

# DARKEST RUSSIA

BY H. GRATTAN DONNELLY.

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## CHAPTER VII.

Ilda Barosky.

There appeared for a moment a young girl, bearing a violin and bow—it was only for a moment—between the two servants, Azof and Hanajka. With a quick gesture she threw aside the servants, and with flashing eyes and head erect she advanced to the center of the room.

"Who is responsible for this outrage—this insult? Who is master here?" she demanded, in quick, impassioned tones, while her face indicated the terrible excitement which possessed her.

Paul Nazimoff advanced quickly. "Stop, girl! You forget yourself and who you are. You were commanded here by me—Paul, Count Nazimoff—"

"Who and what is Paul, Count Nazimoff, that he should command me?" was the imperious answer. "Am I your servant, your serf, your child, or your debtor? I am a free-born Russian, no slave, and I shall not obey you!"

Count Nazimoff, by his command had thrown down the gage of battle, and Ilda Barosky—for it was the exile's daughter—had taken it up. Two strong natures were in conflict. On the one hand stood Paul Nazimoff, rich, powerful, noble, accustomed all his life to command and to be obeyed, and now humiliated, if beaten, in the presence of all his guests.

On the other, the young girl, proud, haughty and unbending, her woman's pride stung to the quick by being thrust like a serf into the midst of the brilliant throng, and commanded to play, as a master commands a slave. It was not hard to see that hers was a nature that never would yield to force, not even if resistance meant the loss of life itself.

"How was the battle to end?" "I shall not obey you!"

The words that ended the young girl's speech kept ringing in the ears of Paul Nazimoff. "I shall not obey you!"

No such words had ever been addressed to him before. Could he believe the evidence of his own senses? Surely everybody in St. Petersburg knew that he, of all the great nobles in the capital, was the one whose autocratic ways were best known. All his guests knew it—and yet here, an unknown girl, an humble musician, dared to stand before him, under his own roof, and to fling in his face the bold defiance, "I shall not obey you!"

Paul Nazimoff's face, flushed before, now turned to a ghastly white, and his eyes seemed to turn to coals of fire. He no longer shouted. He appeared calm, but it was the calmness of the tiger about to spring on his unsuspecting victim.

"And I swear—the words came slowly, with a hissing sound, from between the lips—"and I swear you shall obey me. You forget who I am. I am Paul, Count Nazimoff."

"And I swear I shall not obey you. I am Ilda Barosky, the daughter of an exile, and I shall not play 'God Save the Czar!'"

No one spoke. The strain was fearfully intense. Paul Nazimoff shook for a moment as the tree shakes when it feels the first blast of the hurricane! The storm was now beyond control. He forgot himself, his guests, his position, manhood, nobility—all—everything. With an oath he snatched the whip from the hands of Hanajka and raising it advanced a step toward the girl.

"Father!" "Count Nazimoff!" The two expressions rang out as one—the first by Alexis, the other by Cobb.

Alexis was first—he seized the uplifted hand. "Father, you must not!" "Must not! must not!" shouted Nazimoff. He fairly thundered now. Rage had dethroned Reason. "Stand back!" he shouted. "Stand back, for



"I shall not obey you!"

I swear this girl shall play or she shall suffer. Let no one come between us. His voice grew louder. "She has insulted me, my guests, the czar—I swear she shall suffer. No power on earth can save her. Hanajka, Azof—seize her! Seize her!"

The servants obeyed. They would have strangled her there and then had they been so commanded. "Now, girl, for the last time," he raised the whip, "play, or I swear to degrade you by the lash. There is nothing can save you. Now what think you of defying Paul, Count Nazimoff?" The lash was uplifted.

It was a race distorted by insane rage and fury that, with eyes aflame

with devilish resolve, looked into the face of Ilda Barosky.

She never moved. There was no sign of fear, whatever she may have felt. She looked defiance.

"Take hold of her arms and compel the bow to cross the strings!" fairly screamed Nazimoff, as he again raised the whip.

The servants obeyed.

Paul Nazimoff held the whip uplifted. "It is the last time," he yelled. "What will save you now?"

"This will!" The answer of Ilda Barosky, shrill and clear as a trumpet sound, rang out, as with a quick motion she raised the violin far above her head, and, before any one could prevent, dashed the instrument into a thousand pieces at the feet of Nazimoff!

He was baffled—beaten. There was a gasp as he made a motion with the whip. Cobb and Alexis sprang forward to avert the blow, but it was needless. The whip fell from his hands and he fell forward. The strain had been too much, and the next moment he was unconscious.

