

PETERKIN'S WOLF SONG.

A Thrilling Adventure on a Russian Steppe.

Peterkin stands thoughtfully listening to the thunder and roar of the waters, as if of restraint they have leapt from captivity, and, with a sound like the roaring of hungry wolves, flow onward under the masses of ice to the Arctic Ocean.

St. Petersburg stands out in his imaginings with the dazzling brilliancy of a perfect sun at noontide, and ever toward this shining goal his childish feet shall journey.

There is nothing to impede his footsteps by an added weight on that journey, for beside the blackened, greasy tuit of sheepskin which he wears—his sole possession is his head father's violin slung across his shoulders in a quaint bag fashioned by the peasant mother's unskilled hands.

So Peterkin turns his back upon the old life, and journeying southward, keeps body and soul together as best he may.

At first he is disappointed to find elsewhere so little change from what he had left behind, for one Russian village differs little in outward aspect from another save in its poverty and squalor.

The hungry demon which would have locked its jaws in the leader's throat drops before the officer's unerring shot, and the horses gallop onward.

Peterkin sits awed by the night peril, but for all he is so quiet, there is no cowardly thoughts in the little peasant who, with each panting breath, is making a bold resolve, bidding good bye, brave heart, to his cherished dreams—the golden visions of fame in the great city.

A cry of terror smites the air as Peterkin rises to throw himself to certain death, and he turns to see the officer's uplifted arm pointing straight at him the pistol whose last shot has been reserved for that purpose.

Yes, Peterkin says he can and will play, if in return he be granted permission to travel with the wedding party to St. Petersburg.

The wedding at length is over, good byes are said and three horses harnessed abreast to the sleigh dash forward on the long journey.

which the flying hoof-beats mark the rhythmic cadence. Beside the driver sits Peterkin, in place of the yamstchik or post-boy, a low-crowned hat covering the mop of yellow hair cut straight from ear to ear.

Onward they go, resting only when night falls to renew the journey in the morning; but to Peterkin there is little rest, for now after the long year of patient plodding, ever southward, St. Petersburg is almost within sight.

As the day advances, the snow, which began to fall lightly at noon, increases in violence, and Timothy moves uneasily, urging the horses ahead, for only too well does he know the danger of a heavy storm: over the frozen steppes, where the icy blasts whirl here and there in treacherous drifts.

The short day dies without a twilight, and Timothy, knowing from boyhood every verst of the way shakes his head in despair, calling to his horses that their courage may not flag through the ever-increasing storm.

Hark! What was that sound which Peterkin's keen ears have been the first to hear? There—again it comes—he breathes a frightened whisper—"The wolves—they are upon us!"

Not a muscle of the weather-beaten old face shows that the lad's whisper has been heard, as leaning forward the driver calls to his horses:

"Away! Fly, my beauties—my pretty fluttering doves—my Golobki! Haste, my brothers, to thy stables in St. Petersburg!"

The long, low howl of the oncoming foe sounds nearer, but unmindful of the danger the officer sits with his bride enveloped in furs, too much absorbed to give heed to outside events.

Again there sounds that long, low howl, and the swiftly moving black mass gains steadily upon it now, running swiftly to gain the sides, the whole yelping pack leaping up with gleaming eyes and cruel, hungry jaws.

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With a sudden powerful blow he smites the violin as he regains his seat, and strong and clear the first discordant sounds are lost in the loud, rapid movement of a Polish measure picked up somewhere upon that weary tramp.

"Courage, brave fellows! Fly, doves, to thy haven, the city is in sight. Keep, lad, to thy music and we shall be saved."

Czars, with its broad streets and massive stone quays, rises now before their eyes, minaret, dome and spire cleaving the sky in a blaze of light.

It is spring, and the world is waking once again to beauty, when Peterkin sits up to hear the wonderful news that on the morrow he will play before the Czar.

The magnificence of the palace does not abash this peasant, save in so far as all beautiful things must necessarily affect such natures.

"Quick to perform its master's bidding, the bow quivers across the strings, and as the music trembles forth Peterkin forgets all else.

In the gorgeous choir of St. Isaac's, clad in a tunic of blue and gold, Peterkin is now installed, and his masters claim great genius for the little Siberian peasant who, unmindful of cold or hardship, traversed on foot more than a thousand miles in that land of snow and ice where he will one day have a brilliant future.

An Interlude with Which the Piano had Nothing to Do.

"Gracie you—you don't think I come here too often, do you?" was the anxious inquiry of the ingenious, open-faced young man who stood leaning against the piano.

"Certainly not, Frank," said the young lady sitting on the piano-stool.

"I didn't know," pursued the young man reflectively, "but I had been overdoing it."

"What made you think, so, Frank?"

"Why, it was the stipulation, you know, when you gave me the—the cold shake that I should come to see you occasionally as a friend, so as not to break off too sudden and get people to talking. Wasn't it?"

"Yes, I believe that was the understanding."

"That's what I've been doing you know, Gracie. I've been coming occasionally. Once or twice a week is occasionally, isn't it?"

