

## THE RING.

It was midnight. All the bells were ringing. The chimes were full of joy and re-echoed to a great distance; their brazen voices steadily gained in volume, and the bell ringers proud of their privilege of announcing to the faithful the most beautiful Christian festival of the year, sought to out rival each other in the spirit with which they accomplished the work.

Young girls in handsome attire, and all begarlanded, were hurrying to church in joyful bands. They took their places at the further end behind the youths and old men. Their red bodices, their blue or checkered petticoats, their long tresses falling below their waist, and interplaited with multicolored ribbons,—all formed a strangely effective picture. And merriment, the merriment of youth,—frank as the freshness of their complexions, shone in every face. All the tapers were lighted. It was indeed the Great Day,—the day that the Man God, who suffered for the triumph of truth, and who died for our redemption, arose from the dead.

Therefore it was the day of universal joy, the day of forgiveness of injuries, the day that everyone becomes kind; for it was the feast of truth and of Christian love—and peace entered into the souls of all.

"Christ is risen!" cries the priest. "Truly He is arisen!" reply the faithful. And everybody kisses.

It was in little Russia. I had been only two months in the country, and consequently knew very little of the customs, or rather of certain peculiarities in the manners of the Little Russians, which distinguish them from the populations of the central province. In Little Russia they are more frank in their ways, and much merrier on joyful occasions than we other Russians are. Women have neither the prudery nor the affectation of prudery our Muscovite women have. Therefore I felt quite surprised when the daughter of my host, the Cossack Levica, came to me and gave me the Paschal kiss.

"Christ is arisen!" she said. "Truly He is arisen!" I responded, returning her kiss.

But as I had purchased a little present for her Easter gift—very modest little present, nothing more than a little gold ring,—I slipped it upon her finger and put an Easter egg in her hand.

"See! my little hostess," I exclaimed; "here is an Easter egg—a red egg—and here is a little ring for a souvenir."

She looked at the ring. She seemed to be surprised, dumbstricken, and only after a long minute she asked:

"Is it real gold?"

"Pure gold," I replied.

"But then—why dost thou give it me?"

"So that thou mayst remember me when I am gone away."

"But a real gold ring—"

"I bought it expressly for thee—keep it as a souvenir of my gratitude for the hospitality I have enjoyed at thy house."

"Well, if that is the way, I am thankful to thee, young gentleman."

And she left me that she might adore the holy images.

The priest—preceded by the deacon who carried in his hand a huge taper, decorated with brightly-colored ribbons,—passed through the aisles. The priest paused before the image to perform the incense ceremony; then turning to the faithful, who at his approach separated into groups, he swung his censers, and saluted them with: "Christ is arisen!" And all the groups one after the other, responded: "Truly He is arisen!" The priest's candle was decked with a great bouquet of flowers. The Easter hymns rolled out in a burst of joy.

"Christ is arisen! Death by His death is vanquished; and to them that were in the tomb hath He given life. Let the heavens praise Him with joyful praise—let all the earth be joyful—let all the universe, visible and invisible, celebrate this great day! Christ has arisen from the tomb—O joy eternal!"

Mass was over. And the bells began to swing. The Easter cakes were blessed.

"Wilt come to eat the Easter cakes, with us or wilt thou go to the priest's house?" asked Mariana, as I was leaving the church.

"At thy house, my pretty child. Thou knowest I like not to eat with those whom I know little of."

Half an hour later I was seated at the table in the house of my excellent host, the Cossack Levica, and the family repast was merry indeed.

Day began to dawn, and the sky promised us a lovely spring No.—body thought of sleep. Mariana proposed to me to go with her to the village, where she wanted to give some of her girl friends an Easter greeting. We thus made at least a dozen visits in company, and then, instead of returning to the house, we took our way toward a rather remote farm, where her elder sister lived.

The road we took, which followed the banks of the Desna was marvelously picturesque. It was a little path, which sometimes skirted rich and beautiful fields and sometimes lost itself in windings through shadowy thickets. The trees were donning their youthful grab of spring. The acacia had as yet only a few leaves, while the chestnut and the sycamore, much more precocious, were already strutting in their opulent green robes as if proud of the vigor of their sap. The hawthorn, which grows here among the other trees, not in hedges, as it is made to do in more civilized countries, was all covered with a snow of flowers that wafted to us long breaths of perfume. All this beautiful savage nature spoke to the soul, and seemed to promise unutterable joy.

At last the sun rose. It was magical! It daintily gilded the hawthorn blossoms, the trunks and branches of the trees, and flung rosy light upon their foliage. And the same roseate gleams sparkled in the clear blue waters of the river, which flowed all calmly at our feet.