With a quick motion Alexis sprang to the side of the girl. "Quick, come with me," he said in a low voice, as he grasped her by the arm. In all the confusion Cobb seemed to keep his mind. "Get her away," he urged Alexis, and at the same moment he supported the stricken count to a low couch where several physicians among the guests attended him. A moment consultation and they decided that it was nothing serious. Paul Nazimoff was suffering from the effects of a shock and overtaxed nerves. It was all right. A few hours rest and he would be quite himself again.

With a word of apology to the guests for the unhappy affair that had brought the festivities to such an unpleasant termination, Alexis bid good night to such as remained. Cobb he asked not to leave him.

Alexis Nazimoff, immediately after the departure of the last of the guests, retired to his own room, accompanied by General Cobb. He was laboring under intense emotion, and it was some minutes before he became sufficiently composed to trust himself to speak. When he became somewhat calmer he turned to the American, and putting out his hand as if to ask for friendship and sympathy, said, in a voice that still indicated the intensity of his feelings: "Cobb, my rate was decided to-night!"

Cobb was about to answer, when, with a movement, Alexis stopped him, and in an impassioned strain broke out: "You do not know—you do not know that she who stood before my father to-night—she whom he would have degraded by the lash—is the woman I love—the only woman who will ever be my wife."

To say that Cobb was astounded mildly expresses it. He sat amazed and expectant, not knowing what to say. Alexis went on: "Three years ago I first met her, when she was a pupil at the Conservatory. She had appeared before a brilliant assemblage, and won the admiration of all by her wondrous beauty and her genius. I sought and obtained an introduction to her through the Baroness von Rhineberg. I loved her madly, passionately, devotedly—I loved her then as I love her now. I offered her my name, I asked her to become my wife."

Cobb started. He had anticipated a different avowal, and in his mind had framed a reply to Alexis. But he was not prepared for his.

"Ilda refused," continued Alexis, "unless I could gain my father's consent. My marriage with her, she urged, would be a blow to my fondest hopes of military distinction; would ostracize me in St. Petersburg, and would alienate the affections of my father. All this was true, but I cared nothing for it. I begged, implored her to listen to me—to give her consent. I offered to resign my commission in the army, to leave Russia with her, to make, in short, any sacrifice—but all in vain. My father heard of my love for her and we had a stormy scene, which ended in my leaving the house. I went directly to see Ilda—she was gone! In vain I sought her everywhere; she had disappeared as if she were no longer on earth. A week later I received peremptory orders to proceed to the frontier and join the Don Cossacks for a campaign in Turkestan, and a short time after my arrival in Asia I received a note from my father that a marriage had been arranged between Olga Karsicheff and myself, the ceremony to take place on my return to St. Petersburg. Broken-hearted at the loss of Ilda, I made no objection, and you know the rest. I never saw Ilda Barosky from the time I left St. Petersburg until to-night. Now all my love has returned with tenfold strength, and I swear that no other woman shall ever be my wife!"

"But your father, after to-night—"

"He does not know that it was Ilda—he never saw her. Carried away by his rage at her refusal, he knew not cared not who it was that dared to thwart a will that all through life had never been gainsaid. To-night," and Alexis arose, "to-night has decided my fate. I am going to find Ilda Barosky—I am going to make her my wife! I am going to ask you—"

A knock at the door interrupted him. "Come in!"

A servant entered, and bowing respectively said a word or two, and in

answer to Alexis' quick response withdrew to reappear a moment later with a soldier wearing the uniform of the same regiment as that to which Alexis belonged.

Then followed a few words of dialogue in a language Cobb could not understand, and the soldier withdrew.

When they were once more alone Alexis turned to Cobb. "I am going to trust you fully and freely," he said. "My servant has just returned, having followed Ilda to her destination. I know where she is and I am going there to-night. If my father should awake, I ask you, in the name of our friendship, to make such explanation of my absence as will cause him no uneasiness until my return."



"I LOVED HER THEN AS I LOVE HER NOW"

You will do this for me, will you not?" said the young soldier, holding out his hand.

Cobb could say no more. He grasped the proffered hand of Alexis and five minutes later was alone.

Alexis was on his way to seek Ilda Barosky.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Nihilist Rendezvous.

A long, low room, with heavy wooden rafters supporting the ceiling, which was grimed and blacked by the smoke of a dozen oil lamps.

A room with a hot, stifling, suffocating atmosphere—the result of the smoking lamps, the fumes of tobacco and an almost red-hot stove, which had raised the temperature to an uncomfortable, almost an insupportable degree.

A long table, upon which was scattered a miscellaneous collection of implements, a couple of rude benches, a chair or two, and some rough boxes, utilized as seats, constituted most of the furnishings.

