

# THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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## The Alamance Gleaner,

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## Poetry.

### A MOTHER'S LOVE.

BY W.

There are loves of all kinds  
In this fair world of ours,  
There's love in the twilight,  
And love like a dream,  
And love 'mong the flowers;  
At young beauty's fair shrine,  
And a wife's love, as deep  
As the fathomless sea,  
But the love of all loves  
Is my mother's for me.

Intervened with the years,  
Braided silver and gold,  
'Tis as young as the morn,  
In its beauty unrolled  
Fresh as the violet,  
'Tis just kissing the sky,  
When Flora is weeping  
Through April's soft eye,  
And though four score and ten  
Numerous fall at her feet,  
Her love has outlived them  
As immortal as sweet.

Oh, beauty exquisite!  
Oh, bright spirit divine!  
Oh, the love that still thrills  
Every fibre in me!  
That seems ever a star,  
From a calm, perfect sky,  
The one beacon that guides,  
When the storm hurries by,  
The bright pole star of hope,  
In the midst of the sea—  
Aye, the love of all loves,  
Is my mother's for me.

There are loves of all kinds  
In the lives that we live,  
The deep love that absorbs,  
And the love that doth give,  
The love of a sweet-heart,  
Like to nectar divine,  
A star's and a child's,  
In the heart's inner shrine,  
And a wife's love as pure  
As the depths of the sea,  
But the love of all loves  
Is my mother's for me.

### A FATAL NEW YEAR.

A Midwinter Tale of a Russian Soldier.

I was just eighteen years of age, and had been serving for two years, as ensign in the Paulovsk regiment. The regiment was stationed at the great building, still standing on the other side of the Camp de Mars, opposite the Summer Garden. The Emperor Paul I, had reigned for three years, and I lived in the Red Palace, which had just been completed.

One New Year's night which I had been refused a leave, owing to some boyish prank, and was in the guard-room asleep, I was aroused by a man whose breath swept along my face, and whispered in my ear: "Dianiri! A' ex-androvitch, arise, and follow me."

I opened my eyes; a man was standing before me, who repeated the invitation as soon as I was awake.

"Follow you!" I repeated; "and where to?"

"I cannot tell you. Still, you may know that I came from the Emperor."

I shuddered. From the Emperor? What could he want of me, a poor ensign, of good family, but too remote from the throne for my name ever to have reached the imperial ears. I remembered the gloomy Russian proverb, which originated in the time of Ivan the Terrible, "Near the Czar, near death." Still I dared not hesitate. They looked attentively at the man who had come to wake me.

Although wrapped in his pelisse, I fancied I could recognize an old Turkish slave, first the barber, then the favorite of the Emperor. This examination, however, was not long, for by prolonging it, it might become dangerous.

"I am ready," I said, after five minutes, as I fastened on my sword.

My discomfiture was doubled when I saw my conductor, instead of going towards the barrack gate, descend a small staircase leading into the cellars. He lighted our road with a species of dark lantern. After several turnings, I found myself opposite a door quite strange to me. During the entire walk we had not met a soul; the building seemed deserted. I fancied I saw two or three shadows sit past; but they disappeared in the obscurity. The door was closed, my guide rapped upon it in a particular way; it flew open, evidently by the assistance of some one on the other side.

In truth, when we passed, I distinctly saw a man close the door and follow us. After proceeding five hundred paces, we reached an opened grating which my guide unlocked and closed after us. I now remembered the tradition, that a subterranean gallery connected the Red Palace with the Grenadiers' barracks. I saw we were following this gallery, and must be going to the palace. We arrived at a door like the one we had gone thro' first. My guide knocked; it opened, and we found ourselves opposite a staircase, which we descended. It led into the office of some large building, which was carefully heated.

Then all my doubts ceased. I was being taken to the Emperor—to the Emperor who sent to fetch me, an insignificant subaltern. I remembered the story of the young ensign whom he met in the street, and raised in less than a quarter of an hour to the rank of a General. But

I could not hope he summoned me for the same purpose. Whatever it might be, we soon reached a first door, before which a sentry was walking up and down. My guide put his hand on my shoulder, saying: "Take care of yourself. You will soon be in the presence of the Emperor."

