True Account of a Russian Horror.

II.

Michael Alexandroff, called Mischa for short, was one of the regular train hands, employed at Kornoff. This had been a red-letter day with him—suspension of work since noon, double pay and the unique experience of seeing a real live Princess! Ah, that was worth celebrating. So, before going to his cabin, he purchased a quarter of a liter of wodki and a bag full of ginger-bread for Maschinka. Poor little Maschinka, she doted on gingerbread, and got her fill of it only once or twice a year.

They had been married seven months and already owned a little cabin where they lived—the cabin, a table, cupboard, bench and a bed. More still. The gilded shrine that occupied the place of honor on the principal wall of their hut, was all paid for. And how did this come about? Mischa had given up wodki as a steady diet when he took unto himself a wife, and if the little stranger they expected soon was a boy, he would give it up entirely. Yes, indeed, he would.

When Mischa got home he was a little the worse for liquor and full of talk and nonsense, "I've seen a real Princess," he said, "and what is more she has seen me. She came to the window to do it, and pointed me out to the Governor."

"You are a liar, Mischa," cried the young woman with good-natured bluntness—"why should such great people want to look at you?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, but perhaps they were attracted by my new boots, I had polished them till I could see my face in them."

"'Pshaw, you just want to make me laugh; but inasmuch as you brought me gingerbread, allow me to eat it in peace."

They sat down together, she munching with every evidence of relish, he watching her white teeth work and sipping from his bottle. They were the picture of contentment. Suddenly the door was opened with a crash. The police lieutenant and Duschkin entered noisily.

"We are looking for you, Michael Alexandroff."

Husband and wife jumped up. "It must be a mistake, gracious master," cried both, and Mischa added: "My passport is in order, master; I have paid my taxes, though they were extremely heavy. Still, I paid them."

"'No need of telling me that you find no pleasure in giving the Emperor what is the Emperor's. We know all about you, rascal. Have you any printed or written matter in your cabin? Better confess, for we will surely find everything."

"God save me, master—I can neither read nor write."

"That's a moth-eaten excuse, which may be reversed under pressure of the knout. Meanwhile, you, Duschkin, try and rout out the stuff; if there be any suspicious articles we must find them. Search well, and spare not their rags."

The officer executed the order to the letter, leaving no piece of furniture, or firewood, either, unturned, throwing the contents of the cupboard and bed on the floor, and ripping up the mattress despite Mascha's wailings. Of course, he found nothing, nothing except the half-empty wodki bottle, and this he placed carefully out of sight.

"Nothing to be found, master Lieutenant."

"Never mind, they probably have proofs enough in St. Petersburg, anyhow to transport him for life. Now handcuff the scoundrel, but so that he feels it. Quick."

"Great God," cried the woman; "pardon him, little father, whatever he has done he cannot have sinned much, or I, his constant companion, would know it. Release him, gracious master, for this time only. All we own in this world shall be yours."

Schelinsky looked down upon the kneeling Mascha, as if she was a dog awaiting punishment. His eyes swept the disordered room contemptuously.

"Don't lick my boots, baggage!" he cried, "and consider yourself lucky if I do not report you for offering bribes to the police. Duschkin, I order you a second time, to hurry."

Mascha's tears flowed freely. In spite of Schelinsky's haughty injunction, she embraced his knees again and again, and kissed his dirty boots, crying aloud for mercy.

White with rage the uniformed brute tried to shake off the miserable creature, but Mascha hung on, until, finally, beside himself with fury, Schelinsky struck her a fearful blow that sent her reeling toward the floor. In falling the poor girl struck her head against a corner of the iron bedstead. A stream of blood gushed from the wound in her temple and she sank down with a low moan, unconscious.

Michael until then had remained seemingly apathetic and silent. But seeing his wife maltreated, all his manhood rose to ferocious exasperation.

With a cry of anguish and defiance he clutched his long arms round the officer's waist, lifted him a few feet and flung the body heavily on the floor, simultaneously throwing himself on his prostrated enemy and throttling him.

At that moment, the saint's shrine, detached from the wall, by the commotion that shook the cabin from roof to cellar, came tumbling down, falling at the side of Schelinsky's purple head, which missed it by an inch or two. And what no earthly power could have done, viz., loosening Mischa's iron grip on his victim's throat, this sign from heaven accomplished in an instant, for the devout peasant thought that most natural occurrence nothing short of a wonder.

Indeed, to his mind, it voiced God's own stern injunction, "Thou shalt not kill."