The half-dozen steps, leading up to a heavily barred door, indicated that the room was a cellar, and the two small windows, both with heavy shutters of solid wood, which were only a few inches higher than the bottom of the door, were of apparently little practical use, either for light or ventilation.

Within this underground apartment, for such it really was, were gathered, on the same evening as that on which the events described in the last chapter occurred, some twelve or fifteen men and three women. Their faces, darkened even beyond their natural color by the smoke and grime, were marked by suppressed excitement, while their conversation, animated in the extreme, was carried on in that suppressed way suggestive of extreme caution and ceaseless apprehension.

Not that all were talking. There were workers there, men who toiled and delved and whose grimy hands, hard and knotted, gave evidence that they had been no child's play. A long coil of wire, some electrical instruments, and some curiously suggestive metal globes, were some of the objects on the table of which mention has already been made.

The conversation, after an interval of silence, had begun again. (To be continued.)

Out of Pocket, but Got Even.

A squire not a great distance from Philadelphia was visited by a client, who protested that a liverman had "shaved" him dreadfully, and he wanted to come up to him.

"I asked him," explained the client, "the charge for a horse to go to Dedham. He replied \$1. I ordered the horse, and on my return offered in payment \$1; he insisted on another dollar for coming back, and made me pay it."

The squire gave him legal advice, which follows: Going to the liverman, he asked: "How much will you charge for a horse to Salem?" "Five dollars," replied the stable owner.

"Harness him up!" The client went to Salem and returning by railroad, went to the stable, saying, "Here's your \$5."

"Where's my horse?" asked the liverman, in surprise. "At Salem," answered the client. "I only hired him to go to Salem."

Sure Sign of Death.

The doctors who soothe the demon of drink in the alcoholic ward of a New York hospital have recently discovered an unfailing indication of the approaching death of patients. One of them described it in this way:

"The great majority of alcoholic patients in this city are truck drivers. Naturally, when they are driving a team and are continually urging their steeds ahead. It's all right as long as they keep driving ahead, but the moment we hear them begin to back their horses we know it's all off, and we might as well order their shrouds. In dozens of cases I never knew this sign to fail."

# TWO NATIONS MAY FIGHT FOR RUBBER

## Brazil and Peru contest over Acre, a territory as large as Great Britain

When last November there was signed in the city of Petropolis a treaty between Brazil and Bolivia, the impression was given that the dispute about the Aquiri or Acre territory was at an end; but recent events show that only one corner of the triangular dispute has been settled, for Peru is yet to be satisfied.

This territory furnished no end of frontier conflicts during the last generation, owing to the fact that it is a wedge-shaped area at the juncture of the three republics, Brazil, Bolivia and Peru, all three of which, before the treaty of Petropolis, laid claim to it. The so-called Acre territory has an area of about 80,000 square miles, or nearly that of Great Britain. The exploration of a part of it has been the most casual kind and no adequate map of the area has been made.

Being at the extremity of the three republics, little attention was paid to the fate of the great western watershed of the Amazon river until in recent years attempts were made by syndicates to obtain concessions to work the rubber forests and to mine the gold believed to be in abundance in this region.

The dispute at first waxed hot between Bolivia and her eastern neighbor, Brazil, although there was at the same time a series of vigorous protests entered by Peru against Bolivia. In every map of Bolivia the wedge-shaped territory is allotted to that state, and in the government maps of Peru the wedge and something more is allotted to that republic. Bolivia and Brazil had been for several years practically at war over the wilds in the Alto Purus, but by the treaty of Petropolis Bolivia agreed to cede the Acre territory to Brazil, in return for which Brazil agreed to cede a small triangular territory at the juncture of the Abuna and Mamore rivers, to form the Madeira, a giant arm of the Amazon. In addition to this cession,

the so-called Republic of Acre was formed, but it was little more than a threat, for there was never any real attempt at government. Bolivia appeared to think that a neat solution of the embarrassing situation would be to sell a concession to work the rubber lands. Capital was readily found in this country and Germany, and the Bolivian syndicate was formed, and like the great trading countries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was empowered to administer the region as well as to work it. It was given almost sovereign rights. In November, 1902, the agent of the

tending into the interior country to the source of the rivers emptying with that coast, to all their branches and the country they cover."

It will be seen by this contention Brazil claims the entire watershed of the Amazon, one of the most extensive in the world. However, feeling sure of her stand, Brazil offers to hear any claim Peru has to title, but insists upon the withdrawal of Peruvian troops first.

