

PRINCESS TELLA'S MODEL.

This story was written by the Empress of Russia for a book intended for private circulation among the members of the imperial family and their friends. She is a German and does not write Russian. Her German story was translated by M. Fischbein, one of the best-known translators in Moscow, and by him furnished to a New York correspondent at the time of the Czar's coronation. The Russian translation has been incorporated in a book similar to that recently published by Emperor William of Germany. In this book he told two stories—one of them describing how he surprised a group of officers during the Kiel celebration, and the other detailing certain interesting experiences in a Berlin restaurant. Alexander III. also wrote a book of campfire stories. Indeed, it is a fact for the members of this particular royal line to write books. The reader of the story here given will not need to be told that "Princess Tella" stands for the Czarina herself.

"Princess Tella left St. Petersburg yesterday on Special No. 17, and will dine in the Imperial Pavilion at your station to-morrow at noon."

Princess Tella's betrothal to the Czarowitch Nicholas had just been decided upon by the family council, and although the press had been gossiping about the probability of such a happening for some time, the world did not know that the matter had been settled. For once, however, the Government was convinced of the truth of popular rumor, with the result that Her Highness was already treated by the officials as a full-fledged Russian Grand Duchess.

Such was the situation when, on September 2, in the year 1894, the station master at Kornoff received the above telegraphic dispatch.

Half an hour later the adjutant of the Governor-General rushed in the railway official's bedroom to announce that His Excellency Prince Weripoloff and his entire staff, would receive her Highness with royal honors. The station master nearly fainted when he heard the message. To dance attendance upon a princess was bad enough, but to satisfy the Government's plenipotentiary at the same time was almost equal to attempting the impossible. Still it had to be done.

A hundred hands were at once engaged to clear the station and its surroundings of the result of years of sloveness. The floors of the building were scraped and scoured, metal work and windows highly polished. The gardeners of the town were next laid under contribution; so was everybody else in the neighborhood who owned a green plant or a pot of flowers, a gorgeous rug or a striking piece of furniture, all being needed to decorate either the depot or the pavilion. In the kitchen of the latter a caterer was busy with a large staff of assistants preparing delicacies, all other work being abandoned for that of the moment. The station house looked extraordinary, if not elegant, when shortly before the expected arrival of Special No. 17, the Governor appeared.

"Everything in perfect order," reported the station master.

"We will see," replied Prince Weripoloff, ungraciously. Presently his suppressed wrath—he is always enraged at somebody or something—descended upon the head of the chief of police. The cabmen and drivers, halting in a neighborhood where the Princess might see them, were in their working garb; they were dirty and must be ordered away. The railway laborers had to don their best uniforms at once. There were not enough police present; the entire force should be drawn up.

These criticisms and orders were given in a few peremptory sentences and gurgles, as was the Governor's habit. His Excellency would have considered it too much honor to address an underling in such a way as to make himself thoroughly understood. His officials and servants most of the time had to guess at the Prince's intentions and woe to him who translated the abrupt instructions wrong ly. His bread and butter—even his liberty—were at stake.

Not until Special No. 17 actually rolled into the station, and the music corps of the Hessian infantry garrisoned at Kornoff struck up the royal welcome hymn did Weripoloff's face brighten. Giving a last look to the Master of Police at his side—a look that said "If there be an accident to-day, consider yourself discharged"—the stern Governor changed into a smiling, happy courtier. He rushed to open the door of the saloon carriage with his own gloved hand, and bowed low as Her Highness, followed by two elderly ladies and a number of army officers, walked down the steps.

"General," said Princess Tella, "for the last few hours I have admired the province you govern. I am told you have done much to improve it. You like to live here?"

"To live and die here," replied Weripoloff.

"I understand. And if I had any influence in St. Petersburg I would surely exercise it in your favor. But why should you fear to lose your post. You are not a Liberal?"

"Grand Ducal Highness, I have many enemies, and a dream I had weighs heavily upon my mind."

The Princess, who wanted to humor the Governor, said: "But how about

your dream? Out with it, Excellency."

"It is quickly told," said Weripoloff. "I dreamt that a lowly peasant was the cause of my dismissal and disgrace."

"And when did that happen—the dream I mean?" queried Her Highness.

"Three months ago," Princess Tella laughed.

"I must compliment you," she said, "on your forbearance. I have seen any number of rusties while travelling through this province. If Your Excellency were vindictive you would have transported at least one-half of the population to Siberia."

Saying this, Princess Tella walked to the window and looked out into the court yard below, where a number of railway laborers were drawn up in line attired in their best.

"Fine specimens of manhood you have hereabout," she continued. "Look at that fellow on the left wing. I never saw a better model for a head of the Saviour. By the way, General, is there any objection to sending the man to St. Petersburg, where I intend to return in a few weeks? He could sit for the altar piece with which I hope to present His Majesty the Czar for Christmas. It is to be placed in the house chapel."

The Governor fairly beamed with devotion.

"Your Grand Ducal Highness's wish is a command to me," he replied without hesitation. At that moment the Chief of Police entered with two dispatches, one addressed to Princess Tella, the other to Weripoloff. Her Highness attempted to turn the General's telegram over to him, but Weripoloff explained that etiquette forbade him to open it in her presence. So Princess Tella read her message, which was one of greetings and good wishes from the Czarowitch, and then the other.

"I'm sorry," she said, "the dispatch calls you to report at once to the Minister of the Interior. I trust it's nothing serious."

Presently the announcement was made that the train had to proceed, and Princess Tella took leave hastily amid the hurrahs of all assembled. Her Highness, however, did not appear at the window to wave her adieu and thanks, as was customary. Weripoloff, never thinking that as a foreigner the Princess might be unacquainted with Russia usages, noticed the omission with alarm. Perhaps somebody or something had offended the great lady. If that were the case, he, the Governor, would be the sufferer in the end. The General turned savagely to the Master of Police.