Mischa raised his knees from the fallen man's breast. He stood up silently, his arms and hands hanging down, Duschkin found no difficulty in handcuffing the giant, though the unhappy fellow knew full well that his last hour of freedom had passed, probably forever.

His eyes, still bloodshot, sought those of his beloved, good-natured Mascha lying on the ground, her head in a pool of blood that steadily increased. Great God! they were closed. Was she dead? Michael felt as if his own life was ebbing away. A feeling of unwonted irresolution and exhaustion crept over him. He would have fallen if a vigorous kick applied by the spurred boot of the police lieutenant had not recalled his senses.

A few seconds afterwards the three men were on the highroad to the station house. None had made an attempt to rouse the unconscious wife, who was soon to become a mother; Mischa was too dazed to do it, Duschkin dared not take his eyes from the prisoner, Schelinsky would not allow a humane sentiment to interfere with what he considered his duty.

The neighbors, of course, were conscious of what had happened, having witnessed the affair from the windows, but though Maschinka was now alone, none was bold enough to come to her aid. That red-haired Michael was a criminal, perhaps a nihilist, was quite clear to his former friends; and they also knew that to assist "that scoundrel's" wife, was tantamount to incurring the displeasure, or even the suspicions, of the authorities. Ah, if there were no eavesdroppers, no informers about, every one in the crowd would have been only too eager to help, but as things were it would be like putting one's head into the noose. While drinking, or in court, no one is master of his tongue.

"God will assist her, for he is gracious," whispered men and women among themselves. Then making the sign of the cross, each went about his or her business. In the cabin all was quiet as death. From time to time a drop of blood oozed from poor Maschinka's wound to join the big pool that was eating its way into the boards, but the element of dying life ebbed slower and slower. One of the neighbors asserts that only once, towards night, a vague noise broke the awful stillness that hovered over the unhappy roof. The listener thought she had heard the name "Mischa—Mischa," pronounced once or twice.

III.

When the police came next morning to again inspect the premises and search for hidden evidences of lawlessness, they found only a dead body holding in the right hand a small much worn crucifix.

Had any of the folks living near dared proffer assistance after all, and, finding all earthly hopes vanished, fixed the symbol of the promised land between the fingers of the dying woman?

Duschkin might perhaps have enlightened his brother officers. It will be remembered that during his first visit he discovered a bottle containing wodki, and placed it handy for future use, no doubt. That bottle was gone, and Duschkin did not search for it—certainly a suspicious circumstance.

Maschinka's body was carried to the station, and from there to the cemetery. The master of police swore great, big oaths when he found he had to bury her. There was no appropriation for such purposes, and it made necessary a lot of writing and reporting.

Michael Alexander's commitment was made out the same night. It read as follows:

"By order of his Excellency, the Governor General:

"Send to the Peger-Paul fortress.

"Guard carefully; treat severely.

"Special reason: Murderously assaulted the officer commanding the arrest."

"Well," said the sublieutenant in whose custody Mischa was to make the journey, "in conformity with regulations I ought to chain you to the car, but I will not act meanly. Just put your hand in your pocket and see what there is in it."

"They have cleaned me out at the station," replied Mischa, with a sad smile. "Even my boots they took away claiming they were, in all probability, lined with revolutionary literature. The sergeant gave me these sandals in return before I was brought to the depot.

"All that emphasizes the seriousness of your case," said the sublieutenant sternly. "If those fellows in Kornoff were not sure that you will never have occasion to testify against them, they would not have treated you so badly." Then turning to the guards, the official shouted: "Chain the scoundrel to the bench, and keep him short, and whoever talks to him one single word will renew acquaintance with my corporal's cane."

This hard usage was far from galling to Mischa. Since he had been torn from the bosom of his beloved wife—left her in agony, dying, perhaps, on the floor, a feeling of unutterable distress had overcome him. It penetrated to his soul and numbed his senses. Absolute quiet was all he craved.

(To Be Continued.)

SOUNDS.

When you are walking in a very quiet place and hear a faint sound from afar, you wonder how great the distance is between. The whistle of a locomotive is heard 3,300 yards through the air; the noise of a railway train, 2,800 yards; the report of a musket and the bark of a dog, 1,800 yards; an orchestra or the roll of a drum, 1,600 yards; the human voice reaches to a distance of 1,000 yards; the croaking of frogs, 900 yards; the chirping of crickets, 800 yards. Distinct speaking is heard in the air from below to the distance of 600 yards; from above it is understood to have a range of only 100 yards downwards.

