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General Oleg Gedeonoff was a huge old man. His body was immense, his limbs were tremendous, and his head—with its fringed wealth of grayish hair, big beard, and great mustache—seemed simply vast. He was so large that, even at a distance, people felt a sensation of being jostled if he was in sight. When he conversed, the windows rattled; when he sneezed people afar off exclaimed "God bless us!" and when he snored remote neighbors who knew not the cause of that awful sound loaded guns and sat up all night. In short, nature had evidently made him to be a governor, and the czar, in recognition of his long and gallant service in the army, appointed him to rule over the province of Kabarda. He was styled general because that was his last rank in the army, and indeed he looked as if he never had been anything else, as if he had been born a general.

Few if any persons ventured to affirm that Kabarda was not dull. But General Gedeonoff did not complain of it. He cared nothing for social life, had distractions of his own and probably would have been contented in any place where he could be governor. And he was a pretty good gov-

ernor, since he never went out of the way to do any mischief knowingly in his official capacity, and was really kind hearted. His only fault was that he confided too implicitly in a sort of factotum named Boris Razin and delegated to him at times too much authority. That, however, is one of those things which right themselves eventually, as they did in this instance very finely.

The general's distractions, to which allusion has been made, were, as he persuaded himself, scientific. As everybody knows, the newspapers of Russia are permitted to publish almost anything except news, and one that came every week from St. Petersburg to the governor of Kabarda gave much of its space to scientific experiments. Under the head of "Electricity" it taught "how to make a battery with a shaving mug and a very little blow-pipe;" under "Acoustics," "how to make an Eolian harp with threads in a window;" under "Chemistry," "how to make crystals of rock salt;" under "Natural Philosophy," "how to balance a fork on the edge of a wineglass;" under "Magic," "how to cook an omelet in a hat," and so on. And the old general amused himself by doing all those things. The one that pleased him most was "how to reproduce Dionysius' ear." It cost him a good many rubles to

his desk in another apartment so that away, would hear even a whisper in that reproduction of the fabled chamber of the Syracusan tyrant. Luckily he kept the knowledge of his triumph to himself and the one person who aided him, his charming adopted daughter Maria, the child of his friend Colonel Karatavnik, who, dying in his arms on the battlefield, bequeathed her to his care.

Only one thing troubled the good general—he vehemently suspected his nephew, Vladimir, and Maria of contemplating marriage, to which he would have offered no objection had they asked his permission without even a thought of me. It will be quite forgotten that I am governor."

"If such important matters," he said to himself, "are to be settled in my own household without my consent or even knowledge, God knows into what disorder and riot the rest of the province may plunge without even a thought of me. It will be quite forgotten that I am governor."

And he grew exceedingly impatient, for the time was short for a certain programme he had outlined to himself.

"My dignity," he reflected, "will not permit me to ask questions. I must seem to discover the situation by accident. Then I shall be furious and punish them by a little wholesome terror—she of being sent to her agonizing cat of an aunt, he of being shipped off for a year's journey. But at our Easter Sunday feast I will forgive them and announce the betrothal. Yes, but it is Good Friday already, and I know nothing yet of the affair—officially."

Just then Maria poked her pretty head in at the door of his study, where he sat smoking, and said timidly and hesitatingly, "May I talk a little to you, dear father, of something private?"

"Aha," he thought, "the sweet child comes to confess. I shall be good to her. Now I will not even shake at her that grisly terror, Aunt Anastasia." And, to

She looked puzzled, but went on, "A certain poor little girl is very much in love."

"Good! Good!" he responded in an affectionate roar. "That is as it should be. So I would have her. The more love the more happiness. But why did not the timid fellow come along with you? Is he afraid?" He had forgotten all about his programme.

She was bewildered. "He come along! Oh, she has not dared to say anything to him about it! He would break the rascal's head. Then what might happen to him?"

The governor's eyes grew very round and big. Deliberately he laid his big pipe on the table, scratched his chin, stared at her and rumbled, "Whose head would he break?"

"Boris," of course.

"Now, why the devil should Vladimir break Boris' head?"

"Vladimir! What has he to do with it?"

"Yes, that's what I want to know."