He whispered to the sentry who moved to one side. Then he opened the door by some secret spring, as it seemed to me. A little man, dressed in the Prussian fashion, with boots coming half way up to his thigh, a coat falling to his spurs, and wearing a gigantic cocked-hat, turned round at the noise. I recognized the Emperor; it was not difficult to do so, for he reviewed us every day. I remembered that, on the previous day, his eye had rested on me; he had called my Captain from the ranks and asked him some questions; then gave an officer of his suit some short and decided order. All this only served to increase my apprehensions.

"Sire," my conductor said with a low bow, "this is the young ensign with whom you desire to speak."

The Emperor drew near me, and as he was very short, he stood on tiptoe to look at me. Doubtless he recognized me as the person he wanted, for he nodded his head, and turning on his heel, said, "go!"

My guide bowed, went out and left me alone with the Emperor. I assure you I would sooner have remained alone with a lion in its den. The Emperor at first appeared to pay no attention to me; he walked up and down with long strides, stopping before an open window to take a breath of fresh air; then, returning to the table, he took a pinch of snuff. I had ample time to examine all the furniture and arrangements of the room, which was the one in which Paul was afterwards killed. Near one of the windows was a bureau; on it lay an open paper.

At length the Emperor appeared to remember my presence, and came up to me. His face seemed to me furious as he stopped in front of me. "Dust," he addressed me, "dust—thou knowest thou art only dust, and that I am everything!"

I know not how I found strength to reply—"You are the chosen of the Lord, to decide of the destiny of men."

"Hum!" he growled. And turning his back on me he began walking up and down again, taking snuff furiously till he resumed:

"Thou knowest that when I command I must be obeyed without resistance, observation or comment."

"As one should obey God. Yes, sire, I know it."

He looked at me fixedly. There was an expression in his eyes of so strange a character I could not endure his look. I turned away. He seemed satisfied with the influence he exercised over me; he attributed my conduct to respect, while it was disgust. Then he went to the bureau, took the paper, read it once more, folded it, placed it in an envelope, and sealed it, not with the imperial cypher, but with a ring he wore on his finger. Then he came back to me.

Remember that I have chosen thee among a thousand to execute my orders," he said, "because I thought they would be well executed by thee."

"I shall ever have before my eyes the obedience I owe my Emperor," I replied.

"Good, good; I remember that thou art dust, and I am everything."

"I await your majesty's orders."

"Take the letter, carry it to the governor of the fortress, accompany him wherever he may be pleased to take thee; be present at what he does, and come and tell me 'I have seen.'"

I took the packet with a bow.

"I have seen"—thou understandest?—"I have seen,"

"Yes, sir."

"Go!"

And he opened the door by which I had entered; my conductor was awaiting me. The Emperor closed the door after me, repeating, "Dust, dust, dust!" I stood all amazement on the threshold.

"Come," my conductor said to me. We left the place by a different route. A sleigh was awaiting us in the courtyard. The gate of the palace looking on the Fontanka bridge was opened, and the sleigh started at a hard gallop. We crossed the place and reached the banks of the Neva. Our horses rushed upon the ice and guided by the bestry of Peter and Paul we traversed the river. The night was gloomy, the wind howled in a mournful and terrible manner. I had scarcely noticed we had reached dry ground ere we arrived at the gates of the fortress; a soldier asked the password, and let us in. The sleigh stopped at the governor's door. The word given

once again we entered his house as we had done the fortress.

"By the Emperor's orders." This command aroused the governor, who came to us trying to hide his alarm beneath a smile. With a man like Paul there was no more security for the gaolers than for the captives, for the hangmen than for the victims. My guide made the governor a sign that he had to do with me, then he regarded me with more attention; still he hesitated before addressing me—my youth, doubtless surprised him. To put him at his ease, I gave him without a word the Emperor's order. He took it to a light, examined the seal, and on recognizing it as the signal of a secret order, he bowed, made an almost imperceptible sign of the cross, opened it. He read the order, then turning to me, said:

"You are to see?"

