

A GLIMPSE INTO DARKNESS

THE RELEASE THAT CAME TOO LATE.

By Count Tolstoy. (A Heretofore Unpublished Story by the Great Russian Reformer.)

In the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitritch Akayonof. He had two shops and a house of his own.

Akayonof was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Akayonof was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-bye to his family his wife said to him: "Ivan Dmitritch, do not start today; I have had a bad dream about you."

Akayonof laughed, and said: "You are afraid when I get to the fair I shall go on the spree."

His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream. I dreamt you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite gray."

Akayonof laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods and bring you some presents from the fair."

So he said good-bye to his family and drove away.

When he had traveled half way he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Akayonof's habit to sleep late, and, wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused his driver before dawn, and told him to put in the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn, who lived in a cottage at the back, paid his bill, and continued his journey.

When he had gone about twenty-five miles, he stopped for the horses to be fed. Akayonof rested awhile in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch, and, ordering a samovar to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troika drove up with rickling bells, and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Akayonof and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Akayonof answered him fully, and said: "Wont you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him: "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow-merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

Akayonof wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am traveling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me."

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said: "I am the police-officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police-officer unstrapped Akayonof's luggage and searched it. Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying: "Whose knife is this?"

Akayonof looked, and seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

"How is it there is blood on this knife?"

Akayonof tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: "I—I don't know—not mine."

Then the police officer said, "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only person who could have done it. The house was locked from inside, and no one else was there. Here is this bloodstained knife in your bag, and your face and manner betray you. Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole."

Akayonof swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand roubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he were guilty.

The police officer ordered the soldiers to bind Akayonof and to put him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Akayonof crossed himself and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Inquiries as to his character were made in Vladimir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a

good man. Then the trial came on; he was charged with murdering a merchant from Ryazan and robbing him of twenty thousand roubles.

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in gaol. At first she was not allowed to see him; but after much begging she obtained permission from the officials and was taken to him. When she saw her husband in prison dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her and sat down near him. She told him of things at home, and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked: "What can we do now?"

"We must petition the Czar not to let an innocent man perish."

His wife told him that she had sent a petition to the Czar but that it had not been accepted.

Akayonof did not reply, but only looked downcast.

Then his wife said: "It was not for nothing I dreamed your hair had turned gray. You remember? You should not have started that day." And passing her fingers through his hair, she said: "Vanya dearest, tell your wife the truth; it was not you who did it?"

"So you, too, suspect me!" said Akayonof, and, hiding his face in his hands, he began to weep. Then a soldier came to say that the wife and children must go away; and Akayonof said good-bye to his family for the last time.

When they were gone, Akayonof recalled what had been said, and when he remembered that his wife had also suspected him, he said to himself: "It seems that only God can know the truth; it is to Him alone we must appeal, and from Him alone expect mercy."

And Akayonof wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope, and only prayed to God.

Akayonof was condemned to be flogged and sent to the mines. So he was flogged with a knout, and when the wounds made by the knout were healed, he was driven to Siberia with other convicts.

For twenty-six years Akayonof lived as a convict in Siberia. His hair turned white as snow, and his beard grew long, thin and gray. All the mirth went; he stooped; he walked slowly, spoke little, and never laughed, but he often prayed.

In prison Akayonof learned to make boots, and earned a little money, with which he bought "The Lives of the Saints." He read this book when there was light enough in the prison, and on Sundays in the prison-church he read the lessons and sang in the choir; for his voice was still good. The prison authorities liked Akayonof for his meekness and his fellow prisoners respected him, they called him "Grandfather," and "The Saint." When they wanted to petition the prison authorities about anything, they always made Akayonof their spokesman, and when there were quarrels among the prisoners they came to him to put things right and to judge the matter.

No news reached Akayonof from his home, and he did not even know if his wife and children were still alive.

One day a gang of new convicts came to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners collected around the new ones and asked them what towns or villages they came from and what they were sentenced for. Among the rest Akayonof sat down near the newcomers and listened with a downcast air to what was said.

One of the new convicts, a tall, strong man of sixty, with a closely-cropped gray beard, was telling the others what he had been arrested for.

