THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW.

-0-SYLVANUS COBB. JR.

Special experience and the contract of the con CHAPTER VI.

REPORE THE EMPEROR. "Is he dead?" asked Ruric, start-

ing quickly forward.

"Hold, my son," uttered the monk, laying his hand upon the young man's arm. "Surely you have nothing to fear. It was none of your work, no more than if you had run your sword to the heart of a wild beast that had attacked you."

"But I did not touch his heart," quickly returned the youth. "I was careful of that. I would have struck him upon the head with the flat of my sword, but I feared I might break his skull."

"He is not dead yet," answered the surgeon as Ruric pressed forward and asked the question a second time. "He has only fainted from the shock of the blow, coupled with his own fears and passions."

"But will he die?" Ruric asked, kneeling down by the fallen man's

"I cannot yet tell," the doctor said, at the same time wiping the blood away, which was flowing free-

"But why not probe the wound new?" suggested the monk. "Now is the best time, for the place is not yet inflamed, and while he is thus insensible he will be free from pain."

The surgeon at once saw the truth and propriety of this, and he proceeded to act upon the suggestion. Having selected a probe which oppeared applicable, he examined the wound. Ruric watched him ea-

gerly and with a painful expression to think this wound is mortal," the surgeon reported as he form stood before her. cerefully felt his way along the cearse the steel had taken. "It has passed below the right lung and only severed some of the smaller blood vessels. I think, with proper care, he may recover.

"Thank God" fervently ejacular thanks to God. ed Rury with his heads clasped. "But why to antious?" asked Ur-

"You were ready enough to a ceept his challenge."

"Aye, else you would have called it meant, are coward" returned the gunmaker, with a flashing eye. "Had I re-fused to meet him that fetal word would have met me at every turn. I knew that such a men as he was no cope for me at any game when were required. So I mount to disease him and their give him up his hifa, believing that such a move few moments, and then she said: would end the combat. You know bow I labored to spare him. But could not. Yet I would not have the life of a fellow being, a countryman. upon my hands in such a quarrel My father died hehting for his countey, and so would I die if my douth must come from the hand of men. But to die thus would be a curse upon my pame, and to inflict such death upon another would be a curso in my memery."

you mention to overcome you. In no way are you to blame for this."

"True, father. You speak truly." added the surgeon. "The young but Faul manifested no great emo-man has acted most nobly, and no tion upon beholding him. "Nevel, advance." With a bold yet modest sten Burie

Rune seemed somewhat relieved seen the count's wound dressed and a smile. assisted in bearing the insensible form to the sledge, he took Alaric's

Vladimir," returned Rurie, "I have a marten hunt." only seen him once before. Have you ever seen him ere this?"

Tes; several times about our barracks. He has been there when theless. some of our poor fellows have been sick and dying. He seems to be a the afternoon that Ruric was somegood hearted man and, I judge, what startled by seeing some of the quire intelligent."

there is nevertheless a mystery bling, and informed him that he was about him which I cannot solve. Wanted by the emperor's officers.

His countenance is familiar to me, and the solve of the emperor of the emperor. "He was well yester—
indicate the emperor of the emperor. "He was well yester—
day."

When the emperor of the emperor of the emperor of the emperor of the emperor. "He was well yester—
the emperor of the

"Aye," sdeed Alaric quickly and seen that man under different cir- all the particulars. But come, let us cumstances. And others of our com- go in."

pany have thought the same." The two men watched the movements of the monk while they thus them if they sought him. spoke, and they noticed that he en-

tered his sledge and drove off toward Borodino.

"Haric," said the lieutenant after what is wanted?" they had ridden some little distance and at the same time gazing wonderingly into his companion's face, "you handle the sword like a magician. By my soul, I'd give all I own at this present moment, my commis-

sion and all, if I could handle the

sword as you can.' "I do understand the weeven passing well," returned the youth modestly, "but I have worked hard ing the officer by the arm. to gain the science."

"Ah, 'tis not all science," the offiof yours is a host in itself."

"And yet," said Rurie, "I have seen weaker men than myself who would overcome me easily or, at least, who might overcome me."

"But they were not in this city," suggested Orsa, with a peculiar shake of the head.

"True, Alarie. I am not in the habit of mentioning my own powers, but yet I may say that there is no men in Moscow who is my superior in the use of any sort of offensive

arms. The lieutenant readily admitted the truth of this, and then the conversation turned upon the subject of the count and the course he had pursued with respect to the event which had just transpired. This conversation lasted until they reached the door of Ruric's residence, and, having thanked his friend for his kindness and expressed the hope that at some time he might have quate favor, the gunmaker entered the house.

