THE NIHILIST.

Some time before the tragic death of the late czar one of the most important men in the empire was Prince Michel, but reasons of state will not permit the designation of his illustrious family name.

During a sojourn in Paris, just after the war, he met at one of the receptions of the Princess Lisa General de Contremont's charming daughter, whom the Parisian world, just arising from its ashes, knew under the name of "the beautiful Madeleine." She was also as poor as she was beautiful.

Michel was smitten in spite of his forty years and his long formed resolution of celibacy. For fifteen years he had withstood the blandishments of designing young ladies and the manoeuvres of their aristocratic mammas, who had thrown themselves, so to speak, at his head as bouquets of roses and lilies are thrown over the footlights at a favorite diva.

One evening Madeleine said to the widow of the hero of Gravelotte, "Mother, would you be satisfied by my becoming a princess?"

"No, indeed, my daughter, for you were born beautiful enough to become a queen."

In fact, in the most select assembly such a perfect type of womanhood was seldom seen. I saw this superb creature at the opera one evening shortly after her marriage, and I will wager that there were fifty young men in the orchestra who were more or less in love with her through the whole gamut of love, from respectful admiration to the grand passion. You can imagine how they listened to the music: it might as well have been from the score of "Mireille" as from the "Huguenots," and they would have been none the wiser.

This was probably the most memorable evening in the young life of Madeline, for she felt herself avenged in the eyes of the men who would now gladly impoverish themselves for one hour of her favor, but who had formerly considered her too poor to be the object of theirs. From her proud elevation, though scarcely seeming to smile, in the depths of her being she vibrated from head to foot with the exultation of triumph, and her cold brilliance radiated their admiration as diamonds radiate light. She saw in the elegant audience many beautiful women, but she felt herself to be the most beautiful woman there.

On this particular evening an American lady in one of the boxes, many times a millionaire, but not pretty, said: "I do not hope to resemble the Princess Michel, for that would be to expect too much, but only to have her teeth I would give my hotel in the Champs Elysees and all it contains, including the contents of my jewel box; for with such teeth one need not be pretty—one has but to yawn or smile and the world is at one's feet."

"Yes," replied a diplomat, "but I fear the princess will have occasion to yawn oftener than to smile, for his excellency, her husband, has the air of being neither agreeable nor amusing. I imagine the princess will regret Paris many times."

Indeed the prince, even at the time of his marriage, was not an agreeable man, and some years later he was still less so, to the sorrow of the princess be it said. He owed it to the coquetry of his wife to be as jealous as a tiger, and to the favor of the czar to become minister of the police, and the result of his position did not serve to render him more amiable. However, he had found the opportunity to utilize his public functions in aid of his private jealousy. He used his wife's coachman and the servant who opened the door to further his ends, and his emissaries among the police soon placed in his hands all sorts of amorous declarations addressed to his wife, in every strain of ardent and passionate avowal.

However, the flood of correspondence soon slackened, not because the princess was less seductive, but because she was indifferent or wearied, and those who had confided to the post or telegraph their hopes and fears soon found themselves the victims of the most unexpected and various ill fortune, and began to conjecture that either the princess had the evil eye, or that the eyes of the prince were too good. The correspondence only revealed to his excellency that his wife was a harmless coquette, and this discovery brought a relative satisfaction. But the exactions of the czar in regard to the nihilists now left him little time to protect the virtue of his wife, and judge of his ineffable surprise when one day the following letter reached his hands, of which also he recognized but too well the handwriting, though it was signed by only a single initial:

"It appears the emperor will set out sooner than was expected for Varsovie; hold yourself then in readiness to start at the earliest warning, for who knows when we will find again so favorable an opportunity?

"I do not wish to conceal from you the difficulties of the undertaking. Arrange your plans then for success without delay. You will present yourself to me as a friend of my family, traveling in Russia for your pleasure. Call upon my mother before you set out; she will give you some commission for me which will serve as an introduction in case of need."

The unhappy prince was beside himself when he had finished reading this horrible letter. Then this conspiracy, which he fought night and day with sword, with prison and with exile, this pitiless war of armed monsters against the life of a single man, had its origin at his fireside! It was his own wife, his beautiful Madeleine, who said to the assassin, "Behold the hour; be ready to strike!" What fatality had armed his foreign wife against his sovereign? This woman had everything—youth, beauty, wealth, admiration. Yet she was a Nihilist.

What more did she want? What stupendous hatred urged her to this crime at the risk of imprisonment, exile or death? Did the snows of Siberia tempt her roving feet? Was there infatuation in the cord that might strangle her velvety throat? What could he do? He thought of killing his wife, then himself, and leaving the public to conjecture a case of conjugal infamy as the least of evils. Then he thought of throwing himself at the feet of the czar, and, after divulging everything, dying with the guilty woman. But the sentiment of duty made him pause. He held the clew to a conspiracy; it was necessary to unravel the whole plot, and for this reason the letter must be allowed to reach its destination. The assassin would be thus made to betray himself.

