

# DARKEST RUSSIA

By H. GRATTAN DONNELLY.

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## CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

Once more Ivan carelessly turned the leaves, and then without looking up asked, in a matter-of-fact way: "You desire to sell the book—what is the price?"

"I preferred to leave that to the judgment of one who is better able to form an opinion of its value than I am myself."

Ivan bowed. "You will pardon me if I say that the book is not of sufficient value to find a place, as a rare volume, among the Baroness von Rhomeberg's collection; but since you desire to dispose of it, and under the circumstances, I may say that the value of this volume in St. Petersburg is twelve roubles."

Radaloff arose. "I shall not trouble you further. My impression was that it is worth three or four times as much, or I should not have troubled the baroness to examine it."

"I hope you do not think I under-value it," said Ivan.

Radaloff shrugged his shoulders slightly. "My compliments to Madame the Baroness," he said, with a movement toward the door from the library into the great hall, "and please say that Professor Kasovitch regrets that he should have trespassed on her kindness with a book from the learned Professor Muller worth only twelve roubles."

Ivan rang the bell. A servant appeared.

"I shall convey your words to the baroness. Meanwhile, in case you still doubt my judgment as to its value, if you will turn to the page next the last you will find the price in the publishers' figures in Russian characters, and judging by the freshness of the marks, written only a short time ago! Good afternoon. Batof, show the gentleman out."

## CHAPTER V.

### The Fete in the Nazimoff Palace.

The grand fete in the Nazimoff palace, given by Paul, Count Nazimoff, in honor of the arrival home of his only son, Colonel Alexis Nazimoff, had begun. Paul Nazimoff, a tall, soldierly-looking man of some fifty-seven or eighty years, dressed in full uniform of a general of cuirassiers, stood welcoming his guests as they arrived. The haughty expression on the face of the old soldier, an expression of lofty superiority, sat well upon him. For perhaps there was not among the Russian nobility a family whose name was greater. Paul, Count Nazimoff, as he stood there, bore right worthily the pride and dignity which came to him by inheritance and the added honors which a grateful sovereign had bestowed on him for gallantry on many a field. For himself the fete had no particular pleasure, except in so far as it emphasized the welcome back from the sterile plains of Turkestan to his only son, who had won his spurs as became a Nazimoff.

Mingling with his guests, with a word to one, and a smile to another, and a gentle, almost tender sentence or two to the beautiful Olga, the count passed through the brilliant throng and congratulated himself on the fact that even royalty could hardly have surpassed him in the magnificent splendor of the entertainment.

The Countess Katherine Karsicheff was, next to the host and to her daughter Olga, the most observed of the hundreds in the brilliant throng. Wearing a curious but exceedingly



OLGA

picturesque and becoming Russian costume of the XVII century, a costume which rumor had it was a counterpart of that in which a famous ancestress of the countess had married a younger son of the reigning royal family, Countess Karsicheff moved through the salon with an air of conscious pride and evident triumph which she took no pains to conceal. The goal of her ambition was in sight. Within three weeks Olga would be the bride of Alexis Nazimoff, and the

countess herself would see her child reign in this magnificent Nazimoff palace as a very queen in the social realm of the capital.

Olga Karsicheff presented a strikingly beautiful picture, and the hum of admiration which followed her appearance showed that the assemblage was fully appreciative of her surpassing charms. In striking contrast to most of those present she wore no jewelry save a diamond spray, which glittered in her wealth of beautiful hair; and this absence of ornament heightened and emphasized the beauty of the patrician face. Her eyes were of that rarely beautiful color, a deep dark brown. The wistful expression lent to them, large and lustrous as they were, an additional charm. In a word, Olga Karsicheff was the perfect type of a beautiful and attractive girl.

The great clock had just rung out the hour of eleven when Nicholas Karsicheff, pushing his way as rapidly as possible through the throng, approached his father, and with a meaningful look indicated that he desired to speak with him alone. The appearance of General Karsicheff at this moment indicated that he was ill at ease. Already he had sent three different messengers in search of Radaloff, only to receive the answer that Radaloff had not returned.

