

# THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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## A RUSSIAN TRAGEDY.

I was 18 years old and was already for two years an ensign in the regiment of Paulovsky. The regiment was quartered in the great building that still exists on the other side of the Champ de Mars, fronting the Summer garden. The emperor Paul I was then reigning and had been for three years. He resided in the Red palace, which had just at that time been completed.

One night, after I don't remember what escapade, the leave of absence which I had asked for in order to join a few comrades was refused, and I remained in the barracks almost alone. I was aroused from my sleep by a voice that whispered in my ear, "Dimitri Alexandrovitch, wake up and follow me." I opened my eyes. A man was before me, who repeated to me the invitation which he gave me while I was half asleep.

"Follow you?" said I. "Where?"

"I cannot tell you. But take notice that the order comes from the emperor."

I trembled. From the emperor! What in the world could he want with me, a poor ensign, of a good family no doubt, but far too distant from the throne to allow the name to reach the imperial ears. I recalled the somber Russian proverb that came into existence in the days of Ivan the Terrible, "Close to the czar, close to death."

But there was no help for it. I jumped out of bed and dressed myself. Then I looked with some attention at the man who had come to arouse me. All wrapped up as he was in his overcoat, I thought I recognized in him an old Turkish slave, at first the herald and finally the favorite of the emperor. This examination, moreover, was brief. It might, perhaps, have been dangerous to prolong it.

"I am ready," said I at the end of five minutes, and I buckled on my sword carelessly. My nervousness increased when I found that my guide, instead of taking the usual floor of the barracks, descended through a little winding staircase into the lower portion of the immense building. He lighted the way with a sort of dark lantern. After several turns and descents I found myself fronting a little door, the existence of which I had not known before. During all the route we met nobody. One would imagine that the building was deserted. Certainly I fancied that I saw one or two shadows pass, but they disappeared, or, rather, vanished in the obscurity.

The door in front of which we stood was closed. My guide knocked in a certain fashion, and it opened, evidently put in motion by a man who was waiting on the other side. As a matter of fact, when we passed through I saw distinctly, notwithstanding the darkness, a man, who closed the door again and followed us.

The passage in which we entered was a sort of subterranean, about eight feet wide, running through the soil, whose humidity oozed through the brick walls.

At the end of about 500 paces this passage was closed by an iron gate. My guide took a key from his pocket, opened the gate and closed it behind us. We continued our route. Just then I commenced to recall the tradition according to which a subterranean gallery existed between the Red palace and the barracks of the grenadiers of Paulovsky. I knew that we were in this gallery, and that, inasmuch as we had left the barracks, we were on our way to the palace. We arrived in front of another door similar to the one through which we had passed in the first instance. My guide knocked at this door in the same manner that he had knocked at the other one, and it opened like the other, set in motion by a man on the inside. Here we found ourselves at the foot of a staircase, which we mounted.

It led to the lower apartment of a building, but from the atmosphere it was easy to discover that we were entering a well warmed establishment. This building soon revealed the proportions of a palace. Then all my doubts ceased. They were bringing me into the presence of the emperor, the emperor who sent for me, an obscure ensign, almost hidden in the lower ranks of the guard. I remembered the story of the young ensign whom he had noticed on the street and placed behind him in his carriage, appointing him successively lieutenant, captain, major, colonel and general, but I had no hope that he sent for me with the same intention. However, we arrived at last before another door, in front of which a sentinel was pacing up and down. My guide put his hand upon my shoulder and said to me: "Keep up your courage. You are going into the presence of the emperor." Then he whispered something in the ear of the sentinel, and the latter moved to one side. My guide opened the door, not by putting the key in the

lock, so far as I could see, but by some secret means.

A man of small stature stood before me. He was dressed in a Prussian uniform, with boots that reached above his knees and an overcoat that touched his spurs, and wore a gigantic three cornered hat. I recognized him as the emperor. It was not difficult. He reviewed us every day, and I remembered that at the review of the day before he fixed his eyes upon me, called my captain from the ranks, asked him some questions in almost a whisper while looking at me and then spoke to an officer of his staff in a tone in which one gives an absolute order. All that only increased my nervousness.

