# VARIOUS

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# Содержание

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## AN ESCAPE FROM SIBERIA

All the languages of continental Europe have some phrase by which a parting people express the hope of meeting again. The French *au revoir*, the Italian *à rivederla*, the Spanish *hasta mañana*, the German *Auf Wiedersehen*,—these and similar forms, varied with the occasion, have grown from the need of the heart to cheat separation of its pain. The Poles have an expression of infinitely deeper meaning, which embodies all that human nature can utter of grief and despair—"To meet nevermore." This is the heart-rending farewell with which the patriot exiled to Siberia takes leave of family and friends.

There is indeed little chance that he will ever again return to his country and his home. Since Beniowski the Pole made his famous romantic flight from the coal-mines of Kamschatka in the last century, there has been but a single instance of a Siberian exile making good his escape. In our day, M. Rufin Piotrowski, also a Polish patriot, has had the marvelous good-fortune to succeed in the all but impossible attempt; and he has given his story to his countrymen in a simple, unpretending narrative, which, even in an abridged form, will, we think, be found one of thrilling interest.

In January, 1843, we find Piotrowski in Paris, a refugee for already twelve years, and on the eve of a secret mission into Poland of which he gives no explanation. By means of an American acquaintance he procured a passport from the British embassy describing him as Joseph Catharo of Malta: he spoke Italian perfectly, English indifferently, and was thus well suited to support the character of an Italian-born subject of Queen Victoria. Having crossed France, Germany, Austria and Hungary in safety, he reached his destination, the town of Kamenitz in Podolia, on the Turkish frontier. His ostensible object was to settle there as a teacher of languages, and on the strength of his British passport he obtained the necessary permission from the police before their suspicions had been roused. He also gained admission at once into the society of the place, where, notwithstanding his pretended origin, he was generally known as "the Frenchman," the common nickname for a foreigner in the Polish provinces. He had soon a number of pupils, some of them Poles—others, members of the families of Russian resident officials. He frequented the houses of the latter most, in order not to attract attention to his intercourse with his compatriots. He spoke Russian fluently, but feigned total ignorance both of that and his own language, and even affected an incapacity for learning them when urged to do so by his scholars. Among the risks to which this exposed him was the temptation of cutting short a difficult explanation in his lessons by a single word, which would have made the whole matter clear. But this, although the most frequent and vexatious, was not the severest trial of his *incognito*. One day, while giving a lesson to two beautiful Polish girls, daughters of a lady who had shown him great kindness, the conversation turned upon Poland: he spoke with an indifference which roused the younger to a vehement outburst on behalf of her country. The elder interrupted her sharply in their native language with, "How can you speak of holy things to a hare-brained Frenchman?" At another Polish house, a visitor, hearing that M. Catharo was from Paris, was eager to ask news of his brother, who was living there in exile: their host dissuaded him, saying, "You know that inquiries about relations in exile are strictly forbidden. Take care! one is never safe with a stranger." Their unfortunate fellow-countryman, who knew the visitor's brother very well, was forced to bend over a book to hide the blood which rushed to his face in the conflict of feeling. He kept so close a guard upon himself that he would never sleep in the room with another person—which it was sometimes

difficult to avoid on visits to neighboring country-seats—lest a word spoken in his troubled slumbers should betray him. He passed nine months in familiar relations with all the principal people of the place, his nationality and his designs being known to but very few of his countrymen, who kept the secret with rigid fidelity. At length, however, he became aware that he was watched; the manner of some of his Russian friends grew inquiring and constrained; he received private warnings, and perceived that he was dogged by the police. It was not too late for flight, but he knew that such a course would involve all who were in his secret, and perhaps thousands of others, in tribulation, and that for their sakes it behooved him to await the terrible day of reckoning which was inevitably approaching. The only use to which he could turn this time of horrible suspense was in concerting a plan of action with his colleagues. His final interview with the chief of them took place in a church at the close of the short winter twilight on the last day of the year. After agreeing on all the points which they could foresee, they solemnly took leave of each other, and Piotrowski was left alone in the church, where he lingered to pray fervently for strength for the hour that was at hand.

The next morning at daybreak he was suddenly shaken by the arm: he composed himself for the part he was to play, and slowly opened his eyes. His room was filled with Russian officials: he was arrested. He protested against the outrage to a British subject, but his papers were seized, he was carried before the governor of the place, and after a brief examination given into the custody of the police.

He was examined on several successive days, but persisted in his first story, although aware that his identity was known, and that the information had come from St. Petersburg. His object was to force the authorities to confront him with those who had been accused on his account, that they might hear his confession and regulate their own accordingly. One day a number of them were brought together—some his real accomplices, others mere acquaintance. After the usual routine of questions and denials, Piotrowski suddenly exclaimed in Polish, as one who can hold out no longer, "Well, then, yes! I am no British subject, but a Pole of the Ukraine. I emigrated after the revolution of 1831: I came back because I could bear a life of exile no longer, and I only wished to breathe my native air. I came under a false name, for I could not have come in my own. I confided my secret to a few of my countrymen, and asked their aid and advice: I had nothing else to ask or tell them."

The preliminary interrogatories concluded, he was sent for a more rigid examination to the fortress of Kiow. He left Kamenitz early in January at midnight, under an escort of soldiers and police. The town was dark and silent as they passed through the deserted streets, but he saw lights in the upper windows of several houses whose inmates had been implicated in his accusation. Was it a mute farewell or the sign of vigils of anguish? They traveled all night and part of the next day: their first halt was at a great state prison, where Piotrowski was for the first time shut up in a cell. He was suffering from the excitement through which he had been passing, from the furious speed of the journey, which had been also very rough, and from a slight concussion of the brain occasioned by one of the terrible jolts of the rude vehicle: a physician saw him and ordered repose. The long, dark, still hours of the night were gradually calming his nerves when he was disturbed by a distant sound, which he soon guessed to be the clanking of chains, followed by a chant in which many voices mingled. It was Christmas Eve, old style, as still observed in some of the provinces, and the midnight chorus was singing an ancient Christmas hymn which every Polish child knows from the cradle. For twelve years the dear familiar melody had not greeted his ears, and now he heard it sung by his captive fellow-countrymen in a Russian dungeon.

Two days later they set out again, and now he was chained hand and foot with heavy irons, rusty, and too small for his limbs. The sleigh hurried on day and night with headlong haste: it was upset, everybody was thrown out, the prisoner's chain caught and he was dragged until he lost consciousness. In this state he arrived at Kiow. Here he was thrown into a cell six feet by five, almost dark and disgustingly dirty. The wretched man was soon covered from head to foot with vermin, of which his handcuffs prevented his ridding himself. However, in a day or two, after a visit from the commandant,

his cell was cleaned. His manacles prevented his walking, or even standing, and the moral effect of being unable to use his hands was a strange apathy such as might precede imbecility. He was interrogated several times, but always adhered to his confession at Kamenitz; menaces of harsher treatment, even of torture, were tried—means which he knew too well had been resorted to before; his guards were forbidden to exchange a word with him, so that his time was passed in solitude, silence and absolute inoccupation. Since Levitoux, another political prisoner, fearful that the tortures to which he was subjected might wring from him confessions which would criminate his friends, had set fire to his straw bed with his night-lamp and burned himself alive, no lights were allowed in the cells, so that a great portion of the twenty-four hours went by in darkness. After some time he was visited by Prince Bibikoff, the governor-general of that section of the country, one of the men whose names are most associated with the sufferings of Poland: he tried by intimidation and persuasion to induce the prisoner to reveal his projects and the names of his associates. Piotrowski held firm, but the prince on withdrawing ordered his chains to be struck off. The relief was ineffable: he could do nothing but stretch his arms to enjoy the sense of their free possession, and he felt his natural energy and independence of thought return. He had not been able to take off his boots since leaving Kamenitz, and his legs were bruised and sore, but he walked to and fro in his cell all day, enjoying the very pain this gave him as a proof that they were unchained. Several weeks passed without any other incident, when late one night he was surprised by a light in his cell: an aide-de-camp and four soldiers entered and ordered him to rise and follow them. He thought that he was summoned to his execution. He crossed the great courtyard of the prison supported by the soldiers; the snow creaked under foot; the night was very dark, and the sharp fresh air almost took away his breath, yet it was infinitely welcome to him after the heavy atmosphere of his cell, and he inhaled it with keen pleasure, thinking that each whiff was almost the last. He was led into a large, faintly-lighted room, where officers of various grades were smoking around a large table. It was only the committee of investigation, for hitherto his examinations had not been strictly in order.

This was but the first of a series of sittings which were prolonged through nearly half a year. During this time his treatment improved; his cell was kept clean; he had no cause to complain of his food; he was allowed to walk for an hour daily in the corridor, which, though cold and damp, in some degree satisfied his need of exercise. He was always guarded by two sentinels, to whom he was forbidden to speak. He learned in some way, however, that several of his co-accused were his fellow-prisoners: they were confined in another part of the fortress, and he but once caught a glimpse of one of them—so changed that he hardly recognized him. His neighbors on the corridor were common criminals. The president of the committee offered him the use of a library, but he only asked for a Bible, "with which," he says, "I was no longer alone." His greatest suffering arose from the nervous irritability caused by the unremitting watch of the sentinel at his door, which drove him almost frantic. The sensation of being spied at every instant, in every action, of meeting this relentless, irresponsive gaze on waking, of encountering it at each minute of the day, was maddening. From daybreak he longed for the night, which should deliver him from the sight. Sometimes, beside himself, he would suddenly put his own face close to the grating and stare into the tormenting eyes to force them to divert their gaze for a moment, laughing like a savage when he succeeded. He was in this feverish condition when called to his last examination. He perceived at once, from the solemnity of all present, that the crisis had come. His sentence was pronounced: death, commuted by Prince Bibikoff's intercession to hard labor for life in Siberia. He was degraded from the nobility, to which order, like half the inhabitants of Poland, he belonged, and condemned to make the journey in chains. Without being taken back to his cell, he was at once put into irons, the same rusty, galling ones he had worn already, and placed in a *kibitka*, or traveling-carriage, between two armed guards. The gates of the fortress closed behind him, and before him opened the road to Siberia.

His destination was about two thousand miles distant. The incidents of the journey were few and much of the same character. Charity and sympathy were shown him by people of every class.