"Well, friends," he said, "I only took a horse that was tied to a sledge, and I was arrested and accused of stealing. I said I had only taken it to get home quicker, and had then let it go; besides, the driver was a personal friend of mine. So I said, 'It's all right.' 'No,' said they, 'you stole it.' But how or where I stole it they could not say. I once really did something wrong, and ought by rights to have come here long ago, but that time I was not found out. Now I have been sent here for nothing at all—Ah, but it's lies I'm telling you; I've been to Siberia before, but I did not stay long."

"Where are you from?" asked someone.

"From Vladimir. My family are of that town. My name is Makar, and they also call me Semyonitch."

Akayonof raised his head and said: "Tell me, Semyonitch, do you know anything of the merchants Akayonof, of Vladimir? Are they still alive?"

"Know them? Of course I do. The Akayonofs are rich, though their father is in Siberia; a slinger like ourselves, it seems! As for you Granddad, how did you come here?"

Akayonof did not like to speak of his misfortune. He only sighed and said: "I have been in prison these twenty-six years for my sin."

"What sins?" asked Makar Semyonitch.

But Akayonof only said, "Well, well—I must have deserved it!" He would have said no more, but his companions told the new-comer how Akayonof came to be in Siberia; how someone had killed a merchant, and had put a knife among Akayonof's

things, and Akayonof had been unjustly condemned.

When Makar Semyonitch heard this, he looked at Akayonof, slapped his own knee, and exclaimed: "Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you've grown, Granddad!"

The others asked him why he was so surprised, and where he had seen Akayonof before; but Makar Semyonitch did not reply. He only said: "It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

These words made Akayonof wonder whether this man knew who had killed the merchant; so he said: "Perhaps, Semyonitch, you have heard of that affair, or maybe you've seen me before?"

"How could I help hearing? The world's full of rumors. But it's long ago, and I've forgotten what I heard."

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Akayonof.

Makar Semyonitch laughed and replied: "It must have been he in whose bag the knife was found! If someone else hid the knife there, 'He's not a thief till he's caught,' as the saying is. How could anyone put a knife into your bag while it was under your head? It would surely have woken you up?"

When Akayonof heard these words he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Akayonof lay awake. He felt terribly unhappy and all sorts of thoughts arose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite little, as they were at that time, one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast. And then he remembered himself as he used to be—young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar on the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He was, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

"And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Akayonof. And his anger was so great against Makar Semyonitch that he longed for vengeance even if he himself should perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could not get no peace. During the day he did not go near Makar Semyonitch, nor even look at him.

A fortnight passed in this way. Akayonof could not sleep at nights, and was so miserable that he did not know what to do.

One night as he was walking about the prison he noticed some earth that came rolling out from under one of the shelves on which the prisoners slept. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makar Semyonitch crept out from under the shelf and looked up at Akayonof with frightened face. Akayonof tried to pass without looking at him, but Makar seized his hand and told him that he had dug a hole under the wall, getting rid of the earth by putting it into his high-boots, and emptying it out every day on the road when the prisoners were driven to their work.

"Just you keep quiet, old man, and you shall get out too. If you biao they'll flog the life out of me, but I'll kill you first."

Akayonof trembled with anger as he looked at his enemy. He drew his hand away, saying: "I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago! As to telling of you—I may do so or not, as God shall direct."

Next day, when the convicts were led out to work, the convoy soldiers noticed that one or other of the prisoners emptied some earth out of his boots. The prison was searched, and the tunnel found. The Governor came and questioned all the prisoners to find out who had dug the hole. They all denied any knowledge of it. Those who knew could not betray Makar Semyonitch, knowing he would be flogged almost to death. At last the Governor turned to Akayonof, whom he knew to be a just man, and said:

"You are a truthful old man; tell me, before God, who dug the hole?"

Makar Semyonitch stood as if he were quite unconcerned, looking at the Governor and not so much as glancing at Akayonof. Akayonof's lips and hands trembled, and for a long time he could not utter a word. He thought: "Why should I screen him who ruined my life? Let him pay for what I have suffered. But if I tell they will probably flog the life out of him, and I may have suspected him wrongly. And, after all, what good would it be to me?"

"Well, old man," repeated the Governor, "tell us the truth; who has been digging under the wall?"

Akayonof glanced at Makar Semyonitch, and said: "I cannot say, your honor. It is not God's will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am in your hands."

Paris Barefoot Brigade.