"Sire," said my guide, bowing, "this is the young ensign whom you desire to speak to."

The emperor approached, and as he was of small stature he raised himself on the point of his toes to look at me. No doubt he recognized me as the man that he wanted, for he made a sign of approval with his hand and then whirled around and said, "Go." My guide bowed, went out and left me alone with the emperor. I assure you I would almost have preferred to be left alone in an iron cage with a lion.

His majesty at first appeared to pay no attention to me. He walked up and down, taking long steps, stopping now and then before a window with a single pane of glass and opening it to breathe the fresh air. Then he returned to his table, upon which his snuffbox was placed, and took a pinch of snuff.

This was the window of his bedroom, the room in which he was afterward killed, and which, they say, has remained closed ever since. I had time to examine each portion of it and each piece of furniture. Near one of the windows there was a desk and on the desk a sheet of letter paper. At last the emperor appeared to notice me. As he advanced toward me his face had a perfectly fiendish expression, although in reality that was only the result of his nervousness. He paused in front of me.

"Dust," said he, "you know that you are only dust, and that I am everything. I don't know how I had strength enough to reply, 'You are the elected one of the Lord, the architect of the destiny of man.'"

He grunted, and turning his back upon me began once more to pace the room, and after opening the window as before and taking another pinch of snuff he returned to me for the second time.

"And you know, too," said he, "that when I command I must be obeyed implicitly without observation and without comment."

"Just as one would obey God. Yes, sire, I know that."

He gazed at me. In his eyes there was such a strange expression that I could not stand his glance. He seemed pleased with the influence that he exercised over me. Then he went over to his desk, took up the letter, read it carefully, folded it, put it in an envelope and sealed this envelope, not with the imperial seal, but with a ring which he wore on his finger. Then he returned to me.

"Remember," said he, "that I have chosen you out of a thousand to execute that by you they would be well executed."

"I will always have in my mind the obediency that I owe to my emperor," said I.

"Very well. Remember that you are only dust, and that I am everything."

"I await the orders of your majesty."

"Take this letter," said he in a nervous and husky tone, "take it to the governor of the fortress; accompany him wherever he wishes to bring you. Be present at everything that he will do and come back and say to me, 'I saw.'"

I took the envelope and bowed. "I saw," he repeated in a cavernous voice. "You understand—I saw!"

"Yes, sire."

"Go."

The emperor closed the door behind me, uttering the word "dust."

I remained stupefied at the threshold.

"Come," said my guide, and we again stepped out, but by a different route, which led to the exterior of the fortress. A sleigh was waiting in the courtyard, and we both got into it. The great door of the fortress leading to the bridge of the Fontanka opened, and the sleigh started out. The horses trotting rapidly. We crossed the entire square until we found ourselves on the banks of the Neva. Our horses started out upon the ice, and guided by the steps of Peter and Paul we crossed the river.

The night was obscure, and the wind howled in a terrible fashion. I could hardly perceive on coming again upon the other shore that I was on solid ground. We were now at the gate of the fortress. The soldier on guard took the counter sign from my guide and allowed us to pass. We entered into the fortress, and the sleigh stopped at the governor's door. The counter sign was

given the second time and we entered into the governor's apartments, just as we had entered into the fortress. The governor was in the bed, but they woke him up with the all powerful command, "By order of the emperor." He approached, hiding his nervousness under a forced smile, for with a man like Paul I there was as little security for jailers as for captives.

I gave him, without saying a word, the order of the emperor. He brought it up to the candle, examined the seal and noticed that it was the private seal of the emperor, which was used for secret orders only. Then he bowed, and after crossing himself rapidly opened the letter. He read the order, looked at me, read it again and then said:

"You must see! You have to see?"