Travelers of distinction, especially ladies, pursued him with offers of assistance and money, which he would not accept. The only gifts which he did not refuse were the food and drink brought him by the peasants where they stopped to change horses: wherever there was a halt the good people plied him with tea, brandy and simple dainties, which he gratefully accepted. At one station a man in the uniform of the Russian civil service timidly offered him a parcel wrapped in a silk handkerchief, saying, "Accept this from my saint." Piotrowski, repelled by the sight of the uniform, shook his head. The other flushed: "You are a Pole, and do not understand our customs. This is my birthday, and on this day, above all others, I should share what I have with the unfortunate. Pray accept it in the name of my patron saint." He could not resist so Christian an appeal. The parcel contained bread, salt and some money: the last he handed over to the guards, who in any case would not have let him keep it: he broke the bread with its donor. His guards were almost the only persons with whom he had to do who showed themselves insensible to his pain and sorrow. They were divided between their fears of not arriving on the day fixed, in which case they would be flogged, and of his dying of fatigue on the route, when they would fare still worse. The apprehension of his suicide beset them: at the ferries or fords which they crossed each of them held him by an arm lest he should drown himself, and all his meat was given to him minced, to be eaten with a spoon, as he was not to be trusted for an instant with a knife. Thus they traveled night and day for three weeks, only stopping to change horses and take their meals; yet he esteemed himself lucky not to have been sent with a gang of convicts, chained to some atrocious malefactor, or to have been ordered to make the journey on foot, like his countryman, Prince Sanguzsko. At last they reached Omsk, the head-quarters of Prince Gortchakoff, then governor-general of Western Siberia. By some informality in the mode of his transportation, the interpretation of Piotrowski's sentence depended solely on this man: he might be sent to work in one of the government manufactories, or to the mines, the last, worst dread of a Siberian exile. While awaiting the decision he was in charge of a gay, handsome young officer, who treated him with great friendliness, and in the course of their conversation, which turned chiefly on Siberia, showed him a map of the country. The prisoner devoured it with his eyes, tried to engrave it on his memory, asked innumerable questions about roads and water-courses, and betrayed so much agitation that the young fellow noticed it, and exclaimed, "Ah! don't think of escape. Too many of your countrymen have tried it, and those are fortunate who, tracked on every side, famished, desperate, have been able to put an end to themselves before being retaken, for if they are, then comes the knout and a life of misery beyond words. In Heaven's name, give up that thought!" The commandant of the fortress paid him a short official visit, and exclaimed repeatedly, "How sad! how sad! to come back when you were free-in a foreign country!" The chief of police, a hard, dry, vulture-like man, asked why he had dared to return without the czar's permission. "I could not bear my homesickness," replied the prisoner. "O native country!" said the Russian in a softened voice, "how dear thou art!" After various official interviews he was taken to the governor-general's ante-chamber, where he found a number of clerks, most of whom were his exiled compatriots and received him warmly. While he was talking with them a door opened, and Gortchakoff stood on the threshold: he fixed his eyes on the prisoner for some moments, and withdrew without a word. An hour of intense anxiety followed, and then an officer appeared, who announced that he was consigned to the distilleries of Ekaterininski-Zavod, some two hundred miles farther north.

Ekaterininski-Zavod is a miserable village of a couple of hundred small houses on the river Irtish, in the midst of a wide plain. Its inhabitants are all in some way connected with the government distillery: they are the descendants of criminals formerly transported. Piotrowski, after a short interview with the inspector of the works, was entered on the list of convicts and sent to the guard-house. "He is to work with his feet in irons," added the inspector. This unusual severity was in consequence of a memorandum in Prince Gortchakoff's own writing appended to the prisoner's papers: "Piotrowski must be watched with especial care." The injunction was unprecedented, and impressed the director with the prisoner's importance. Before being taken to his work he was

surrounded by his fellow-countrymen, young men of talent and promise, who were there, like himself, for political reasons. Their emotion was extreme: they talked rapidly and eagerly, exhorting him to patience and silence, and to do nothing to incur corporal punishment, which was the mode of keeping the workmen in order, so that in time he might be promoted, like themselves, from hard labor to office-work. At the guard-house he found a crowd of soldiers, among whom were many Poles, incorporated into the standing army of Siberia for having taken up arms for their country. This is one of the mildest punishments for that offence. They seized every pretext for speaking to him, to ask what was going on in Poland, and whether there were any hopes for her. Overcome by fatigue and misery, he sat down upon a bench, where he remained sunk in the gloomiest thoughts until accosted by a man of repulsive aspect, branded on the face—the Russian practice with criminals of the worst sort—who said abruptly, "Get up and go to work." It was the overseer, himself a former convict. "O my God!" exclaims Piotrowski, "Thou alone didst hear the bitter cry of my soul when this outcast first spoke to me as my master."

Before going to work his irons were struck off, thanks to the instant entreaties of his compatriots: he was then given a broom and shovel and set to clear rubbish and filth off the roof of a large unfinished building. On one side was a convict of the lowest order, with whom he worked—on the other, the soldier who mounted guard over them. To avoid the indignity of chastisement or reproof—indeed, to escape notice altogether—he bent his whole force to his task, without raising his head, or even his eyes, but the iron entered into his soul and he wept.

The order of his days knew no variation. Rising at sunrise, the convicts worked until eight o'clock, when they breakfasted, then until their dinner at noon, and again from one o'clock until dark. His tasks were fetching wood and water, splitting and piling logs, and scavenger-work of all sorts: it was all out of doors and in every extreme of the Siberian climate. His companions were all ruffians of a desperate caste: burglary, highway robbery, rape, murder in every degree, were common cases. One instance will suffice, and it is not the worst: it was that of a young man, clerk of a wine-merchant in St. Petersburg. He had a mistress whom he loved, but suspected of infidelity; he took her and another girl into the country for a holiday, and as they walked together in the fields fired a pistol at his sweetheart's head: it only wounded her; the friend rushed away shrieking for help; the victim fell on her knees and cried, "Forgive me!" but he plunged a knife up to the hilt in her breast, and she fell dead at his feet. He gave himself up to justice, received the knout and was transported for life.

The daily contact with ignorant, brutish men, made worse than brutes by a life of hideous crime, was the worst feature in his wretched existence. He had determined never to submit to blows, should the forfeit be his own life or another's, and the incessant apprehension kept his mind in a state of frightful tension: it also nerved him to physical exertions beyond his strength, and to a moral restraint of which he had not deemed himself capable in the way of endurance and self-command. But in the end he was the gainer. After the first year he was taken into the office of the establishment, and received a salary of ten francs a month. He was also allowed to leave the barracks where he had been herded with the convicts, and to lodge with two fellow-countrymen in a little house which they built for themselves, and which they shared with the soldiers who guarded them. It was a privilege granted to the most exemplary of the convicts to lodge with one or other of the private inhabitants of the village; but besides their own expenses they had to pay those of the soldier detailed to watch them. In the course of the winter they were comforted by the visit of a Polish priest. A certain number are permitted, to travel through Siberia yearly, stopping wherever there are Polish prisoners to administer the sacraments and consolations of their Church to them: there is no hardship which these heroic men will not encounter in performing their thrice holy mission. Piotrowski, who, like all Poles, was an ingrained Roman Catholic, after passing through phases of doubt and disbelief had returned to a fervent orthodoxy: this spiritual succor was most precious to himself and his brother-exiles.

One idea, however, was never absent from his mind—that of escape. At the moment of receiving his sentence at Kiow he had resolved to be free, and his resolution had not faltered. He

had neglected no means of acquiring information about Siberia and the adjacent countries. For this he had listened to the revolting confidences of the malefactors at the barracks—for this he heard with unflagging attention, yet with no sign of interest, the long stories of the traders who came to the distillery from all parts of the empire to sell grain or buy spirits. The office in which he passed his time from eight in the morning until ten or eleven at night was their *rendezvous*, and by a concentration of his mental powers he acquired a thorough and accurate knowledge of the country from the Frozen Ocean to the frontiers of Persia and China, and of all its manners and customs. The prisoner who meditates escape, he says, is absorbed in an infinitude of details and calculations, of which it is only possible to give the final result. Slowly and painfully, little by little, he accumulated the indispensable articles—disguise, money, food, a weapon, passports. The last were the most essential and the most difficult: two were required, both upon paper with the government stamp—one a simple pass for short distances and absences, useless beyond a certain limit and date; the other, the *plakatny*, or real passport, a document of vital importance. He was able to abstract the paper from the office, and a counterfeiter in the community forged the formula and signatures. His appearance he had gradually changed by allowing his hair and beard to grow, and he had studied the tone of thought and peculiar phraseology of the born Siberian, that he might the better pass for a native. More than six months went by in preparations: then he made two false starts. He had placed much hope on a little boat, which was often forgotten at evening, moored in the Irtish. One dark night he quietly loosed it and began to row away: suddenly the moon broke through the clouds, and at the same instant the voices of the inspector and some of his subordinates were heard on the banks. Piotrowski was fortunate enough to get back unperceived. On the second attempt a dense fog rose and shut him in: he could not see a yard before him. All night long he pushed the boat hither and thither, trying at least to regain the shore; at daybreak the vapor began to disperse, but it was too late to go on; he again had the good luck to land undiscovered. Five routes were open to him—all long, and each beset with its own perils. He decided to go northward, recross the Uralian Mountains, and make his way to Archangel, nearly a thousand miles off, where, among the hundreds of foreign ships constantly in the docks, he trusted to find one which would bring him to America. Nobody knew his secret: he had vowed to perish rather than ever again involve others in his fate. He reckoned on getting over the first danger of pursuit by mingling with the crowds of people then traveling from every quarter to the annual fair at Irbite at the foot of the Urals.

Finally, in February, 1846, he set out on foot. His costume consisted of three shirts—a colored one uppermost, worn, Russian fashion, outside his trousers, which were of heavy cloth, like his waistcoat—and a small sheepskin burnous, heavy high boots, a bright woolen sash, a red cap with a fur border—the dress of a well-to-do peasant or commercial traveler. In a small bag he carried a change of clothing and his provisions: his money and passports were hidden about his person; he was armed with a dagger and a bludgeon. He had scarcely crossed the frozen Irtish when the sound of a sleigh behind him brought his heart to his mouth: he held his ground and was hailed by a peasant, who wanted to drive a bargain with him for a lift. After a little politic chaffering he got in, and was carried to a village about eight miles off at a gallop. There the peasant set him down, and, knocking at the first house, he asked for horses to the fair at Irbite. More bargaining, but they were soon on the road. Erelong, however, it began to snow; the track disappeared, the driver lost his way; they wandered about for some time, and were forced to stop all night in a forest—a night of agony. They were not twelve miles from Ekaterininski-Zavod: every minute the fugitive fancied he heard the bells of the pursuing *kibitkas*; he had a horrible suspicion, too, that his driver was delaying purposely to betray him, as had befallen a fellow-countryman in similar circumstances. But at daybreak they found the road, and by nightfall, having changed horses once or twice and traveled like the wind, he was well on his way. At a fresh relay he was forced to go into a tavern to make change to pay his driver: as he stood among the tipsy crowd he was hustled and his pocket-book snatched from his hand. He could not discover the thief nor recover the purse: he durst not appeal to the police, and had to let it go.

In it, besides a quarter of his little hoard of money, there was a memorandum of every town and village on his way to Archangel, and his *plakatny*. In this desperate strait—for the last loss seemed to cut off hope—he had one paramount motive for going on: return was impossible. Once having left Ekaterininski-Zavod, his fate was sealed if retaken: he must go forward. Forward he went, falling in with troops of travelers bound to the fair. On the third evening of his flight, notwithstanding the time lost, he was at the gates of Irbite, over six hundred miles from his prison. "Halt and show your passport!" cried the sentinel. He was fumbling for the local pass with a sinking heart when the soldier whispered, "Twenty kopecks and go ahead." He passed in. The loss of his money and the unavoidable expenses had reduced his resources so much that he found it necessary to continue the journey on foot. He slept at Irbite, but was up early, and passed out of an opposite gate unchallenged.