A MAN WITH THIRTEEN WIVES.

A Dozen of Them Will Swear Against Him, But the Last One Remains True.

There is incarcerated in the Springfield, Ill., Jail a man who has undoubtedly earned for himself the title of the champion polygamist of the nineteenth century. His name is William Six, and he is held awaiting trial on a charge of bigamy. Six succeeded in marrying so frequently within the past 12 months that the local authorities have found 13 Mrs. Sixes. Most of the women are in Missouri, but there are a few in Kansas and several in Indiana. Six is known to have been in the Indian Territory for some time, but this section of the country has not been heard from. One of Six's wives in Missouri writes that her husband had six wives living and undivorced when he married her.

Six was arrested several weeks ago at the instance of the irate brothers of his last wife. She was Miss Kate Hornung, living at Berry, Ill., and the daughter of a well-to-do farmer.

When he had spent

ALL HIS WIFE'S MONEY

He tried to sell her horse and buggy. When all the money was gone Six became repentant and permitted his wife to take him to her father's home. The bride's brothers learned that Six hailed from Missouri, and they wrote there and learned his real character. Six left the house one night, Mrs. Six had him arrested at Logansport, Ind.

Several days after his arrival at Berry, Sheriff Baxter began receiving letters from all parts of the Western country from women who claimed Six as their legal husband. One letter from a Mrs. Six at Lamar, Mo., stated that two days after she married Six he left her, taking with him $100 of her money and a gold watch. Another letter from Missouri stated that Six had married a woman near Joplin, and lived with her a short time and left. Still another letter from a Mrs. Six in Kansas read that Six left her last December, after living with her a week. He took her horse and buggy with him and $50 in money. Up to date Sheriff Baxter has learned of 13 women who claim Six for their husband.

LAST WIFE TRUE.

In spite of all these letters the last Mrs. Six has never lost her infatuation for the man. After she was advised of all his undivorced wives she first stated she was through with him. But the next day she was at the jail with a bunch of flowers, begging to be admitted to talk with him. Last week Six made his will, in which he bequeathed all his belongings to the last Mrs. Six. He claims to be entitled to a share in his father's estate in Canada, which he values at $5,000.

The case will shortly come up for trial. Nearly all the wives that have written the Sheriff have signified their intention of coming to the trial to testify against him.

OPTIMISM IN REAL LIFE.

Uncle Henry's Way of Making Things Come Out Right.

"What is an 'optimist,' father?" a farmer's boy asked of his father, who, though far from being a learned man, had always been found by the boy capable of giving an intelligible answer to his questions. The farmer reflected a moment before replying. Then he said:

"Now, sonny, you know I can't give ye the dictionary meanin' of that word, no more'n I can of a great many others. But I've got a kind of an idea what it means. Probably you don't remember your Uncle Henry, but I guess if there ever was an optimist, he was one. Things was always comin' out right with Henry, and especially anything hard that he had to do; it wa'n't a-goin' to be hard—'twas jest kind of solid-pleasant.

"Take hoein' corn, now. If anything kind of took the tucker out of me 'twas hoein' corn in the hot sun. But in the field 'long about the time I begun to lag back a little, Henry he'd look up an' say:0

"'Good, Jim! When we get these two rows hoed, an' eighteen more, the piece'll be half-done!' An' he'd say it in such a kind of a cheerful way that I couldn't 'a' ben any more tickled if the piece had been all done—an' the rest would go light enough.

"But the worst thing we had to do—hoein' corn was a picnic to it—was pickin' stones. No end to that on our old farm, if we wanted to raise anything. When we wa'n't hurried and pressed at something else, there was always pickin' stones to do; and there wa'n't a plowin' nor a frosty winter but what brought a fresh crop of stones to the top, an' seems if the pickin' all had to be done over again.

"Well, sir, you'd 'a' thought to hear Henry that there wa'n't any fun in the world like pickin' stone. He looked at it in a different way from anybody I ever see. Once when the corn was all hoed, an' the grass wa'n't fit to cut yet, an' I'd got all laid out to go fishin', and father he up and set us to pickin' stones up on the west piece, an' I was about ready to cry, Henry, he says: 0

"'Come on, Jim. I know where there's lots of nuggets!'

"An' what do you s'pose now? That boy had a kind of a game that that there field was what he called a plasser mining field, and he got me into it, and I could 'a' sworn I was in Klondyke all day—I had such a good time.