"I am to see."

"What are you to see?"

"You know."

"But do you know?"

"No."

He remained for a moment in thought. "You came in a sledge?" he asked me.

"Yes."

"How many persons will it hold?"

"Three."

"Does this gentleman go with us?" he asked, pointing to my conductor.

I hesitated, not knowing what to say. "No," the latter replied, "I will wait."

Very good. Get ready a second sledge, choose four soldiers, let one take a lever, another a hammer, and the last two hatchets."

The man to whom the governor spoke, went out directly. Then turning to me, he added—"Come and you shall see."

We left the room with a tarkey behind us, and walked on till we found ourselves opposite the prison. The governor pointed to a door. The gaoler opened it, and went in, and lighted a lantern. We followed. We went down ten steps, passed a row of dungeons, then down ten more, but did not stop. At last we descended five more, and at length stopped. The doors were numbered, the governor stopped at one marked No. 11. He gave a silent signal; it seemed in this abode of the dead as if he had lost all power of speech. There was this time a frost of at least twenty degrees outside.

At the depth where we found ourselves, it was mingled with a damp which penetrated to the bone; my marrow was frozen, and yet I wiped the perspiration from my brow. The door opened; we went down six steep and slippery steps, and found ourselves in a dungeon of six square feet. I fancied by the light of the lantern, that I saw a form moving in it. The governor remained on the step, and said to the prisoner: "Arise and dress yourself."

I had a curiosity to know to whom this order was addressed.

"Turn on the light," I said to the gaoler.

I then saw a thin and pallid old man rise up. He had evidently been imprisoned in this dungeon in the same clothes he had on when arrested, but they had fallen off him by piece meal, and he was only dressed in a ragged pelisse. Through the rags his naked, bony, shivering person could be seen. Perhaps his body had been covered by splendid garments; perhaps the ribbons of the most noble orders had once crossed his panting chest. At present he was only a living skeleton that had lost rank, dignity, even name, and he was called No. 11. He rose, and wrapped himself in the garments of his pelisse without uttering a complaint; his body was bowed down, conquered by prison-damp, time, it might be hunger. His eye was haughty, almost maniac.

"It is good," said the governor, "come, he was the first to go out."

The prisoner threw a parting glance on his cell, his stone bench, his water-jug and rotten straw. He uttered a sigh, yet it was impossible that he could regret anything of this. He followed the governor, and passed before me. I never shall forget the glance he turned upon me in passing, and the reproach that was concentrated in it.

"So young," it seemed to say, "and already obeying tyranny!"

I turned away; that glance had pierced my heart like a dagger. How long was it since he entered it? Perhaps he did not know himself. He must have ceased for a long time measuring days and nights. On reaching the governor's door, we found two sledges in waiting. The prisoner was ordered into the one that had brought us, and we followed him, the governor by his side, I in front. The other sledge was occupied by the four soldiers.

Where were we going? I knew not. What were we going to do? I was equally ignorant. I had only to see, the action itself did not concern me at all.

We started. Through my position the old man's knees were between mine; I felt them tremble. The governor was wrapped in his furs; I was buttoned up in my military frock, and yet the cold reached us. The prisoner was almost naked, but the governor had offered him no coverings. For a moment I thought of taking off my coat and offering

it to him; the governor guessed my intention.

"It is not worth while," he said. Soon we reached the Neva again, and our sledge took the direction of Cronstadt. The wind came off the Baltic, and blew furiously; the sleet cut our faces; though our eyes had grown accustomed to the darkness, we could not see ten yards before us.

At last we stopped in the midst of a furious storm. We must have been about a league and a half from St. Petersburg. The governor got off the sledge, and went up to the other. The soldiers had already got off, each holding the tools he had been ordered to bring. "Cut a hole in the ice," the governor said to them.