A barefoot brigade is trying to make converts in Paris. Their chief is a painter of some renown, who believes that going barefooted is absolutely essential for the health. In his studio he wears no foot covering of any kind, and when he is out he wears specially made boots free as perforated so as to allow free access to the air, water and snow.

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Akayonof sat up and said, "What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!"

Makar Semyonitch bent close over Akayonof and whispered: "Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!"

"What for?" asked Akayonof.

"It was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife among your things I meant to kill you, too, but I heard a noise outside; so I hid the knife in your bag and escaped out of the window."

Akayonof was silent, and did not know what to say. Makar Semyonitch slid off the bed-board and knelt upon the ground. "Ivan Dmitritch," said he, "forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home."

"It is easy for you to talk," said Akayonof, "but I have suffered for you these twenty-six years. Where could I go to now?—My wife is dead, and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go—"

Makar Semyonitch did not rise, but beat his head on the floor. "Ivan Dmitritch, forgive me!" he cried. "When they flogged me with the knout it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now—yet you had pity on me and did not tell. For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch that I am!" And he began to sob.

When Akayonof heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep.

"God will forgive you!" said he. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words his heart grew light, and the longing for home left him. He no longer had any desire to leave the prison but only hoped for his last hour to come.

In spite of what Akayonof said, Makar Semyonitch confessed his guilt. But when the order for his release came Akayonof was already dead.

Hosiery in Europe.

The term "hosiery," which includes socks, stockings and knit underwear, by improvement and development of machinery is now being extended over an infinite variety of jerseys, Tam o' Shanter and the like. The neatness and smartness of these garments when knit, clinging closely to the form, are pushing other knit fabrics, including trousers, the woven equivalents out of the trade. The Germans are given the chief credit for initiative in knit goods. They have built special factories and put in special machinery for them. This, coupled with certain advantages in dyeing and ability to produce cheaply, has given them, it is said, almost a monopoly of the European trade.

The Germans have even commanded the British market, but as the extraordinary demand for their product disables them from filling orders within many months after they are placed the English manufacturer sees and is grasping his opportunity. Admittedly he cannot produce and sell as cheaply as the German, but he can fill orders promptly. This fact, with the natural desire of the British to buy home products, encourages the belief that the English manufacturer can at least secure the home market, if he may not be able to compete elsewhere with the German. Moreover, many of the machines with which the Germans are achieving prosperity in knit fabrics are British make; hence Great Britain is manifestly equipped with the weapons most necessary in the contest. The present activity in the production of knit fabrics, or preparations therefor indicates that the German invasion is to be repelled if possible.

The Tragedy of Being Lowly.

Nine-tenths of man's felicity depends upon being well born; in London a bit more than nine-tenths. In the upper classes 18 per cent. of the children die before reaching the age of five years, but in the lower classes—say of St. George's-in-the-East—the average death rate is twenty-nine years of age.

So by the mere fact of being born out of the nobility and gentry the Londoner is stripped of twenty-seven years of the life that might have been his. Oh, of other things, too, he is ahorn. His short life is bare of comfort or delight. Nor can he take pride in it—it is, at once, too dirty and too sad; all by that chance of birth too far eastward.

Pain and hunger and helotry—the empty belly and the overburdened back—are his heritage. He and his woman—a pair of lean, varped animals—slink together through the grayness of life, under the iron laws.

And in blows and oaths they find a certain joy in gin—which is white as water and runs hellishly hot down the throat and smokes in the brain; find, too, in the pewter pot of heavy wet a certain sleep which is better than waking; go thus through life till the iron law of averages knocks them on the head at twenty-nine.

An inexorable law, decreeing that one of every four Londoners shall die in workhouse, hospital, jail or lunatic asylum.—Outing Magazine.

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Paris Barefoot Brigade.

900 DROPS CASTORIA Vegetable Preparation for Assimilating the Food and Regulating the Stomachs and Bowels of INFANTS & CHILDREN Promotes Digestion, Cheerfulness and Rest. Contains neither Opium, Morphine nor Mineral. NOT NARCOTIC. Perfect Remedy for Constipation, Sour Stomach, Diarrhoea, Worms, Convulsions, Feverishness and LOSS OF SLEEP. Fac Simile Signature of Dr. J. C. FLETCHER NEW YORK. 18 months old 35 DROPS - 35 CENTS EXACT COPY OF WRAPPER.