"But when a fellow gets to coming three or four times a week you know, it looks as if he were getting off the occasional basis and trying to make a new deal. That's what I wouldn't do."

"I wouldn't—r-r-r-rum-tum. Ker-chug let such a thing as that—lum-ti-tum-tum—worry me."

"It's all right, of course, to go on being friends, Gracie, but it's going to take a long time to break it to 'em gently if this occasional business gets any more—h-m—occasional than it is now. And it'll be pretty tough on me to make it any less occasional."

"Some day, of course, I'll have to quit. It has been a pretty long time now since I have bored you, Gracie, with a word about love—"

"A long time?" exclaimed Gracie, pensively. "It's been an eternity, Frank!"

Yum! Yum! Yum-yum! Yum-yum! Which the sagacious reader will understand to be an interlude with which the piano had nothing whatever to do.

And Frank is to go to see Miss Gracie one day next week with a regularly ordained minister, a new black suit and a marriage license.

A Good Remedy.

Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief? And is thy heart oppressed with woes untold? Balm wouldst thou gather for the deepest grief?

Four blessings round thee like a shower of gold.

'Tis when the rose is wrapped in many a fold Close to its heart the worm is eating there, Not when all unrolled, its bosom rich and fair, Sends forth its perfumes on the ambient air.

Rouse to some work of high and holy love, And thou an angel's happiness shalt know, Shall bless the earth, while in the world above The good begun by thee shall onward flow.

Quite Right.

"Now, John," said a teacher, "if your mother should send you for half a dozen eggs and they were three cents each, how much would you pay for them?"

THE WORK OF ISAIAH.

BY GEORGE HODGES.

The book of Isaiah is remarkable among the books of the Bible for its interest and its value. The Bible is made up of a considerable number of books, some in prose and some in poetry, some history, some prophecy, some letters and some sermons.

The word prophet, we ought to keep in mind, means preacher. You can find another meaning in the dictionary and in common conversation. The conjunction of Venus and Jupiter is just now giving occupation to what we are accustomed to call nowadays the exercise of prophecy.

In the bible, the prophet is a preacher. We may read a good many of the writings of the Old Testament "prophets" without discovering any prediction at all.

Concerning the personal life of Isaiah we know little. The first verse of his book, which is a heading added by the men who gathered these sermons together into this volume, tells us that he lived in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

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Isaiah's two sons had quite remarkable names. The Old Testament names have many of them a queer sound in our ears.

Thus Shear-jashub means "a remnant will remain." That, we will see presently, was one of the most notable of the doctrines of Isaiah.

Thus Isaiah's boys had names that were condensed sermons. That shows how deep the prophet and the prophets had their hearts in the great work.

It is likely that Isaiah continued preaching 40 years. He spent 40 years in one parish. He was probably about 70 when he died.

The call of Isaiah, the beginning of his ministry, is described in a chapter which, for some reason which no one knows now, is numbered in the book not one, but six.

In the sixth chapter of Isaiah we learn what it was that made this man a minister. It was not because he had tried two or three vocations and had not succeeded very well in any of them, that he concluded to try the clerical profession.

The prophets, indeed, are all unanimous in the assertion that God called them. They were going on about their ordinary business so they say, and somehow there came a voice. God called them. And they obeyed, sometimes unwillingly, having no sort of inclination toward that kind of work, desiring most earnestly to keep out of it, living, some of them, in a day when, as they say, a wise and prudent man will preserve a discreet silence.

They were stopped, and suddenly turned about, and sent on a message from God. Thenceforth the words they speak are God's words. "Thus saith the Lord" is the pre-

face to their sermon. There is something notable in this constant affirmation of the old preachers that God called them.

In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah had a vision. He seemed in a dream to be standing in the temple, only the temple was a hundred times greater and fairer than he had ever seen it before.

And then the whole great temple seemed to reel and shake, and a great mysterious cloud of smoke, as of the incense of the prayers of heaven, descended upon it.

Isaiah made no separation in his thought between the Church and the State. It is not likely that he cared much for any institution as an institution, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

Thus he concerned himself in whatever concerned them. And the chief concerns of his time were of a political complexion. Great measures were pending, and great perils impending.

Isaiah was all the time on the side of national independence. These were great questions. The supreme need of the time, as indeed of every time, was a wise man and a good man who could look at these critical questions from the religious point of view—that is to say, from the point of view of deep and eternal principles.

St. Paul, who was a good judge of religious audacity, says that Isaiah was very bold. He was indeed. The boldest thing that a man can do is to denounce the sins of his own class.

This man stood in the midst of the court, a rich man, a man of social standing, a layman, too, with no allowance for professional zeal possible in his case, and spoke his mind about the iniquities of priest and prince.

The first chapter of the second part is number 40. These two divisions are so different that a good many scholars think they were written by quite different men.

The whole world was of interest to Isaiah. There was nothing narrow or parochial about him. Babylon and Egypt, Moab and Edom, Arabia and Tyre, had their places in his sermons.

Golightly—"Girls make me weary!" Quindunc—"Why; what's the matter?" Golightly—"They're so nervous and excitable."