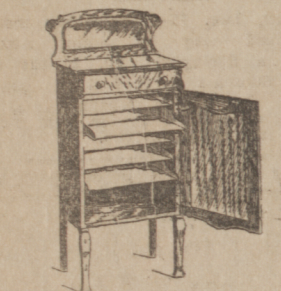


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Magazine Stands from \$7.75 to \$23—A novelty this season, and a much-needed arrangement. Shelves for the books and a closet on top.

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MARKET SQUARE

Barlasch of the Guard

By HENRY SETON MERRIMAN

"You told me to send for you," she said, in a quiet, tired voice, "if I wanted you. You have saved me the trouble."

His eyes were hard with anxiety as he looked at her. She held the letters toward him.

"By coming," she added, with a glance at him which took in the dust, and the stains of salt water on his clothes, the fatigue he sought to conceal by a rigid stillness, and the tension that was left by the dangers he had passed through—daring all to come.

Seeing that he looked doubtfully at the papers, she spoke again.

"One," she said, "that one on the stained paper, is addressed to me. You can read it—since I ask you."

The letter told him, at all events, that Charles was not killed, and, seeing his face clear as he read, she gave an odd, curt laugh.

"Read the others," she said. "Oh! you need not hesitate. You need not be so particular. Read one, the top one. One is enough."

The windows stood open, and the morning breeze fluttering the curtains brought in the gay sound of bells, the high, clear bells of Hanseatic days, rejoicing at Napoleon's new success—by order of Napoleon. A bee sailed.

The talk was of such matters as conventional men more than women, of armies and war and treaties of peace. For all the world thought that Alexander of Russia would be brought to his knees by the little of Borodino. A hundred years ago, moreover, women did not know their place as they do today. They ignored the primary duties of the equality of the sexes, and did not know that a woman's opinion is always of immense value, whether she know anything of the matter or not.

Save for the one reference to his life in the Baltic during the past two months, d'Arragon said nothing of himself, of his patient, dogged work carried on by day and by night in all weathers. Content to have escaped with his life, he neither referred to, nor thought of, his part in the negotiations which had resulted in the treaty just signed. For he had been the link between Russia and England; the never-failing messenger passing from one to the other with question and answer which were destined to bear fruit at last in an understanding brought to perfection in Paris, culminating at Elba.

Both were guarded in what they said of passing events, and both seemed to doubt the truth of the reports now flying through the streets of Dantzig. Even in the quiet, Franconian, all the citizens were out on their terraces calling questions to those that passed by beneath the trees. The itinerant tradesman, the milkman going his round, the vendors of fruit from Langstrut and the distant villages of the plain, lingered at the doors to tell the servants, the latest gossip of the market-place. Even in this frontier city, full of spies, strangers spoke together in the streets, and the sound of their voices, raised above the clang of carillons, came in at the open window.

"At last a victory is always a great one," said d'Arragon, looking toward the window.

"It is so easy to ring a bell," added Sebastian, with his rare smile.

He was quite himself this morning, and only once did the dull look arrest his features into the stony stillness which—d'Arragon knew—

"You are the only one of your name in Dantzig," said d'Arragon, in the course of question and answer as to the safe delivery of letters in time of war.

"So far as I know, there is no other Sebastian," replied he; and Desires, who had guessed the motive of the question, which must have been in d'Arragon's mind from the beginning, was startled by the fulness of the answer. It seemed to make reply to more than d'Arragon had asked. It shattered the last faint hope that there might have been another Sebastian of whom Charles had written.

"For myself," said d'Arragon, changing the subject quickly, "I can now make sure of receiving letters addressed to me in the care of the English consul at Riga, or the consul at Stockholm, should you wish to communicate with me, or should Madame find leisure to give me news of her husband."

"Desires will no doubt take pleasure in keeping you advised of Charles's progress. As for myself, I fear I am a bad correspondent. Perhaps not a desirable one in these days," said Sebastian, his face suddenly clearing. He waved the point aside with a gesture that looked out of place on a hand lean and spare, emerging from a brown sleeve without cuff or ruffle.

"For I feel assured," he went on, "that we shall continue to hear good news of your cousin; not only that he is safe and well, but that he makes progress in his profession. He will go far, I am sure."

D'Arragon bowed his acknowledgment of this kind thought, and rose rather hastily.