"'Only,' says Henry, after we'd got through the day's work, 'the way you get rich with these nuggets is to get rid of 'em, instead of to get 'em.'

"That somehow didn't strike my fancy, but we'd had play instead of work, and a great lot of stones had been rooted out of that field.

"An' as I said before, I can't give ye any dictionary definition of 'optimism,' but if your Uncle Henry wa'n't an optimist, I don't know what one is."

GREAT ENGLISH STRIKE.

A PARTICIPANT'S RECOLLECTION OF THOSE STIRRING TIMES.

When All Kinds of Industries Were Nearly at a Standstill for Six Weeks — The Greatest Labor Struggle That Ever Occurred — Ignorance of the People Those Days — The Strike Was Lost.

Thomas Grundy, of Pittsburg, was a participant in some of the famous strikes which occurred in England forty or more years ago, and his recollections of the manner in which they were conducted and his comments upon the good which they accomplished are interesting just now. Mr. Grundy is now upward of 60 years of age, and has been a hard worker in the labor movement nearly all his life. He drew his first inspiration from a mob of striking weavers, who when Mr. Grundy was seven years old, called at the schoolhouse where he was beginning his education and compelled the teacher to give the scholars a vacation. This was a unique form of enforced sympathy strike, which Mr. Grundy has never since seen duplicated. He had sometimes wondered at the tameness of labor struggles which he has since witnessed compared with what he saw in his boyhood's days, but as he remembers his feeling on the great occasion, it was simply one of satisfaction that the strikers should relieve him of the necessity of going to school.

According to Mr. Grundy's description of this strike it must have been one of the greatest labor-struggles that ever occurred. In 1842 the condition of the cotton workers in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire, had become so bad, owing to the introduction of machinery, that a general strike movement was brought about without any organization and at first without leadership.

During the six weeks industry of every kind was entirely suspended in the district affected, it being estimated that in the neighborhood of

3,000,000 PEOPLE WERE IDLE.

This included the weavers themselves and persons of every other occupation whom they obliged to leave work. The small tradesmen and manufacturers were obliged to close their places, the teachers in the schools, had to send their pupils home, and the strikers even prevented the passing of vehicles upon the highways by massing themselves in compact bodies through which no horse could be driven.

Mr. Grundy having been very young at the time this strike occurred, most of his information about it has been gathered from reading. The incidents which he remembers are principally the forcing of his teacher to dismiss school and the obliging of his father to suspend business. Mr. Grundy's father was a hatter, having a shop of his own and employing a few hands in the town of Ashton, near Manchester. The strikers came in a large body, and it was only necessary for one of them to say: "Put out that fire, Grundy," and the hatter immediately suspended all work in his little place and sent his men home to wait for the strike to be over.

Mr. Grundy remembers seeing bodies of the strikers marching along the highways thickly massed together and filling the roads from side to side as far as they could be seen. They were always armed with clubs, and when marching would line up close together, each grasping the club of the man on either side of him, and so weaving themselves into a solid mass. In this way it was rendered impossible for anything or anybody to occupy the road but the strikers, and their object of forcing a general suspension of business in the district was obtained. This was only for a little while, however, as large bodies of the troops of the empire were ordered into the district held by the strikers, and soon obliged them to preserve the peace and desist from interfering with the affairs of those who desired to carry on business.

Mr. Grundy's recollection of the matter is that much sympathy was displayed for the strikers by the troops, and that the latter were of very little use so far as breaking the strike of the weavers was concerned. The strike was lost, however, the weavers going back to their work at the end of six weeks without having obtained any increase of wages, or any shortening of their hours of labor. It was not long, however, until Parliament, as a result of this strike, began to pay some attention to the condition of the weavers, and laws which served very effectually to ameliorate their condition were passed.

Cobden, Bright and other great English statesmen took up their cause, and investigations and discussions, resulted, the good effects of which are still felt. The

REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS,

by which English workingmen were enabled to obtain cheaper food, Mr. Grundy thinks, was largely due to the strike, though it had been advocated before the strike took place. Another law which was of great benefit forbade women and children under eighteen years of age to be employed in the cotton mills longer than ten hours a day. This law was not only a good thing in itself, but it caused the workers generally to think and agitate for a ten-hour day, and some ten years after the great strike of 1842 there was a general strike for ten hours, which resulted successfully, and which was the beginning of better times in the matter of hours of labor in nearly all English industries.