"Well, what is it, Nicholas?" impatiently asked the general, when a few minutes later he found himself alone with his son. Then, as his eye fell again upon Nicholas and he noted the expression of the face, he added, with an appearance of anxiety he could no longer conceal: "What is it? Don't keep me in suspense."

"There is a rumor in the clubs tonight that a change in the ministry is imminent."

"Well, there are always rumors. Is that all? That is nothing."

Nicholas hesitated.

"Well, well, well?"

"There was a rumor as I came here that another proclamation of the Nihilists has been found in the winter palace."

"My God."

General Karsicheff as he uttered the words staggered with the force of the blow. If this news were true it meant but one thing—his official end, his social doom, his political death.

A moment more and he recovered himself.

His face was deathly pale and he gave evidence of laboring under intense excitement.

"Who—found it?"

"I have not heard."

"My God! if this is known to Gortschakoff I am undone. Have you heard? tell me the worst."

"I fear it is worse than even that—I have heard that the proclamation was shown to the czar himself!"

Karsicheff sank into a chair. His head fell upon his hands as he bent over the figure of a broken man.

Nicholas Karsicheff, cold, bloodless, heartless, even when his own family was concerned, felt a touch of pity for his father. Placing his hand on the shoulder of the general, he said, in a voice with a strain of concern:

"Is it as bad as this?"

There was no answer.

And now Nicholas Karsicheff began to realize that even more than his father's position was at stake. The peril to his own future; the blow to his mother's pride; the danger to his sister's happiness; all these flashed through his brain. What could be done? Something must be done to avert the threatening lightning bolt which might strike at any moment.

"His mother?"

That was it! Her influence, her favor at court, the power of her family connections—all, all of these must be invoked to avert the danger, to prevent at least a change in General Karsicheff's position until after the marriage of Olga.

"I will summon my mother," began Nicholas, leaning over the general.

Karsicheff raised his head, and grasping Nicholas by the arm with a grip of iron held him fast. "No, no, not that. To tell the countess news were madness. It would drive her insane. Wait, wait, let me think."

With white lips and deeply marked brow the minister of police, his hand pressed hard against his fevered brain, rose to his feet.

"If Radaloff—" he thought.

Ay, "if Radaloff had but succeeded then he could do something."

And if Radaloff failed!

Suddenly his face brightened a little. A feverish energy possessed him. He would stake all on Radaloff. "Go, at once, take the carriage and drive to the Gortschakoff palace. Say that I am now on the trail of the conspirators, that I have them in the hollow of my hand, and that before daybreak I will arrest every Nihilist in St. Petersburg."

"But—"

"Go, I tell you, and at once. I have two hundred suspects on my list—"

no evidence against them—but what of that? This latest outrage, this proclamation will justify extreme measures. Tell Colonel Helfman to have his men ready. I will give him the list tonight. Yes, I will strike a blow. I will do something that will at least give me a breathing spell until I can find the fountain head of this damnable stream of revolution and stop the spring at its source."

Five minutes later Nicholas Karsicheff was on his way, as fast as horses could carry him, to the residence of the prime minister of the imperial council, and General Karsicheff, having recovered in some degree his composure, was once more mingling with the guests. He had been in but a moment when Count Nazimoff approached him with a rather amused expression on his face. He held a letter in his hand.

"I say, Karsicheff," said the count, "you remember that extraordinary American we met at the dinner given by the American minister some three years ago?"

"The man who had a scheme to build elevated railroads in St. Petersburg, to open telephone lines to Moscow, to—"

"Exactly; well, he is here again, and what is more remarkable, has met



"HAVE YOU HEARD? TELL ME THE WORST!"

Alexis in Asia, and brings a number of letters from him which he writes to me he will do himself the honor to present in person."

"Met Alexis—how!"