Already the name of this man was known to the minister—Nicholson—some Englishman or American, perhaps, an expert in dynamite, or simply a Russian student who had assumed a false name. The letter was sent, and the same evening the prince accompanied his wife to the opera, where, pale, trembling and feverish, he appeared fifteen years older. She was more charming and admired than ever.

"Are you ill, Michel?" inquired Madeleine, as seated in their carriage they drove homeward.

"Why do you ask that question?" replied her husband, with a strangely somber air.

"Why! Because you have not appeared jealous this evening," she said, smiling.

At the end of a week the minister remarked to his wife, without seeming to attach any importance to the statement, "It is on Tuesday that the czar sets out from St. Petersburg." "Ah," said Madeleine, seeming scarcely to have heard her husband. And then she murmured, "But the papers gave another date." Desiring to deceive the accomplice of Nicholson, for he had his plan, the minister replied, "Yes, it is necessary to thwart those who may have designs against the life of the emperor." Then he spoke of casual things, covertly admiring the strength of soul of this unworthy woman. The very same day convinced the minister that his ruse had succeeded, when the following dispatch was handed to him addressed by the princess, to whom it is easily divined:

It is for Tuesday. Be punctual.

Tuesday passed, and it may well be believed that neither the czar nor his minister left the capital. Madeleine suddenly became very uneasy at the announcement of his pretended change. On the afternoon of the following day a stranger, richly dressed and decorated with an enormous rosette, presented himself at the palace of the prince.

"Whom do you wish to see?" inquired the obsequious flunkey, who had received his orders from his master.

"Madame the Princess de Contremont. Present my compliments, and inform her that I am the bearer of a message from her mother. I am Dr. Nicholson."

"You are expected, sir," replied the servant, "but madame is at this moment visiting a friend, and has left orders to have you conducted to her. The carriage will be ready in a moment."

The carriage drew up and the man entered with Nicholson, taking his seat beside him without so much as asking permission. Nicholson's wonder at the fellow's presumption was of short duration, for after a rapid drive of a quarter of an hour the self styled doctor found himself in one of the strongest prisons of St. Petersburg, and if he was expected it certainly was not by the princess. In a slovenly sort of reception room, filled with armed police, a personage whom he did not know, and who was the prince himself, interrogated him with a want of respect to which poor Nicholson was not accustomed.

"It is infamous!" he cried, struggling in his bewilderment to defend himself. "I reached Paris only this morning, and have not spoken three words to any one, and when I present myself to the princess I am arrested and carried off to prison like a common thief."

"You know the princess, then?" the minister inquired coldly.

"Know her! I have known her since she was an infant. Here is a letter from her mother, the widow of a great general. Besides, I am an American citizen and protest"—

"Examine this man carefully!" interrupted the high functionary, without seeming to hear the doctor.

Nothing to excite suspicion was found on Nicholson, except a little box carefully wrapped up in many envelopes of fine paper. Could it be an infernal machine? An expert from the torpedo school, who usually accompanies the minister on such occasions, untied the package with scientific precaution. The roomful of assistants were very nervous and stood around with pallid faces, evidently awaiting a terrible explosion. Nothing abnormal was revealed, only the expert, with a singular smile, handed the open box to the prince, who, after a hasty glance at the contents, hurriedly thrust it in his pocket.

Then turning to Nicholson he demanded, "You are"—

"An American dentist, sir; very much pressed for time, as my client is this moment waiting for me."

Five minutes later Nicholson was in the carriage again, having this time for a companion the prince himself, who loaded him with apologies.

"But," said the husband of the beautiful Madeleine, "how did it happen that I never discovered anything myself?"

"Your excellency," proudly replied the American, "if you had been able to discover anything, such a dentist as Nicholson would not merit his great reputation."

"Then the teeth of the princess"—

"Are false, my prince. When Mme. de Contremont was young she was thrown from her horse and sustained an injury which ruined her teeth, and it was myself who constructed for her the most perfect set of teeth that ever left my hands. But these becoming worn I was summoned to Paris to adjust a new set in your absence."

The public never heard of the adventure, but it was duly observed that the prince appeared to be less in love with his wife than formerly.—From the French of Leon de Tinseau, by Francis M. Livingston, for New Orleans Times-Democrat.

He Pulled Jackson's Nose.

R. H. Lacentier, of Washington, says that he was standing on the wharf at Alexandria, Va., when Lieut. Randolph stepped forward and pulled President Jackson's nose. He heard the president exclaim, "Show me the villain and I will send him home." Randolph got away in good time, or Jackson would have carried out his threat easy enough. The old general's hair stood up straighter than ever when the incident occurred, and his eyes fairly flamed with anger.—Chicago Herald.

