I was recalled to myself by the voice of my servant Peter, now, however, no longer a servant
but a soldier. Under his black overcoat he wore a blue tunic, a shako adorned his head, and he carried a rifle on his shoulder.

"The Count begged me to tell Madame that he was ordered to the front, and would wait on her at the first halt." So he said, to my great disappointment.

"He then said that he would fetch me some water to wash with; and went off, presently returning with a large wooden bowl, half full of water, and a wisp of hay. The bowl, he informed me, was for my own use—having been bought for me by the Count. So I re-entered my apartment, the wagggon, and performed my ablutions to the best of my ability. This done I began to think of breakfast, and this I discovered, on reopening the curtains of the wagggon, ready for me on the shafts, where it had been placed by Peter.

"It consisted of a hunk of bread and some bacon, with a cup of cold coffee, which Peter apologized for not being able to make hot, there being no fire for the purpose. I ate and was well filled. Then I began to feel rather lonely; I had sent off Peter, saying I had no further need of him. I knew nobody near me; I felt like a stranger amongst all these men. I cast my eyes in the direction of the line of march,
and saw about a mile ahead, on the summit of a hill, a body of horsemen. Happily I have good eyes, and I could discern one horseman separated from the rest, whose figure I could not mistake. To make certain, however, I jumped off the waggon, and going up to one of the cannoneers, asked him who the horsemen were.

"He saluted with great respect, and then told me they were the vanguard under Colonel Count Jagellon.

"'Colonel Count Jagellon,' I repeated. I liked the sound of the name. 'Is that he riding apart from the rest?'

"'Yes, Madame.'

"I took to this cannoneer at once; I began to talk to him; asked him about his guns; how many, and what calibre they were; and in this way we soon got on nicely—some of the other gunners putting in occasionally a respectful word. Presently the gun, the last of the battery, became imbedded in some soft ground, previously ploughed by the other cannons.

"Then was tugging and shouting and the use of some uncouth language. They tugged and tugged, horses and men, to no purpose; the gun only got deeper in the mire. I watched the contest with increasing excitement; I was stand-
ing at the back of the carriage, and I could not help exclaiming, 'Back it, back it, men!' To my astonishment they took my advice, and, as luck would have it, by dint of the exertions of some twenty men, the gun was pulled back out of the hole in which the wheels had stuck. Then they started off again with a run, a hideous jolt, and away the gun went.

"From this moment I rapidly improved my acquaintance with the soldiers. Finally, I put myself at the head of the scythemen and chatted with their colonel, a Parisian Pole, who had served in the French army at Solferino. A proposition to fetch my horse I rejected with disdain, and I continued to march bravely on foot, by the side of the soldiers. I think this encouraged them, fatigued as they were with continually marching for days. However this may be, the time seemed to pass quickly to myself; and I found I had walked more than four hours, when at last the army came to a halt. The opportunity occurred at a river about twenty or thirty yards broad, and too deep to ford. The army, therefore, was obliged to halt, while a rude bridge was constructed by means of the trunks of pine trees, and some of the waggons which were abandoned for the purpose.
"I struck out from the line of march and walked off by myself in an attempt to reach by a circuitous route the vanguard, where I expected to find my husband.

"I had not, however, proceeded far on my walk when I heard some shots in the distance, and looking back towards the line of men and waggons I had just left I saw that some tumult was going on; the line was broken; the troops were being formed into platoons or companies on each side of the road; an officer on horseback was riding across the fields towards the river.

"I at once conjectured that we were attacked. The firing became more frequent; waggoners lashed their horses on, vainly endeavouring to get to the front. The road was blocked up. I ran back in alarm to the protection of the Kossiniaires.

"Just as I reached the road and had got under the shelter of our troops, I saw a squadron of horse riding to the rear, amongst whom I soon distinguished my husband leading them. They came on at a round trot, and their officer appeared to be so intent on carrying out his orders that he would certainly have passed within twenty yards without seeing me, had I not waved a handkerchief to him.

"This attracted his attention; he turned and
saw me. His face brightened into a smile as he saluted me with his sword; then turning to his men he waved them on, and away they all went. I felt happy after that, having said good-
day to him.