"Your men looked and acted like drunken loafers in the presence of Her Highness," he cried, "and on the outer side of the rails were no guards whatever. It seems to me, Usloff, you neglect your duty more and more. Mind, I will not stand it much longer. Either you execute my orders to the letter or give up your epaulets. To-night I leave for St. Petersburg. See to it that I find no cause for complaint upon my return. And, by the way, that red-haired laborer whom Princess Tella was gracious enough to notice, must be sent to the capital at once."

With this the Mighty One boarded his troika and drove off. As soon as he was out of hearing distance Colonel Usloff ran over to where his lieutenant was stationed.

"Schelinsky," he snorted, "may the devil take you and your men. Miserable dunces that you are! Our whole reception was spoiled by the combination of carelessness and slovenliness you represent. Where are your eyes, man? Of course you placed no guards on the other side of the rail. A child would have known better, but you appear to think authority was given you for no other reason but that you may smoke cigarettes in places where smoking is generally forbidden. And another thing—who was that red-haired scoundrel who dared raise his eyes to Princess Tella, or at least the window where Her Highness stood?"

"The guard," Schelinsky tried to explain, "was lying on the ground according to orders issued at the time when the Czarowitch passed through here."

"Rot! His Imperial Highness honored this station six months ago. To-day the guards should have been visible. But as to that red ruffian, who is he? Does nobody know him?"

"Please, Your Honor, it's Mischa, with his full name Michael Alexandroff," spoke up Policeman Duschkin. "I had my eyes on him all the time."

The Colonel fairly jumped with rage. "You have seen everything, and yet failed to break that dog's ribs? I shall fine you a month's pay for your stupidity."

Then, turning to Schelinsky, the commander continued:

"Take some of your men and arrest Mischa. Then report to me."

The lieutenant bowed submissively.

"And what is to be done with the fellow?"

"He goes to St. Petersburg to the Peter-Paul fortress, of course," snapped the Colonel. "That done you will keep to

your room for three days, and the next three days do day and night service, to remind you of your neglect of duty on this august occasion."

The station master, who had overheard the Colonel, approached Schelinsky when the police mogul had withdrawn. "I'm sorry for you," he said good naturedly. "You were punished for no reason whatever."

"Pshaw," laughed the lieutenant. "That's the way of the world. Big fish will always eat the little ones. There is only one way out of it—grow and become an oppressor on your own hook. I am a terror in my own little way, and can visit my displeasure, if I feel any, on quite a goodly number of people. There is this Mischa, for instance, the cause of all this trouble. Perhaps you think I won't take it out of his hide! We will see. Duschkin, you will attend me on this mission."

II.

Michael Alexandroff, called Mischa for short, was one of the regular train hands employed at Kornoff. This had been a red letter day with him. Suspension of work since noon, double pay, and the unique experience of seeing a real, live princess. Ah, that was worth celebrating. So, before going to his cabin he purchased a quarter of a liter of wodka and a bagful of gingerbread for Maschinka—poor little Maschinka, who doted on gingerbread, and got her fill of it only once or twice a year!

They had been married seven months, and already owned the little cabin where they lived—the cabin, a table, a cupboard, a bench and a bed. More still. The gilded shine that occupied the place of honor on the principal wall of the hut was all paid for. And how did this come about? Mischa had given up wodka as a steady diet when he took unto himself a wife, and if the little stranger whom they expected was a boy he would give it up entirely. Yes, indeed, he would.

When Mischa got home he was a little worse for liquor and full of talk and nonsense.

"I've seen a real princess," he said, "and what is more she has seen me. She came to the window to do it, and pointed me out to the Governor."

"You are a liar, Mischa," cried the young woman, with good-natured bluntness. "Why should such great people want to look at you?"

"I don't know, I am sure, but perhaps they were attracted by my new boots. I had polished them until I could see my face in them."

"Pshaw! you just want to make me laugh. But inasmuch as you brought me gingerbread allow me to eat it in peace."

They sat down together, she munching with evidence of relish, he watching her fine white teeth work while he sipped from his bottle. It was a picture of contentment. Suddenly the door was opened with a crash. The police lieutenant and Duschkin entered noisily.

"We are looking for you, Michael Alexandroff."

Husband and wife jumped up.

"It must be a mistake, gracious master!" cried both, and Mischa added: "My passport is in order, master. I have paid my taxes, though they were extremely heavy. Still I paid them."

"No need of telling me that you find no pleasure in giving to the Emperor what is the Emperor's. We know all about you rascal. Have you any printed or written matter in your cabin? Better confess, for we will surely find everything."

"God save me, master, I can neither read nor write."

"That's a moth-eaten excuse, which may be reversed under pressure of the knout. Meanwhile you, Duschkin, try and rout out the stuff. If there be any suspicious articles we must find them. Search well and spare not their rags."

The officer executed the order to the letter, leaving no piece of furniture unturned. He threw the contents of the cupboard and bed on the floor and ripped up the mattress despite Mascha's wailings. Of course he found nothing except the half empty wodka bottle, and this he placed carefully out of sight.

"Nothing to be found, master lieutenant."

"Never mind. They probably have proofs enough in St. Petersburg to transport him for life. Now handcuff the scoundrel, but so that he feels it. Quick!"

"Great God!" cried the woman, "pardon him, little father! Whatever he has done, he cannot have sinned much or I, his constant companion, would know it. Release him, gracious master, for this time only. All we own in the world shall be yours."

(Continued on Fifth Page)

Meeting of Delegates.

A meeting of the Liberal-Conservative delegates of the third district of Queen's County, will be held in the Masonic Temple, on Friday, next, July 2nd, at 1 p. m.

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