The Peruvian attitude is simply that Peru never admitted Brazil's title to the territory now in dispute, that the treaty of 1851 contains no recognition of it, and that the Peruvian government has no recollection of ever having admitted Brazil's "pretended right."

Peru asserts her willingness to resort to arbitration, but without "demanding previous conditions unnecessary to governments really wishing to reach a prompt, just and pacific settlement of their differences." In other words, Peru insists upon her military occupation of Acre while the case is arbitrated. Brazil makes it a condition that she will listen to arbitration, consequently at present the two governments are deadlocked.

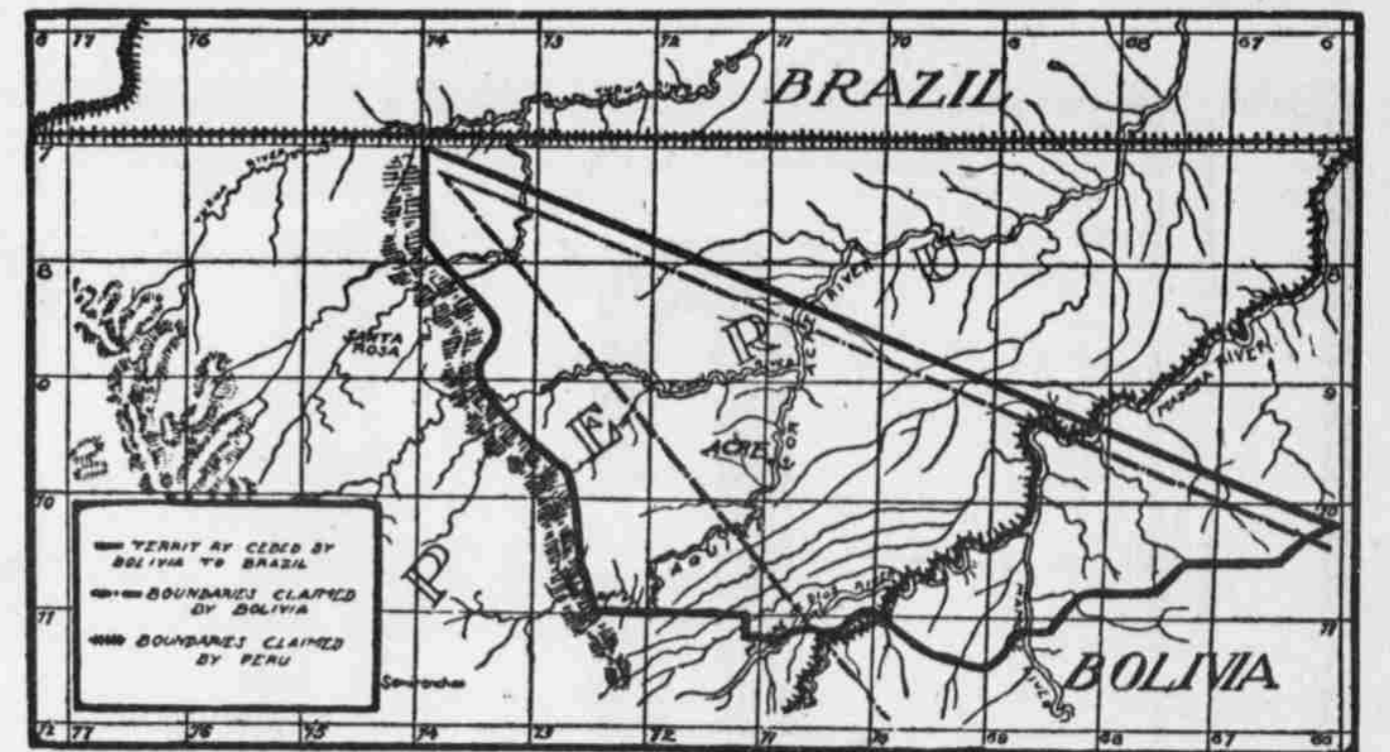
Among the South American states war and revolution are a part of the life and, therefore, at this time no one would have the hardihood to predict whether the dispute terminates in hostilities or in arbitration. If the two states resort to force there appears to be the favor of numbers on the side of Brazil, which has a regular army of 28,160 men, gathered by compulsory service and by conscription, has a regular force estimated at 4,000 and the possibilities of increase are not sufficient to offset the Brazilian advantage. Each republic has a navy, both of them small, and Peru's rather insignificant. Brazil could send some of her ships as far up the Amazon as



A PERUVIAN RUBBER HUNTER

syndicate attempted to take possession, but so great was the feeling that he was only a blind for a great American annexation scheme that he barely escaped with his life, by abandoning his journey.