"But my happiness did not last long. Soon the noise of the combat grew louder, the shots were more frequent, and I could even hear the shouts of the combatants. Then I was seized with an agony of fear. I could see nothing of what was going on, on account of the confu-
sion of waggons in the direction of the scene of the combat, and the intervening battalions of infantry. But I knew he was in the midst of the fight, and I expected every moment to see him borne by his soldiers, dead or wounded, before me. I prayed with all the fervour of fear for his safety. Then I listened intently to ascertain how the fight was progressing. The sounds of battle were growing fainter. Some of the men of the battalion standing near me raised a shout, but whether of joy or anger I did not know.

"Had our men been driven back?

"The suspense was horrible. I ran to one of the waggons which was standing still, unable to get on in the crowd of vehicles. I climbed on to it and looked towards the scene of the fight.
I saw a number of horsemen galloping away. They were our enemies, the Cossacks, as I could see by the lances they carried.

"Hurrah! we had beaten them! we were in hot pursuit. I saw a body of the enemy's cavalry pursued by only three or four of our men.

"They overtook the Cossacks; they rode into the midst of them, and I could see them cutting down the flying enemy. One of them I saw ride into the very midst of the retreating cavalry.

"Oh, heavens! I recognized my husband. I could just see his head above the crowd of his enemies, and I thought he must be taken prisoner, for he was completely surrounded.

"But presently the mass of enemies seemed to open out, and I saw him striking to right and left.

"At every blow he struck an enemy to the ground, nor did his foes make the least attempt at resistance, but suffered themselves to be slaughtered with impunity. I began to feel a great contempt for them.

"They soon afterwards broke and fled in all directions, and then the Count turned and rode back to his men.

"By this time our infantry had resumed their
march, and the waggons were moving on again. The fight was over, and presently our horsemen came riding back. But what a sight they were! He, their leader, I mean, was hot and flushed with the fight, and reeking—no other word will express it—with slaughter.

"Upon my word, Lucy, if it had been any one else, I believe I should then and there have conceived a horror of the man. And there was an air of manlike insolence too about him, which I did not quite like.

"I do not think I ever saw my Count in circumstances less advantageous to himself. And yet I could not help thinking that he looked remarkably handsome in the insolence of his victory.

"He called a halt, and rode up to me.

"'We have beaten them off,' he cried, with a laugh.

"'I am glad to hear it,' I said; I thought it well to be a little dignified.

"I said that I hoped he had not lost many men.

"'Oh, a couple killed and two or three wounded, that's all,' he answered, indifferently. Then, stooping from his saddle, he paid me a compliment on my good looks, commencing with a hope that I had slept well.
"'Oh, I feel very well to-day,' I replied, coldly. I asked him where he was going.  
' 'To the front again, confound it! But (lowering his voice) I will come and see you again as soon as I can, dearest!'  
'I took no notice of this, but asked why he was returning to the guard. 'Are you sure the general does not mean you to stay in the rear?' I said.  
'He seemed puzzled, as if this was a new light to him, and hallooed to one of his men to ride to the general and ask for further orders. Meanwhile he dismounted, and stood by my side. I had some difficulty in preventing him taking my hand. His were red, Lucy. I asked questions about the skirmish in which he had just been engaged, and kept him talking till the trooper returned. The man informed us that the cavalry were to remain in the rear of the line.  
' 'I thought so,' I said with an air of authority. He looked rather astonished at this, and seemed to be impressed with my superior wisdom. Then all at once he became much nicer, I thought. He raised the shako he wore. 'Good-bye, then, for the present, my dear Countess,' he said. 'We must be separated again.'  
'I held out my hand, for I felt sorry for him.
But he held back, saying, 'No, no, I am not fit to touch.'

"'Well, I shall wait impatiently till you come back,' I said, and I whispered a fond epithet to him which sent him away radiant.

"Well, the whole army halted at this river and had a meagre dinner. It was then I found out a circumstance which made me reproach myself bitterly. Peter brought me a substantial repast of bread and meat and some water to drink. I ate heartily, leaving a small quantity for Peter to finish, for I had already a dim suspicion, which was confirmed by the way in which he gobbled up the fragments.