"My best chance of quitting the city unseen," he said, "is to pass through the gates with the market people returning to the villages. To do that I must not delay."

"The streets are so full," replied Sebastian, glancing out of the window, "that you will pass through them unnoticed. I see, beneath the trees, a neighbor, Koch, the locksmith, who is perhaps waiting to give me the news. While you are saying farewell, I will go out and speak to him. What he has to tell may interest you and your comrades at sea—may help your escape from the city this morning."

He took his hat as he spoke and went to the door. Mathilde, thirsting for news that seemed to him in the streets like the sound of bees, rose and followed him. Desires and d'Arragon were left alone. She had gone to the window, and turning there she looked back at him over her shoulder, where he stood by the door watching her.

"So you see," she said, "there is no other Sebastian."

D'Arragon made no reply. She came nearer to him, her blue eyes sombre with contempt for the man she had married. Suddenly she pointed to the chair which d'Arragon had just vacated.

"That is where he sat. He has eaten my father's salt a hundred times," she said, with a short laugh. For whither-ever civilization may take us, we must go back to certain primeval laws of justice between man and man.

"You judge too hastily," said d'Arragon, but she interrupted him with a gesture of warning.

"I have not judged hastily," she said. "You do not understand. You think I judge from that letter. That is only a confirmation of something that has been in my

mind for a long time—ever since my wedding day. I knew when you came into the room upstairs on that day that you did not trust Charles."

"I?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, standing squarely in front of him and looking in his eyes. "You did not trust him. You were not glad that I had married him. I could see it in your face. I have never forgotten."

D'Arragon turned away toward the window, Sebastian and Mathilde were in the street below, in the shade of the trees, talking with the eager neighbors.

"You would have stopped it if you could," said Desires, and he did not deny it.

"It was some instinct," he said, at length. "Some passing misgiving."

"For Charles?" she asked, sharply.

And d'Arragon, looking out of the window, would not answer. She gave a sudden laugh.

"One cannot compliment you on your politeness," she said. "Was it, for Charles that you had misgivings?"

At last d'Arragon turned on his heel.

"Does it matter," he asked, "since I came too late?"

"That is true," she said, after a pause.

"You came too late; so it doesn't matter. And the thing is done now. And I—well, I suppose I must do what others have done before me—I must make the best of it."

"I will help you," said d'Arragon, slowly, almost carefully, "if I can."

He was still avoiding her eyes, still looking out of the window. Sebastian was coming up the steps.

CHAPTER XIV.

Moscow.

Nothing is so disappointing as failure—except success.

While the Dantzigers with grave faces discussed the news of Borodino beneath the trees in the Franconian, Charles d'Arragon, white with dust, rose in his stirrups to catch the first sight of the domes and cupolas of Moscow.

It was a sunny morning, and the gold on the churches gleamed and glittered in the shimmering heat like fairy-land.

Charles had ridden to the summit of a hill and sat for a moment, as others had done, in silent contemplation. Moscow at last! All around him men were shouting: "Moscow! Moscow!" Grave, white-haired generals waved their shakos in the air. Those at the summit of the hill called the others to come. Far down in the valley, where the dust raised by thousands of feet lunging in the air like a mist, a faint sound like the roaring of falling water could be heard. It was the word "Moscow!" sweeping back to the rear-most ranks of these starving men who had marched for two months beneath the glaring sun, parched with dust, through a country that seemed to a them a Sahara. Every house they approached, they had found deserted. Every barn was empty. The very crops ripening to harvest had been gathered in and burnt. Near to the miserable farmhouse, a pile of ashes hardly cold, marked where the poor peasants had been tossed upon the fire kindled with the year's harvest.

Everywhere it was the same. There are, as God created it, few countries of a sadder aspect than that which spreads between the Moskva and the Vistula. But it has been decreed by the dim laws of Fate that the ugly countries shall be blessed with the greater love of their children, while men born in a beautiful land seem readiest to emigrate from it, and make the best settlers in a new home.

There is only one country in the world with a ring-fence round it. It is a Russian is driven from his home, he will go to another part of Russia—there is always room.

Before the advance of the spoilers, chartered by their leader to unlimited and open rapine—indeed, he had led them hither with that understanding—the Russians, peasant and noble alike, fled to the east. A hundred times the advance guard, fully alive to the advantages of their position, had raced to the gates of a chateau only to find, on breaking open the doors, that it was empty—the furniture destroyed, the stores burnt, the wine poured out.