The agent arrived at Porto Alonzo, on the Acre river, 2,800 miles from the mouth of the Amazon, just at the time the Bolivian government officials were being overpowered by the Brazilians and the Republic of Acre was



Sketch Map of the country in dispute—territory has not yet been accurately charted.

which was admittedly inadequate, Brazil also agreed to give an indemnity of \$10,000,000. This money, however, is to be used mainly in the construction of railways and other works tending to improve the communications and develop commerce between the two countries. Brazil also agreed to build on her own territory, parallel with the Mamore river, a railroad about 240 miles long, from San Antonio to Guajara-Mirim, around the rapids and cascades in the river, which makes the stream within that length unnavigable.

In addition to these stipulations Brazil agreed to take the quarrel with Peru off the hands of Bolivia; consequently, under the convention, Bolivia is now experiencing that tranquility that has been withheld her for many years.

The history of the dispute is considerably involved, and will no doubt have to be decided by either arbitration or war finally. Although there are in existence boundary treaties of 1851 and 1867, neither Peru nor Brazil can at present agree upon their interpretations. Brazil contends that there are 10,000 Brazilians in the disputed country; that there should be no question to her right of occupation. On the other hand, Peru claims to have maintained a military occupation of the country unmolesated for years.

Like most boundary disputes (and Peru has had a lengthy history of them) little interest was manifested in the remote district until it became apparent that it was a land of virgin riches. For years the rubber gatherers had worked the rubber lands on the Amazon, but these became worked out and the interest moved up the river. Finally they entered the Acre district, which was found to abound with rubber trees. In a little while between 10,000 and 20,000 Brazilians were in the territory, working the vast rubber lands.

In 1899 Bolivia took steps to occupy the region. She found the Brazilians had developed the rubber industry to an enormous extent, and at once sought to coerce them. Finally

in the process of making. With the ousting of the Bolivian officials who were to hand over the region of Acre to the syndicate's representative, the syndicate's occupation failed, for it was impossible to take possession under the circumstances. Brazilian warships were sent up the Amazon and troops were put on transports and sent along to occupy the disputed territory. About that time a protocol was signed, then followed the treaty

of Petropolis, and one of the litigants was removed from the troublesome business.

Peru has always had pretensions in the Acre region, and has had innumerable disputes with Bolivia on the subject. In fact such a dispute was on at the time Bolivia made the cession to Brazil, but as the latter agreed to assume the responsibility, the present disturbance in the region will have to be settled between these two states. Peru has occupied the upper Purus valley, and recently there were reports of a battle having taken place between the Brazilians and Peruvians at Santa Rosa.

Brazil insists that her right to the region is of long standing, and that this right was recognized by the treaty of 1851. She also insists that, that being in possession of the coast, and also of the territory extending to the sources of the rivers Jurua or Yurua and Purus emptying into that coast, long peopled by Brazilians, she is in the right under the application of the rule established by Pinckney and Monroe in the note of April 20, 1805. This rule is as follows:

"When any European nation takes possession of any extent of seacoast, that possession is understood as ex-

Acres, the head of navigation on the Acre river. Peru, however, could make no use of her navy unless she trust them sufficiently to send them around Cape Horn to harass the Brazilian coast, which is not near so likely as that Brazil might send some of her ships to make an assault upon Callao, although the chance of success in this undertaking is so small as to scarcely warrant the undertaking.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Strict Eastern Etiquette. By a remarkable law of royal etiquette, which has ruled for centuries at the court of Siam, no person is permitted to sleep in an apartment over that occupied by the king. A deliberate breach of this custom has on more than one occasion been punished by death. When the King of Siam honored Paris by a visit some years ago, by a singular oversight at his hotel the bedrooms reserved for his dusky retinue were placed directly above that of the monarch himself, and the blunder caused considerable consternation among his fearful courtiers, until the matter was explained to the management of the hostelry and duly rectified.

Hydrophobia Antidote. During the last year 584 persons bitten by dogs having hydrophobia were treated by the Pasteur Institute of India. There were only six failures to immunize the patients. Six other cases came after the disease had developed.

The Misanthrope. He neither joys nor grieves. But cavils and mistrusts. His hopes are like the withered leaves. Swirled down the autumn gusts.

He looks askance at Life. If so be Mirth lurk near; He has ill humored Doubt to wife. And is the slave of Saecr.

He makes a mock of Love. And all that on her wait; Yet, howe'er he desire may move, He cannot rise to hate.

Crimes of a former birth. Must wreak on him their spell. Else why, while yet upon this earth. Must he abide in hell?

—Clinton Scollard, in Smart Set.