The widow sat in her great chair by the fire. She was pale and anx- ical one. But that is not the thing. ious. Her brow was supported by You would have killed him if you her hands, and at every sound from | could." without she would start up with a frightened expression and listen. At length the sound of bells struck | I tried to spare him." upon her ear. They came nearer and nearer, and they stopped at her "We shall see about that when we door. She would have arisen, but come to the palace. Perhaps you she could not. With her hands may go clear; but upon my soul, and listened with & frantic interest. | place." Soon the door opened. Surely no

"Mother!"

"Ruriel My boy! Safe!" She tottered forward and sank perer's presence. upon the bosom of her noble son,

eager look of fear upon hor face. Rorio saw it, and he knew well what

"Mother," he seid, "the count is not dead."

quickly and eagerly.
"Yes; badly. But, listen, I could not help it." And thereupon he related all the circumstances connected with the conflict. When he had in frame and careless of those graces concluded, his mother pendered a which go to make up the sum of

you acted epon the defensive. From on beat a heart thirsting more for murdered him had he not taken this the first he has only been intent on the good of Russin than for self or course." stracking you, and on the battle-kindred.
ground he would have idlied you if Rurie surgeon

"Most surely he would, mother. Aye, he would not have hesitated to duke's eye, and a peculiar sansation stab me in the back could be have of fear ran through his mind as he "I believe you, my son," the month mad beyond all self control, and his sion that rested upon Olga's face.
"Only if the rount dice you eagerness to kill me was only equal—"Sire," spoke the leader of these should not allow such feelings as ed by his chagrin at being overcome conquer.

After this Rurie went to his shop,

of course that I should return alive by these assurances, and, having and well," said the gunmaker, with

"Why, of course," returned the bey composedly. "What would a proffered arm and proceeded to his score of such men a he be to you?

Even team.

"Who is that monk?" asked the fore Rurio Nevel? No. I only issuitement as they entered their smiled when I heard his challenge. "I only know that he is called ing anxious about your return from

Rurie smiled at his bey's peculiar eagerness of expression, but he felt a degree of pride in his words never-

"I agree with you there," our hero house, and ere long afterward his house, and ere long afterward his mother came to him, pale and trem-

"Fear not, my mother," the youth

Ruric found the officers, three of them, in the kitchen, and he asked I thing from you. The count has been

"No, sire. He was the challenger."
"So, so. And who was the other party?"
"A humble gunmaker, sire, naming this morning."
"Exactly."
"No, sire. He was the challenger."
"So, so. And who was the other party?"
"A humble gunmaker, sire, naming this morning."
"Nevel, Nevel."

"And who wants me?"

Oh, they will not take my noble boy from met" cried Claudia, catchour good emperor that Russia has taken my husband from me, that he cer added. "That wondrous etrength fell in his country's cause. Tell him

my boy was not to blame"-"Hush, mother," interposed Ru-"Fear not yet."

ric, "Fear not yet."

"Come," said the lender. "It is "Come," said the lender. "It is growing late, and Peter will not brook delay."

"But they will not been him!" the mother frantically cried, cling-

ing now to her son.
"No, no, my mother. Rest you easy here until I return" And then, turning to the guard, he added, "Lead on, and I will follow."

"Now rest you ease, my dear mother" And with these words Ruric gently set her back into her chair and then hastened out after the officers. In the entry he put on his bonnet and pelisse and then foilowed his conductors out to the street, where stood a double sledge with two horses attached.

"You seem to look upon the killing of a Ressian noblemen as a very small affair,' said one of the officers opportunity to return some ade- after they had started on their way.

"Is he dead, then?" Rurie quickly asked. "The doctors think his case a crit-

"No, no. By heavens, 'tis not so! All who were present will swear that

"Very well," returned the office. clasped she bent eagerly forward would not willingly occupy your

Ruric cared not to argue the point one hat he would enter without with those who knew nothing about knocking. She started to her feet, the circumstances, so he romained The inner door opened. A male silent during the rest of the ride. It was near sundown when they reached the imperial palace, and Rurie maker, who is a hugo fellow, provok was conducted at once into the em-

The Empeter Peter was in one o and while she wound her same tight the mother nuclionee chambers, sitly about him she marmured her ting at a large sable covered with purple volves heavily arought with By and by the widow became more | gold, and upon either hand stood calm, but still there was an earnest, some of his private attendants. He was a young man, not yet so old as Ruris by some three years, but his most cowardly manegvering in in face already were a mainro lock. [His frame was solid, but not large, being rather slight than otherwise "Nor wounded?" she uttered in physical bulk. His dress betrayed nerligence and carel siness and was in marked contrast with the rich garts of his attendants. Such was Peter of Russia, yet a youth, small few moments, and then she said:

"Surely, my son, I will try to affairs of a great dation upon his suffer nothing from this even shoulders. Within that head workshould the wicked man die. In all ed a mighty brain, and in that hos-

Rurie saw Stephen Urzen and the | lord?" surgeon there, and he also saw the Duke of Tula there. He mot the

ed by his chagrin at being overcome who had conducted the prisoner as he led his companion forward.
by one whom he had hoped easily to thinker, "Ruric Nevel etands before The emperor gazed upon Urse

"Ah," uttered Peter, easting his said

advanced to the table, and, with a low bow, he awailed the emperor's pleasure. There was a shudder percepsible in the frames of those who wished the prisoner well, for well they knew their mighty ruler's iron will and sternness of legal purpose.

> CHAPTER VII. A STARTLING TRIAL

In order to understand the circumstances under which Rurie was brought before the emperor it will be necessary to go back a few hours. The autocrat had occasion to send heless. for the surgeon, Kopani, who had It was toward the latter part of attended at the duel, and as he was some time in answering the summons he was questioned when he did come concerning his tardiness. His answer was that he had been attend-

ing the Count Damonoff.
"And what ails the count?" asked

"Look ye, Kopani," the young eagerly; "that is precisely the case confidently returned. "The emperor ruler cried, who saw in an instant with me. I am very sure that I have will not blame me when he knows that something unusual had happened, "think not to conceal any-thing from me. What is it, now?"

"Sire, I meant not to hide anyengaged in a duel

Ha! Was he challenged?"

last war with the Turks. He rose Thus bidden Urzen resumed:

"Who should want you but the from the ranks under Feodor and was one of the bracest of the braves"

"Captain Nevel Ati yes I re-member now He and Valdei were the two who first montred the camparts at Izium, So the old dispatches read."

"Yes, sire. Poor Nevel was that a month afterward while leading his brave company against a whole squadron of Turkish infantry, while Valdai came home and got a colonel's commission."

"And afterward received a title." added Peter.

"Yes, sire."

"And this gunmaker is this captain's son?" "Yes, sire." "And methinks Valdai kft a

"He did, sire; a daughter, who h now with Olga. She is his ward." "Yes, yes. And the count fought a duel with young Novel and got beaten, eh?"

Before the surgeon could answer a page entered the chamber and anmounced that the Duke of Tula wished to see his imperial master.

The emperor directed that he afterward the proud dake entered hothy, made at it. the apartment. He was a tall, stout of age. His bearing was haughty, having learned that a lieutenent of though he was forced to a show of the Khitagorod guard was present master.

"Sire," spoke the duke after the usual salutations had passed, "I have come to demand justice at thy hands. My young friend the Count him for some moments, and then he Conrad Damonoff has been most said: brutally murdered." "S

"Ha! Say ye so, Olga?"
"Yes, sire."

"But how was it?" "Thus it was, sire: On the day before yesterday I sent the count with jur dignity. a message to one Rurie Nevel, who is a gunmaker in Slobeda. He went as | crat sternly. I wished, and while there the gun ed a quarrel and knocked the nobleman down. Of course the count was offended, and as the ruffien threat aned to repeat the offense and as h furthermore grossly insulted a no ble lady whom the count held most dear he could hardly help challeng ing him. The fellow accepted the challenge and has succeeded by the

flicting upon him a morret wound."
"This is a serious affair," said the emperor, who had not failed to note | pace. the astonished look of the surgeon while the duke was telling his story. "It is most serious, sire, and surely the ruffian should be at once exe

"But did you not say that the

count challenged him?" "I did, sire, but you toust remembor that it was an instinct of self preservation with the noble count. The fellow would have undoubtedly

"Were you present at the duel, my

"No, sire, but I have a friend without who was present." "Then you may bring him in."

The duse departed, and when he project the nobleman and struck returned Stephen Grzen bore him me without provocation."

company. "This is the man, sire," Olga said

"You were present at this duel,

were you not, sir ?" "I was, sire," the man answered. bowing low.

"And he was at their first meeting also, sire," interposed the duke.
"Ah, yes. Then you know all about the affair?"

"Yos, sire," answered Urcen.
"Then tell me about it,"

gunnaker's shop to get him to-"Let me explain here, sire," inter-

rapted the duke as his puppet hesitated. "this man may not know properly about that mission. Livof mine, a gentle, timid being, who "Aye. Did he has been somewhat a comfort to me zen?"

