

Literature, &c.

The British Magazines.

From Sketches of Christian Heroism.
ERICK'S GRAVE.

'Hereby,' says St. John, 'perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.'—That is we ought to be ready to lay them down: we ought to deny ourselves what we should like to have, yes, and what we really need, for the sake of others; and, in doing this, all of us, even the youngest, will show forth a triumph of the cross. And there have not been wanting those in whom the grace of God has been so marvelously shown, that they have literally fulfilled St. John's exhortation, and proved by experience the truth of what St. Paul teaches, that "peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

It was on a stormy evening, in the month of November, that a Russian nobleman, called baron Jaroslav, his wife, their little daughter Helena, and their faithful servant Erick, in a heavy travelling chariot-and-four, driven by postillions, drew up at the only inn of the little town of Kobrin, on the borders of Russia and Poland. They were returning from their travels in Europe; and, as the baron had already overstayed the time he had intended to be absent from home, and the weather every day grew worse and worse, he was anxious to press forward with all the speed possible. The fur caps of the postillions, the long manes and tails of their horses, and even the rough leather portmanteaux, which were strapped on to the roof of the carriage, were white and crisp with frost: clouds of steam rose from the weary beasts as they were unharnessed, and made halos round the lantern which the ostler held in his hand, and the landlord, coming up to the door of the chariot, observed, that of course his honour would not think of proceeding further.

'Not if I were at liberty to follow my own inclinations,' said the baron; but, as it is, I am pressed for time, and we must get on another stage to night.'

'It is a long one, sir,' said the landlord, 'thirty versts at the very least; and you have the forest of Rotosov to pass. There the road is bad, and I dare say the snow is deep; and the wolves, these long nights, are getting hungry.'

'O, I am not afraid of wolves,' cried the baron; 'they would not dare to attack the carriage so early in the year as this is. Let us have four good horses, landlord, and we may be in by nine; for it is not now more than half-past six.'

'Well, sir, a wifal man must have his own way: I only hope that you may not repent your determination. Horses on, directly, Nicholas. But may be, your honour, and your honor's lady, will take something hot, for you will need it before you get to Bo'isov.'

So a cup of spiced wine was brought for the travellers; and Erick had a double portion. He sat, wrapped up in a huge fur coat, on a low kind of box in front; for the baron's carriage, though old-fashioned, had been built in England. In a few moments the fresh horses were harnessed, the postillions cracked their whips, and, amidst the thanks and good nights of the landlord, the carriage rolled on.

'It is bitterly cold,' said the baroness, as she pulled her cloak more completely round her, and took the little Helena on her lap; 'it is bitterly cold, and a fearful night to travel in.'

'If the moon could but break through the clouds, as she is trying to do, we shall have a pleasant ride yet,' replied her husband. 'What Catharine, a Russian, and afraid of a little snow.'

'Well, I am glad that we came on, too,' said his wife; 'it is pleasant to think that every mile is bringing us nearer to home, and my own dear little Nicholas and Frederica.'

They were now passing over a wild moor: the wind whistled mournfully round the carriage, driving and chiding the snow before it, for it was snowing heavily: the flare of the lamps cast a kind of ghastly haze on the immediate neighbourhood of the carriage, and seemed to make the dark distance still darker.

'O, mamma,' cried Helena, 'let me come closer to you; it makes me quite afraid to look out of the window.'

'Why, what should you be afraid of, my love?'

'One is always afraid in the dark, you know mamma; and, then, just listen to the wind, how it howls.'

'My dear child, there is One to whom the darkness is no darkness; and who maketh the winds his ministers. We are as safe in his protection here, as if we were in our own dear home, with a warm roof over our head, and a bright fire roaring up the chimney. See the moon is coming out: we shall not have to journey in the dark.'

Then, amidst occasional questions and answers, the carriage rolled on for some miles. The clouds passed off; the moon was walking in brightness; the wheels rolled noiselessly along over the snow; and as far as eye could see was one glistening sea of white. And now the moor was almost passed; straggling trees, the vanguard of the great forest of Bostov, began to appear on both sides; they became thicker and thicker; and the earth swelled up into banks, and sank into valleys, where there were primroses in the early spring, and daisies and cowslips as summer came on. But even the hollows could scarcely be traced, for the snow had drifted much; right and left thousands of pines, which would make a twilight even in

the summer moon, were now almost shrouded in darkness, except where an occasional gap or crevice in the branches made the white ground yellow with moonlight. Here and there a larch spread out its white, feathery arms; and occasionally a leafless oak might be seen, sturdy in its winter nakedness, and moaning dismally to the wind. On passed the carriage and still the pines clustered thicker, and (except in the very road) the shades grew deeper; and there was that solemn sound which is made by the clashing and roaring of a hundred thousand branches.