Now began a long and weary tramp. The winter of 1846 was one of unparalleled rigor in Siberia. The snow fell in enormous masses, which buried the roads deep out of sight and crushed solidly-built houses under its weight. Every difficulty of an ordinary journey on foot was increased tenfold. Piotrowski's clothes encumbered him excessively, yet he dared not take any of them off. His habit was to avoid passing through villages as much as possible, but, if forced to do so to inquire his way, only to stop at the last house. When he was hungry he drew a bit of frozen bread from his wallet and ate it as he went along: to quench his thirst he often had no resource but melting the snow in his mouth, which rather tends to increase the desire for water. At night he went into the depths of the forest, dug a hole under the snow, and creeping in slept there as best he might. At the first experiment his feet were frozen: he succeeded in curing them, though not without great pain. Sometimes he plunged up to the waist or neck in the drifts, and expected at the next step to be buried alive. One night, having tasted to the full those two tortures, cold and hunger—of which, as he says, we complain so frequently without knowing what they mean—he ventured to ask for shelter at a little hut near a hamlet where there were only two women. They gave him warm food: he dried his drenched clothes, and stretched himself out to sleep on the bench near the kitchen stove. He was roused by voices, then shaken roughly and asked for his passport: there were three men in the room. With amazing presence of mind he demanded by what right they asked for his passport: were any of them officials? No, but they insisted on knowing who he was and where he was going, and seeing his pass. He told them the same story that he had told the women, and finally exhibited the local pass, which was now quite worthless, and would not have deceived a government functionary for a moment: they were satisfied with the sight of the stamp. They excused themselves, saying that the women had taken fright and given the alarm, thinking that, as sometimes happened, they were housing an escaped convict. This adventure taught him a severe lesson of prudence. He often passed fifteen or twenty nights under the snow in the forest, without seeking food or shelter, hearing the wolves howl at a distance. In this savage mode of life he lost the count of time: he was already far in the Ural Mountains before he again ventured to sleep beneath a roof. As he was starting the next morning his hosts said, in answer to his inquiries as to the road, "A little farther on you will find a guard-house, where they will look at your papers and give you precise directions." Again how narrow an escape! He turned from the road and crossed hills and gorges, often up to the chin in snow, and made an immense curve before taking up his march again.

One moonlight night, in the dead silence of the ice-bound winter, he stood on the ridge of the mountain-chain and began to descend its eastern slope. Still on and on, the way more dangerous than before, for now there were large towns upon his route, which he could only avoid by going greatly out of his way. One night in the woods he completely lost his bearings; a tempest of wind and snow literally whirled him around; his stock of bread was exhausted, and he fell upon the earth powerless; there was a buzzing in his ears, a confusion in his ideas; his senses forsook him, and but for spasms of cramp in his stomach he had no consciousness left. Torpor was settling upon him when a loud voice recalled him to himself: it was a trapper, who lived hard by, going home with his booty. He poured some brandy down the dying man's throat, and when this had somewhat revived him gave him food from his store. After some delay the stranger urged Piotrowski to get up and walk, which

he did with the utmost difficulty: leaning upon this Samaritan of the steppes, he contrived to reach the highway, where a small roadside inn was in sight. There his companion left him, and he staggered forward with unspeakable joy toward the warmth and shelter. He would have gone in if he had known the guards were there on the lookout for him, for his case was now desperate. He only got as far as the threshold, and there fell forward and rolled under a bench. He asked for hot soup, but could not swallow, and after a few minutes fell into a swoon-like sleep which lasted twenty-four hours. Restored by nourishment, rest and dry clothes, he set forth again at once.

During the first part of his journey he had passed as a commercial traveler; after leaving Irbite he was a workman seeking employment in the government establishments; but now he assumed the character of a pilgrim to the convent of Solovetsk on a holy island in the White Sea, near Archangel. For each change of part he had to change his manners, mode of speech, his whole personality, and always be probable and consistent in his account of himself. It was mid-April: he had been journeying on foot for two months. Easter was approaching, when these pious journeys were frequent, and not far from Veliki-Oustiog he fell in with several bands of men and women—*bohomolets*, as they are called—on their way to Solovetsk. There were more than two thousand in the town waiting for the frozen Dwina to open, that they might proceed by water to Archangel. It being Holy Week, Piotrowski was forced to conform to the innumerable observances of the Greek ritual—prayers, canticles, genuflexions, prostrations, crossings and bowings, as manifold as in his own, but different. His inner consciousness suffered from this hypocrisy, but it was necessary to his part. They were detained at Veliki-Oustiog a mortal month, during which these acts of devotion went on with almost unabated zeal among the *boholomets.* At length the river was free, and they set out. Their vessel was a huge hulk which looked like a floating barn: it was manned by twenty or thirty rowers, and to replenish his purse a little the fugitive took an oar. The agent who had charge of the expedition required their passports: among the number the irregularity of Piotrowski's escaped notice. The prayers and prostrations went on during the voyage, which lasted a fort-night. One morning the early sunshine glittered on the gilded domes of Archangel: the vessel soon touched the shore, and his passport was returned to him uninspected, with the small sum he had earned by rowing.

He had reached his goal; a thousand miles of deadly suffering and danger lay behind him; he was on the shores of the White Sea, with vessels of every nation lying at anchor ready to bear him away to freedom. Yet he was careful not to commit himself by any imprudence or inconsistency. He went with the pilgrims to their vast crowded lodging-house, and for several days joined in their visits to the different churches of Archangel; but when they embarked again for the holy island he stayed behind under the pretext of fatigue, but really to go unobserved to the harbor. There lay the ships from every part of the world, with their flags floating from the masts. Alas! alas! on every wharf a Russian sentinel mounted guard day and night, challenging every one who passed, and on the deck of each ship there was another. In vain he risked the consequences of dropping his character of an ignorant Siberian peasant so far as to speak to a group of sailors, first in French and then in German; they understood neither: the idlers on the quays began to gather round in idle curiosity, and he had to desist. In vain, despite the icy coldness of the water, he tried swimming in the bay to approach some vessel for the chance of getting speech of the captain or crew unseen by the sentinel. In vain he resorted to every device which desperation could suggest. After three days he was forced to look the terrible truth in the face: there was no escape possible from Archangel.

Baffled and hopeless, he turned his back on the town, not knowing where to go. To retrace his steps would be madness. He followed the shore of the White Sea to Onega, a natural direction for pilgrims returning from Solovetsk to take. His lonely way lay through a land of swamp and sand, with a sparse growth of stunted pines; the midnight sun streamed across the silent stretches; the huge waves of the White Sea, lashed by a long storm, plunged foaming upon the desolate beach. Days and nights of walking brought him to Onega: there was no way of getting to sea from there, and after a short halt he resumed his journey southward along the banks of the river Onega, hardly knowing whither or

wherefore he went. The hardships of his existence at midsummer were fewer than at midwinter, but the dangers were greater: the absence of a definite goal, of a distinct hope which had supported him before, unnerved him physically. He had reached the point when he dreaded fatigue more than risk. In spite of his familiarity with the minutiae of Russian customs, he was nearly betrayed one day by his ignorance of *tolokno*, a national dish. On another occasion he stopped at the cabin of a poor old man to ask his way: the gray-beard made him come in, and after some conversation began to confide his religious grievances to him, which turned upon the persecutions to which a sect of religionists is exposed in Russia for adhering to certain peculiarities in the forms of worship. Happily, Piorowski was well versed in these subjects. The poor old man, after dwelling long and tearfully on the woes of his fellow-believers, looked cautiously in every direction, locked the door, and after exacting an oath of secresy drew from a hiding-place a little antique brass figure of Byzantine origin, representing our Saviour in the act of benediction with two fingers only raised, according to the form cherished by the dissenters.

Following his purposeless march for hundreds of miles, the fugitive reached Vytegra, where the river issues from the Lake of Onega. There, on the wharf, a peasant asked him whither he was bound: he replied that he was a pilgrim on his way from Solovetsk to the shrines of Novgorod and Kiow. The peasant said he was going to St. Petersburg, and would give him a passage for his service if he would take an oar. The bargain was struck, and that night they started on their voyage to the capital of Poland's arch-enemy, the head-quarters of politics, the source whence his own arrest had emanated. He had no design: he was going at hazard. The voyage was long: they followed the Lake of Onega, the Lake of Ladoga and the river Neva. Sometimes poor people got a lift in the boat: toward the end of the voyage they took aboard a number of women-servants returning to their situations in town from a visit to their country homes. Among them was an elderly woman going to see her daughter, who was a washerwoman at St. Petersburg. Piotrowski showed her some small kindnesses, which won her fervent gratitude. As they landed in the great capital, which seemed the very focus of his dangers, and he stood on the wharf wholly at a loss what should be his next step, the poor woman came up with her daughter and offered to show him cheap lodgings. He followed them, carrying his protectress's trunk. The lodgings were cheap and miserable, and the woman of the house demanded his passport. He handed it to her with a thrill of anxiety, and carelessly announced his intention of reporting himself at the police-office according to rule. She glanced at the paper, which she could not read, and saw the official stamp: she was satisfied, and began to dissuade him from going to the police. It then appeared that the law required her to accompany him as her lodger; that a great deal of her time would be lost in the delays and formalities of the office, which, being a working-woman, she could ill afford; and as he was merely passing through the city and had his passport, there could be no harm in staying away. The next day, while wandering about the streets seeking a mode of escape, the pilot of a steam-packet to Riga asked him if he would like to sail with them the next day, and named a very moderate fare. His heart leapt up, but the next instant the man asked to see his passport: he took it out trembling, but the sailor, without scrutiny, cried, "Good! Be off with you, and come back to-morrow morning at seven o'clock." The next morning at seven he was on board, and the boat was under way.

