

assured him they had no other weapon. In the great airy kitchen the white-capped and white-aproned warden-cook presented them with paninikas of the soup that was being served for dinner. "Ver' fine soup!" said Captain Poniatieff, his first complete sentence in English. The comparative cheerfulness of the cells (into each of which, the Governor observed, the sun penetrated at some hour of the day) pleased the Princess. Captain Poniatieff thought them not quite solid enough.

"Yet we have no escapes, sir," said Captain Strode.

"Point d'evasions, mon cher," interpreted the Princess, and her brother smiled politely.

The Princess asked whether there were no worse cells in the prison than the ones they had inspected. She was aware that the English Government no longer tolerated dungeons, but she had heard of punishment cells called "black holes." A punishment cell was promptly unlocked. It was bare, except for a plank bed, and very dim, but the torture of darkness was not felt there. The cell chanced to be tenanted by a middle-aged Malay, who was seated on the edge of his wooden bed twirling his thumbs.

The patience of the governor endured all questions and all criticisms, for the further he led his visitors the more was he convinced that the triumph of John Howard Prison was great. The Princess, indeed, made no scruple to say that she had not seen its like. The workshops, where trades were in progress or in course of being taught, were inspected; and, last of all, the library, among the contents of which a few volumes in French and a Spanish grammar attracted notice.

The Princess was curious to know whether books in foreign languages were often asked for.

"Our educated prisoners," answered the governor, "read everything they can get hold of; here is a French history which, as you may see, has passed through many hands. The librarian, our chaplain, is asked now and then for a book in some language almost unheard of."

"I do not suppose you have any books in Russian?" said the Princess.

"I think not, madame. Your country does not supply us with many prisoners; though, by the way, we have a Russian in our keeping just now. I don't know what his reading is, but he reads English as easily as I do."

"A Russian?" said the Princess. "Who is he, monsieur?"

"The man Orloff is serving the first months of his sentence here."

"You do not mean!" The Princess flushed angrily.

"Tu entends?" she said to her brother. "Ce vilain d'Orloff est ici." "Tiens!" he exclaimed. "We have seen him?"

The governor explained that a convict spent the first nine months of his sentence in separate confinement, leaving his cell only for chapel and exercise. "But we passed the cell," he continued, "not five minutes ago. You shall see the man, if you please."

From the moment that Orloff's name had fallen, the Princess had shown all the excitement of indignation.

"This man, monsieur," she said to the governor, "is canaille, base, vile. He is of the Nihilists, and in Russia we know what he has done. What he has done here is little, but in Russia—!" To her brother she said abruptly, "Veux tu le voir? M. le gouverneur nous accorde la permission."

Captain Poniatieff, less moved than his sister, seemed not over-eager to embrace the offer. "For you to say," said he, shrugging his shoulders.

"Are you sure, monsieur, that it is Orloff?" asked the Princess.

"For myself," replied the governor, "I never set eyes on him till he was brought here. As far as we know, this is his first sentence in England. I may tell you, however, that since his admission here he has been seen

by Russian, French and English detectives, two of whom are prepared to swear that he is the Orloff who is wanted in Russia for the affair which the Princess seems to hint at. There has been some talk of raising the question of extradition; but I don't quite see how that can be dealt with until he has settled his account in this country. He was sentenced at the Old Bailey to five years' penal servitude."

"Allons!" said the Princess, with an effort. "I will see him—but I wish I had not known that he was here."

"Come, then, madame," the governor replied. "We have not twenty steps to go. The man is lodged in the hall we have just passed through, quite close to the door."

They descended from the library, a room near the governor's office, to the colonnade or covered way which communicated with the first hall of the prison. Rain was falling, but there were not six yards to traverse in the open. The gate or grille of light iron bars which shut off C hall from the rest of the prison was unlocked again, and Captain Strode stopped at the cell marked twenty-three.

"It is a matter of form, madame," he said, as he shook out a key from his bunch; "but I must ask you to give me your word that you will hand no written message to the prisoner, nor any tool or weapon."

"Monsieur," said the Princess Trubetskoi, "I gave you the only paper that I had; I never carry tools, and I have no weapon."

"You see," said the governor, with a smile, as he turned his key in the lock of cell twenty-three, "in prison, we are the most timid of people. The maxim of the Home Office is, that 'Suspicion sleeps at wisdom's gate.'" It was Captain Strode's own quotation from the poets.

As he threw open the door of the cell, little Orloff looked up from his loom.

"La, la! I not much like," said Captain Poniatieff, as his sister went in alone. "Orloff? No, I trust him never."

The Princess had left the door ajar; but the nerves of Captain Poniatieff, who had held himself so reserved, seemed now on edge. He fluttered in a fidget to and fro in front of the cell door, drew the governor away, led him back, and snid perpetually. "You think safe? Orloff! In Russia we should tie some chains at him."