"Soon after this we crossed the river I told you of, and Jagellon being for the time relieved of his duties came to me. I asked him at once if he was not going to eat something. He evaded my question, but I pressed him the more and conjured him to tell me the truth, when he confessed that I had eaten his rations for the day, and that he had shared the breakfast of another officer, a man named Raczynski, whom I had seen in the company of the Count on the first night of my arrival. The fact was, he told me, that the army had barely sufficient food to last two days longer, and that the orders were consequently very strict as to the distribution
of the rations. Oh, how I upbraided him when I found it out! and then he swore that it would be much worse to see me starving, and that he was quite used to going without his dinner.

"At last I was comforted by the arrival of Peter, and soon after of Raczynski, each with their rations for the benefit of my husband. These three divided the two portions equally amongst themselves, and I contrived to cook the meat for them and gave them as good a dinner as I could. I became a firm friend of Raczynski after that. This man had accompanied the Count from Warsaw, and was now his 'chum,' as my husband called him.

"I do not know how he arranged afterwards, but we all got something, and I would partake of nothing till I saw him eat. Ah, how happy I was then!

"I knew it could not last, and the next day we had scarce time to think about our happiness, for the fighting began seriously. We beat them handsomely that day, but the fight delayed our march sufficiently for Bagrathion to come up with us, and then our misfortunes began. The Russians, taking us in front and rear, attacked and captured our baggage. Our cavalry, a mere handful of men, was all but annihilated. I saw him charge again and again into the innumerable
Cossacks. Lucy, it was a miracle he was not killed; his horse was shot; most of the horses, in fact, were hors de combat; and henceforth we had no cavalry, no food, and our retreat was cut off, and fresh forces of the enemy were coming up in front."

"Good heavens! Dora," exclaimed Lucy, "and you had to starve?"

"We slept supperless on the ground that night. Well, the next day—the fatal day, Lucy—the fighting was renewed. Our first movement was to retreat to some woods on our left, in order to be sheltered from the harassing attacks of the Cossacks. And then Bagrathion brought up his artillery and shelled the wood. You have no idea what it was like—the branches of the trees crackling and falling on to us, and the shells again and again bursting in the midst of the dark trees with a frightful noise.

"At length the enemy approaching nearer, and the infantry deploying to the left and right of the guns, it was resolved by our commanders to advance and, if possible, open a way through the enemy. Our men, therefore, went out of the wood and formed in battalions, the riflemen and Zouaves running on in front and firing on the enemy's gunners. Then, indeed, the storm of war burst on our devoted men. Not
only did the artillery of the enemy play upon them, but the infantry opened a continuous fire, volley after volley rattling and echoing around the hills. The bullets were cutting the leaves and twigs off the trees so that the ground was strewn with foliage at my feet, and several spent bullets dropped upon me. I stood behind a large tree for protection and watched our brave soldiers as they slowly marched forward towards the enemy. The central column was composed of the battalions of scythemen, and on each side of these advanced the riflemen and the Zouaves. They went up to within about two hundred yards of the enemy amidst the hailstorm of bullets and a continuous discharge of grapnel shot from the guns—and then they stopped; they wavered. I saw several officers run to the front, Jagellon amongst them. Several of them were shot down as they ran forward. Their bravery was of no avail, our men began to fall back, followed rapidly by the enemy's cavalry. These, however, were in their turn driven back by our riflemen.

"Well, Lucy, our brave men advanced a second time to the attack, and a second time were forced to retreat by the terrible fire of the enemy, and, oh! the whole space between us and the enemy was strewn with our poor fellows, some quite
dead, some crawling with difficulty towards us, and some writhing helplessly on the ground.

"Would you believe it, Lucy; they made the attempt for the third time? They again drew up their ranks in readiness to advance, though, even as they stood, their numbers were every moment lessened by the bullets of the enemy.

"At the moment, however, when they were ready to start, there was a lull in the fire of the enemy, either from admiration at the bravery of our troops, or because they were executing a change of tactics, and the smoke which had hitherto concealed their ranks from our view drifted away. I saw distinctly from where I was standing, just outside the wood—I saw General Bagrathion close to the guns, and apparently engaged in issuing his orders to the gunners.

"It may be my fancy, Lucy, but I fancied then, and I believe it still, that he had perceived me, and was directing his men to fire on the spot where I stood.

"But my attention was immediately recalled to Count Jagellon. He had also seen our antagonist, and, pointing with his sword towards the general of the enemy, he cried out—

"'There's Bagrathion!'