From Riga he had to make his way on foot across Courland and Lithuania to the Prussian frontier. He now made a change in his disguise, and gave himself out as a dealer in hogs' bristles. In Lithuania he found himself once more on his beloved native soil, and the longing to speak his own language, to make himself known to a fellow-countryman, was almost irresistible; but he sternly quelled such a yearning. As he neared the frontier he had the utmost difficulty in ascertaining where and how it was guarded, and what he should have to encounter in passing. At length he learned enough for his purpose: there were no guards on the Prussian side. Reaching a rampart of the fortifications, he waited until the moment when the two sentinels on duty were back to back on their beats, and jumped down into the first of the three ditches which protected the boundary. Clambering and jumping, he

reached the edge of the third: shots were fired in several directions; he had been seen. He slid into the third ditch, scrambled up the opposite side, sprang down once more, rushed on until out of sight of the soldiers, and fell panting in a little wood. There he lay for hours without stirring, as he knew the Russian guards sometimes violated the boundary in pursuit of fugitives. But there was no pursuit, and he at last took heart. Then he began a final transformation. He had lately bought a razor, a pocket-mirror and some soap, and with these, by the aid of a slight rain which was falling, he succeeded with much difficulty in shaving himself and changing his clothes to a costume he had provided expressly for Prussia. When night had closed he set forth once more, lighter of heart than for many long years, though well aware that by international agreement he was not yet out of danger. He pushed on toward the grand duchy of Posen, where he hoped to find assistance from his fellow-countrymen, who, being under Prussian rule, would not be compromised by aiding him. He passed through Memel and Tilsit, and reached Königsberg without let or hindrance—over two hundred miles on Prussian soil in addition to all the rest. There he found a steamboat to sail the next day in the direction which he wished to follow. He had slept only in the open fields, and meant to do so on this night and re-enter the town betimes in the morning. Meanwhile he sat down on a heap of stones in the street, and, overcome by fatigue, fell into a profound sleep. He was awakened by the patrol: his first confused words excited suspicion, and he was arrested and carried to the station-house. After all his perils, his escapes, his adventures, his disguises, to be taken by a Prussian watchman! The next morning he was examined by the police: he declared himself a French artisan on his way home from Russia, but as having lost his passport. The story imposed upon nobody, and he perceived that he was supposed to be a malefactor of some dangerous sort: his real case was not suspected. A month's incarceration followed, and then a new interrogation, in which he was informed that all his statements had been found to be false, and that he was an object of the gravest suspicion. He demanded a private interview with one of the higher functionaries and a M. Fleury, a naturalized Frenchman in some way connected with the police-courts. To them he told his whole story. After the first moment's stupefaction the Prussian cried, "But, unhappy man, we must send you back: the treaty compels it. My God! my God! why did you come here?"—"There is no help for us," said M. Fleury, "but in Heaven's name write to Count Eulenberg, on whom all depends: he is a man whom everybody loves. What a misfortune!"

He was taken back to prison. He wrote; he received a kind but vague reply; delays followed, and investigations into the truth of his story; his anguish of mind was reaching a climax in which he felt that his dagger would be his best friend after all. A citizen of the place, a M. Kamke, a total stranger, offered to go bail for him: his story had got abroad and excited the deepest sympathy. The bail was not effected without difficulty: ultimately, he was declared free, however, but the chief of police intimated that he had better remain in Königsberg for the present. Anxious to show his gratitude to his benefactors, fearful, too, of being suspected, he tarried for a week, which he passed in the family of the generous M. Kamke. At the end of that time he was again summoned to the police-court, where two officials whom he already knew told him sadly that the order to send him back to Russia had come from Berlin: they could but give him time to escape at his own risk, and pray God for his safety. He went back to his friend M. Kamke: a plan was organized at once, and by the morrow he was on the way to Dantzic. Well provided with money and letters by the good souls at Königsberg, he crossed Germany safely, and on the 22d of September, 1846, found himself safe in Paris.

# AUSTRALIAN SCENES AND ADVENTURES

## TWO PAPERS.—1

Australia is still the world's latest wonder—a land whose very existence was but a few years ago ignored by geographers, but which they now acknowledge as a fifth continent; a land of marvels that courts and repays the investigation of the curious by its wild scenery, its strange aboriginal inhabitants, its birds and beasts unlike all others, its rich floral treasures, its mines of inexhaustible wealth, its meadows and plains of dimensions so vast as to defy for centuries to come a general cultivation; a land that has in less than half a century experienced a growth and expansion unprecedented in the history of nations. Yet is the civilization an imported one, not indigenous, and to be traced only here and there in the colonies, having as yet scarcely touched the interior of the island or its aboriginal inhabitants. These are, in our own day, hardly less untamed and untamable than when visited by the great adventurer William Dampier in the latter part of the seventeenth century, now almost two hundred years ago. So little regard was paid to the reports of Dampier that nearly another century elapsed without further efforts at the exploration of Australia, till in 1770 Cook, in his first voyage around the world, visited this great island, furnishing to his country the first accurate information of its climate, soil and productions. Yet his marvelous accounts, though exciting at first a sort of nine days' wonder, failed to awaken any permanent interest, and soon Australia was again forgotten. But when England, in consequence of the loss of her valuable American colonies, to which she had been accustomed to transport her worst offenders, began to look around for a substitute, the eyes of the government were for the first time turned toward Australia. In May, 1787, the first shipload of convicts was sent out, and in the following January the foundation of Sydney, the future capital of the penal settlement, was laid. Little, however, was done in the way of exploring the country until the discovery of gold within its borders. Then, indeed, the world woke up, and long-forgotten, neglected Australia came to be reckoned a point of interest, at least to fortune-hunters.

Seen in the distance, the view of this great island is scarcely attractive. Its abrupt shores wear a sombre hue, and the traveler, ere he sets foot on the soil, detects a sort of savage air that seems to reign triumphant over the demi-civilization that has been the growth of only a score or two of years. Tiny native huts, looking as though the architect had studied how small, uncouth and inconvenient a human dwelling could possibly be made, contrast strangely with the tasteful white cottages surrounded by flower-gardens and wreathed with vines, or the elegant mansions of stone and slate, that form the homes of foreign residents; natives in filthy garb, or no garb at all, prowl about the dwellings or worm their devious way among the costly equipages of Europeans; orchards and vineyards are planted under the very shadow of forests where roam in all their savage freedom herds of wild cattle and their wilder masters; and out from the rocks and boulders of the most rugged spots rise clusters of the graceful umbrella palm, with a foliage, fern-like and feathery, of the loveliest emerald, and a cone expanding like a lady's fan. The odor of English cowslips mingles with the spicy aroma of tropical fruits, and the perpetual snow of-lofty peaks is reflected on fields of golden maize and on meadows that gleam and glitter in the bright sunlight as if paved with emeralds. It is contrast, not similitude, that attracts the eye, novelty more than beauty, and quaintness rather than such gorgeous sights as one meets everywhere within the tropics.

The harbors are very marvels of commodiousness, that of Port Jackson, the entrance to Sydney, being fifteen miles long. It is landlocked on both sides, without a shoal or rock to mar its perfectness, and broad enough to afford safe anchorage to all the navies of the world. Here ride at anchor vessels of almost every nation, their gay pennons flaunting in the breeze, while worming their way in and out among the shipping may be seen multitudes of native boats made of bark, quaint as frail, and looking

for all the world like a shoal of soldiers' cocked hats. A man on land carries his tiny craft on his shoulders with less difficulty, apparently, than the boat carries him on the water. Rowing one seems about as difficult an operation as balancing one's self on a straw would, be; but it has an especial point of merit—it never sink, only purls, and an Australian takes a good ducking as nonchalantly as he smokes his pipe. The natives usually paddle in companies of three, and when one of the triad is purled the other two come to the rescue. One on each side taking a hand of their unlucky comrade, and reseating him, they move on rapidly as before, cutting the blue water with their slender paddles and enlivening the scene by occasional songs. The presence of numerous sharks in these waters is the chief drawback to the pleasures of boating, and many an ill-fated oarsman pays the forfeit of life or limb for his temerity in venturing out too far. The nose of the shark is his most vulnerable part; and the natives, who eat this sea-monster as willingly as he eats them, often inflict a fatal wound by slinging a huge stone at his nose and battering it to a jelly as he rises out of the water. The flesh is eaten raw by the aborigines in their wild state, but the more civilized "burn it," as they say, "like white men;" that is, they cut off huge lumps of the flesh, lay them before a fire to roast, gnaw off the surface as fast as it burns, and put down the remainder to toast again until the appetite is glutted.

These islanders were all cannibals when first discovered by Europeans, intellectually inferior to other savages, ignorant of agricultural and mechanical arts, going entirely naked, and living more like brutes than human beings. Slowly and mutinously have their barbarous customs been relinquished, even by those brought into occasional contact with foreigners, while those in the interior are savage as the monsters that prowl about them in dens and holes of the earth. Even such as mingle most freely with the colonists can seldom be prevailed on to practice permanently the arts of civilized life, usually preferring their original habits and pursuits to the restraints of society. They readily admit the superiority of foreigners, but cling tenaciously to their forest homes and rude lives of unfettered freedom. In character they are cruel and vindictive, improvident and thievish; and they seem almost devoid of gallantry in the treatment of their women, wooing their wives with blows, and often inflicting death upon women and children for the slightest offences. Yet they have some ideas of a Supreme Being and a future state, they practice a sort of religious worship, and they bury or burn their dead. They call their chiefs *be-à-na*, or "father," but unless compelled by fear to obedience they treat them with little respect or affection. Their language has a musical sound, but the vocabulary is scanty; and thus far the origin of these people and their language remains a matter of doubt, though in many particulars they bear a decided resemblance to the negroes of Guinea. In regard to dress their habits are certainly primitive. A single ratskin often forms the entire wardrobe of a native chief, and a tomahawk with a brace of spears pointed with iron-wood or flint his adornments. Opossum-skins tied together form a sort of cloak used as a protection against the cold, but if on the chase the wearer finds his upper garment oppressively warm, he tosses it away, and trusts to finding or stealing another when he needs it. Their dwellings are wretched little huts, or rather sheds, composed of bark or dried leaves, and so low-pitched that one must crawl on his knees to enter them. They are ill-ventilated and filthy in the extreme, utterly devoid of furniture and household implements, and without any means of securing either privacy or warmth—places where we should deem it impossible to dwell content. Yet the native Australian seems always merry, and he would not exchange his filthy hovel for the palace of a prince. Unpretending as that of his subjects was the royal abode of the venerable King Tatambo, an old man, whom the count de Beauvoir describes as having a "skin black and shiny as liquorice, with snow-white hair and beard," his only garment being a fur cloak that was cast aside during the dance at which the count was present. He gives, in connection with the king's portrait, that of "the youngest and most beautiful of His Majesty's daughters," which may serve as a type of the female beauty of Australia.

The Australians are extremely fond of dancing, especially their *corrobori* or war-dance, performed always with bodies perfectly nude, while they brandish a spear in one hand and a flaming brand in the other. The night is invariably selected for the performance of the corrobori, and the

effect upon unaccustomed eyes is startling in the extreme. The agile movements of the lean forms, black as night, reflected by the radiance of their gleaming torches, the yells and frantic gestures, together with the fierce onsets of the combatants with spear and tomahawk, present a spectacle of weird interest, quite in keeping with the wild scenery of the defiles and ravines where the corrobori is usually celebrated.