"He has been in Turkestan and has been having all sorts of adventures. We will have him here tonight."

"Will he not be rather—that is, out of his element?"

"Not at all. I have never found an American gentleman who was not quite at home in any society, however high. From what I have seen of Americans they seem to have an easy natural way of adapting themselves to any circumstances in which they may be placed. Besides, in this case, I could hardly be discourteous enough to receive letters kindly brought by this gentleman from Alexis and then ignore the gentleman himself."

Before he could finish the sentence the attention of Count Nazimoff was directed to the great hall. There was some commotion and an expression of curiosity among the guests grouped at the entrance.

"Thank you—that's all right; I can find my way. I am a friend of the family."

These words, in choice English with a marked American accent, were uttered as he entered the room by a gentleman who had evidently just arrived. He was a man of some forty-five years of age, with a clean-cut figure, and a face which betrayed a singular mixture of earnest resolution and good humor. The costume of the newcomer was in marked contrast to the brilliant uniforms which were the rule, but there was something in the easy, self-possession of air of the man, dressed in the conventional evening suit, which bespoke the thorough gentleman and stamped him as the peer of any in the room.

Count Nazimoff, who had advanced toward the door when he heard the voice, was ready with outstretched hand. "General Cobb, is it not?"

"Count Nazimoff!" and the stranger grasped the hand held forth in kindly welcome.

"I was not aware that your house was the scene of such a brilliant party tonight, or I should have hesitated about coming; but as I leave St. Petersburg to-morrow and was anxious to meet the father of Colonel Nazimoff as well as to deliver these letters, I—"

(To be continued.)

Kelly's Art of Polite Repartee.

The story about Arlie Latham talking the umpire out of the notion of fining him \$25 calls to mind one of Mike Kelly's retorts to an umpire's threats.

Mike had been protesting every decision, and finally, long about the eighth inning, he became particularly obnoxious.

"Enough of this, Kelly," said the umpire. "One more remark like that and I'll fine you \$50."

"If you fine me \$50 there'll be a lot of thirsty fans around the hotel tonight, I tell you that," said Kelly.

Reason Enough.

"Have a wee nip, friend?" asked the hospitable passenger with the flask.

"No, I thank you," replied the stranger.

"Don't drink whisky, eh?"

"No. I make it."

Undoubtedly.

"I believe," said the minister, "that every man has his secret sorrow."

"Sure," rejoined the doctor. "Even the man who is outwardly happy has a skeleton in his midst."



### Power of a Drop of Water.

You have probably heard that the constant falling of a drop of water will wear away the hardest stone.

Here is an easy way to test the force of a single water drop, which we will take as a unit for all the billions of water drops it takes to wear away the stone, and then perhaps you may get a slight idea of the stupendous force all those water drops would exert if they were combined into one mammoth water drop—and 't dropped! You wouldn't care to be under it!

Cut a notch in the center of a match, then bend so as to form an acute angle. Lay it across the mouth



Match, Coin and Water Drop.

of a bottle and place a penny on the match. You are now ready to demonstrate the force of the water drop—and also ready to do a neat little trick to surprise some onlooking friend.

Ask your friend to get the coin into the bottle without touching either the match or the bottle. After he has puzzled over it for a while dip your finger in a glass of water, hold it above the place where the match is notched and let a drop fall on the point. The power of the water as it strikes the match is strong enough to force the sides of the angle to spring apart, thus making the opening large enough for the penny to fall into the bottle.

Your trick is performed, while the water drop's power is illustrated at the same time.

### Some Riddles and Answers.

The first lady of the land in three letters? Eve.

Relating to civil life in five letters? Civic.

A legal document in four letters? Deed.

What baby says about candy in four letters? "Dood."

Something the most stupid person can see through in three letters? Eye.

A gentle domestic animal in three letters? Ewe.

One of the famous pair of giants in three letters? Gog.

Something used by burglars in three letters? Gag.