'What is Erick looking at?' asked the baroness; for the box was so low that its occupier might be seen from the front windows of the carriage.

'I cannot tell,' replied her husband; 'but he must have good eyes if he can make out anything.'

'Hark! what was that?' cried his wife, as a long, low melancholy howl, different from the wind, and yet like it, was heard for a moment, and then died away.

'It is the wolves,' answered the baron; 'this cold weather makes them restless.'

'There it is again. It is certainly nearer.'

'Erick,' said his master, letting down the front window, 'tell the boys to drive on: we must keep out of the way of the wolves.'

'On with you, my men!' shouted Erick; and then in a lower voice he said, 'I doubt whether we can altogether keep out of their way, sir.'

'How is that?' asked the baron alarmed.

'There is a large pack of them, sir; and they are in scent of us, I fear: at least they are much nearer than when I first heard them, ten minutes ago.—There they are again. They cannot be half a mile off.'

'What are we to do?' asked the baron: 'I know you are a Conrland man, are more used to these things than I am.'

'Why, sir,' replied the servant, 'if they come to us, we will take no notice of them, except they attack us: may be, as they are timid creatures, the glare of the lamps and the sight of us will keep them off, and in an hour we shall be in. But I would advise you, sir, to draw the bullets from your large pistols, and load with swan shot; it is more to the purpose to wound a good many than to kill one or two.'

'O, papa,' cried Helena, as the baron took his pistols from the top of the carriage, 'what shall we do?'

'We shall do what we can, my dear child, for ourselves; and God will do the rest for us. There is no great danger in these wolves except in the very depth of winter; and, if there were, He who delivered David from the paws of the lion, and the paws of the bear, and Benaiah from a lion, as this is, in the time of snow, and David from the seven hungry lions, can deliver us also.'

'Now,' said her mother, 'now, my love, is the time to see, whether we have faith in God, or not. It is easy enough to put our trust in Him when everything seems safe and comfortable around us; but, when we feel our weakness, then is the time to believe in his power.'

'They are coming, sir,' said Erick.

The baron looked, and, about a hundred yards back, to the right, in the wood, he could just make out a grey mass, moving through the trees, and leaping out into the carriage track. They did not howl, but bayed fearfully; and, as they trotted swiftly along, you might hear the shuffling and rustling of the snow underneath their feet. They moved steadily, and all together; but were gaining evidently on the carriage. The post-boys plied both whip and spur; and the horses themselves, in an agony of fear, broke out into a canter, in spite of the heavy snow.

'Do you think there is any danger, my dear husband?' asked the baroness.

'I cannot tell,' replied her husband. 'They do not seem disposed to attack us yet; but they are certainly savage. It is for the horses we have to fear first.'

'Are they gaining on us?'

'A little; but they are not putting out their speed, they could be up with us in a moment if they liked.'

Thus the carriage flew along, for about five minutes: Erick never took his eyes off the pack, and the baron, thrusting himself out from the left-hand window, watched them as carefully.

'Are you loaded, sir?' asked Erick.

'All—with swan shot.'

'I have two loaded with ball, and two with shot; so we shall do.'

The pack was now not more than ten yards from the carriage: there might be about two hundred in it. On they came: ears pricked up, eyes glaring and blood-shot, tails stretched, straight out tongues, hanging down. At their head ran an old, strong, grey wolf, the leader of the pack. They all came nearer, nearer, nearer still; at last, with a ferocious howl, the leader sprang on one of the wheel horses, and at the same time received a bullet through his head from Erick, who was prepared for him.

'Now, sir,' said he, 'if you will let me have a piece of string, we may be able to make something of it.'

'A piece of string!' cried his master: 'yes, here it is; but what end will it serve?'

'Why, sir, you see wolves, like cowardly creatures as they are, are always suspecting a trap; so I will just tie a stick to this string, and let it drag behind the carriage. It will keep them off. I dare say ten minutes.'

Erick was right: the stick was dragged along at the distance of about ten yards, and for some time the pack kept behind it, and were plainly afraid of it.—At last they began to grow bolder, seemed to have discovered the trick, pas-

sed it, and were again making up to the carriage.