Mr. Grundy was employed in a cotton mill himself at the time this last strike took place. The workmen simply quit when they had worked ten hours one day, and so inaugurated a movement which was successful. Mr. Grundy says that at that time there was so little general education that many persons could not tell the time of day by a clock, and so in passing around the word for the inauguration of the strike everybody was instructed to stop work when the clock pointed straight up and down, this being a method of securing a more general understanding than to say 6 o'clock in the evening.

In the mill where Mr. Grundy worked the clock was watched all afternoon, and when the time came there was a general rush for the outside of the mill. The foreman had the gates locked and proceeded to harangue the workmen, but it was to no purpose. Several were notified that they were discharged, but this produced no effect upon them or the others. Mr. Grundy thinks that among ignorant workmen, that is, among those who are ignorant, in the matter of education obtained from books, there has been as a rule more loyalty to each other displayed than by those who are fairly well educated. At any rate they stuck together upon this occasion, and won their strike so thoroughly that there was never afterward a general return to the old practice of working twelve or fifteen hours a day. In the mill where Mr. Grundy was employed, too, the manager, after the ten-hour system had been in force for some time, called the workmen together, and expressed his satisfaction with it, saying that the results obtained were much more satisfactory from the standpoint of the proprietors than under the old way.

A SEA MYSTERY.

The Building of Great Ironclads Only an Experiment.

The most remarkable experiment in recent years is the building of navies at enormous expense, when there has been no opportunity of testing the value of the new machinery in actual warfare.

During the last quarter of a century there has been no naval battle worthy of being mentioned in the same breath with Trafalgar or the Nile, or with Rodney's great victory in the West Indies. Lissa in the Adriatic was a small fight at the opening of the new era of naval progress.

A few ironclads have been in action on the west coast of South America, and a British fleet shelled the ill-armed forts of Alexandria. There was a battle between fleets on the Yalu not long ago; but the mental inferiority of the Chinese to the Japanese rendered it impossible for experts to judge what their ships would have done if they had been properly manned and well handled.

Meanwhile, the art of naval warfare has been revolutionized, and every maritime nation has been expending immense sums upon battleships and other fighting vessels without knowing whether armor will adequately protect them or whether torpedo-boats do not hold the proudest fleets at their mercy.

Two years ago there was a wonderful naval review at Kiel when the Baltic Canal was opened, and this year there has been another off Portsmouth at which the most

POWERFUL ENGLISH FLEET

ever assembled in any waters has been seen on holiday parade. These fleets were immense combinations of machine-shops, engine-houses and gun-factories. What their value may be in a sea-battle is one of the mysteries of the sea.

The best experts frankly say that they do not know whether these complex iron boxes filled with steam and electric machinery will remain afloat under heavy fire from shore or torpedo attack. They readily admit that navies will be transformed as soon as there is a great engagement between modern fleets.

In Nelson's time there was an unwritten law that hot shot were not to be used in battle, on account of the risk involved in setting fire to inflammable wooden ships. There was then a naval instinct against treacherous methods of fighting. This has passed away. Every navy now has all the modern resources for setting on fire or sinking by secret assault an enemy's ship.

In naval reviews the battleships are floating batteries which seem to defy assault; but torpedo-boats have never been used against them. With a single sting of the little steel wasp the great leviathan with its heavy armor and long-range guns may go down with a quick plunge. If the experts only knew what was the real, effective value of the torpedo in naval warfare, they could tell with a fair degree of confidence what the fleets of the future would be like.

They do not know, and the building of the fleets goes on in a fog of uncertainty. "I command one of these ships," said an old sea-dog at Kiel, "but let me tell you frankly, I would not like to go into battle with her. We shall know more after the next naval war than we do now."

SEMI-CYCLE.

Queer Machine Ridden by a Variety Performer.

Trick cycling shows all are familiar with. Some crack experts ride tricycles, and others bicycles. There are others, again, who, contemning a multiplicity of wheels, perform all their wonderful feats on one solitary wheel, with which they seem able to do any conceivable thing. M. Noiset, however, a trick cyclist in Europe rides half a wheel! Of course, the angles are not sharp, but rounded. No one has ever heard tell of round angles, perhaps, but then our cyclist's performance is likewise unique. The machine is provided with unusually long and powerful cranks, which (to say nothing about the back-pedaling necessary) are very requisite for the forward movement, when the half circle has run its course, and the flat side is about to come down on to the ground. This young artiste, when touring across Europe and America in the various variety theatres, always contrived to get up public races between himself and the local professional scorcher, invariably stipulating, however, for a nicely calculated start.