"I have to see," I replied.

"What have you to see?"

"No."

"But do you know?"

"No."

"Then he remained an instant thinking."

"You have come in a sleigh?"

"Yes."

"How many persons can your sleigh hold?"

"Three."

"Is this gentleman coming with us?" said he, pointing to my guide. I hesitated, not knowing what to say.

"No," said the latter. "I will wait."

"Where will you wait?"

"Here."

"What will you wait for?"

"The close of the act."

"Very well. Got ready another sleigh, select three soldiers, let one take a crowbar, the other a hammer and the two others axes."

The man to whom the governor addressed these words went out immediately. Then turning to me the governor said, "Come, and you shall see."

He walked in front of me, lighting the way. I followed him, and a turnkey walked behind us. We proceeded until we came in front of the prison. The governor pointed to a door, and the turnkey immediately opened it, passed in first, lighted a lantern and carried it in front of us. We descended ten stone steps and found ourselves in the first section of the dungeon. But we did not stop there. We had to go down ten steps farther, and even there we did not stop, but went down five more, and there we stopped.

The doors were all numbered, and the governor stopped in front of No. 11. He made a sign to the turnkey without speaking. One would imagine that in this tomb people had lost the faculty of speech.

The door was opened, and we descended six more steep and damp stone steps. Here we found ourselves in a cell about eight feet square. In the light of the lantern I saw a human figure move in this cell. We could hear a dull and rattling noise. I understood at once what it was and when it came. It was the water of the Neva rushing against the walls of the fortress. The cell was below the level of the river.

"Get up and dress yourself," said the governor.

I looked to see to whom the order was given, and as the turnkey threw the light of his lantern upon a far corner of the cell I noticed a thin and pale old man, with white hair and long white beard. No doubt he was put into that cell with the clothes which he wore when he was arrested, but these garments had worn away piece by piece, and he was now only half clad in a tattered cloak. Through the torn rag I could see his shivering and bony body, which shivers at one time was dressed in splendid garments. Perhaps the insignia of the most noble orders were once fastened upon that fleshless breast. Now he was a living skeleton, without rank, without dignity, and even without a name.

"He was simply 'No. 11.'"

He got up and wrapped himself up in his tattered old cloak without a murmur. His body was bent, broken down by long imprisonment, humidity, darkness and perhaps hunger, but his glance was still proud, almost threatening.

"All right," said the governor.

"Come."

The prisoner cast a final glance around his cell. For an instant his eye rested upon his stone seat, his water pitcher and his rusty sword. He heaved a sigh. Good heavens! Could it be possible that he could regret anything there? He followed the governor and passed in front of me. I can never forget the look he gave me as he moved by and the depth of reproach that was in that look.

"So young," he seemed to say, "and already at the orders of tyranny." I cast down my eyes. That glance went to my heart like a ponder. How long had he been in that cell? Perhaps he didn't know himself. Probably he had long ceased to measure the days and the nights in the depth of that abyss.

He passed on, and I walked after him. The jailer followed us and carefully closed the cell door. He

doubt it was needed for another. Outside the two sleighs were ready. The prisoner was placed in the one that brought us. The governor, myself and the old man sat down in front of him. The other sleigh was occupied by four soldiers.

Where we were going or what we were about to do I could not imagine. The affair itself was not my business. I was to see, and that was all. But, yes, there was something else. I had to say, "I saw."

We started off. In my position I found my knees touching the knees of the old man. I could feel him trembling. The governor was wrapped up in furs, and I was buttoned up in my military overcoat, and still we felt the cold. The old man was almost naked, and the governor of

found him nothing to cover him. For an instant I had an idea of taking off my overcoat and giving it to the poor old man, but the governor, guessing my intention, remarked, "It isn't worth while." So I kept on my overcoat.