"You did not let me tell you. It is about Natalia. Boris persecutes her, and she detests him. She loves Feodor Danilov, and Boris swears to send him to Siberia if Natalia does not give him up."

A dangerous light gleamed in the general's eyes, but he only said, with ominous gentleness, "So he will send somebody to Siberia?"

"Yes. And Feodor, who loves Natalia dearly, if he knew how Boris persecutes and frightens her, would kill him. Having constant access to the house on your service, Boris makes opportunities daily for threatening her. She wanted to beg your protection, but feared you would roar at her and favor Boris."

"Natalia is a very good girl, and I am fond of her, but she is foolish. She was a pet of my poor wife, who raised her from childhood and left her to my care. Is it likely I would give her to that ugly far-far-faced rascal? She should know me better. But I am curious to hear him. Tomorrow when he comes at the usual hour for orders, let him find her in Dionysius' ear. And she must draw him out. You at the same time come here to me. But have you nothing to say to me on your own account?"

"No," she stammered, blushing. "But I saw Vladimir at the door, and perhaps he has something to say."

She ran swiftly away, and the general was still chuckling when Vladimir entered.

Boris Razin glided stealthily along the corridor, listening at closed doors, peeping in at open ones, until he caught sight of Natalia sitting before a window, sewing, in a small octagonal room. Softly he stepped inside and closed the door. She looked up, startled.

"Don't look so frightened," he said, grinning. "You need not fear a man who loves you as I do if you will only be sensible. I have been looking everywhere for you."

"I did not wish to see you."

"Very probably, but I chose to see you, which is more important. I saw fit to remind you once more of what will happen if you do not tomorrow give me the answer I expect."

"You will have no other answer from me than that I have already given to you, neither tomorrow nor any other time."

"Listen to me, Natalia Ilovaiki. You will meet me in the church before the altar when the candles are lighted and the priest blesses the cakes. Then and there in the holy presence you will promise to be my wife. If you do not, you know what I shall do."



"MERCY! HAVE MERCY!"

"I do not."

"I shall send Feodor Danilov to Siberia."

"I do not believe you. You cannot. He is guilty of nothing. The governor will not condemn him without reason."

"The governor! I can wind him about my finger. Reason sufficient will be found."

"I shall go to the general and tell him all."

"It would do you no good. I shall simply whisper to him that Feodor is a nihilist and show some proof I have ready. Then, pshaw, our little brother Feodor will go to Siberia for life. And it will be you who have sent him there by refusing me."

The girl burst into tears, and he glided away, turning back at the door to hiss to her, "Remember at Easter matins you save or ruin Feodor." Presenting himself in the governor's study for orders, as was his daily duty, Boris found there his master and Maria, who frequently served as the general's confidential amanuensis. She was writing, and the general made him a sign to wait a moment. In a few moments she stopped and gave to the old man what she had written. He read it over, smiled, put it in an envelope, which he secured by a great blob of wax stamped with his own seal and then gave it to Boris, saying pleasantly, "Keep this carefully and bring it to me tomorrow after the Easter matins service."

The last glorious chords of the triumphal Easter matins gush floated away over the heads of the congregation crowding the church. Worshippers exchanged the "kiss of peace" and the salutation "Christ is risen!" Candles lighted at those upon the altar spread their flame to others until everywhere were the twinkling lights. The priest bestowed his blessing upon the cakes offered by the devout. The joyous turbulence prevailed which distinguishes the observance of this the greatest festival of the Greek church.

threading his way through the throng, nursing in his heart these who detained him at every step with their salutes, Boris Razin sought Natalia. At length he found her not before the altar, but near the door, going out.

"Christ is risen!" he proclaimed, placing himself before her.

"He is risen!" she responded, submitting with a shudder to his "kiss of peace."

"Natalia, what is your answer?" he

demanded, low at her ear, while still bending over her. "Will you be my wife?"

"Never," she answered so emphatically that those near by turned to look at her.

"We go the same way," he said, with a ferocious smile, and placed himself at her side. "I have business with the governor."

They walked together, he threatening as usual, she in silence, wondering why Feodor did not appear and fearing he would. When they reached the governor's study, he entered, and she, a little to his apprehensive annoyance, followed him in.

General Gedeonoff loomed up at his official desk. Maria sat near him.