Married Man—Why don't you get married, Miss Jones? You are getting to look like a "back number"—will soon be an old maid.

Miss Jones—If I was as easy to please as your wife was I would have been married long ago.—Texas Siftings.

The Four Imprisoned Miners.

No more thrilling tale has been told recently than that of the four men rescued from the coal mine at Jeansville, Pa. Away down 400 feet below the surface of the earth, three-quarters of a mile from the entrance shaft, miners were delving at the coal seams as usual one day. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, a deluge of water broke through from a shaft of an abandoned mine. What started it will never be known, probably. In five minutes it was 300 feet deep in the lower portions of the mine, though miners neared the shaft escaped. When the roll came to be called eighteen were missing. Some of these as were not drowned by the flood would naturally seek refuge in the higher passageways leading off from the level. The mine was honeycombed with these, for it had been worked nearly fifty years.

The water had filled the main shaft to a third of its depth. But there was one thing it could not do. When it rushed in a mighty torrent into the mine it drove the air before it up the narrow passageways and packed it into the ends of these. The water could not go through the air. It could drive it over upon itself and compress it, and the more the air was compressed the more it resisted the water, till at last the air kept the water out of the farther end of the passageways as effectually as if it had been a wall of brick and mortar. That saved the lives of the four who were rescued. It gave them air of a pressure of four atmospheres to breathe, but it saved them.

Great engines, pumping 2,500 gallons a minute, were put to work, and the pumps throbbed day and night. The mine must be cleared and the bodies of those who had been drowned brought out and buried. Half a month went on, and the pumps only then ceased to throb. The water was low enough to search for the bodies. Several were found. In one spot it was plain that a fire had been kindled, and that had caused the death of four men who had clustered around it. The flames had consumed the oxygen in the confined air of the "pocket" in which they were inclosed, and the men were slowly asphyxiated to their death.

The search went on until the bodies of all but four had been found. The rescuers themselves braved death a hundred times a day from suffocation in the close air, but the work did not stop a moment.

The full dangers and difficulties of that dread search cannot be fully told. A line of pickets over the whole three-quarters of a mile to the entrance of the mine was kept constantly on the alert. Once a minute, day and night, the signal passed from man to man, "All right!" They will hear it in their dreams for months to come, those brave fellows.

The nineteenth day came. At 8 o'clock in the evening the workers stood in front of "breast No. 5." Suddenly the face of one of them blanched and his eyes blazed. He spoke, and this is what he said, "I heard something!"

Then through a passageway only three feet high they crawled, over jagged coal and slate, their clothes torn, their hands bleeding, and brought the four living men out of their prison.

In the first days of their imprisonment the four men had found a little food in their dinner pails. Then the strongest one of them killed rats, with which the mine was infested. They ate the legs of these rats, as epicures eat frogs' legs, and that kept the life in them. But at the same time it required all the feeble strength that was in them to keep the rats from eating them. At last only hope was left them, and they lived on that till rescue came. Tenderly as new born infants the four saved men were conveyed to a landing in the upward shaft. They were too exhausted to be taken farther.

At 2 o'clock in the morning the rescuing party ascended to the surface, blackened, begrimed and bleeding, themselves exhausted almost to the point of fainting. Their thoughts turned then to where all men's thoughts fly in times alike of great fear or great joy, to the dread unfathomable source of all that is, was or shall be. They stopped before the house of the senior member of the company, and there in the darkness, with all their souls in their voices, sang "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

Two hundred years ago such a difference between France and England as at present exists concerning Newfoundland would probably have ended in war, but now both nations are extremely conciliatory, and there is not any apprehension that the difficulty over the Newfoundland fisheries will cause war. It will be arbitrated peacefully, and concessions will be made satisfactory to both sides. Thus much advancement at least the Universal Peace society can congratulate itself the world has made.

Eating Before Sleeping.

Eating before sleeping is now so generally recommended by physicians to those troubled by insomnia resulting from nervous trouble, it is not a difficult prescription to fill, but the determination of the question just what to eat is not infrequently puzzling. One who has experimented for years names a glass of warm milk as a good nightcap for many, while for people who have a tendency to biliousness it will not do at all. To the latter buttermilk, not too cold, is said to be the best of nightcaps. Warm milk with vichy is also recommended. Oranges and, to a certain extent, hot and sour lemonade are good for all.—Cincinnati Commercial Gazette.

Choosing a Trade.

Modern Girl—Father, I long to be independent—to rely upon my own exertions for support. What trade or profession would you recommend?

Wise Father—First class cooks make $5,000 a year.

Modern Girl—I don't like cooking. It's too familiar.—New York Weekly.

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