The complexion of the Australians is black or very dark brown, their hair straight, and their features of the negro type. They are of medium stature, but generally thin, though well-formed, athletic and agile. They are eager in the pursuit of gain, and this characteristic, combined with their wonderful powers of endurance both of hunger and fatigue, renders them patient and successful miners, while all other causes combined have tended less to the development and improvement of the Australian than has the discovery of gold within his borders. This discovery, that has so changed the aspect of everything in Australia, was the result of a mere accident that a thinking mind knew how to turn to advantage. An adventurer from California, whose dreams by day and by night were all of the land of gold he had so recently left, while searching in company with another for a new pasturage-ground for their sheep, came one day upon a range of low hills so like the "Golden Range" of California as to bring back all his old prepossessions in favor of mining. Stopping to examine, he found the hills composed of granite, mica and quartz, the natural home of gold, and his experience as a miner led to the conviction that though the main body of the gold might have been already washed out among the surrounding clay, yet enough remained to repay a careful search and to indicate the existence, somewhere in the immediate vicinity, of a mine of untold wealth. Several days were spent in unprofitable search: then more favorable indications led the shepherds to dispose of their flocks and set out in good earnest to dig for gold. A couple of spades, a trowel and a calabash were their only tools, but our adventurer was a knowing man, and "knowledge is power." His practiced eye knew just where the precious metals would be most likely to exist if at all in that locality—that in the old beds of rivers now dried up gold would more naturally be found than in younger streams, and especially that where round pebbles indicated a strong eddy ten times as much gold might be expected as in the level parts. Gravel and shingle were cleared away without examination, then a bed of gray clay, as too porous to hold gold; but when a stratum of pipeclay was reached the diggers knew that not an ounce of gold would be found beneath, and their search was confined to a little streak of brownish clay, about an inch in thickness, just above the pipeclay. Every particle of this was carefully washed, and after hours of patient labor the toilers were rewarded by about a thimbleful of the shining dust they were so eagerly seeking. From this small beginning on the 10th of June, 1851, have grown the wonderful mining operations of Australia; and in less than a month after the little incident related above twenty thousand diggers—in a year increased to one hundred and fifty thousand—were busy in the inexhaustible mines of that far-off land; and so came those rugged, barren lands, hitherto scarcely broken even by savages, to be peopled by men from every civilized land.

Ballarat, the centre of one of the chief mining districts, is connected now by railway with Melbourne, so that in the interval of only four hours one passes from the commercial metropolis to the "City of Gold." Over the fertile belt of cultivated lands that surrounds Melbourne, through rugged rocks and barren sands, runs this road, on which one meets crowds of pedestrians, many of them barefoot, the sole capital of each a tent and a pickaxe. Nearing the mines, the aspect of everything is changed: whole forests of trees demolished as if by a thunderbolt; rivers turned out of their natural bed; fertile meadows laid waste; gaping chasms and frightful depths here and there, in which are men toiling half naked, begrimed with mud, and fierce, reckless, cadaverous faces that tell of hardships and strife and sin in the eager pursuit of riches. Ballarat was at first only a mining-camp of immense size, and its environs are still occupied by tents, where transient visitors find very passable accommodations. But the city proper, now some sixteen years old, with a population already of thirty thousand, is an exact transcript of Melbourne, with beautiful dwellings, and broad streets thronged with carriages by day and lighted with gas by night. It boasts already its clubs and theatres, its banks

and libraries and reading—rooms, where the successful miner may invest his earnings, cultivate his intellect and seek recreation for his leisure hours.

There are over two thousand mining districts in Australia, of which one of the richest is "Black Hill Mine," but why called "Black Hill" it would be difficult to say, as its beautiful glistening sands are far nearer white than black. Next to gold, the most valuable ore is mercury, immense quantities of which are shipped annually to England from these mines. Iron-ore is found in nearly every part of the island, much of it so rich as to produce nearly three-fourths of its weight of metal. Topazes of rare beauty are frequently obtained, and coal is both good and abundant. In addition to these the island possesses an almost inexhaustible store of granite, slate and freestone, well adapted to building purposes. Sometimes gold is found diffused with wonderful regularity within a few inches of the surface, and so abundant that a single cradleful will yield an ounce of pure gold-dust, the miners readily realizing two or three thousand dollars per diem. As the grass is torn up, flecks of bright gold are found clinging to the roots, and the clay as it is turned over glitters with the precious dust. Again, the digger has to search for his treasure deep in the bowels of the earth, or among flinty rocks, or far down beneath a river's bed, and, it may be, spend weeks or months without realizing a bawbee. Nothing else is so uncertain as to results as the search for gold, and few vocations are at once so fascinating and so cruelly exacting in regard to health, ease, and even life.

Among the mines, and amid barren, rugged scenery in Australia, one is often surprised by glimpses of rare beauty—flowers of wondrous brilliancy, odorless though they be; a gigantic tree twined about by a delicate creeper of exquisite loveliness; or one of those magnificent Australian lakes that show nothing at first but the greenest grass, tall and luxuriant as under the equator; then, as he attempts to ride through the grass, he suddenly finds his horse's feet growing moist and the spongy vegetation getting fuller and fuller of water, till he discovers that he has entered a lake so wide and deep that his only safety lies in a quick retreat. This phenomenon is repeated on a small scale all through the jungle-lands, little tufts of grass here and there, known readily by their brighter green, furnishing water enough to meet the wants of a thirsty animal. A calabash full of pure, sweet water may be expressed from one of these tiny clumps of grassy sponge, as many a weary traveler has attested while roaming over sterile regions destitute alike of wells and springs.

But of surprises there is no end in Australia. Flowers fascinating to the eye have no smell, but uncouth—looking shrubs and bushes often fill the air with their delicate aroma; crows look like magpies, and dogs like jackals; four-footed animals hop about on two feet; rivers seem to turn their backs on the sea and run inland; swans are black, and eagles white; some of the parrots have webbed feet; and birds laugh and chatter like human beings, while never a song, or even a chirrup, can be heard from their nests and perches. So an English lark or nightingale is at a premium; and many a rough miner, with his shaggy beard and uncouth ways, his oaths and lawlessness and crimes, has been known to walk on Sunday evenings to a little English cottage twelve miles out of the settlement just to hear the sweet song of a pet lark.

The variety of vegetable productions is so great that above five thousand species, more than half of which are peculiar to the country, have been described and classed. Among the most remarkable is the species of *Eucalyptus*, or gum tree, that forms some of the largest timber yet discovered, having been seen of the height of one hundred and fifty feet, and thirty to forty in girth near the root. The leafless acacias are also found here, as well as the *Nepenthes distillatoria* and the *Cephalotus follicularis*, two remarkable varieties of the monkey-cup or pitcher-plant; while many very beautiful ferns and flowering vines adorn the coasts and lave their graceful fringes in the blue ocean waves. The timber of the country is of gigantic size, and with other varieties may be found cedar, rosewood, tulip and mahogany.

But the most wonderful products of Australia belong to the animal kingdom, among them the kangaroo, the wombat, and that strange anomaly of the animal creation, the *Ornithorynchus*, or "duck-billed quadruped." Emus, eagles, parrots, white swans and overgrown pelicans of many varieties,

enrich the ornithological kingdom, while among insects and reptiles are found some less desirable specimens, such as tarantulas. The natives of the island hold the old tradition of the ancients, that one bitten by a tarantula will dance himself to death. The plumage of Australian birds is varied and brilliant, and the natives make pretty fans by arranging the feathers in assorted colors; while a sort of head-dress worn by both men and women on the occasion of their marriage, and composed entirely of feathers made into many-tinted flowers, is a very gorgeous affair. Among the varieties of birds peculiar to the island are the "lyre-bird" and that known as the "satin-bower," so called from its glossy plumage, which is green while the bird is young and jet black at maturity. Before building their nests these birds gather a large quantity of twigs, weaving them into a sort of bower, which they tastefully decorate with bones, feathers, leaves and such other adornments as they are able to collect. Here in this arena the courting is done, the male bird chasing his mate up and down, bowing his pretty head and playing the agreeable generally, while she indulges in all manner of airs and graces, pretends to be very coy, and acts the coquette to perfection. But her lover's devotion conquers at last, and in due time the fair flirt surrenders, yields up her liberty and settles down as a dutiful wife and loving mother, bringing up a family of sons and daughters, and no doubt duly instructing them in the part they in their turn are to take in life's drama. The black swans are not prettier than white ones, but they are rarer, and when both are floating together over the smooth surface of those lovely Australian lakes they present a picture of which one never wearies, see it as often as one may.

The count de Beauvoir, in describing a hunt of several days, speaks with enthusiasm of the flocks of wild-turkeys and blue cranes, but bewails his ill-success in running down the huge emus that stalked before the hunters faster than their horses could gallop. He describes also a kangaroo-hunt, and a single combat with an old kangaroo, grizzled and gray, that in a hand-to-hand fight for a long time parried all the hunter's efforts to take him, either living or dead. He was brought down at last by a revolver, and his skin was carried off as a trophy of victory. The cattle-hunt was even more exciting, in the wild flight of four or five thousand terrified beeves, rushing pell-mell through the tall grass or over sandy plains, stopping occasionally to hide their terrified faces from the dangers that beset them, but one occasionally succumbing to the trusty weapons of the count and his comrades. The hunters were certainly not encumbered with superfluous garments, several of the boys being clothed only in a pair of boots, and none with more than a single garment. The immense droves of cattle and sheep herded together in Australia cannot fail to awaken the surprise of the visitor on his first arrival in the country, an Australian herdsman reckoning his flocks by hundreds, and even a thousand or two heads of cattle owned by one man being no unusual occurrence. Indeed, everything seems on a mammoth scale in Australia—forests of timber trees that outlive generation after generation of men, and yet have no thought of dying; ferns like those near Hobart Town, that lift their graceful fringes high over men's heads or serve as shade trees to their dwellings; gigantic emus flying like the fabled Mazeppa over plains the extent of which the eye cannot measure; and those fathomless mines of inexhaustible wealth that seem to promise gold enough for all the world for the centuries yet unborn.

Aristocracy is a queer thing in Australia. Many of those now claiming "respectability" and holding themselves aloof from the members of the settlements did not have their expenses paid out by government, because they were born on the island—not convicts, but only the offspring of those who were. In the race for wealth educated and refined gentlemen are generally outstripped by those who with less mind have greater physical strength, more practical knowledge of the world and more tact in overcoming difficulties; so that one meets wealthy miners who cannot write their own names, and learned bootblacks and cooks who have taken their degrees in mathematics and the languages. One millionaire who had a fancy to be thought literary sent regular contributions to the English magazines, every line of which was written by his footman, to whom he paid an enormous salary, not so much for writing as for keeping his secret, and it was years before it leaked out. In the struggle for position the man of gold gains the day, and not unfrequently brute force or unscrupulous trickery is called in to keep that which wealth has purchased.

Melbourne is the commercial metropolis of Australia, as Sydney is the capital of the penal colony, and though both are large, well-built and thriving cities, they are strikingly in contrast with each other. One is the scion of a lordly house, "to the manner born"—the other, the *parvenu* of yesterday, whose gold makes his position. Melbourne is to all intents a European city, with its boulevards and regular streets, whole blocks of costly stores and princely dwellings, and environed by elegant villas and country-seats adorned with gardens, vineyards and choice shrubbery. It has its English and Chinese quarters, the latter as essentially Chinese as if built in the Celestials' own land, and brought over, mandarin buttons, tiny teapots, opium-pipes and all, in one of their own junks. The English quarter contains, besides the government buildings, several schools, hospitals, churches and benevolent institutions, the public library, a polytechnic hall, a national museum, theatres and opera-houses, all built in a style alike elegant and substantial. The library only ten years after it was opened numbered 41,000 volumes, and has since been largely increased. Science rather than literature, and practical utility more than entertainment, have been kept in the ascendency in the management of this institution. The hall is open for daily lectures, and some valuable telescopes and other apparatus belong to the institution. The cabinet of natural history contains many rare specimens that serve to elucidate the ancient and modern history of the country, especially in regard to some of the animals and vegetables indigenous to the island. The museum is built on a commanding eminence, and from its spacious windows one sees clearly to the opposite side of Hobson's Bay.

