

BATYUSHKA.

From yonder gilded minaret... Beside the steel-blue Neva set, I faintly catch, from time to time, The sweet, aerial midnight chime— "God save the Tsar!"

THE EARTH-SPIRIT.

A RUSSIAN GHOST STORY.

Translated for "Progress" from a German rendering of Gogol.

In the month of June, the roads round Kiev swarmed with students from the seminary, on the way to their homes. Those who had no parents wandered about, eating and sleeping in the open air.

In such a way, one summer, three students left the high road in order to seek food in the nearest village. They were the theologian Haliava, the philosopher Thomas Brutus, and the student of rhetoric, Tiberius Gorobetz.

It was already late as they left the high road. The sun had set and the heat of the day lingered in the sultry air. The philosopher and the theologian walked together in silence, smoking their pipes; the student of rhetoric amused himself by striking off the heads of the thistles with his staff.

"O no! Haliava, that is impossible," he cried. "Lay ourselves down like dogs, without a supper! Let us push on a little more and perhaps we may reach a house, and drink a glass of brandy before sleeping."

At the word brandy the theologian spat on the ground and exclaimed: "It is true; we must not stop here!"

Once more the companions resumed their march and soon to their great joy they heard the barking of a dog.

of the theologian, who had purloined it in passing from a cart in the yard, and then laid himself down to sleep. Suddenly the door opened, the old woman entered and without a word came towards him.

Was he dreaming or waking? He experienced a sort of horrible enjoyment, and began to think that his heart was taken out of him. He tried to recollect prayers and repeated some forms of exorcism which he had learned.

But a few days after his return the rumor spread that the daughter of a nobleman, whose estate lay about 50 versts from Kiev, had been brought back in a dying state to her home, wounded in every limb.

"Listen, Domine Thomas!" replied the rector. "Nobody dreams of asking your consent. I will only tell you that if you show obstinacy your back shall be so treated with rods that for a long time you will not need the bath."

The philosopher scratched his head and departed in silence. But he made up his mind to seize the first opportunity for escape. As he descended the stairs in thought, he heard the voice of the rector, giving directions to someone who was evidently a messenger from the nobleman.

"Thank his honor for the eggs and the fruit," said the rector, "and tell him I will send the books as soon as they are copied. And forget not, friend, to remind your master in my name that he has excellent fish in his ponds, particularly fine sturgeon. Pray him to send me some, for fish in this market is had and dear. And do not forget to hold the philosopher fast, for else he will escape."

"What a dog of Satan!" said Thomas to himself; "he has smelt a rat, has he?"

Thomas thought in himself, what must come, will come, so he turned to the Cossacks and said: "Good day, comrades. So, I am to go with you? A glorious kibitka you have. You only want musicians and one could dance in it!"

"Yes, it is a well-proportioned carriage," replied one of the Cossacks, seating himself by the driver, whose head was covered by a cloth, as he had found occasion that morning to leave his cap at an inn as security for payment.

Notwithstanding the oppressive heat of the July day, all descended from the kibitka and entered the dirty inn. The Jewish landlord came to greet them as old acquaintances. He brought forth some sausages from his pocket and placed them on the table. All seated themselves and received enormous stone jugs.

"Who are you and whence come you, good man?" he asked at length, in a voice that was neither severe nor kindly.

"I am a student," replied the philosopher, "Thomas Brutus."

"How have you known my daughter?" "I have never known her, gracious lord, I swear it. Never in my life have I had dealings with noble ladies."

"Why then did she choose you to say the prayers for her?" The philosopher shrugged his shoulders. "God may know. Great people sometimes ask for things which the learned cannot understand. Does not the proverb say 'Dance, devil, as thy master bids'?"

"Oh, had she but lived a moment longer!" said the nobleman with trembling voice, "I had then learnt all. Send, father, to the seminary at Kiev and invite the student Thomas Brutus to pray three nights for my soul. He knows * * * * * more she could not say. Good man, doubtless thou art famed for thy holy life; my daughter had heard of thee."

With these words he led the way to an adjoining room. The floor was entirely covered with red cloth. In one corner, surrounded with sacred pictures, lay the corpse of the departed lady. The bier was surrounded with wax tapers, which cast a pale light over the room.