Part of the verb to do in three letters? Did.

A small vehicle in three letters? Gig.

The condition of the grass in the morning in five letters? Dewed.

The cry of a bird or a chick in four letters? Peep.

Twilight time in three letters? Eve.

### Giving Sheep Their Dew

Three hundred years ago one question used to bother the English farmers. There were more sheep in England than in any other country in the world (it isn't so now, but that is another story), and yet the "silly" creatures were seldom seen to drink. To such an extent was this abstinence observed that when a sheep was noticed drinking it was thought, so an old writer declared, "a prodigious thing that sheep should drink."

There was, he said, a cause for their never suffering much thirst—"There is so much dew on the grass that they need no other water." Ancient authors, like Aristotle, were quite mistaken "in thinking that the northern sheep had more need of water than the southern. In Spain those sheep bear the best fleeces of wool that drink least." But if the animals can not get dew they must have water.

In the seasons of great draught that sometimes afflict the Australian sheep farmers the flocks perish by the thousand.

### Game of Bouquet.

This is a jolly game for a number of children to play. Sit down in a circle around your leader. Let the leader give each one a flower for his name—violet, daisy, sweet william, black-eyed susan, etc. Then let her tell you a story, "made up out of her own head," in which she brings in every one of the flower names.

Whenever a child hears his flower name mentioned he must get up, turn around and sit down.

Whenever the leader uses the word "bouquet" all the children must jump up and change places, at which time the leader tries to capture a seat. Whoever gets "left" must then become leader.

### Loan Was Costly.

In 1812 a loan was made by the state of Connecticut from its school fund to Samuel Perkins. The amount was \$1,733.34, and it was secured by a mortgage on real estate situated in

Windham, Conn. A year later the principal was reduced by the payment of \$500. Since then the heirs have paid interest on the balance amounting to \$6,401.11. The whole has just been settled and proceedings entered to clear the title.

### Spider Web.

Fasten to the hall chandelier as many lengths of red, yellow, green, blue and white twine as there are boys and girls players.

Tell each child to take a length of twine and follow it through the different rooms until he finds the other end, winding the twine into a ball as he goes.

It will lead him up stairs and down, around table legs, through cracks in doors, in and out through the banisters, and so on.

At the end you should previously have fastened some pleasant surprise, like a tiny box of bon-bons or an orange.

### Korean "Mercy-Box."

When the king of Korea goes into the streets he is preceded by a secretary of state, who carries a "mercy-box." Into this box are placed all the papers upon which the Koreans have indited their petitions or grievances, and which are thrown from over walls, or hung on strings from windows. The king himself reads every paper.

### How to Make a Flute.

A little flute from which a good deal of amusement can be derived can be made by wrapping a piece of paper around a pencil to make a tube. Paste the edge flat, and to one end of the tube fasten a triangular piece of paper, somewhat larger than the opening.

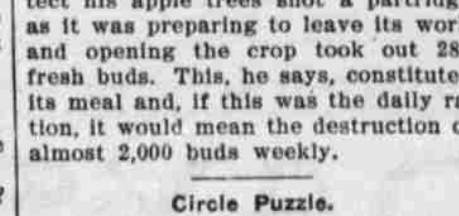
To play the flute, draw in your breath through the open end of the tube; the difference in pitch will depend on how hard you breathe.—Lollid Magazine.

### Partridges Eat Apple Buds.

A Maine man who sought to protect his apple trees shot a partridge as it was preparing to leave its work and opening the crop took out 284 fresh buds. This, he says, constituted its meal and, if this was the daily ration, it would mean the destruction of almost 2,000 buds weekly.

### Circle Puzzle.

Draw three equal squares inside the large circle, each square to contain five of the smaller circles, and leaving three spaces outside each containing five of the smaller circles.



A Soapsuds Surprise.

Here is an experiment with soapsuds in which there is no blowing of bubbles. Fasten two knitting needles or other small rods together with threads of equal length so as to form a rectangular frame. A third thread attached to the upper rod enables you to hold up the frame without touching it.

