

# A LEADEN MEDAL.

It Played an Important Part in a Love Affair.

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At the breaking out of our war with the Japanese I had been somewhat surprised at the devotion of a young lieutenant in the army who seemed to consider me the object of a grand passion. He was several years younger than I and extremely boyish. We Russians are a fair haired race, but Paul Nevinsky's hair was almost white—not with age, for he was but nineteen years old. His eyes were a light blue and his complexion milk and rose, suitable for a girl. No beard had yet sprouted.

I will remember the day Paul called upon me to say that his regiment was



"I WILL NO LONGER KEEP YOU IN IGNORANCE."

to be transported that very day over the Transiberian railway to Manchuria. He told me that were it not for leaving me he would be glad to go, since he wished active service. "I am consoled, however," he said, "that I may have an opportunity to gain some honor to place at your feet."

I was moved by this, though I saw no reason why bravery should make me love him. I was pleased that he wished renown for me rather than for himself. Since he was about to leave me and I might never see him again I had not the heart to chide him, so I bade him goodbye without giving him any definite knowledge with regard to my feeling for him. When he left me before going out of the door he turned and gave me a look so melancholy that I advanced a step, took his hands in mine and kissed him.

That kiss put new life into him. With a wave of the hand he walked quickly away, apparently not wishing to risk looking back at me again.

The battle of the Yalu was, I believe, the first great battle of the war. At any rate, it was one of the first. A few weeks after it had been fought I received a little package and a letter. The handwriting on both indicated

that they had been addressed by the same person. I opened the letter first. It was from the surgeon of the regiment to which my youthful lover was attached. It read:

Lieutenant Paul Nevinsky at the battle of the Yalu distinguished himself. In a charge the Japanese fire was so deadly that all the officers of his regiment who had not been picked off were driven back before the storm of bullets except Lieutenant Nevinsky, who stood his ground, rallied a small number of men and with them kept the enemy at bay till the others had returned, then completed the charge, winning all that it was intended to accomplish. But in the moment of victory he was struck by a bullet and carried off the field dangerously wounded. I have attended him and extracted the ball. He will not survive. He has asked me to send it to you, saying that since he cannot live to receive a decoration to send you he gives you what he denominates his leaden medal.

So many wounded men need my attention that I feel I am taking time that belongs to them to fulfill my promise.

This brief message written by one who was called away from his patient to other multifarious duties was all I ever received from Paul. I had no hope that he lived, and when the returns of the killed and wounded came his name was among the dead.

I would indeed have been hard hearted if this devotion had not affected me. I had admirers, but all their admiration seemed trifling beside that of this young man who faced death that he might send me a medal and had instead only had time to send me the bullet that had killed him. But I kept my leaden decoration to myself. No other knew of it or that the man it had struck loved me. Nor did I intend that others should know of it, especially those men who were honoring me with their devotion and their offers of marriage. I had before me a career, and I did not propose that it should be blighted by the blue-eyed, beardless boy who had been killed by the Japanese.

When Count Gravenieff, a noble of high rank, offered himself I would have accepted him at once but for two reasons. First, I did not wish him to think I was overanxious for him; second, I wished to complete a year of

mourning for my young soldier lover. A few days before the expiration of this period a card was sent up to me bearing the name of Paul Nevinsky.

Was I glad or sorry?

I don't know. I only know that I hurried down stairs. There stood the young soldier, his cheeks, which had been round, now hollow, his complexion a pale yellow, his eyes sunken in his head. I wished to be taken into his arms that my heart might beat against his. But I controlled myself. I showed my delight at receiving him back from the dead, but gave no indications that it was from love. Gravenieff was a splendid match, and I was by no means ready to permit this condition of sentiment to interfere with my taking advantage of what it would bring me.

This was Paul's story:

He had disappointed the surgeons by recovering from his wound and far more quickly than could have been anticipated. He had taken part in the subsequent battles of the war fought by the army with which he served and had returned a general of brigades, covered with decorations.

I asked him why he had not informed me of his recovery. He replied in a shamefaced way that, having sent me the bullet that killed him, he had felt that to announce that he had not been killed after all would have put him in a ridiculous position before me. He had therefore put off the announcement of his continued existence from time to time and finally had concluded to communicate it to me in person. He hoped that I would not think any the less of him for not having been killed.

While I could not forbear smiling at this absurd self-abnegation, I confess

I was touched by it. I could not forbear taking his hand, and when he bent forward for a kiss I could not help giving him one.

I now had two lovers between whom it was not easy for me to decide. On the one hand, there was Gravenieff, who permitted me to understand that it was a great condescension on the part of his family to consent to mingle its blood with mine. Indeed, considering that he came of the oldest stock in Russia and I was noble only on my mother's side, the match would be very advantageous to me. On the other hand was my boy soldier, who was so anxious to honor me that he apologized for returning alive after having sent me as a mark of his devotion the bullet that was supposed to have killed him. Never was a woman called upon to decide between such extremes.