At length the old Cossack gave the summons, and, as before, he was conducted to the church and left with the corpse. He tried to encourage himself with the belief that there could be nothing new to fear; that his exorcisms were sufficient to protect him. But when he had made the circle, and taken his place at the desk, he dared not raise his eyes, but read on. So an hour passed, and wearied by the exertion, he took out his snuff-box, and half-unconsciously raised his eyes. His blood was almost frozen in his veins as he beheld the corpse standing close to him at the edge of the circle.

He found the master of the estate in the same room, and almost in the same attitude, as before. He looked up, as Thomas stood at the door with cap in hand, and asked him if all was going well.

himself to his desk, opened the book and began to read with loud voice, in order to give himself courage. Something within him said that the corpse was moving, that it was raising its head. . . . But all was still; the body lay as before; the tapers shed their pale light around. Still the question arose in his mind: "If she arose." . . . He raised his head. The corpse was no longer recumbent: it was sitting upright. Slowly it descended, and began to approach him, with eyes closed and arms extended. Hastily he drew a circle with his fingers around his person and began to recite exorcisms which he had learned from an old monk, well acquainted with sorcerers and evil spirits.

At the first gleam of dawn the old Cossack came to relieve the philosopher from his task. Long after his return he could not sleep; but fatigue at last overcame the impressions of the past night. On waking, all seemed to him as a dream. At dinner he was restored to his former self, for he belonged to the class of people which a hearty meal can always furnish with happiness. But he made up his mind to say nothing of his adventure, and to all curious questions made no reply but this:

When the meal was over, the philosopher became very lively. He explored the whole village, made acquaintance with everybody and was turned out of two houses. Indeed, it is said that a young and pretty damsel gave him a box on the ear. But as evening approached his high spirits were much diminished. An hour before supper all the company played *kvagti*, a species of skittles, in which sticks took the place of balls, and where the winner gained the right of riding on the back of the loser. Thomas tried to take part in the game, but his mind was filled with fear, which increased with the oncoming darkness.

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"There are all sorts of fearful things in the world, and last night —" But the philosopher did not continue; he only made a gesture. At this moment a young woman passed, who, at sight of Thomas, uttered a cry of astonishment: "You have become quite gray!"

"Yes, she speaks the truth," said one of the Cossacks, "you are gray, like our old Javtukh."

The philosopher ran to the kitchen, where was a broken mirror, and there he found that, indeed, part of his hair was grey. He made up his mind at once to go to the nobleman and declare that he could not continue to watch by the corpse. He would return at once to Kiev.

He found the master of the estate in the same room, and almost in the same attitude, as before. He looked up, as Thomas stood at the door with cap in hand, and asked him if all was going well.

"Read, read on, my good fellow," said the master, "and I will reward you well."

"But I care not for reward; by my faith, lord, do what you please, but I will not read again!"

"How should I not know," whimpered the philosopher. "Received in large quantities, they are intolerable."

The philosopher held his tongue; he perceived that, with a character like this, his philosophy itself was of no use. But none the less he made up his mind to escape. He waited till after the midday meal, when all the village took a long siesta. Even old Javtukh stretched himself out in the sun and closed his eyes. Thomas entered the garden, which seemed the best way of reaching the outskirts of the estate. With the exception of a narrow path, the whole was overgrown with fruit-trees, bushes and weeds. Beyond the hedge lay a wide expanse of high brush-wood, through which no path seemed possible. As he pushed his way among the knotty stems, he believed that before him lay the road to Kiev. At any rate, he saw a tract of forest, in which there would be ample security from pursuit. Entering it, he found an open glade, containing a clear pool of water. He flung himself down at its brink and slaked his thirst in long, eager draughts.

"What capital water!" he exclaimed half aloud. "Here must be an excellent place to rest!"

"No; let us rather push on," replied a voice behind him; "perhaps we are already pursued."

"And I know why," answered Tiberius; "because he was afraid. If he had not feared, the witch could not have hurt him. In such cases one has only to make the sign of the cross and spit on her tail. I know this, for all the old wives in Kiev are witches."

"It is time," said Javtukh, "let us be going."

As they took their way to the church, the philosopher looked round on all sides, and attempted to converse with his companions. But Javtukh was silent; even the usually loquacious ones said few words. It was a fearful night: wolves were heard howling on the steppe, and even the barking of the village dogs sounded strange and uncertainly.