'They will be upon us in a moment,' cried Erick; 'when I cry, Now, sir, be ready to fire on them from one side, and so will I from the other.'

'Very well,' replied the baron. Helena sat with her hand in her mother's, looking up to her face, and seeming to gain comfort from that. Her mother's face was sad, but very calm: she was evidently praying, and thinking more of her child than herself, and yet still more than either of the mercy and power of God.

'Now, sir,' cried Erick.

Master and servant fired at the same moment: there was a savage yell from the foremost in the pack; and three or four fell.

'Load again, sir,' cried Erick: 'if this lasts, you will want all your pistols soon.'

After they had fired once or twice, the wolves were no longer frightened by the report and flash; and they began to surround the coach on all sides.

'There is but one thing left,' said Erick: 'we must cut the traces of one of the leaders, and turn him off; that will divert them for a little while.—And, turning to the foremost post-boy, he ordered him to cut the traces of his off-horse. The man obeyed: the terrified animal started off to the right, into the forest; and, with a loud yell, the whole pack rushed after him.

'Thank God for that,' replied the baroness. 'Then we may be saved after all.'

'Aye, madam, if He pleases,' replied the servant: 'but this relief will not last long; and they will soon be upon us again.'

'How far do you imagine that we are from the post-house, now?' inquired the baron.

'Some half-hour,' answered Erick: 'but they will chase us up to the very doors. I never knew them more fierce. Hark! they have got him.'

As he spoke, there came a scream, or rather shriek, as of a person in agony, far from the right; a shriek so horrible in its sound, that once heard, it could never be forgotten. Helena and her mother both exclaimed, 'what can that be?'

'It is the poor horse,' replied the baron: 'they are tearing him to pieces. A horse's shriek is the most horrible of horrible things.'

'Drive on my men, for your lives,' shouted Erick. 'They will be back presently.'

But the snow became deeper, and the road worse; and the three horses, worn out with fatigue, ill supplied the place of four fresh ones. On the right hand the wood thinned a little, opening into a kind of glade, in the centre of which was a frozen pond. As the travellers passed it, the pack of wolves appeared dashing up the valley, baying as they had done at first; only now the jaws and heads of many were steeped with blood.

'We must let another go,' cried Erick, 'or they will be too much for us; but we must take care what we are about. You and I, sir, will fire at once; and then do you, Peter,' he added, addressing the foremost post-boy, 'cut the traces of your horse, jump down, and leap up here by me.'

This was done, and the pack were again drawn off. The remaining pair of horses strained their utmost, and all the travellers listened intently for any sign of the re-appearance of their enemies. The baron spoke once or twice to Erick, but received no answer; he appeared quite taken up by his own thoughts. At length the carriage reached the top of a hill; and at the distance of apparently two miles before it, a clear steady light was to be seen.

'Thank God! there is Bo'isov!' cried Erick; 'now then, sir, I believe that you are safe.' As he spoke, the pack again was heard in the distance; and though the post-light grew larger and brighter every moment, every moment the wolves gained on them, and in a few moments surrounded them.

'It must come at last, my dear master,' said Erick. 'I have served you and your father these twenty years, and I never did better service than I now intend to do. If we all remain together, we shall be all torn to pieces: I will get down, and with my pistols, I shall, I trust, be able to keep them at bay a few minutes. You press on with all speed: leave me here. I know you will take care of my wife and child.'

'No, Erick!' said the baroness: 'we will not allow this. We will all be saved, or all perish together. I could not bear to escape at the price of your blood.'

'No, indeed, Erick,' said Helena.

The baron looked at his wife and child, and said nothing.

'Besides, I will try to climb a tree,' said Erick: 'may be they will give me time. But if I delay a moment longer, we shall all be lost together.'

'God bless you, Erick,' cried his master; 'God bless you, and He will bless you. If you perish, I will look on your wife as a sister, and bring up your child as one of my own.'

'Thank you sir,' said Erick firmly. 'Now God be with you all. Fire, sir, two pistols at once!—And, while the baron fired, Erick leaped to the ground. On dashed the horses; the pack terrified for a moment, stood still and bayed. Almost immediately the travellers heard the report of a pistol: in about a minute after, of two, close together, but they heard no more.

And now they are within a hundred yards of the strong, log-bait inn: the pack are close behind them; the post-boy cracks his whip; the baron fires; the whole party shout and as the carriage dashes up to the door, it opens, and a fresh blaze of light is poured into the road. The wolves turn; and the baron and his family are in safety.