I could not restrain a cry of terror. I began to comprehend.

"Ah!" the old man muttered, with an accent resembling the laugh of a skeleton, "then the Empress does remember me. I fancied she had forgotten me."

Of what Empress was he talking? Three had passed away in succession, Anne, Elizabeth, and Catherine. It was evident he believed he was still living under one of them, and did not know even the name of the man who ordered his death.

What was the obscurity of the night compared with that of his tomb!

The four soldiers had set to work. They broke the ice with their hammers, cut it with their axes, and raised the blocks with the lever. All at once they started back; the ice was broken; the water was rising.

"Come down!" the governor said to the old man. The order was useless, for he had already done so. Kneeling on the ice he was praying fervently.

The governor gave an order in a low tone to the soldiers; then he came back to my side, or I had left the sledge. In a moment the prisoner rose.

"I am ready," he said.

The four soldiers rushed upon him. I turned my eyes away; but though I did not see, I heard.

I heard the noise of a body hurled into the abyss. In spite of myself I turned round. The old man had disappeared. I forgot that I had no right to give orders, but I shouted to the driver—"Away, away!"

"Stop!" cried the governor. The sledge, which had already moved, stopped again.

"All is not finished," the governor said to me in French.

"What have we to do?" I asked.

"Wait!" he replied.

We waited half an hour.

"The ice has set, your excellency," one of the soldiers said.

"Art thou sure?"

He struck the spot where the hole had so lately yawned; the water had become solid again.

"We can go said the governor.

The horses started at a gallop, and in less than ten minutes we had reached the fortress. Then I rejoined my conductor.

"To the Red Palace!" he said to the driver.

Five minutes after the Emperor's door opened again to let me pass. He was up and fully dressed, just as I had seen him the first time. He stopped before me.

"Well?" he asked.

"Thou hast seen, seen?"

"Lock at me, sire," I said to him, "and you will not doubt."

I was standing before a mirror, I looked at myself, but I was so pale, my features were so altered, that I scarce recognized myself. The Emperor looked at me, and went to take a second paper from the bureau where the first had lain.

"I give thee," he said, "an estate of five hundred peasants. Between Toriza and Peresloff. Start this night, and never come back to St. Petersburg. If thou speakest, thou knowest how I punish."

I went. I never returned to St. Petersburg, and this is the first time I have told the story to a living soul.

**Pimpkins.** Don't you know Pimpkins? Then you don't know the daintiest, darriest, most fashionable and most fastidious young self-admirer that ever lisped and languished in a drawing-room. Pimpkins was at Mrs. Bonnycastle's closing party last spring. One of the company was a blooming damsel from the country—a fresh, rosy cheeked, bright faced girl, over whom the impressive bachelors were in ecstasies. Pimpkins saw and admired, Pimpkins determined to make an impression. He stared at her through his quizzing-glass until he had stored her out of countenance. Then he approached her. She was engaged in knitting a pair of over socks for one of Mr. Bonnycastle's children. "Aw!" said Pimpkins, "knitting, 'pon h'mah! 'Tis too industrious. Now, do you know, I like to see a young lady industrious. It's a good sign. I like to encourage industry. Aw!—what would you charge to knit me a pair like that?"

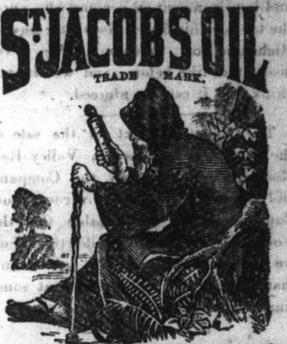
"Socks or stockings do you want, Mr. Pimpkins?"

"Ah! deuced if I exactly understand; but—aw—I want them to come over the calf, you know."

"In that case," replied the blooming damsel, smiling a sweet, innocent smile, "I should have to estimate. I never knit a pair to cover one's whole body!"

Pimpkins was observed at the side-board shortly afterwards trying to eat half melted ice with a fork.

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