We had not gone far before the storm burst upon us with all its fury. The snowflakes became so thick that we were in danger of being lost in perfect walls of snow. At last we stopped, when, as I imagine, we must have been about one league from St. Petersburg. The governor alighted and approached the second sleigh. The four soldiers had already got down, each one holding in his hand the instrument he was ordered to bring.

"Make a hole in the ice," said the governor.

I could not suppress a cry of horror. I commenced to understand.

"Ah," muttered the old man in a tone so strange that it might be taken for the unworldly laugh of a skeleton. "The empress remembers me. I thought she had forgotten me."

What empress was he speaking of? Three empresses had succeeded each other—Anne, Elizabeth and Catherine. It was evident that he thought he was still living under one of them, and that he was ignorant of even the name of the one who had decreed his death. What was the darkness of that terrible night compared to the long years of darkness in his cell?

The four soldiers went to work. They cut the ice with their axes and lifted up the block with their crowbars. Suddenly they jumped backward. The work was done; the water appeared. "Get down," said the governor to the old man, turning to him. The order was useless, for the old man had already come down. Kneeling upon the ice, he was praying. Then the governor gave an order in a low tone to the four soldiers and returned and seated himself beside me. I had not left the sleigh. At the end of a minute the old man arose. "I am ready," said he.

The four soldiers seized him. I closed my eyes, but if I did not see I heard. I heard the splash of a body thrown into the hole. In spite of myself I turned around. The old man was gone. I forgot that it was not for me to give orders, and I cried out to the driver, "Pachol! Pachol!"

"Stal!" cried the governor.

The sled, which had already started, was stopped. "All is not finished," said the governor to me in French.

"What have we further to do?" said I.

"Wait," said he. And we waited half an hour.

The ice has again formed over the hole, your excellency," said one of the soldiers.

"Are you sure?" asked the governor.

The soldier struck the place with his crowbar. The water had already become solid. "Now let us go," said the governor.

The horses started off in a gallop. One would have imagined that the despair of moments was pursuing them. In less than ten minutes we returned to the fortress. There I found my guide.

"To the Red palace," said he to the driver.

Five minutes afterward the door of the palace was opened for me. The emperor was up and dressed just as he was when I left him.

"Well?" said he.

"I saw!" was my answer.

"You saw? Saw? Saw?"

"Look at me, sire, and you won't doubt it."

I was in front of a mirror and noticed my appearance. I was so pale and my features so altered that I scarcely recognized myself. The emperor looked at me, and without saying a word took from the desk a paper.

"I give you," said he, "between Troitz and Peresol a piece of land, with 500 peasants. Leave now, this very night, and never come back to St. Petersburg. If you speak, you know how I can punish. Go."

I left and never saw St. Petersburg again while Paul I lived and never before told to a living being what I have now told to you.—Translated from the French of Alexandre Dumas. Our Short Stories.

## NEW YORK CLUBLAND.

An Improbable Evelyn Eden and Some of its Characteristics.

Clubland in Gotham is by no means confined to the Union and the Enquirer-bocker, the Metropolitan and the Callmet, the University and the Players, the New York, Manhattan and Union League. In one and the same side street may be found a couple of such well contrasted organizations as the Century and the Racket, and apart from the innumerable associations colored by nationality or religious belief there is a great downtown club in the Lawyers', while athletics possess conspicuous temples of their own, dedicated to every indoor sport imaginable from court tennis and fencing to water polo. The Racket, like the Century, succumbed some years ago to the up town tendency and took possession of an extremely pleasant house in Forty-third street, where the Century—so long established in the neighborhood of Union square—has built for itself a temple.

The Lamb and the Lotus, each typical in a way of what is considered Bohemia, occupy the one an ex-dwelling in Thirty-first street, the other a brownstone front in upper Fifth avenue, and these organizations also have made a certain advance toward Central park, albeit the governing committee of the Lamb has not lost sight of the fact that the members expect this resort to remain within easy distance of the theaters where they are engaged. The border land of Central park may do for millionaires. The neighborhood of Broadway appeals to actors, managers and playwrights.