"At the same time I heard Mentzel's voice—
"'Death to the traitor!'

The words were repeated by the soldiers till the cry swelled into a fierce and terrible shout. Seizing the moment, their commanders ordered the soldiers to advance again. Their orders were obeyed with a loud hurrah from the ranks, and this was answered by the renewed fire of the enemy's guns, more deadly, more sustained, and better aimed than before. A volume of smoke again obscured the lines of our adversaries, and through this dense vapour tongues of flame darted out incessantly, while the roar of the cannon, the rattling of the volleys of musketry, and the bursting of shells and whistling of bullets around us, formed a scene sufficient to appall the bravest man. To advance against that entrenchment of smoke and flame appeared to be nothing less than reckless suicide. But our men were now seized with a fierce rage. They were willing to risk their lives on the chance of some of them reaching the guns where their enemy stood.

"They advanced at first at a quick step, which gradually increased in pace to a run. I saw him distinctly as he waved his sword and motioned to his men to charge.

"The soldiers, I saw, were dropping fast. Now and then whole lines seemed to disappear under
the fearful fire of the enemy. Still our troops went on; they neared the smoke; they rushed on in one mass. Another moment, and they all disappeared.

"And then all was silent!

"Oh! I shall never forget the suspense of that moment. I think we all held our breaths then as we stood watching. Then we heard a shout; the smoke cleared away, and we saw the guns standing naked before us, and our men driving the Russians, slaughtering them as they ran.

"'Ah, heavens!' I cried aloud. I believe I shouted 'bravo!' And then, Lucy, all I remember now is that then I saw two men bringing apparently a dead or wounded man towards us.

"I was foolishly gazing at the fight, and scarcely noticed these two men till they came near. Then, happening to cast my eyes on them, I thought I saw——"

"Oh, Theodora, what did you do?"

"The next instant he was laid at my feet, bleeding, Lucy. As they laid him down he opened his poor eyes, saw me, and smiled to me. 'I'm done for, Dora!' he said.

"I can scarcely remember anything of what followed. I tore open his coat, and tried to
stanch the flowing blood. He was wounded in the breast.

"Oh, Lucy! the blood soon ceased to flow. What could I do? I laid him down, and procured a cloak to keep him warm, for there was no tent to lay him in—no shelter whatever.

"I did all I could for him. I got him some water, and bathed his head; and he drank some of it as well. But it was of no use; he sank gradually.

"He told me not to trouble myself. 'Get away as soon as you can,' he said; 'for it is all over with me!'

"As if I could desert him! Oh! and he did suffer so much. I cannot bear to think of it."

Here the narrator ceased speaking, overcome with the remembrance of the scene. At length, after a long pause, she continued her story.

"All this time, you must understand, Lucy, that the fighting continued. Our soldiers held the ground they had won, and as it began to grow dark the sound of the firing died away. He seemed to perceive this. 'It is growing dark,' he said to me; 'I can't see you.' I did not think anything of this, and only told him it was getting dusk, and that we were masters of the field.

"'It's all one to me,' he said.
"Then he asked me to kiss him, and, stooping, I raised his head and I kissed him. Oh, Lucy! I think it was then he departed, for when I looked at him again he seemed to be asleep, and for a long time I rested his head in my lap.

"It grew quite dark and still I remained nursing him, till his comrade Raczynski came to me and told me they were going to retreat.

"I do not know what I said to him; I think I bade him hush, for he was asleep, I said. The man turned his head away; and then suggested to me that we should carry him on a gun-carriage. 'He will not wake,' he added.

"I agreed to this, and we laid his body on the carriage and slowly moved off with the rest of the army.

"I did not then believe he was gone, Lucy. I did not believe it really till yesterday. I was utterly stupefied."

"But where did you go to?" asked Lucy.

"Why, we retreated to the frontier. What could we do? We had, indeed, gained the victory, and our enemy was dead, for General Bagrathion fell in the thick of the fight. They say my friend Raczynski (as I call him now) was the first to strike him as he was endeavouring to form his men, already broken. But when night came on, our men realized their horrible situa-
tion. They had had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours, they were wearied with fighting; they were still surrounded (at a respectable distance) by their enemies—what could they do? They could only disperse, the greater number, including myself, crossing the frontier; and in Austria we were immediately made prisoners of war, I amongst the rest. Peter was with me then; Raczynski and the other ardent spirits of the rebellion having taken another road, dispersing themselves to unite at another point.