The city is not built on the sea-coast, but two or three miles from the shore, its port being Sandridge, with which it is connected by railway. Vessels of all nations crowd the harbor, and the streets are as full of busy life and gay frivolity as those of Havre or Marseilles. The drives in the environs of the city are replete with picturesque beauty—meadows dotted with many—tinted flowers and magnificent forest trees, about which are festooned flowering vines and creepers. Their thick branches are the resort of cockatoos, parrots and paroquets in brilliant plumage, and perhaps most beautiful of all, because most rare, sparrows, not clothed, like ours, in sombre gray, but rejoicing in vestments of green and gold. But brilliancy of plumage is the solitary charm of these feathered beauties, for their voices are harsh and their song a very burlesque on the name of music.

# FORECAST

When I, for ever out of human sight,
Shall seem beyond the wish for anything,
Oh then believe at morning and at night
My soul shall listen for thy whispering.

The work of life may so fill up the day
That not a thought of me shall venture there;
And after labor Love may charm away
What could not enter for the press of care.

But when thou'st bidden all *this* world good-night,
And enterest that which lies so close to mine,

*Call me by name*—-it is my angel's right—
And I shall hear thee, though I give no sign.

When morn undoes the high, white gates of sleep,
Pause, as thou comest forth, to speak to me:
It may seem vain, for silence will be deep,
But uttered wishes wait on prophecy.

And when some day far distant thou dost feel
That night and morrow will no longer come,
The pitying heart will let me then reveal
My presence to thee on the passage home.

*CHARLOTTE F. BATES.*

# THE MATCHLESS ONE:

# A TALE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY, IN FOUR CHAPTERS

## CHAPTER III

I was nearly asleep, though my thoughts were entertaining enough, when again footsteps entered the arbor below. This time the intruder did not pause. A woman's voice humming an air seemed to approach, and in a moment more a swift hand parted the bushes behind me, and Blanche Furnaval appeared. I was very much surprised, but stood up to make way for her, at the same time throwing aside my cigar.

"I beg your pardon," she exclaimed immediately, clearly as much astonished as I: "I did not know any one had found this pretty spot but myself."

"I think I know how to look for pretty things," I replied, gazing at her face, which was glowing from quick walking, though her breath came evenly through her parted lips.

"Do you never tire of making those silly speeches?" she asked, lifting her gray eyes candidly to my face. "Excuse me, you need not answer: I am very brusque. You see I did not expect to find any one here, and consequently left my company manners at home. I am sorry to have disturbed you," she continued, turning to go.

"Let us compare notes, Miss Blanche, and see to whom the rock belongs by right of discovery. Won't you be seated?" I said, making a place for her.

"I came to see the sunset," she replied after a moment's hesitation, "and if it won't incommode you I will stay. Should you not care to talk, please read on: I shall not mind. And won't you light another cigar? I have no objection to cigars in the open air, though I think them disgusting in the house."

"Thank you," I said as she sat down and I took another Havana for the one I had thrown away at her arrival. "Will you relate to me the manner of your discovery? I would rather not read."

"About two weeks ago," she began, looking over the landscape, and not at me, "I was sitting in the arbor below, and I heard Mrs.—well, a lady coming whom, to be sincere with you, I dislike. If I stayed, I knew she would have a long talk with me: if I walked on, she might call me back. I looked about in haste for a hiding-place. The bushes near me appeared as if I might get behind them: I pushed through, saw a little path, which I followed, turned round the base of a hillock, and found two rocks, upon which I raised myself with the help of a sapling. Then, carefully parting the branches, I saw this," waving her small hand that I might see it, but still not looking at me. "The sun was just setting; away down in yonder field the sorrel was as fire in its rays; a catbird was reciting a merry pastoral in the thicket beyond; two goats stood high on a bank, like satyrs guarding the place. You see why I come again."

"I have the right of discovery," I cried gayly: "I made the path and placed the rocks. I claim it, that I may lay it at your feet."

"Do you like it?" she asked, turning to me and laying a slight stress on "you."

"I told you I admired pretty things, and you know, Miss Blanche, I am a bit of a poet."

She smiled: "Ah yes; but do you really admire this?"

"Of course I do—think it dem foine."

She laughed outright—a laugh so gay that I joined her, though I could not tell why. "As for sorrel," I added, "you ought to see The Beauties: the fields are full of it, though the farmers don't seem to admire it much."

"Well, I am very fond of the sorrel," she replied, "with the clover-tops, the seed-globes of dandelion and the daisies by the water: it makes quite a bouquet in yonder field."

I looked at her to see if she was chaffing me: not at all—she was sober as a judge.

"Dem foine! I beg pardon, very nice indeed. How would you like to carry it to the ball this evening?"

"I never take anything to a ball that I care to have appreciated," she answered dryly.

"Aw! That is the reason you won't sing down there: isn't it, now? But, really, they thought it fine the other night—quite clever, I heard some of them say."

"Oh yes," with a weary smile that had a little contempt in it.

"Did that ugly little Italian know very much about singing? You seemed pleased with his admiration."

"That ugly Italian, as you call him, has heard some of the best prima donnas in Europe. He is poor, he is seedy—for his voice left him just as he was on the eve of success—but he was the only person in the room who could tell me that I sang as well as the greatest of them." Her voice quivered as she spoke.

"You are mistaken indeed, Miss Blanche," I said. "Any fellow there would have paid you the same compliment if you had given him a chance; but you were so confoundedly wrapped up in that Italian chap that you would not look at the rest of us."

"I don't care for the compliment," she said, cooling down directly: "I care for the truth. They don't know if I sing well or not."

"Then you only sing to be admired, Miss Furnaval?"

"I don't sing at all," she said, coloring.

"But you *should* sing."

"Why?" she asked.

"To please—to give pleasure to others."

"I don't care to please any one but myself."

"But that is not right, you know. Now, I try to please everybody."

"Do you always succeed, Mr. Highrank?"

"Yes, always; and though it's tiresome at times, I bear it. Last autumn you never saw anything to compare to it—in the country, you know. But it's my vocation, and I try to live up to it. People do wrong who have talents and do not use them. That is why I blame you, Miss Blanche."

"It is not worth the trouble. I have withdrawn my hand from market, and intend to please myself the remainder of my life."

"From what market? What do you mean?"

"I mean the matrimonial market, of course."

"Why won't you marry? if I may ask."

"It is too much trouble. I won't be a slave to the caprices of the world so that I may be called amiable. Now, if I don't wish to appear in the parlor, I stay in my room; if I don't wish to receive callers, I refuse; if I don't wish to attend a party, I stay at home. I need not visit to keep myself 'before, the public.' I can be as eccentric as I like. When I disagree with a gentleman, I can contradict him; if I do not feel like smiling, I frown; and when I want to walk alone, I go. I can please myself from morning till night, and I enjoy it."

"You like clever fellows, don't you?" I asked, remembering the conversation I had just overheard.

"Yes," she answered, and then speaking decidedly, added, "and I like 'poor devils,' as you call them: they are not so dreadfully conceited as *some* men are."

"I tell you what," I said—just for the purpose of getting her opinion of myself, you know—"I am a clever fellow: I hope you like me."

She glanced round—I suppose to see if I was in earnest—then turning away said, "Y-e-s, pretty well."

It was rough on a chap, but she looked so sweet as she said it, and sat so very unconscious that I was looking at her, that I thought I would give her a little advice. I could not get it out of my head how Mrs. Stunner said she would end badly, and it seemed a pity for a charming girl such as she was. So I said, persuasively, "Now, don't you go and marry one of those poor chaps, Miss Blanche. You see, you will be regularly unhappy, and all that sort of thing, if you do."

"How do you know?" she asked.

"Oh," I replied, not knowing what to to say for an instant, "I heard it."

"Heard what?" she said, looking at me curiously.

"That you would do it, and would be unhappy."

"A report made to order by those good people whom you want me to take pains to please. 'Tis a method to make a harmless rival of me. Rumor that I am engaged, and to a man beneath me, and of course other gentlemen will not pay me attention. Mean! mean! But no matter," she continued after a moment: "it won't hurt me. I am not engaged, and don't intend to be; and it is nothing new for me to know that the world is not particularly truthful."

"But why not marry? You had better change your mind—indeed you had: I advise you for your good."

"You say I must not select a poor man, and the rich require too much devotion from the ladies. You gentlemen let us take all the trouble to please: you present yourselves, and expect us to fall at your feet.*I* am waiting for a chevalier who will go the world over to win me—who will consider it an honor if I finally accept him, instead of fancying, that I am honored by his choice."

"I used to have ideas of that kind, but found them false. It *is* an honor to receive a proposal, you know. Every one thinks so, else they would not tell of it and brag as they do. By being so unlike the rest of the world you will end badly—indeed you will, Miss Blanche."

"Look for a moment at the case as I put it. A man asks me to marry him: he likes me—thinks I shall make him a good wife. He woos me to please himself, not to please me, and you think I should be grateful because his vanity prompts him to believe that I am highly honored. But this is only one of the many fallacies which people adopt without question. It is good for a man to be refused several times: it takes some little conceit out of him, and makes him more humble and nice for the poor woman who is ultimately to be his wife. I am convinced that there is no gentleman who makes his first proposal that has a doubt of his being accepted. Now, is there?" she asked, appealing to me.

"Well, you are about right. Women are not so particular about making a choice, you know. It isn't so hard for them to find, somebody that suits. I suppose I should be accepted by any girl I might ask. Frankly, now," I said, wishing to give her a poser, "wouldn't you accept me?"

"Frankly," she replied, taking my own tone, "I would not."

"And why not?" I asked.

"There would be too many young ladies made unhappy through losing you," she answered banteringly.

"But you know I should not care for that: I can't marry them all."

"You told me you thought it your duty to please everybody."

"Come, now, think of it, and tell the real truth: you know if I marry it would have to be but one girl."

"You might go to Utah."

"You won't answer. Silence gives consent, don't it?" I said in a tone of triumph.

"Do you really want me to answer your question?" she asked, looking at me queerly.

"By Jove!" I thought, "it's coming now. I've pushed it too far—never thought what I was doing: she will certainly accept me, and I cannot retract." It took me but a moment to see my danger and to make up my mind. A gentleman will always sustain his word. My voice was shaking a little from the

greatness of the resolution I had made, but I managed to say pretty steadily, "Of course I do." It was so very sudden, you know. I felt I should be an engaged man in five minutes more.

"You are awfully funny," she exclaimed after quite a pause.

"I believe I am considered witty," I replied, hardly knowing what I said: I tell you, that sort of thing makes a man confoundedly nervous.

Then she began laughing, and I thought she, would never stop. I did not feel like laughing, so I just sat and looked at her.

"Oh my! oh my!" she gasped, trying to control herself, "why didn't you say No? You never intended to ask me at all. It is the funniest thing I ever heard of. Oh my! I shall die of laughing. I think *you* will 'end badly' if you go on so," she said, quoting what I had repeated. "What induced you to act in this manner?"