A charm that I cannot explain came over me. My sensibility seemed strangely intensified; I thought that my perceptions had become more subtle than they had been before. Perhaps it was the beautiful but sleepless night that had excited my nerves; I fancied so at the time; but be that as it may, I knew that never again during my life did the sight of a fair landscape under the rising sun fill me with such emotion. I felt like one about to weep.

Then I looked at the beautiful young woman, who, during two long months had ministered to me with such loving care and kindness, lest I should feel lonely at being so far away from my own home. She beamed with roseate health and youth, with goodness and frankness. In her, and in the splendid scenery that seemed to make background for her picture, there was summed up for me all the great and mighty poetry of nature.

We walked on slowly without speaking to one another. I do not know if the morning air had intoxicated me but I felt a lassitude that I could scarcely strive against.

"I feel tired, Mariana," I said to her "let us rest here a moment, thou madest me run about a little too much in the village."

"Then let us sit down, my young gentleman," she answered.

Mariana had one particular grace, her sweet speech. She did not perhaps, express herself with the elegance of city women; but the admirable tone of her voice—a voice low, deep, melodious, and caressing—lent a great charm to all that she said.

We seated ourselves upon the trunk of a tree that had recently been cut down. She was not much inclined to chat that day. In order to make her talk I asked her all sorts of questions at random. I even asked her about her husband, who had long been absent on military duty, never suspecting that in giving this turn to the conversation I was venturing upon dangerous ground.

"When dost thou expect thy husband to return?" I asked.

"I do not know," she answered me. "If he will soon return. He wrote to me that he would not be long away; but it is now six months or more since I got that letter, and I have not heard any further news of him."

"Thou must feel very lonely at home. Were you living long together before he went away?"

"Three weeks only."

"And thou must have cried for him a great deal when he went to join the service?"

She smiled.

"How can it concern thee to know?" she replied.

"Was it any harm to ask thee?"

"No," she answered after a moment's reflection, it was not any harm. But dost thou wish me to answer thee very frankly—to tell thee the whole truth?"

"Certainly or else do not answer me at all."

"Well, then, I will say to thee that I did not cry when he went away. I did not love him. I was married to him against my will."

"And now thou dost not love any one?" I asked with real interest.

"Yes, I do," she returned with a smile.

"And may I know whom thou lovest?"

"Thou mayst."

"Then who?"

"I love this ring."

And she held up before my eyes the little gold ring I had given her at the morning service.

"But is there any sense in loving a ring—an inanimate object that cannot speak to thee—that cannot tell thee one wish of the heart?"

Mariana blushed, but made no answer. And as she remained silent a long time, I said:

"Why does thou say nothing? Is it because thou hast suddenly become dumb?"

"No," she answered sweetly, "I have not become dumb; but I think it is better that I should be silent, for I am very much afraid that all this talk would lead us to nothing good."

"Perhaps thou art right," I answered, a little disappointed. Then rising, I said: "Let us walk on—let us go to thy sister's."

"Very well, let us go, my young gentleman," she responded, with a little sadness in her voice.

We had another verst and a half to walk before reaching the farm. For some moments we proceeded in silence—occupied with our thoughts.

We came to a little grove of birch trees. Suddenly Mariana turned toward me, and looking me full in the face, said, with a blush:

"I would like—I would like so much to tell thee, but I could never dare to tell—still, thou must know it. I must tell thee, because if I do not tell thee I think I should die. Let us sit down here," she continued, in a scarcely audible voice.

We sat down. She seemed violently agitated.

"This is how it is, my young gentleman," she said, very gently, and trembling all over as she spoke. "I love thee—that is. Sure, I love thee; it can only cause thee pain and me much torment—but, for sure, and no matter what happens, I will never give up this little ring which thou didst give me."

I could not find a word in answer; I held my peace, totally vanquished by the innocence of her avowal. We both felt ill at ease awhile; but soon a gush of tenderness overcame our embarrassment, and a long kiss made our lips dumb.

Then she rose up, all joyous. We arose and followed the road to the farm. She walked close to me, singing her merriest songs, and looking at me from time to time with her beautiful, caressing eyes.

She seemed quite happy at having confided in me, and at knowing that our hearts understood each other.

At the farm-house we passed a delightful day. We took a boat-ride on the Desna. Mariana, sitting by me, bathed me with her warm breath, and I could not respire enough of it—so sweet it was.

It was almost midnight when we thought of returning home. The sky was pure, the night was lukewarm—one of those splendid April nights that are full of spring perfumes. The full moon flooded us with light.

When we again came to the little wood of birch trees where I had received her first confession I proposed to halt a little while.

"But why?" she asked, with a serious face; "we are not yet tired,—it is not more than a quarter of an hour since we left the farm."

"Come, Mariana, do let us sit down just for a minute."

"But what for?"

"Just to please me."

"Very well, we shall sit down."

"Who was it that told me this very morning, in this very place, that thou didst love me?"