CASTORIA For Infants and Children. The Kind You Have Always Bought Bears the Signature of Dr. J. C. Fletcher In Use For Over Thirty Years CASTORIA THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

RICH MEN'S KIN.

There is good authority for the statement that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Yet it is possible for him to do so and have his earthly wealth forgiven him by Providence. It is probably impossible for him to have his wealth forgiven him by all his relatives. "God gives us our relatives," but thank God, we can choose our friends," is a modern epigram sufficiently cynical. There is evidence enough in the experience of every very wealthy man to support the theory that some of his relatives were "given" him to chasten his spirit through trial.

The very successful man with a numerous family circle is in for some trying experiences. He is apt to be looked upon by some of his connection as a sort of earthly providence. Like charity, he must suffer long and be kind. He must stand for perpetual "touches" which the euphemy of the parties of the second part disguises as "loans." He must make bad bargains with his kith and kin. To insist on getting back his principal is odious, to remind them that there is some interest coming to him is atrocious, to close out a mortgage stamps him as an enemy of his kind. Only a monster in human form would suggest to a relative who has adopted the comfortable theory of life that "Cousin Bill owes me a living" that he has a pair of stout legs and arms of his own.

What the daughters of the horse-leech said is of record. "Give! Give!" were their refrain. It is not of record what the nephews and nieces and the cousins through the various degrees of consanguinity said; but it was doubtless to the same effect. The world has had several notable instances of collateral relatives mobilizing and descending in a body on the estate of a rich man's widow, and has its own discount ready for any expressions of disappointment or dislike, post-mortem or ante-mortem. Fashionable clergymen have much to say about "the trials of the rich," but have they not failed to take due account of this one?

It is costing twenty times as much to live as it did a hundred years ago. But cheer up! Most of us are earning more than forty times as much as we did then.

If you wore a mind reader you would learn a lot of unpleasant things about how you can only survive.

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The Shark—"It seems to me you are rather stuck on yourself these days." The Octopus—"Well, I have a right to be. If it wasn't for me what would these anti-Trust people do for a smile?"

The Christmas Dinner.

In spite of the fact that the word "dyspepsia" means literally "bad cook," it will not be fair for many to lay the blame on the cook if they begin the Christmas Dinner with little appetite and end it with distress or nausea. It may not be fair for "any" to do that—let us hope so for the sake of the cook! The disease dyspepsia indicates a "bad stomach," that is a weak stomach, rather than a bad cook, and for a weak stomach there is nothing else equal to Hood's Sarsaparilla. It gives the stomach vigor and tone, cures dyspepsia, creates appetite, and makes eating the pleasure it should be.

One way to encourage a thing is to pass a law prohibiting it.

SHAKE OFF THE GRIP of your old enemy, Nasal Catarrh, by using Ely's Cream Balm. Then will all the swelling and soreness be driven out of the tender, inflamed membranes. The fits of sneezing will cease and the discharge, as offensive to others as to yourself, will be stopped when the causes that produce it are removed. Cleanliness, comfort and renewed health by the use of Cream Balm. Sold by all druggists for 50 cents or mailed by Ely Bros., 56 Warren Street, New York.

A man may mind his own business even when he employs a private secretary.

Are You Nervous?

Nervousness and sleeplessness are usually due to the fact that the nerves are not fed on properly nourishing blood; they are starved nerves. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery makes pure, rich blood, and thereby the nerves are properly nourished and all the organs of the body are run as smoothly as machinery which runs in oil. In this way you feel clean, strong and invigorated, and you are good for a whole lot of physical and mental work. Best of all, the strength and increase in vitality and health are "lasting."

The trouble with most tonics and medicines which have a large booming sale for a short time, is that they are largely composed of alcohol holding the drugs in solution. This alcohol shrinks up the red blood corpuscles, and in the long run greatly injures the system. One may feel exhilarated and better for the time being, yet in the end weakened and with vitality decreased. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery contains no alcohol. Every bottle of it bears upon its wrapper "The Badge of Honesty," in a full list of all its several ingredients. For the druggist to offer you something he claims is "just as good" is to insult your intelligence.

Wigg—"They say Bluffet is fabulously rich." Wagg—"Yes; I guess his wealth is all a fable."

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