Take it all in all, clubland in the metropolis is more imposing than a cursory glance at its merely superficial features might disclose. It is indeed the world of New York classified and set apart, and were it not for the fact that it remains an Eveless Eden it would be "all the world and his wife."

Lovely woman has indeed founded a certain number of minor clubs from the quiet parlors dedicated to "shoppers" to those arenas wherein the voice that never wearies is raised in debate and protest, and life is one long discursive pink tea.

Yet, despite the assaults of the new woman, there is one citadel of man that remains physically impregnable. His wife may go to her mother's after some difference of opinion with the lord and master and weep on the maternal bosom, but man has an effective recourse in the silent sympathy of the walls wherein he knows himself to be safe from domestic arguments and secure from pursuit.—Boston Herald.

**The Verbena.**

There are few plants that equal the verbena. They are a mass of bloom the entire summer and until hard frost if given the treatment they will stand any amount of drought, but find it pays, and pays well, to water them whenever they need it. During a dry spell the soil should be stirred well around the plants, that they may take in all the moisture that there is in the air. The plants that are not watered will live through the drought, but you will get no flowers, or if you do they will be very insignificant ones, and as we wish them only for the flowers they are hardly worth having if we do not give them the care they require. They should be watered regularly and given liquid fertilizer twice a week. After they begin to bloom the seed pods should be picked off daily, and after they commence to grow straggling should be pinched back nearly to the ground, when several additional branches will start off. In this way you keep them a mass of bloom the entire summer.

I start my seeds about the middle of February, and they are just large enough to transplant to their permanent beds by the 1st of May. In the fall, just before the hard frosts, I take up several of the plants and pinch them back to the ground, and in the early spring months, when most flowers are scarce, my verbena plants are a mass of bloom. I have kept old plants for three years by pinching them back. They do not bloom well in a partially shaded place, but must have the full rays of the sun.—Episcopat.

**He Was First.**

The compiler of the treasury is an autocrat whose decision overrides even that of the chief magistrate of the nation. Some years ago the then incumbent of the office refused to sign a warrant for money which General Grant thought it proper to expend. "That is right," the president said. "I admire your firmness. Where your conscience is concerned, never permit yourself to be coerced. You may consider yourself clear in this affair, for I shall appoint a new comptroller tomorrow."

**Not the Right Kind.**

Mrs. Norwich—I'm having heaps of trouble trying to get a French maid. Mrs. Noybor—I thought you'd secured one.

Mrs. Norwich—I did. But this one speaks French, and I can't understand her.—Chicago Record.

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Ar Raleigh 1:10 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:10 Ar Greensboro 1:20 3:20 5:20 7:20 9:20 Ar Goldsboro 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30

West Bound. No. 27. No. 11. Mixed. Daily. Daily. Daily.

Ar Greensboro 2:00 p.m. 4:30 a.m. 6:45 a.m. 8:55 a.m. 11:05 a.m. 1:15 p.m. 3:25 p.m. 5:35 p.m. 7:45 p.m. 9:55 p.m. Ar Raleigh 2:10 4:40 6:55 9:05 11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:05

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Ar Goldsboro 2:30 5:00 7:15 9:25 11:35 1:45 3:55 6:05 8:15 10:25

THROUGH SCHEDULE. No. 28. No. 30. Daily. Daily.

Ar Washington 11:15 a.m. 10:45 p.m. Ar Charlotteville 1:25 p.m. 1:55 p.m.

Ar Richmond 4:00 4:15 a.m. Ar Lynchburg 6:15 6:30 a.m. Ar Danville 8:30 8:45 a.m.

Ar Greensboro 10:15 10:30 a.m. Ar High Point 12:15 12:30 p.m. Ar Salisbury 2:30 2:45 p.m.

Ar Newberry 4:45 5:00 p.m. Ar Columbia 7:00 7:15 p.m. Ar Florence 9:15 9:30 p.m.

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