"Aye. Did he not, Stephen Urin my loneliness. In additional stephen are zen?" in my loneliness. In childhood she was acquainted with this Ruric Nevel. and now the fellow has presumed thereupon several times to insult her of late with his disgusting familiarity. She dared not remonstrate with him for fear of violence, so she referred the matter to me The count has been anxious to wir her for a wife, so I thought him not an improper person to send on the delicate mission. Accordingly 1 wrote a sort of promise in the form of a voluntary assurance pledging the eigner not to make himself familer with the lady any more. And at the same time he received the assurance that his presence was very disagreeable to the person mentions ed. This I supposed he would sign at once, and as the count aspired to her hand I deemed it no more than right that he should render her this "His father was a captain in the may continue."

"The noble count was desirous sire, that I should accompany him. man's shop we found him at work. upon a gunlock, I think. He received the note, but refused to sign it. The count urged him to sign in mild, persuasive language until the fellow became insolent. Then he Heavy and Fancy used some stronger terms, and I think he made some threat of what he would do if his insults to the lady were repeated, and thereupon the gunmaker struck him a furious blow in the face and knocked him General Merchandise

low used, but it was fearful." "And how about the due!?" asked

down. I cannot remember all the

threatening language which the fel-

the emperor.

In answer to this Urzen went on and related what he had prepared on the subject, and it need only be said that the report was about on a par with what we have already heard. He even went so far as to swear that the count had tried repeatedly to compromise matters after the conflict had begun, that he begged of Nevel to give up the battle, but that the latter, thirsting for should be admitted, and ere long the young no deman's blood, kept

It was at this juncture and with man, with light hair and blue eyes, out referring to the surgeon that and not far from five and forty years | the emperor sent for Ruric, and, respect now that he was before his at the duel, he sent for him also. Orsa arrived first and was present when Ruric came.

And now Ruric Nevel stood before his emperor. Peter gazed upon "Sir, thy bearing is bold."

"Why should it not be, sire, when I stand before one whom I honor and respect and do not fear?" So spoke Ruric calmly and with pecul-

"Not fear?" repeated the auto-

"No, sire. Peter of Russia is not a man to be feared by these who love and honor him."

"Insolence!" uttered the duke The emperor looked up into his face, and he added:

"Now, sire, you can see for your-self some of his traits of character." "Aye," returned Peter, "f see. They are wonderful. I know not that among my actions there were man of such boldness."

The duke knew not how to interpret this, and he moved back a

"Now, sir," resumed Peter, turning to the gunmaker, "how dared you strike a hussian noblewan?" "I did not, sire. Conted Damoncif. came to my shop, and he brought me a paper in which I was required

or ordered to relinquish all claims to the hand of' -"Sire," interposed the dake, "he

misstates"-"Never mind," broke in the emperor, with an authoritative wave of the hard, "we will hear nothing population and hard before the hard. peror, with an authoritative wave of shout the lady here. Why did you strike the count?"

"Because, sire, he descended from his station and struck me. He threw away the shield which should

"And then you knocked him

"I did. sire." The emperor gazed upon Urrec a "And perhaps you would have few moments in silence and then done the same to me."

"hire," answered the youth quick ly, "when Damonoff tried by threats to make me sign his paper I told him there was but one men on earth at whose order I would do that thing! The man who has the right to command shall never have occasion to strike me."

There was something in this reply and more in the tene and bearing of "Then tell me about it."

"First, sire," commenced the men, duke tremble. He saw plainly that casting a sort of assuring glance at the emperor's eyes sparkled with adthe duke, "the count went to the miration as they rested upon the gunmaker,

"But now about this duel," re-sumed the emperor. "How dared you take advantage of the count in the conflict?"

"Advantage, sire?" repeated the

"He did, sire," replied the man thus addressed. "And which of the two do you call the best swordsman?" Peter asked.

"Why, ar, the count is or was vastly bis superior."
"And what eay you, sir lieuten-

Alagic trembled, for this was ad-dressed to him. He knew that the duke was auxious to crush his friend, and he feared to draw the wrath of that powerful nobleman down upon his head. But a happy thought came to his aid.

"Sire," he said, "I would rather you would judge of that for your-

"Me judge? And how am I to do

"Let Rurio Nevel's skill be tried here before you. If I mistake not, you have some good swordsmen near your palace. There is Demetrius, the Greek."

(Continued on Seventh Page.)

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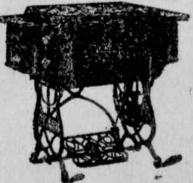
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