"Peter procured my release on the understanding that I was to return to England. And when I was asleep, overcome by fatigue, and hunger, and watching, he contrived to conceal from me my sleeping husband, and I do not remember anything more till you came to me the other day, Lucy.

"And that is all I can remember of how he fought and died, Lucy, and all my consolation is that no one could die a nobler death—for was he not fighting for his country's freedom and for right against might and wrong?"

This was the substance of Theodora's narrative, and when Lucy heard it all she kissed her bereaved friend, saying, "Now we two are left alone in the world, Dora, and if you like we will live and die together."
“No, no, darling,” replied Theodora, “you have other duties to do. You must not wither your young life with me.”

“My life is over,” said Lucy.

“No, darling, it has only begun, but mine indeed is finished, for I have nothing to live for now in the world.”

“Then let us live together,” urged Lucy.

But Theodora shook her head and told her it could not be.

And Lucy stayed at Rose Lodge another day and then returned home at her mother’s request.
CHAPTER XXII.

LUCY'S ENGAGEMENT.

It may be imagined that it was a grave household at Park House during these days.

Mr. Golding came home late nearly every evening, looking more and more careworn and overworked.

His wife watched his anxious mood in silence, asking no questions, only she tried to make him as comfortable as she could. She watched him as he lay awake thinking at night, and noticed how tired he looked in the morning, but she waited patiently till he thought proper to tell her all about it; she knew the old man's ways.

So one evening when Lucy was away at Rose Lodge, and the old couple were alone together in the library, he told his wife the whole story.

A firm of long standing, whose credit had always been considered above suspicion, were on the point of suspending payment. The partners had speculated in Russian Bonds and
had lost heavily, so that they were unable to meet their bills, a large amount of which were held by Golding's Bank.

This was the cause of Mr. Golding's anxiety, as he told his wife.

"How much will the loss be?" inquired Mrs. Golding.

"I don't know yet for certain. I fear it cannot be less than sixty thousand pounds."

"Shall we have to give up the house, dear?" his wife asked bravely.

"No, no, I hope not. That is not the question; it is Lucy. More than half her dowry is gone. I cannot take anything from Barbara's share. Poor thing! she has lost a lot of money as well."

And the poor old gentleman put his face in his hands and sighed heavily.

It was so hard on him now, after he had fought so long and hard for his wealth and position, to be unable to meet his engagements, and keep to the agreement which had been made on Lucy's betrothal.

He would not have suffered much more if the bank had had to cease payment altogether. The bitter part to him was that his integrity, his carefully built-up credit, should prove faulty after all these years.
Lucy's Engagement.

"We must tell her," said his wife, after thinking for some minutes.

"Will you tell her, Lizzie? I must put the case to him myself. You see, I cannot possibly give her the dowry we agreed on. It is hard," he continued, sighing again, "but it must be done. It is for him to decide."

"Yes, dear," acquiesced his wife, "I will tell her." And then she fell to consoling her husband, making him tell her the whole story, for she knew it would be a relief to him to tell her all about it. And she took the most hopeful view she could of the affair, laying stress on the chances of the firm meeting its engagements, and encouraging him in his plan for arranging the matter, so that he went to bed that night more cheerful and slept better than he had done for several nights, while his wife lay awake trying to calculate what would be the result of this loss.

She told Lucy of it next day when she returned from Rose Lodge, and explained to her the state of affairs. Lucy answered that she was ready to abide by Gus's decision, and said that she did not think she should mind if he broke off the engagement.

"It is better that he should break it off than that I should, mamma," she said. "I should not like people to think I had jilted him."
"No, dear; I am sure everybody will be sorry for you."

"Yes," Lucy replied, smiling a little, "I am afraid that will be the worst part of it."

And when her father came home that evening she contrived to find him alone in the library, and went and kissed him.

"Don't fret about me, papa dear," she said; "I shall bear it very easily."

But the poor old gentleman fairly broke down, and Lucy had to sit on his knee and talk to him, telling him that she loved him as well as ever.

"God bless you!" was all her father could say; and it is said that there is a secret efficacy in such blessings.