So also in the peasants' huts. Some more careful than the rest, they pulled the hatch from the roof to burn it. There was no corn in this the Egypt of their greedy hopes. And, lest they should bring the corn with them, the spoilers found the mills everywhere wrecked.

It was something new to them. It was new to Napoleon, who had so frequently been met half-way, who knew the more for greed, will part smilingly with half in order to save the residue. He knew that many, rather than help a neighbor who is in danger by a robber, will join the robber and share the spoil, crying out that force majeure was used to them.

But, as every man must judge according to his lights, so must even the greatest find himself in the dark at last. No man of the Latin race will ever understand the Slav. And because the beginning is easy—because in certain superficial tricks of speech and thought, Paris and Petersburg are not unlike—so much the more is the breach widened when they necessarily dig deeper than the surface. For, to make the acquaintance of a stranger who seems to be a counterpart of oneself in thought and taste, is like the first hearing of a kindred language, such as Dutch to the English ear. At first it sounds like one's own tongue, with a hundred identical words, but on closer listening it will be found that the words mean something else, and that the whole is incomprehensible and the more difficult to acquire by the very reason of its resemblance.

Napoleon thought that the Russians would act as his enemies of the Latin race had acted. He thought that, like his own people, they would be over-confident, urging each other on to great deeds by loud words and a hundred boasts. But the Russians lack self-confidence, are timid rather than over-bold, dreamy rather than fiery. Only their women are glib of speech. He thought that they would begin very brilliantly and end with a compromise, heart-breaking at first and soon lived down.

"They are savages out here in the plains," he said. "It is a barbaric and stupid instinct that makes them destroy their own property for the sake of hampering us. As we approach Moscow we shall find that the more civilized inhabitants of the villages, enervated by an easy life, rendered selfish by possession of wealth, will not abandon their property,

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but will barter and sell to us, and find themselves the victims of our might."

And the army believed him. For they always believed him. Faith can, indeed, move mountains. It carried four hundred thousand men, without provisions, through a barren land.

And now, to sight of the golden city, the army was still hungry. Nay! it was ragged already. In three columns it converged on the doomed capital, driving before it like a swarm of flies the Cossacks who harassed the advance.

Here again, on the hill looking down into the smiling valley of the Moskva, the unexpected awaited the invaders. The city, shimmering in the sunlight like the realization of some Arab's dream, was silent. The Cossacks had disappeared. Except those around the Kremlin, towering above the river, the city had no walls.

The army halted, while side-by-side camp flew hither and thither on their weary horses. Charles d'Arragon, sunburnt, dusty, hoarse with cheering, was among the first. He looked right and left for de Casimir, but could not see him. He had not seen his chief since Borodino, for he was temporarily attached to the staff of Prince Eugene, who had lost heavily at the Naughe River.

It was usual for the army to halt before a beleaguered city and await the advent in all humility of the vanquished. Usually it was the mayor of the town who came, followed by his councillors in their robes, to explain that the army had abandoned the city, which now begged to throw itself upon the mercy of the conqueror.

For this the army waited on that sunny September morning.

"He is putting on his robes," they said, gaily. "He is new to this work."

(To be Continued.)

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BACK TO THE LAND

Out in the upland places see both dais and down. And the ploughed earth with open scores Turning the green to brown.

The bare bones of the corn Lie gaunt in winter days. Grim faces of rock and sod, Sure, while the year decays.

And, as the autumn withers And the winds strip the tree, The companies of buried folk Rise up to speak with me.

From homesteads long forgotten From the graves by church and yew They come to walk with noiseless tread Upon the land they knew.

Men who once tilled the pasture And the graves by church and yew Women within grey, vanished walls Who bore and loved and died.

And when the great town closes Upon me like a sea, Daylong, above its weary din I hear them call to me.

Dead folk, the roofs are round me To bar out field and hill. And yet I hear you on the wind Calling and calling still.

And while, by street and pavement, The day runs slowly through, My soul across these haunted downs Goes forth and walks with you.

—Violet Jacob, in The Outlook, London.

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When the stars are snuffed like candles, And the seas no longer fret, When the winds unlearn their cunning, And the storms forget!

When the last life is palsied, And the last prayer said; Love shall reign immortal While the world's life dead.

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