Of Erick no trace was ever found. His pis-

tols were discovered next morning, where he had been left; three discharged, and one still loaded. It is supposed that he had not time to fire it, before he was pulled down. I need not tell you how nobly the baron fulfilled his promise to his wife and child.

On this same spot now stands a cross, bearing on one side of its pedestal the name and story of Erick; on the other the legend—'GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS; THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.'

And now, what are you to learn from this story? What but this? If there have been found those who were willing, for their friends' sake, to give up the dearest things they had, even their life, will you not be ashamed at your selfishness in being unwilling to give up the smallest trifle for those you love? It is all very well to read of the triumphs of the cross; but when will you show them! Not while you seek your own pleasures, not while you do your own will, not while self is uppermost in everything you take in hand. Thus, if you conquer, you will show your remembrance of greater love than that of Erick; the one endured even to death for benefactors and friends, the other for offenders and enemies.

From Hogg's Instructor.

NOODLES.

Notwithstanding the 'march of intellect', and the great exertions now made for the diffusion of useful knowledge, there are still to be found in every sphere of life not a few who may be denominated *Noodles*. We have met of late years with many worthy persons, who imagined that when once the 'schoolmaster' was fairly abroad, the noodles, like the rest of the community, would be benefitted by his labours. They thought it impossible that these would remain stationary when every body else was 'going a-head.' The showers of knowledge which were descending in all directions from the press could not fail, they argued, to penetrate into the hardest and thickest heads among them. Nay, some of the more enthusiastic renovators of society hinted that they had no doubt but that their friend the 'schoolmaster' would put an effectual extinguisher on the whole class. The hopes of these worthy men have, however, been rather disappointed. They are still in a flourishing condition. To us this is no matter of marvel. They form, in truth, an element in the great social system. Like the poor, they will never cease from the land. There were noodles at the beginning, and there will be noodles to the end.

Before we proceed to mention a few specimens of the class, it is needless that we should give a general geographical sketch of the Kingdom of Noodledom, in order that the uninitiated may have some distinct idea as to its locality and boundaries. Society may be said to be made up of two classes, the sane and the insane. Between these, however, there is a third class, dwelling in a sort of debatable land, bounded on one side by the territory of those who are sane and sensible, and on the other by that of those who are 'mad as March hares.' It is in this neutral ground, where the inhabitants are neither altogether sound in their intellects nor thoroughly crack-brained, that our heroes have their place of habitation. There are various degrees of noodleism. Some are immeasurably dull and stupid; others, again, are highly and hair-brained. It is not at all necessary that a man should be to a certain extent crazed in order to constitute him a noodle. The truth is, it is perfectly possible for him to be in the full possession of all the faculties he was ever blessed with, and yet still be a noodle and nothing but a noodle. Indeed a man requires a certain portion of intellect to be a noodle. It may be very small, a mere glimmering, barely sufficient to create a sort of darkness in his mind, but he could not do without it. Unless he possessed a small modicum of intellect, he would be a simple fool; but having wherewithal to keep him somewhat on the sunny side of insanity, he takes rank as a noodle. He is therefore a superior person to a fool. He no doubt, at times talks and acts somewhat like a fool, but there is always a spice of rationality about what he says and does, which clearly distinguishes him from one. He is frequently a hair-brain scaram half-witted being, who, though by no means a Solon, has at least two idens in his brain. They may not be very bright, but they bear each other company, and prevent the noodle's mind from being an absolute vacuum. It is this mingling of a small modicum of intellect with a pretty considerable amount of stupidity, absurdity, and silliness, which constitutes a genuine through-paced noodle.

We cannot undertake to describe every variety of the noodle species. Their name is legion. We may, however, notice some of the more prominent of the class. There is the eminent noodle and the loquacious noodle. The former is in general lean, lank, and cadaverous in his general look, and in his mind. If he is young, he is as lean in body as in mind. He is young, he is pale and parched-looking, and often sleek smooth hair, green spectacles, and often times a drop at the tip of his nose. If he is getting up in years, or ears (for a noodle can scarcely be said to have arrived at the years of discretion), he is generally considerably bald, or sports a wig which can never under any circumstances be mistaken for natural hair. He has a very staid look, reminding one of an owl in an ivy bush, and he sits so motionless on his chair that one would almost take him for a man of straw, which to a certain extent he is. Those who belong to this class very seldom open their mouths. If they are not as wise as the Carthusian Monks, they are certainly as taciturn. As Miss Miford would say, they have a 'remarkable gift of silence.' On some rare occasions they