"It was I myself who told thee so." And suddenly, with unexpected quickness, she rose and retreated from me.

"Why go away from me? What art thou afraid of?"

"Yes, indeed, I am afraid, my young gentleman—see how I tremble!"

"And hast thou such fear of me?"

"I do not know—I swear to thee I do not know; but see, I love thee too much—I want to run away from thee."

"And whither wilt thou run?"

"Anywhere—right before me."

"If thou lovest me, Mariana, confess at least thou hast a strange way of showing it."

"I swear to thee I have my own way of loving!" she cried, in a voice so insinuatingly sweet that one would have given her his very soul.

"Mariana!"

"Torment me not, my little dove; do not make me suffer. Every day the good God gives me to live I will thank thee and bow myself to the earth before thee."

"Calm thyself, Mariana—never will I torment thee; I promise it. Tomorrow I shall go away in order that thou shalt not have to avoid me."

"In very truth?"

"I promise thee."

"Then—take back thy ring!"

She slipped it gently from her finger, placed it to my lips, gave me a long, sweet kiss, and ran away, crying, through the woods.

I kept my promise—I departed next day.—Translated from the French by the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

One of those gentlemen who peddle odds and ends that oscillate between suspenders and neckties, carried about in a basket and offered to people who want them at very low prices, found his stock running low. He strolled into an establishment devoted to the sale of sundry useful but carefully hidden articles of men's apparel. He was shown up to the fourth story, where the senior partner of the firm was very busy.

"What do you want for your suspenders?" said he.

Buttons, said the partner.

But what do you sell your suspenders for?"

To hold up trousers.

But how much do you charge?

Two dollars and a half a dozen.

I'll give you a dollar and a quarter.

The proprietor incontinently took him and threw him down a flight of stairs. He landed on the third story where the junior partner chucked him down another flight of stairs where the managing clerk received him and flung him down to the ground floor. There the janitor took him and flung him into the street. He shook himself together, and turning, looked up at the building admiringly. He rubbed his hands and soliloquized, "What a bootiful system they have in that establishment!"

A SCIENTIST says that the red-tail, a little bird, will catch nine hundred flies in an hour. It is not stated which base-ball club the red-tail has signed with, but it should have no difficulty in securing a position on one of the nines.

Will the coming man be happier, asks a writer. It depends to a great extent upon whether his wife has got tired and gone to sleep or is still waiting up for him.

No, said Fogg, in reply to the person on the doorstep, the lady of the house is not in: It is her evening out, but my wife is in; perhaps she might do as well.

You are mistaken sir, indignantly remarked a burglar caught in the act. It is quite true that circumstances are against me, but I never served as an alderman in New York during the whole course of my experience.

An Italian astronomer declares that the inhabitants of Mars are making signals to us. This shows that that planet also is cursed with people who want the earth.

And what do you think of doing after leaving Harrow.

Oh, I shall go into the Indian civil service.

Do you think you'll like India, then.

Oh, it's not that. But you know, in the Indian civil a fellow's widow gets such a good pension.

## NEWS IN BRIEF.

Of the twenty-five members of Grant's two cabinets six have died.

The crown jewels in the Cathedral at Moscow are valued at \$12,000,000.

Colorado is becoming a large producer of very superior draft horses.

A German chemist is said to have discovered an antidote for strichnine.

During the past ten years the population of London has increased 572,000.

Boys as pages are now popular features at weddings in Eastern cities.

A bamboo shoal at Fort Moyer, Fla., has grown twenty feet since May 25th.

Green and red are most feared by those most charged with color blindness.

Four millions of false teeth are manufactured in this country every year.

One fifth of the legal voters of Massachusetts are veterans of the civil war.

A mad dog adjourned the District Court at Minden, La., recently, sine die.

Geologists say that the coal beds of the earth will be exhausted in 10,875 years.

The number of visitors at the British museum last year was nearly 469,000.

Each new recipient of the order of the Garter pays fees to the amount of \$5,000.

The wheat crop of Colorado will this year amount to nearly 3,000,000 bushels.

Twelve Hebrews were converted in London last year at an expense of \$175,000.

Atlantic city is said to use about 500 tons of ice a week at this season of the year.

Piute Indians are proving successful farmers on the Pyramid Reservation in Nevada.

Some smart statistician has figured it out that lightning kills 100 Frenchmen every year.

The number of recruits to be called out for Russian army and navy this year is 230,000.

In Philadelphia for the last ten years the ratio of divorces to marriages has been 1 to 34.

The weight of the silver in the treasury vaults at Washington, is estimated at 543,700 tons.

The people of the United States consume more lemons than those of all others combined.

Of the 1,250 voters registered at Walla Walla Washington Territory, about 400 are women.

One hundred and fifty thousand vessels in Europe and North America are engaged in fishing.