And while I was undecided, or, rather, while I was unable to hurt my young lover by turning him away for the man it seemed best for me to marry, my position was a delicate one. When the count learned that Paul Nevinsky was his rival he was very much astonished. Paul had no fortune, was a commoner and was in years and appearance a mere boy. That such a man should presume to compete with him for the favor of any woman was a great blow to Gravenieff's vanity. That I should consider Paul at all in competition with a nobleman of his rank and wealth somewhat diminished the count's good opinion of me. I believe that on this account, had he not been too proud to give in to such an inferior person, he would have withdrawn his proposal for my hand.

As for Paul, when he first learned that he had a rival in Count Gravenieff all hope deserted him. "I would not truly love you," he said, "should I insist upon your bestowing yourself on me when a position so much more exalted than I could give you is in store for you?"

I could not but contrast the self-confidence of the count with the modesty of the little general. Nevertheless I was not so affected by this difference between the two men as by the fact that the one considered himself too good for me, while the other cared only for the honors he had won that he might lay them at my feet.

One evening my two lovers happened to call upon me at the same hour. As soon as the count saw the general his brow darkened. I introduced them. The count bowed stiffly. The general returned the salute with more amiability than might have been expected under the circumstances. The count's forbearance with me for keeping him so long in doubt broke down.

"I cannot consent," he said haughtily, "to be placed in rivalry with one who, though he has distinguished himself on the field of battle, belongs to an entirely different class from my own. I have offered you my heart and hand. It remains for you to decide whether you prefer to be the wife of a noble or the wife of a commoner. If General Nevinsky can bestow upon you what I am able to bestow I will resign you for your own good. If not, let him cease to come between you and me."

"Count," I said, "I will no longer keep you in ignorance of my decision. I fully appreciate the substantial honors you are able to bestow upon me. General Nevinsky has already made me one gift which I hold in greater esteem than the wealth I would share with you as your countess. That gift has won. Being called upon to choose between you, I choose him who gave me this."

Catching hold of a small gold chain about my neck, I drew from under my bodice that which was attached to it—a leaden bullet.

The count stood for a moment astonished that a bit of metal should overbalance his estates; that the little general should have won me with a bullet. But he knew that my decision was against him and in favor of the giver of the ball of lead. He withdrew haughtily, and the moment the door was closed behind him my accepted suitor knelt at my feet.

## FREE TO STARVE.

That is About What the Workingman's Liberty Amounts To.

The Rev. Percy Stickney Grant, rector of the Church of the Ascension, New York, preached recently on "The Workingman's Liberty to Starve." He said that a man is seldom able to choose his occupation and must do what he can to keep himself in food and clothing. In that event it is not a question of liberty, but of necessity, according to Dr. Grant.

"If we are free at all we are free to be sick or injured," said Mr. Grant. "We are free to be subject to the tyranny of our employers, free to walk in the streets and be killed by an automobile."

"If you were to double the working force, couldn't you divide the hours in two? That means that the drones should be set to work. Under a rational organization of industry a very few hours would give mankind what it enjoys today, and perhaps more. If you wished to paint or write you could have that pleasure; there would be time to exercise the temperamental gifts you possess."

"In the state of Wisconsin there is said to be a map showing the fertility of every ten acres of land within its borders. A prospective purchaser may look at the map and see what he is to get. This is considered to be rationalization of agriculture. But we need rationalization of human industry. When that stage is reached we will feel it as a blow in the face to be told that the workingman is at liberty to starve."

## New York's Liability Law.

In the suit of Meyer Wagner against the Metropolitan Street Railway company, heard in the supreme court in New York city, a verdict for \$10,000 in favor of the plaintiff was handed in. Suit was brought under the new employers' liability law by the plaintiff for injuries received while working in the company's car barns as an elevator man shifting cars. Another elevator, also operated by an employee, collided with the plaintiff's elevator in such a manner as to fracture both legs. Counsel claimed that under the new law an employer is responsible for the acts of his employee and that the company therefore was responsible for the operation of the colliding elevator. This is the largest verdict for damages yet received under the liability law passed last winter by the New York legislature.

## Union Editor Honored.

Charles W. Fear, editor of the Missouri Trades Unionist, Joplin, Mo., was elected to the Missouri legislature by the voters of the Joplin district, running ahead of his ticket and being the only Republican candidate elected in that part of the state. Fear is well known among organized workmen of the country, having been active for years.

## Woman.

Woman has been defined as "an essay on goodness and grace in one volume, elegantly bound." But she doesn't like to be put on the shelf all the same.

Fire in the heart sends smoke in the head. German Proverb.