"One would think they were not wolves that are howling," said one of the Cossacks, "but something else."

"I will not be afraid," he said to himself; "No, I will not be afraid."

He had not the courage to examine them carefully, but he could distinguish one monstrous object, which almost filled the opposite wall with its extent. It was covered with long, matted hair, through which glowing eyes protruded. All gazed on Thomas, all sought him, but none could reach him in his magic circle.

cried the corpse, for the first time uttering intelligible words: "quick, bring him here!"

"Raise up my eyelids. I do not see!" said he with sepulchral voice.

"That is he!" cried the king of the Gnomes, and pointed with his finger at him. In a moment he was overwhelmed by the whole swarm, which swooped upon him, and fell dead on the ground. Then the cock's crowing was heard. It was for the second time, the spirits had not heard the first. With fearful cries they rushed to the windows for escape. But it was too late: all remained as if petrified around the doors and windows. When the priest came the next day to say the funeral mass, he dared not cross the threshold. The church was forever deserted from that time; it was gradually overgrown with wild plantations, and now the very path to it is lost.

The rumor of this adventure reached Kiev, and when the theologian Haliava heard of the death of the unhappy philosopher, he thought about the matter deeply. In the interval fortune had smiled on him; he had become bell-ringer of the highest tower in the city, and always appeared with a damaged nose, since the tower steps were in a neglected state.

"Have you heard what happened to Thomas?" asked Tiberius, who had now entered the class of philosophy, and had grown a beard.

"It was God's will," replied the bell-ringer; "come to the tavern, we will drink to his memory."

The young philosopher, who was enjoying his new privileges so much that all his clothes smelt from afar of brandy and tobacco, eagerly accepted the proposal.

"He was an admirable man, was Thomas!" said the bell-ringer, when the limping landlord had placed the third can before them—"an admirable man, and yet he must perish for nothing."

"And I know why," answered Tiberius; "because he was afraid. If he had not feared, the witch could not have hurt him. In such cases one has only to make the sign of the cross and spit on her tail. I know this, for all the old wives in Kiev are witches."

The bell-ringer nodded with approval. But as he perceived that his tongue no longer obeyed him, he rose up slowly, staggered and took a devious way towards his tower. But seeing an old shoe in the road, the force of habit prevailed, and he placed it in his pouch as he went his way.

A WOMAN'S DOUBLE LIFE.

A Strange Case That Rivals the Story of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

The story of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is quite outdone by a recent revelation of the story of Miss Clara Blalock of this place. Here is one Miss Clara Blalock, first a promising school-girl, graduating with honor in the city schools, and promoted to be a teacher, and here is the same person, the master-spirit of a dark conspiracy against the lives and property of the citizens of a great stretch of country.

The curious feature of the case is, that while Clara, the school teacher, was perfectly good, Clara, the horse-thief, was perfectly bad. The letters penned by the same fair hand that wrote copies for the children, are filled with the foulest and most profane words, used with design in a sort of cipher. No wicked word ever escaped the lips of the school teacher, and the while her brain must have been filled with the darkest designs and fiendish purposes. When she came to the school-house in the morning no shadow rested on her brow from her guilty knowledge that the night before a business house had been burned in the town by her accomplices, and when she had looked over the children's examination papers and filled out her school report, she sat down to write directions where horses should be stolen and whither in the darkness they should be ridden; to write pages in hideous jargon of the drama that finally culminated in murder.—Columbus, Kan., Dispatch.

Advice of a Philadelphia Chestertield.

A modern Lord Chesterfield in Philadelphia was lately giving his son some advice about getting on in society. In answer to the question, "What is the best subject to talk to a lady about at a ball?" he replied: "Talk to her about her beauty." "But," said he, "suppose she has no beauty?" "Ah, then," replied the experienced paterfamilias, "talk to her about the ugliness of the other women present if you want to get on."—Philadelphia Times.

HER THOUGHTS.

"Sweet maid, what anxious thoughts tonight? Keep you lingering here on the stair? Are you thinking of eyes that with love's deep light Plead with yours a share?"

She was wondering if, at the coming ball, With a little artistic taste, She could make that look like another dress By wearing a different waist.