Paris is ready with 1200 beds in her cholera hospital if she should unhappily need them.

The season in London is reported "very gay," though the trade and business is correspondingly dull.

Snow shoveling is still a fashionable amusement in the vicinity of Montezuma, Colorado.

A bullet fired at a Georgia man recently, struck his watch chain, and was thus turned aside.

A law in New Haven, Conn., prohibits the display of fireworks before daylight on July Fourth.

The city mission of Berlin circulates no less than 75,000 printed sermons on Sunday morning.

The palace which the city of Versailles presented to Napoleon III. is now used as a cholera hospital.

English capitalists own 21,000,000 acres of grazing land in the west, together with the stock thereon.

A resident of Atlanta, Ga., died of congestion of the lungs in seven minutes after a hearty diet of watermelon.

Ward No., which cast over 500 votes less than ten years ago, now has a total population of about fifty.

A man with wax birds in a miniature cage has been selling them to the confiding Poughkeepsie people for fly traps.

This country is drinking 33 per cent more coffee than tea. In 1881 the difference was only 12 per cent.

Water ponds in Chili were covered with thin ice on the 5th inst., indicating a temperature rarely low for that section.

The Russian colony in McPherson county, Dakota, has sown some ten thousand acres of flax and it promises well.

## HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

Air your houses well.

Tinware washed in soda water will look like new.

If meat bakes too fast cover with buttered paper.

A piece of zinc put on the live coals in the stove will clean out the stove-pipe.

Wipe hot flat irons on a cloth wet with kerosene to prevent them from scorching.

Milk which is slightly turned or changed, may be sweetened and rendered fit for use again by stirring in a little soda.

To scour knives easily, mix a small quantity of baking soda with your brick dust, and see if your knives do not polish better.

If flat irons are rough and smoky, lay a little fine salt on the surface and rub them well. It will smooth them and prevent sticking.

A fashionable woman on the streets now a days without a little bunch of flowers at her breast is the "very conspicuous exception."

Rub your black walnut sewing machine tables, your cabinet organs, or any piece of solid furniture you may have, with a cloth moistened with kerosene oil, and you will quickly see an improvement, but keep it away from varnish.

When putting away the silver, tea or coffee-pot, which is not used every day, lay a little stick across the top under the cover. This will allow fresh air to get in and prevent the mustiness of the contents, familiar to hotel and boarding house sufferers.

WHETHER onions have a soporific effect upon all persons must be determined by the use of them. The lamented Mr. Frank Buckland found them beneficial after mental fatigue, followed by sleeplessness. Onions prepared by the following method have afforded relief to many persons suffering from insomnia. To each quart of onions allow a quart of cold water with half a teaspoonful of salt. Let the onions simmer for two hours. Drain them thoroughly when cooked and let them become quite cold. Mix one teaspoonful of butter with one tablespoonful of flour, adding salt and pepper, and pour on the mixture one pint of boiling milk stirring constantly. Put the onions in the sauce and set them on the fire until they boil.

TEA BITCHINS.—One quart of sifted flour, 14 cups of sour or buttermilk, one-half teaspoonful of salt, one tea-spoonful of soda dissolved in the milk, mix well; then roll and beat with the rolling pin till the dough is full of blisters and cracks loudly, roll out and cut with a biscuit cutter, grease the top with butter, fold one-half over the other; lay on the baking tin, so that the biscuit will not touch. Dip the fingers in milk and rub the top of each, to glaze them; bake in a quick oven.

CREAM OF CELERY SOUP.—Wash and scrape a head of celery and put it in one pint of boiling salted water. When it is boiled soft mash it fine in the water and pass it through a soup strainer. Turn this into a pint of hot milk that has been thickened by having a teaspoonful of flour wet with cold milk cooked in it. Add a teaspoonful of salt, teaspoonful of pepper, a tablespoonful of onion juice (if liked), and, lastly, a tablespoonful of butter. As soon as the butter is melted give the soup a quick and thorough stirring and serve hot. This is nutritious as well as delicate, and is much liked by epicures.

PARSNIP BALLS are excellent for an entree. Parboil six large parsnips and let them get quite cold, then peel them and grate them; beat two eggs until very light and mix with the grated parsnip, adding enough flour to give coherence to the mixture; flour your hands and make small, flat balls have hot lard in a shallow kettle and drop the balls gently into it; fry them until they are well browned on both sides. Send to the table very hot.

LEMON PICKLE.—The fruit should be small, with thick rinds. Rub them with a piece of flannel; then slit them down in quarters, but not quite through the pulp, fill the slits with salt hard pressed in; set them upright in a pan four or five days until the salt melts; turn them three days until they become tender in their liquor. Then make enough pickle to cover them of ripe vinegar, the brine of the lemons, Jamaica pepper and ginger; boil and skim it. When cold put it over the lemons.