"Christ is risen!" declaimed Boris.

"He is risen!" echoed the general, conforming to the universal custom of the day, but growling as an appendix. "And Judas' troubles are about to begin."

"Here, your excellency, is the envelope entrusted to my care," Boris reported, drawing it and a folded paper together from his pocket. "And here is a warrant for your excellency's signature, authorizing the arrest of a nihilist conspirator."

"His name?"

"Feodor Danilov."

"No, no, your excellency! It is a false charge!" cried Natalia in terror, clasping her hands imploringly.

The old governor waved her aside, and looking piercingly at the accuser said in a tone of earnest and surprised interest: "So you have had the courage to attempt winding me about your finger? I am not aware that any one has done that yet and fancy I would not like it, particularly to be wound around a finger so dirty as yours always is."

"I never said anything of the sort. I swear that I did not. She has been lying about me." And he pointed at Natalia.

"She has not until just now said a word."

"I heard you," interpolated Maria.

"Your excellency is mistaken," stammered Boris, beginning to feel frightened.

"No. She is not, miscreant!" thundered the general. "I myself heard you. Your words were written down as you uttered them. Open that envelope which you saw sealed a minute after you left Natalia and have had ever since. Read."

Boris was so terrified that he did not even notice several persons entering the room behind him. His trembling fingers tore open the envelope, and he hastily scanned the sheet it inclosed. "It is witchcraft!" he shrieked. "Mercy! Have mercy!" and dropped upon his knees.

"Oh, yes! The merciful deserve mercy," boomed the general deliberately. "I shall not have you knouted, and that is conceding more than you deserve. But I think you will go to Siberia. Search him!"

Two men sprang forward and seized Boris. He howled, but ventured no resistance. From one of his pockets they dragged a tract.

General Gedeonoff looked it over and rumbled: "Hail, Brutus!" A fine title; nihilistic literature if there ever was any; caught with it in possession. Now, Boris, I'm sure you'll go to Siberia."

"He who betrays justice and plots to ruin another by perjury is even a more infamous wretch than a nihilist. This time I shall be sure of sending to Siberia one who belongs there. Take him away. There! Now he is gone, don't talk about him any more. Let me get the taste of him out of my mind. Come in, Vladimir, and stand there beside your lover. If paired before me, that I may have you all paired before me. And now, my children, as governor, friend and father, I give to your union official sanction, earnest congratulations and paternal blessing."

An Easter Controversy.

IN THE history of the Christian church there has never been any difference of opinion as to why Easter is observed, but there has been a good deal of controversy as to when it should be kept. This was perhaps because Easter is one of the movable feasts and not fixed to one particular day like Christmas. Easter day moves backward or forward according as the full moon next after the vernal equinox falls nearer or farther from the equinox.

In the prayer book of the English church the following is given as a rule to find Easter: "Easter day is always the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon or next after the 21st day of March, and if the full moon happen upon a Sunday Easter day is the Sunday after."

About the year A. D. 158 a controversy arose as to the date of Easter which divided all Christendom. This difference arose originally between the churches of Asia Minor and the then so called churches of the west, the former insisting on keeping Easter the same day as the Jews kept their Passover. Toward the end of the century the discussion became so violent that Victor, the bishop of Rome, issued an apostolic canon decreeing that "if any bishop, priest or deacon celebrated the holy feast of Easter before the vernal equinox, as the Jews do, let him be deposed."

In the fourth century matters had gone to such a length that the Emperor Constantine thought it his duty to allay the controversy. So he got an ecclesiastical canon passed that Easter should be observed on one and the same day, but the controversy continued until A. D. 684, when Oswy, king of Northumbria, determined to take the matter in hand and called a conference, at which he himself presided. Colman, bishop of Lindisfarne, represented the British church, while Agilbert, bishop of Dorchester, headed the Romish party. After much discussion the king finally decided the question in favor of the present existing method of keeping Easter, and from that day to this the date of Easter has depended upon the moon's changes.

All the movable feasts and fasts of the year depend upon Easter. The nine Sundays before and the eight after depend upon it, and form, as it were, a sort of body-guard to this queen of religious festivals.

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"SEE

THAT

CURVE?"



"SEE

THAT

CURVE?"

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