However, she asked her father to tell Gus at once; "and let us get it over, papa," she said; "and then we can live at peace again."

So Gus was duly asked to dinner two days after this.

Now Gus had, contrary to custom, not been to Park House at all during these few days, for the following reasons.

He had heard, as every one had, of the ruin of the Polish cause, and he had also found out that the Countess had returned to London. Not wishing to intrude on Lucy, now that her friend had returned to her, and fearing lest some catas-
trophe, such as had in reality happened, might be the cause of the Countess's return, he thought it best to leave Lucy to herself for the present. Moreover, the sudden intimacy, the unexpected confidence with which Lucy had treated him in this matter, had raised his hopes, and at the same time overcome his resolution to wait patiently till Lucy should feel prepared to be his wife, should she ever be able to fulfil his hopes. He had hitherto acted the part of Tantalus with much patience, but he now felt that he could act the part no longer; he was determined to put his fate to the touch.

So the invitation from Mrs. Golding seemed to be a favourable opportunity for deciding his fate, and he resolved to take advantage of it.

It was a very silent and awkward dinner that evening at Park House, Gus being the only guest there. Every one was thinking of what might happen, and it was with great difficulty that conversation was kept up at all. At last the two ladies rose and left the room, and then Mr. Golding swallowed a glass of port, took a deep breath, and turned to his guest.

"Gus—a—I wanted to have a word with you about our affairs."

The old gentleman paused, it was so hard to
make a clean breast of it. But he summoned up courage and went on bravely.

"I have had—a—considerable losses in this Russian affair—" he paused again.

"Sorry to hear that," said Gus politely. He did not in the least know what his host was driving at.

"And I fear," proceeded Mr. Golding, "I shall not be able to give Lucy the dowry we agreed upon."

"Oh!" said Gus; he was all attention now.

"I should explain to you," the other continued, "that on my eldest daughter's marriage I made over to her half of my property—more than fifty thousand pounds—on the understanding that the capital was to remain in the bank. Since then I have paid other sums to her account, as her share of my money; and though I can recall these sums over and above her dowry, yet I am loth to do so, as she has herself suffered heavy losses in Russians."

"But I hear Russians have gone up lately," put in Gus.

"Yes, but the mischief is already done. We do not hold Russians ourselves, but we hold a large amount in bills of a firm which has speculated largely and lost so heavily that I fear they will not pull through."
"Oh, they have not failed yet, then?" asked Gus.

"No, and they may yet escape, but we shall have to lose something in any case."

"Will all Lucy—a—Miss Golding's dowry be swamped?" asked Gus. The old man noticed the Christian name.

"No, not all of it. We may lose sixty thousand pounds, not more, probably much less, as even if the firm fails I think there will be large assets."

"How much can you give—a—Miss Golding positively, sir?" said Gus, after thinking a moment.

"I am afraid I could not promise safely more than ten thousand down, and eight hundred a year to begin with. I have of course spoken to Lucy," Mr. Golding added with an effort, "and she agrees to leave the matter in your hands."

A silence followed, while Gus sat looking at his glass and thinking. At last he said—

"May I see Miss Golding before deciding?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Golding. "Will you like to see her now?"

"At what time is most convenient to her."

"If you will wait a moment I will see her."

So saying Mr. Golding went out of the room.
Gus, during his absence, refreshed himself with a glass of wine. He felt his courage ebbing fast, now that the crisis in his life had come.

Presently Mr. Golding returned.

"Lucy will see you in the drawing-room now, if you wish," he said.

Gus rose at once.

"Then I will go now. Thanks, I know the way," and he went out of the room.

He opened the drawing-room door slowly; he closed it carefully and stood before Lucy. She had risen from her chair when he came in. She was very calm and self-possessed.

"Mr. Golding has told me," said Gus, "about the loss you have sustained, Lucy," he said, and hesitated. "It makes no difference to me. But if you wish to break it, this is a good time to do so. I leave myself in your hands. I said before you were free to break it, and you may do so now, and it shall be understood it is my doing."

He spoke these words with his head bent down; now and then his voice shook a little.

"It is for you to decide," she answered quietly.

"I am bound now to do what you wish."