I saw that she had found me out and thought I was a fool. This provoked me, and I replied, rather warmly, pretending I did not know what she meant, "It appears to me an odd manner you have of receiving an offer, Miss Blanche. I think you should at least treat me with politeness."

She became serious in a moment when she saw I was hurt, and did not lose her good-temper at my rude speech, but said pleasantly, "You are not fond of being teased, Mr. Highrank. Never mind: I don't intend to take advantage of your blunder, nor keep you long in suspense. Go "—and she smiled as if she really could not help it—"go, and be sensible in future."

"You mean that you won't marry me?" I asked.

"Don't talk of that: let us pretend we were in fun—as of course we were—and let me thank you for a very agreeable afternoon."

I declare she looked so bewitching as she spoke that I wished she had thought me in earnest and accepted me. It was real good in her, giving a fellow a second chance when she might have snapped him up directly. I think girls ought to give a man two chances, but they seldom do. Many a poor soul repents the moment the words are spoken, but he can't help himself. Generally, when 'tis done 'tis done.

She made a motion to rise: I could not permit her to go without an explanation. She had been so generous, and she was so beautiful, that I began to desire quite earnestly that she would be my wife, and that we could settle down at The Beauties together: she would like the sorrel at any rate. Perhaps Fortune had sent her to me this very afternoon, and I ought not to let the opportunity slip, but ask her seriously before she left. Of course she would accept me if she knew I was in earnest. She was too delicate to take advantage of a mistake—mighty few girls so particular. The more I entertained the idea, the more I liked it, so I resolved to speak. I fancied that she was a little cool in her manner: possibly she thought I ought not have jested on such a subject, but I would make it all right now. I was sitting on a stone a little lower than she. I leaned forward and placed my arm on the rock and round her—just near enough to keep her there, you know. Then I spoke: "I want to beg your pardon, Miss Blanche. You are offended, but I did not mean to annoy you: I esteem you too highly for that."

"I am not at all offended, not at all," she said heartily, at the same time trying to rise, but as I was leaning on her dress she could not. "I must beg you to move: I am going home," she added, looking round: then seeing where my arm was, her tone became slightly angry: "Will you allow me to rise?"

"Not until you listen to me. Do not be displeased when I tell you the truth. I was jesting, or at least did not think what I was asking, a moment ago, but now I am in real earnest. I want you to marry me—truly I do. I love you, and am willing to do everything you can desire. See, I will kneel if you like devotion;" and I fell on my knees before her, catching her little white hands and kissing them. "Won't you love me?" I felt as I looked into her sweet face that I could do anything in the world for her.

"A little less devotion and more respect would suit me better, Mr. Highrank. Will you stop this farce and release my dress? I shall certainly be offended if you do not rise instantly."

"I will obey you if you will give me one kind word."

"I have none for you," she said frigidly.

"You think I have been too hasty—that I am not really in love with you; but I am, I assure you. I fall, in love very quickly—indeed I do. I have often been in love with a girl the first time I saw her, and I have known you ever so long. Won't you believe me, Blanche?"

"I believe you are treating me in a most ungentlemanly manner in keeping me here when I don't wish to stay."

"I can't let you go," I said as I rose, but standing so that she could not pass, "till you are convinced that I love you, for I do, and shall always. Surely I have a right to an answer."

"I thought you were good-natured"—now she spoke reproachfully—"and you are teasing me in the most disagreeable way. Please let me pass."

"Do you think me so base as to tease you on such a subject? What shall I do to persuade you that I am sincere."

"Let me go home."

"May I go with you?"

"I would rather you did not come, please."

"Why are you so unkind?" I asked, taking her hand. "Tell me you love me, and let us be happy."

"But I don't love you," she said, trying to withdraw her hand, and the tears coming into her eyes. "I don't love you, and I want to go home." She turned from me to hide her face, looking about at the same time for some way of escape.

"But you will love me by to-morrow," I replied soothingly. "I may ask you again, may I not?" and then she looked so pitiful, with the tears rolling from her frightened eyes and her hand trembling in mine, that I thought I would put my arm around her—to comfort her, you know. "Poor child!" I said, drawing her to me as they do in the theatre, "you don't know your own heart: rest here."

I wish you had seen her!—I *wish* you had seen her! She drew herself from me quivering with indignation, her eyes% sparkled, and she was in such a rage that she could hardly speak, but after an effort she broke forth in a torrent of words: "I have an utter contempt for you, and I will bear this no longer. You think you are irresistible—that all the girls are in love with you—that your wealth buys you impunity—that your position will excuse your rudeness—and that you can dispense with politeness because your name is Highrank! I would like to box your ears. I despise you and your behavior so thoroughly that were you a hundred times in earnest in asking me to marry you, I would refuse you a hundred times!" Then she rushed past me, and I was so astonished that I did not try to prevent her.

The idea of her refusing *me*, and in such a manner! No wonder if she should end badly. Mrs. Stunner was right. However, I am glad she *did* refuse me, for she must certainly be a little wrong in her head. Wonder if her ancestors were insane or anything. She was deuced handsome when she got angry. Never saw a woman angry at me before: something very queer about her. Had a contempt for me, too! Why should she have that? I don't understand it. Said I was conceited—that I thought all the girls would marry me. And so they would, all but herself; and that shows there is something odd about her—not at all like any other woman. Deuced glad she did not take me at my word. Queerest thing! She cried when I put my arm around her: never knew a woman would cry at *that* before. Little Eva wouldn't. I believe I like tender women best—at one time I thought they were not nice. What a fool I was! What should I do with a wife I could not kiss? I wonder if Blanche will speak to me again? Maybe all this was a dodge, women have so many; but she looked in earnest. I might have frightened her by being so sudden, but why the deuce should women be frightened at proposals, when they pass their lives in trying to get them? So Mrs. Stunner said. Poor birdie!, what a soft hand she has! Maybe some women are modest: I will ask Hardcash about it. She may not have known what she was saying—agitated, and all that sort of thing. I will see how she acts to-night—need not ask her again if she is not civil. Eva will comfort me if I need it. What a sweet voice she had till she got angry! but she was very odd.

I strolled home to the hotel, musing over the adventure of the afternoon. Blanche was a girl who might be included in the star type that I had once sought for: wanted to be worshiped and play the superior. Now that I had found her I was surprised how little I liked that style. Just as if a good-looking fellow like me was a bear or a wild Indian, to be afraid of! I don't see that she would have been any the worse for it if I *had* kissed her; and wasn't I as respectful as her nearest relation? 'Pon honor I was. A very odd girl. I shall ask Ned Hardcash about it.

## CHAPTER IV

I never saw Eva looking better than she did that night. I lounged around the room until I came to her crowd, attached myself there, and did some heavy flirting. I asked her to take a moonlight stroll, but her aunt overheard me and gave her a look, upon which she said the air outside was too cool. I saw the play was to be above-board. Aunt Stunner had taken matters into her own hands, and the game had commenced in earnest. Mr. David Todd, Jr., was there, and Eva paid him a good deal of attention: I did not like it.

Presently she went off to dance with him, and Aunt Stunner sat down by me. Fanning herself energetically, she said in a confidential tone, "Eva is looking sweetly to-night: don't you think so, Mr. Highrank?"

"Miss Eva always looks jolly," I said shortly. I did not want to talk to the old lady.

"Mr. Todd appears to think so too," she went on with a nod and a knowing look at me. Evidently she was playing Todd against Highrank.

"Mr. David Todd, Jr.?" I asked languidly: "he has thirty thousand a year, hasn't he?"

She looked at me sharply for an instant, then smiled and said, "How should I know, dear Mr. Highrank? It is his rare personal merit that pleases me. I own I am happy to see him so attentive to the child for her sake. She is so impulsive and innocent, so likely to fancy a younger, more dashing kind of man"—here she glanced at me—"that I acknowledge I do feel anxious to have her settled happily. Not but that some young men are exceptions," she continued amiably, "and make excellent husbands."

"There are two classes of men," I remarked quietly. "They can be divided into those who make good husbands and those who don't. Wealthy men are the most superior, and are best fitted to fill the situation."

"I agree with you entirely: you are a very sensible young man," enthusiastically replied the old lady, not recognizing the quotation.

We talked on until Eva came back: then I claimed the next waltz, and decided I would carry her off from Todd. I pressed her hand, but she would not respond: it was plain she was obeying orders.

"Won't you walk with me?" I whispered as we were near an open window in a pause of the dance.

"I can't, Charley—indeed I can't," as I tried to draw her outside: "I will explain another time."

"You are very cruel," I continued in the same undertone.

"You don't care if I am," she said a little bitterly.

"As if I do not care when you use me badly! Won't you tell me what is the matter?" I asked tenderly.

"Oh, Mr. Highrank, I am so unhappy!" she whispered.

"Why so, my dear?" No one could help calling Eva "my dear"; besides, we were hidden by the heavy window curtain and no one overheard us.

"I—I—am going to be married," she said.

"It appears to me that ought to make you particularly merry, oughtn't it?"

"But it don't," she answered, sighing.

"Why not, you foolish girl?"

"Oh, everything is so different from what I expected."

"In what way?"

"W-h-y," she answered slowly, "I thought it would be romantic, and that he would ask me in the moonlight."

"Like to-night, for instance?" I said, taking her hand and drawing her through the low window on to the piazza.

"Yes," she replied, "and instead of that—"

Well, instead of that?" I repeated, seeing she paused.

"Instead of that, it was in that old parlor of ours. I have never had a nice time since we took it two weeks ago, odious green place! I detest green furniture; it is so unbecoming," she said pathetically.

"And who is the happy dog—I mean gentleman'—Eva? I may call you Eva, just for this evening yet, mayn't I?"

"I don't care if—if—Oh my! what a name! Charley, did you ever hear such a dreadful name as David?"

"What! old Todd? It isn't old Todd?" I asked, laughing.

"It is very unkind of you to laugh when you know I must marry him."

"I won't laugh," I said, putting her arm in mine and walking down the verandah. "Come, sit on this sofa and tell me all about it."

"Well," she said, half pouting and half crying, "I must marry some one this season—both mamma and auntie say so—and I can't marry Ned."

"Ned Hardcash? You don't mean to say he was spooney on you?"

"Yes he was, but I told him he was too poor."

"You are very reasonable, Eva."

"You need not talk that way. Mamma would not hear of it. I could not let him ask her, for she would have been so angry, and she and auntie would have scolded me; and you don't know how fearfully auntie can abuse one when she begins."

"How did Ned take your answer?"

"Oh, he just went away, and did not care a bit, and I have not seen him since."

"He did not care?" thinking I now had the clew to Ned's savage manner for the week past. "When did it happen?"

"I can't exactly remember: it was soon after we took the parlor. Auntie would not let me invite him there, and he got angry and jealous of Mr. Todd, who was with me all the time, and—"

"But that showed he loved you, don't you think so?"

"Well, perhaps he did a little: he told me if I Would trust him he would not let mamma or auntie scold; but you know that was nonsense. I would like to see any one prevent them if they want to do it. And he hadn't any money, and we should have starved: I told him so. Then he said there was no danger of that: he could manage to keep the wolf from the door. I knew of course that be could easily keep wolves away, for there are none here, and I would not live in that horrid West; but that would not prevent us starving: auntie said we would starve."