Plunge the frame into strong soapsuds and lift it out slowly by this third thread. You find the frame filled by a transparent liquid film, like a pane of glass.

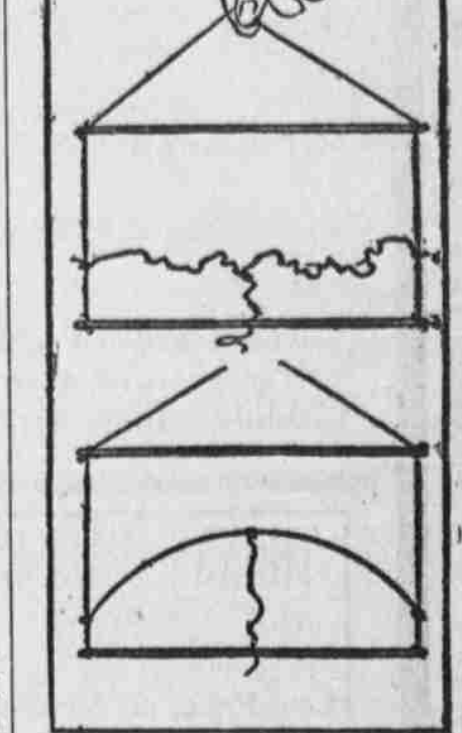
Break this film and attach to the vertical threads, about one-third of their length from the bottom, the ends of another thread which is no longer than the knitting needle, so that it hangs down in a curve, and to the middle of this thread fasten still another thread by one end, leaving the other end hanging down.

Now dip the frame again in the

soapsuds and lift it out. The last two threads will appear as irregular lines embedded in the film of liquid. Break the lower part of the film, and you will see the upper part contract, drawing the loose thread up with it into the form of a circular arch.

Now take hold of the free hanging thread below the lower rod and pull downward. The single arch becomes a double arch but resumes its former shape as soon as you release the hanging thread.

These experiments, which might be



Frame for the Films.

varied in many ways, show that the liquid film is like a stretched elastic membrane or sheet of india rubber. It always makes itself as small as possible, as the last experiment proves, and if stretched out by force it contracts again as soon as the force ceases to act.

It affords, therefore, an interesting example of the "surface tension" possessed by liquids.

The film has two parallel surfaces and their tensions act together.

### Domino Fortune Telling.

Lay them on their faces on the table and shuffle them; then draw one and see the number, which has its meaning as follows:

Double six, receiving a handsome sum money.

Six-five, going to a place of amusement.

Six-four, lawsuits and trouble, which can only be avoided by great care.

Six-three, a ride in a carriage.

Six-two, a present of clothing.

Six-one, you will soon perform a friendly action.

Six-blank, guard against scandal, or you will suffer by your inattention.

Double five, a new abode to your advantage.

Five-four, a fortunate speculation in business.

Five-three, a visit from a superior.

Five-two, a pleasant excursion on the water.

Five-one, love, intrigue.

Five-blank, a funeral, but not a relative.

Double four, drinking liquor at a distance.

Four-three, a false alarm of fire.

Four-two, beware of thieves and swindlers.

Four-one, expect trouble from creditors.

Four-blank, you will receive a letter from an angry friend.

### The Number Nine.

It is a curious thing, which every one does not know, that you cannot destroy the integrity of the figure 9 by multiplication.

To make plain:  $9 \times 9 = 81$ . Add 8 and 1 (the product) and you have 9. Take any other number, say  $123: 123 \text{ times } 9 \text{ equals } 1107$ . Add the figures of the product again and they equal 9. Again,  $5 \text{ times } 33 \text{ equals } 297$ , which added gives us two 9s by adding 7 and 2, and the three figures added equal 18, or  $2 \times 9$ . Whether the number is small or large, the sum of the figures of the product will always be divisible by 9.

### Inhuman Monster.