Then, as if ashamed of his nervousness for his sister, Captain Poniatieff, with a Herculean effort at English, launched desperately into praise of the prison.

"Ver' fine preesen! We viseet many preesen—France, Jairmany, Etaly, Swedain. The Princess, she go all the time in preesen. But Zhon Hovard! No; it is not to make compareesen. C'est la prison des prisons. Ver' splendid!"

"Canaille, va!" And there was a sound from cell twenty-three as if a blow were struck.

"Parbleu! I know!" said Captain Poniatieff, but the governor was first at the cell's door.

The Princess Trubetskoi stumbled across the threshold, leaving, through the half-closed door, a glimpse of Orloff crouched in a corner of the cell.

The governor swung to the door with a crash. The breach of discipline had changed him quickly into the offended gnu.

"Madame," he said brusquely, "I do not allow even my warders to lay a hand upon a prisoner. If you were insulted your remedy was with me."

"Pardon," murmured the Princess. She had thrown herself, trembling from head to foot, upon her brother's shoulder. "Pardon," she repeated. "He knew me, and insulted me, and I struck him." The very timbre of her voice was altered.

"Madame will probably not wish to stay longer," said Captain Strode.

The Princess remained silent and quivering on her brother's shoulder.

Captain Strode led the way to the gate of the ward, and thence straight towards the outer door of the prison.

The rain had not ceased; it was a dull procession; and the princess, her arm tight in her brother's, let her fine skirt trail over the sodden path. Under the archway, between the inner and the outer gates, the brougham waited for them.

At the inner gate stood the chief warden, and as he opened it the Governor stood aside to let his visitors pass. In the act of following them his attention was arrested by a very curious mark upon the wet gravel. Captain Strode's eyes blazed and a terrible look crossed his face, but in a moment he was cool again. By a gesture scarcely perceptible he showed the chief warden what he had seen on the path; then, quietly, to him: "The black case from my cupboard—quick!"

What Captain Strode had seen was that each step the Princess Trubetskoi had taken between C hall and the gate she had just passed through had left upon the muddy walk the impress of the broad arrow, which is cut in the sole of every convict's shoe!

Captain Poniatieff had already handed his sister into the brougham.

"I believe I must detain you for one moment longer," said the governor, approaching the door. "It is the rule in our prisons for visitors to sign their names. The book is here in the reception room," indicating a door immediately opposite to the door of the brougham.

The Princess seemed to hesitate, but as the governor offered her his hand to alight she roused herself and stepped out.

As they entered the reception room, where the visitors' book stood open on the desk, the chief warden entered behind them. What did he hold which caught the eye of Captain Poniatieff, whose hand went like a flash to a pocket of his overcoat?

"Hands up! You're covered!" said the chief warden.

The Princess, who had taken up the pen to write her name, turned swiftly and looked along the barrel of Mr Sykes' revolver. With a cry, half horror, half despair, she threw up her hands and reeled against the desk. The governor stepped beside the chief warden, took from his other hand the fellow of the pointed weapon, and raising his whistle to his lips blew a summons. The gate warden was on the scene in a moment.

"Handcuff and bring here at once the prisoner in C 23," said the governor.

"I don't know what birds we have trapped, Mr Sykes," he added, "but in a minute or two we will ask the lady to remove her veil."

At this moment the Princess found a strained and feeble voice. "What is it?" she said. "What does this mean?"

"Madame, or sir," said the governor, "for at this moment I will not swear to your shoes—it is a simple question of the soles that you are wearing. I fancy that your boot-maker has somehow contrived to identify you with one of my prisoners. A mistake? We shall clear it up in a moment!"

A tap on the door and two warders led in a grotesque little figure. He or she was correct in the tunic and knickerbockers of the convict, but his or her legs were cased in silk, and the feet in patent leather shoes.

The lost game told its own disastrous tale.

"H'm!" said Captain Strode, "not quite quick enough at the change, eh? Very sad. Very sad, upon my word; but these little matters are difficult to bring off neatly. Has either of you any statement to make here, or will you wait till we get to Row-street? Plenty of time before the court rises."

"Captain Poniatieff" still held himself defiantly, and looked as though—had his companions been armed as he was—he would have led a rush for the gate. As it was there were two very ready revolvers to be reckoned with, and warders were now swarming at the door. To make the attempt would be as useless as smiting the sea with a sword.

"Come," he said to Orloff and the "Princess." "It is done with us. We fight not to-day."

A noise of heavy wheels rolled in under the archway—the first prison van with prisoners from the police courts.

"Handcuff Orloff and the other," said the governor. "The van will wait. What, Orloff—as the steel circlets were slipped upon the little figure in the Paris jacket—and you found John Howard so much more comfortable than the Russian prisoners!"

As the prisoners were led out from the reception room the gate warden handed the governor a telegram, which read: "Scotland Yard.—Orloff's brother will visit the prison to-day disguised as Princess Trubetskoi."

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