"Poor Ned!" I murmured.

"You pity poor Ned," said she, now sobbing, "but you don't pity poor me at all, and I am the most wretched."

"Come, don't cry, Eva," I said, putting my arm around her: it was very dark in that corner, and I knew Eva would not fuss about it, as a certain other person did not long ago. "What shall I do for you, my dear? Do you want Ned back? I'll tell him and make it up between you: shall I?"

"No, no! He is so cross and fierce that I should be afraid of him: he was dreadfully ill-tempered when he left me that night."

"But that was because he loved you, Eva."

"When people love me I don't want them to be disagreeable: I should not want to vex any one if I loved him."

"You will make a dear, kind, amiable little wife, I know."

"But I don't want to marry Mr. Todd," she said, still sobbing on my shoulder. "Oh, Charley, what shall I do?"

Could I find a lovelier, more tender, sweeter wife than the girl now in my arms? My ideas of affectionate women had changed, dating from about two weeks back, and the conduct of Miss Blanche, who would neither see me nor speak to me since that afternoon, strengthened me in the opinion that a woman is best with some heart. Was it any wonder, then, that I decided on the spot to answer Eva's question of "Charley, what shall I do?" by saying "Marry *me*, my dear: 'tis the only way I see for you to get out of the scrape"? Just as my resolve became fixed I heard footsteps near. In another moment, scarcely giving Eva time to wipe her eyes, those three sisters, the Greys, came trooping by, and stopped in front of us.

"Spooning as usual?" remarked one of them to me.

"Miss Eva, won't you ask Mr. Todd to give him a lesson in proposing? I don't believe he knows how to do it. A deplorable state of ignorance!" said another.

A merry group soon joined them, and I did not get another chance that evening. However, I went to my room happy, for I knew I should be successful on the morrow. Eva loved me: her mother had said as much when I overheard her in the arbor on the mountain-side, and I knew Aunt Stunner would have no objection, as my income exceeded Todd's. In an easy-chair by the open window I thought over my resolution, and counted myself a fortunate man. In the midst of this reverie the door burst open, shut with a bang, and Ned Hardcash threw himself on a fauteuil opposite me.

"What's up now?" I cried. "Has Harry Basset lost?" Ned was always deep on the turf, and I could think of nothing else that would cut him up so much.

"D—n Harry Basset! I say, Charley, haven't you some brandy?"

"Too hot for brandy to-night," I said: "take some of this," pushing him a bottle.

"Stuff!" and he looked at it contemptuously. "If you can't treat a poor devil more like a man when he comes, he will go;" and he rose with a jerk.

"Sit down, old fellow! or rather go to that closet and get what you want—enough there for a night or two."

He looked the worse for hard drink already, but of course I could not refuse him if he wanted it. It is true politeness, if your friend wants to commit suicide, to sharpen the razor for him and ask no questions. I leaned back while he mixed a glass with seltzer and drank it greedily. Finally, when he looked more composed, I said, "I want to ask you a question, Ned." I thought of Blanche Furnaval's strange conduct on seeing Ned before me, and resolved to ask him if he could explain it. "I believe you know something about the queer ways of women. Can you tell—"

"Look here, Charley," he broke out savagely: "I want one thing understood. You are always teasing and bothering about the women; and as you have not got a piece of flesh as big as a pea for a heart, you will never understand anything about them; so, if you don't want to set me crazy, just let that subject down while I am here."

"It's a woman, then," I said, forgetting in my surprise to be angry. "Cheer up, old boy! You will soon get over it: no woman's worth it."

"Not to you, perhaps, but it may be the contrary with me," he answered moodily.

There was a long silence. I smoked, he drank: at last I broke it by saying unconsciously, "She is a dear little thing." My thoughts had reverted to Eva.

"Ah, you saw it?" cried Ned eagerly. "Then I can talk to you about it. You may well say she is a dear little thing. She is an angel—too good for a fellow like me. But the poor child dotes on me: that is the hardest part of the cursed thing. How she laid her head on my shoulder and cried, and said she did not want to marry that other fellow, d—n him! It almost broke my heart," he continued dejectedly, "and it is not of the stuff that breaks easily. I told her I would take her off and we would

run for it, though Heaven knows what we should do afterward. Sometimes it seems as if I could not bear it. I wish I could strangle Todd: that would be some comfort."

"What makes you so savage against old Todd?"

"Don't you know he and Eva are engaged? All owing to the interference of that old Stunner. What business was it of hers, I wonder? And poor Eva disliking him as she does, and so unhappy about it, and I can't help her! My cursed luck, always;" and Ned heaved a brandy-and-seltzer sigh.

Yes, it was Eva. I had forgotten all she had told me about Ned, or rather she had not told me as much as he did. She sobbed on his shoulder, did she? His shoulder! disgusting! She dote on him! he comfort her! It was horrible! A sudden idea struck me. "Did you kiss her, Ned?" I asked gruffly.

"You are asking a d–d impertinent question, old fellow, and of course I sha'n't answer you;" and he tried to make his drunken face look grave.

I should have liked to throw him out of the window, but the question was, as he said, hardly one to be asked; and then, if she allowed it, what right had I—It was enough. It might be pleasant to have an affectionate wife, but no drinking gambler like Ned Hardcash should ever be able to say or remember that he had kissed the mistress of The Beauties.

I was sad at heart: hope now failed me. Poor little Eva! I must bury her image with the "wild rose," with "my star," with the "sympathizing friend." All, all are emptiness—are names, are dreams. The poets were old-fogy chaps: they never saw the women of to-day, and well for them they did not.

I am still unmated: I bear the loneliness that awaits all great excellence. The sun has no companion in glory; the moon shines alone; there was but one phoenix; the white elephant is solitary. So it must be with me. I am not misanthropic: I have learned to bear my superiority with philosophy. I was groomsman at Eva's wedding the other day, and gave her a handsome present, as it was expected I should. I still like my fellow-beings, and fulfill the duties of life to the best of my abilities. I flirt, I dance, walk, drive, pursue my usual occupations, give bachelor-parties at The Beauties, and have grown contented from habit, but I am a confirmed old—or shall I say young?—bachelor.

*ITA ANIOL PROKOP.*

# MUNICH AS A PEST-CITY

From a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, Munich has had the reputation of being an exceptionally unhealthy place. All ancient towns have their legends of desolating plagues, the record of an ignorant defiance of sanitary laws, but such stories are especially numerous in the traditions of Munich, and are connected with circumstances which show that epidemic diseases were formerly extremely frequent and virulent in that City.

The absurd festival of the "Metzger-Sprung" (Butchers' Leap), which takes place annually on the Monday before Ash-Wednesday, when butcher-boys attain to the second grade of their apprenticeship by dressing themselves in long robes trimmed with calves' tails, and springing into the old fountain in the Marien-Platz in the face of an admiring crowd, is held in commemoration of a similar frolic contrived several hundred years ago by lads of the same trade during the prevalence of a horrible epidemic, for the purpose of tempting the frightened citizens out of their gloomy houses into fresh air and merriment, which these sensible youths had concluded to be the best safeguards against disease. The grotesque procession of the "Schäffler-Tanz" (Coopers' Dance), which occurs once in every seven years, just before the Carnival, has a similar origin. One of the favorite myths of Munich is that of an enormous dragon which lived in the ground beneath the city and poisoned all the wells with his venomous breath, until, being at last lured to the surface by seeing his reflection in a mirror held above a certain spring, a brave knight slew him and saved the people from further destruction. The former imminence of danger from pestilence is shown also in the songs of the night-watchmen, who every hour exhorted to prayer for exemption from the plague, as well as from the terrors of fire, sword and famine.

And this evil fame still clings to Munich, in spite of all that has been done to improve its condition, and of all that has been written to purge it of its contempt. Efforts of the latter kind have indeed been prodigious, increasing with the growing importance of the place as a centre of education in science and art. Local medical authorities issue from time to time ingenious pamphlets on hygienic investigations, with particular application to the suspicion under which their city labors in this regard; the newspapers keep up the whitewashing process with diligence, not forgetting to hold up frequently before their readers the sanitary shortcomings of Vienna and Berlin; nay, the traveler is met at the very threshold of his hotel by a tiny tract containing not only a list of the principal sights, but also a comforting assurance that the climate is not so bad as has been represented, and that by wearing sufficient wrappings and avoiding the ordinary drinking water, strangers may hope to accomplish their visit and escape unharmed. Surely no other city takes such benevolent pains to reassure its inhabitants and instruct and warn its stranger-guests: perhaps it is because deeds have not kept pace with words that assertion and argument have hitherto failed of the desired effect. The protracted, repeated cholera epidemic of 1873-74 may well challenge a close observation of the situation, surroundings and sanitary condition of Munich as a means of ascertaining the causes of this exceptional visitation, as well as of the continual existence of an indigenous disease which, more than almost any other, is dependent upon circumstances within the power of man to control.

Instead, therefore, of constructing the cholera and the typhus out of our "inner consciousness," as certain of the physicians and hygienists of Munich, in true German fashion, appear disposed to do, let us look at some of the facts of the case—facts sufficiently obvious to be perceptible to any person of intelligence, and the nature of which is so well understood as to be accepted at once as bearing closely upon the subject in question.

And first, as to climate. Considering that the cholera, from which Munich suffers more at every visitation than almost any other European city, and typhus, which is always at home within its limits, are not, properly speaking, climatal diseases, it would seem at first sight unnecessary to consider the situation of Munich in this respect. But while the principal object of the present paper is to indicate

the causes of the above-mentioned plagues, the fact should not be lost sight of that nearly all known diseases flourish in this unfortunate city, many of them owing to its exceptionally bad climate, while the sudden and extreme changes of temperature which occur in every season of the year have a tendency to aggravate those ills which find their sources in more preventable conditions.

Munich stands upon a high, barren plain, sixteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, exposed to the full power of the sun in summer, brooded over by chilly fogs in spring and autumn, and swept the whole year through by all the storms that accumulate upon the mountains filling the horizon to the south and east. The air is mountain-air, *minus* the aroma and stimulus of evergreen forests, and *plus* the miasma of miles of marsh and peat-land and the foulnesses of the city exhalations. It is the thin air of a high elevation, pleasantly bracing to persons so fortunate as to possess nerves of iron and lungs of leather, but extremely irritating to sensitive brains and delicate chests, and too exhausting, after a time, in its demands upon the most abundant vitality. It is the boast of certain physicians in Munich that consumption is rare in that city, but the weekly report of deaths would seem to contradict this assertion. Certain it is that diseases of the throat and lungs are very common, especially during the spring, and that all the rest of the year the whole population suffers more or less from catarrh. Perhaps if there be less of consumption than one would expect to find in such a climate, it is because those who would otherwise be its victims are carried off early by acute inflammation of the implicated organs. "Of course, if these die in the beginning, they cannot die at a later period," as a recent medical writer has wisely and wittily pointed out to certain amateur statisticians who would fain reduce the mortality of Munich by leaving out of view the immense percentage of infant deaths.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.