"No, no," he answered quickly, looking straight at her, "you must decide; I have known
you nearly three years, and I cannot go on any longer. I love you too much. It is exquisite torture to be near you—to claim you and not to be able to love you freely. Have pity on me! If you feel you cannot like me, I will go away and will never see you again. But Lucy, oh! Lucy, if you think you could like me, if you think you could grow to love me a little, will you try me, will you believe me that I love you dearly?"

He had come nearer to her as he spoke, and stood with clenched hands a little way off her. She stood a moment silent with head bent down.

"I cannot love you as I ought;" she almost whispered—"I love another."

"I know," Gus said with a sigh. "If so, I will give you up. I hope——" he stopped, he could say no more.

She lifted up her head and looked at him, then she turned away, and whispered—

"He is dead now."

Gus started, and stepped up to her. He put one arm half round her and took one of her hands. She gave a little sob, and then stood quiet, with her hand in his. Gus waited a little while, and then he spoke.

"Lucy dear, tell me what you wish to do. If
you wish to live by yourself, I will leave you free, but if you think you would be happy with me, Lucy dear, I think I could make you happy, and I should be very happy myself with you. What do you think? Do what you think best, Lucy, and I shall always love you just the same."

"Will you wait a year?"
"Yes, if you like, dearest."
"Very well, I will be your wife then."
"You really wish it so, Lucy?"
"Yes," she said, "and I will try and make you happy, Gus."
"Oh, you need not try, Lucy. You do not know how happy you make me!" And he took both her hands in his, and gave her his first kiss of love.

Then, as they stood there, he told her all the story of his love, from that first day of the accident in Rotten Row till she came back from Italy, when he felt that he could not wait any longer for her. "If I had failed," he said, "I should have thrown up my appointment, and travelled about till I died, I think."

When he had finished his story, he remembered Mr. Golding.

"I suppose I may tell Mr. Golding?" he said.
"Oh yes, you had better tell him at once."
Lucy's Engagement

So Gus rang the bell, and the old people answered it themselves. Gus thereupon resigned Lucy to her mother, having first kissed the dear old lady. The old man understood it at once. He seized hold of Gus's hand.

"Well, my dear boy?" he said; his voice trembled.

"We are to be married in a year," said Gus, squeezing the old hand.

"God bless you, my boy! I am sure you will both be happy. And as to the money—"

"It is not a question of money," interrupted Gus, with a very aristocratic air.

"Never mind," said the old banker, "I'll see if I cannot finance it yet."

Is it necessary to say that he did "finance it?" that within a month he managed, with the agreement of the principal creditors, to pull the firm through the crisis, and that he is now a partner in the same firm (this the creditors specially stipulated), and its affairs promise to be more prosperous than ever? So the "money" was all right again, and in the summer the date of the forthcoming marriage was publicly announced to the friends and relations of both families, to the satisfaction of all; and the opinion of the Cocoa Club was that Gus was "a devilish lucky fellow!"
I have now finished my story, for I hope I may be excused the melancholy labour of relating the incidents of Count Jagellon's funeral, and that a few words on the subject will suffice. He was buried in a quiet churchyard, not far from London, by the side of his father and mother. Of his numerous acquaintances and companions-in-arms, only four followed him to his grave; that is to say, his wife and Lucy, his old servant Watkins, and Peter.

Together the two women stood hand-in-hand by the grave; together they placed on the coffin their offerings of love—the fresh flowers of the spring; and it was Lucy who led the Countess Jagellon away from the spot where her husband was laid at rest.

And I am told that year by year, in the spring and summer time, sweet flowers grow over the grave, round the simple marble stone which is, from time to time, washed with the
tears of the woman he loved. The inscription on the tombstone is composed simply of his name, and the date of his birth and death, and underneath the words—

"DULCE EST PRO PATRIÃ MORI."

I am aware that there is an old-fashioned custom of describing with minute exactness at the end of a story what became of all the characters therein, what they did afterwards, how much money they had, how many children, and when, if ever, they died. This seems to me to be a custom not over-flattering to those who have listened to the tale, since it evidently presupposes that they are not gifted with sufficient sagacity or imagination to be able to conjecture how the several characters lived after the events which have been related. I am not so uncivil, and I am confident that I may leave it to my audience to guess how the personages of my story lived in after times, more particularly as they already know how the after events came about. For instance, it is a matter of history that the unfortunate Poles, after prolonging a hopeless contest, for a whole year, were at length completely reduced to obedience. Raczenski, I believe, was killed in one of the last combats,
after displaying a courage worthy of a more successful cause.

On the other hand, Mentzel actually lived to lament the failure of another attempt to liberate his country. He returned to London about a year after the termination of my story. His hair, from grey, had become perfectly white, and his strength being at length broken down by the hardships and disappointments of the war, he could only creep about Holborn, an enfeebled old man, leaning for support on Willaume's arm. The latter had also escaped from the dangers of war, and lived with Mentzel for some years, till he was better provided for by the care and munificence of Madame de Jagellon.

Mr. Mentzel was also indebted to her in the last years of his life for a number of little comforts. For she often came to see him, and they talked together of the scenes in which they had acted—a theme on which the old man loved to dwell. Finally, the Countess tended him in his last illness, and took care that his death, contrary to his life, should be a peaceful and happy one.

Concerning my heroine herself, I may relate a few particulars in conclusion of her story.

Soon after the funeral of her husband she sold her house in London and went to live in a
little seaside town in Devonshire, on the shores of the Atlantic. She took with her only her maid Amalia, and another of her old servants. Peter, whom she persuaded with difficulty to leave her, she recommended to a Polish nobleman, over whose house he is now major-domo. He lives a quiet life among his compatriots, to whom he sometimes relates, over the pine-wood fire in the chateau, the stories of his experience in the great world of politics.

Some months after the date of my story, when Lucy was beginning to arrange about her trousseau, she received a letter from Theodora as follows:

"Darling Lucy,

"I have got a baby, dearest. He is such a beauty—so like him, Lucy!

"I can hardly look at him yet without crying. I dared not tell you before, for I feared it might not come to pass, and I have prayed so hard for it.

"I am very well, only weak, more with happiness than anything else.

"Your loving

"Theodora."

On receipt of this letter Lucy flew to her
mother and told her the whole story of the Countess's marriage, and begged her to let her go to Theodora.

Whereupon Mrs. Golding, moved by maternal sympathy, agreed, provided her husband approved of the journey. Mr. Golding, on being consulted, made no objection, but said that Gus must be told about it, as he was in London just now, having been summoned to the F.O. from Paris, on his appointment to a superior post at Vienna. Lucy said that she could not tell him everything till she had seen Theodora, but she would explain to him where she was going. So she wrote to him to say that she was leaving the following morning on a visit to Madame de Woronzow in Devonshire, and asked him to come and say good-by.

Gus came promptly, and insisted on seeing Lucy off by the train. And when she explained to him that she could not tell him yet the cause of her journey, but that she would get leave to tell him when she came back, Gus said—

"Do not tell me anything, Lucy, unless you like. Surely I can trust you in everything."

But Lucy said he should know everything, and she promised to write to him when she said good-bye.

A few more hours and she rushed into Theo-
dora's room, where the two friends were soon locked in each other's arms. It might be tedious to attempt to describe (what indeed I know nothing certain about) how they caressed and petted the new-comer.

Lucy stayed with the young mother until after the infant was christened, at which ceremony she stood godmother to the young Christian, and till Theodora was able to walk about and drive in the pretty lanes of the county; and a very pretty picture the trio must have made—Theodora, and Lucy, and the young Jagellon—as they rode together in the carriage. At length Lucy returned to town, leaving Theodora with many promises to see her again.

And here we also will leave her in her new life, with her new love—or rather her old love come to life again in her own child, to love and cherish for the rest of her life.

As to Lucy, when she returned she told Gus the story of Count Jagellon, enjoining him to keep it a secret from every one.

Gus wondered at some part of the tale. "But," said he, "I thought he was fond of her when we were at Ladywell together." And then he told Lucy about the Countess being angry with him, and a little about Mrs. Price.

"I never believed the story, you know," he
said in conclusion, "and I always kept up an acquaintance with him, though the other men rather cut him, and I am glad now I acted as I did."

Then he was silent, thinking how unjustly jealous he had been of the Count; and Lucy also remained silent for awhile after Gus had told his story. At last she said, naively—

"Gus dear, I shall not mind marrying you now so much as I thought I should at first."

And Gus, far from regarding this statement as derogatory to his _amour propre_, considered with more justice that he had fairly won her, and in proof of his claim he put his arm round her and kissed her gently.

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