

# IN THE REIGN OF BORIS.\*

By Robert McDonald,

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## XXIII.

BEVERLY did not leave the room by the window, as the young officer had suggested. He had forgotten all about suggestions from anybody. He was divided in his mind, and the sudden whirl of events had given him a sort of numbness of intellect. He wanted to get into some quiet corner and put the problems before him into words, just as he might have set down a row of figures on paper as an assistance to his memory.

He felt friendless. He had risked everything for Boris, he had gone through perils for him. They should have been "brothers in blood," the bond sealed by their perils. But Beverly was not of the sentimental cast that sits and whines at fate. There were still deeds before him. Nor was he of such a small mind and imagination that he was incapable of seeing that Boris was not all a bad man. It is easy to be conventionally good as long as there is a public opinion to be our conscience, and we are whipped into the narrow path by the thorns of the social wilderness that borders it. It is altogether different to be absolute lord of your own conduct under the stress of enormous temptation. While Beverly's own love strengthened his arm and steeled his heart, it made him understand in some dim fashion that he was not particularly abused; that had fate changed their places, he might have been as little generous as this Muscovite had shown himself.

As Beverly came out into the great room, he saw that it was filled with officers of the king's suite. They were rather raffish young men, mostly, with narrow heads. The one who had sent him to the king was not there.

The Carpathian officers turned from the piano, and from the tables where they stood fingering the glittering trinkets which Elinor Marr had scattered here and there, giv-

ing a bizarre effect to the grim old room, and looked at him curiously. He had just come from the royal presence, and probably the breach—the slight breach between the king and his foreign favorite which they had felt in some vague way—was already healed. They had known favorites who hung about the court of Carpathia in other years, with fluctuating fortunes. In an instant Beverly felt this attitude, and his expression met it. He was fighting with the weapons of strategy now. He put on the complacent expression of one who might have countless favors to bestow, and walked with his head in the air through the group, speaking carelessly to one here and there.

He was determined not to leave the castle without having said one word to John Marr. Linda had said that the prisoner was in the tower, and it was probable that he was still there. Beverly knew, from his efforts to reach the castle the day after the death of Lubona, that if he went to Linda to ask her how he could reach Elinor's father, it would be impossible to return. He would be like a cook with the recipe for preparing a hare, and no hare.

In the doorway he came up against the officer who had let him in. A wide smile went over the good natured face. This officer was something of an adventurer himself, one of those who always took the broom by the handle. He had belonged to the court in the days of Johann, Boris' predecessor, and was cheerfully ready to change his allegiance again if it were worth his while. In the mean time he was ready to be on good terms with the powers that be.

Beverly put his hand familiarly on the Carpathian's arm and turned him around.

"I know when I may trust a man," he said confidentially.

"So you didn't need to climb out of the window?"

"The king has more politeness than to require gymnastics for his amusement." The

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American returned lightly. Then he went on with a graver face. He had pushed his arm through that of the Carpathian, and had drawn him to that old carved chest before the tapestry covered door. "When a man has a mission, he has a right to use such means as he sees fit. Is not that one of the laws of diplomacy?"

"I am no diplomat," the other disclaimed, though he smiled happily; "but it is the law of common sense, than which there is none higher."

"I have a secret mission." Beverly's voice went low. "I am to see and make a proposition to the prisoner who is held here. As he is my countryman, it will be easier for me than for another. It is best that I should reach him in such a way that he will have no inkling that I come from the king. I must appear to every one, even if I am discovered, to have been acting upon my own responsibility. I give you my confidence because, but for you, I should not be going upon this mission, and I know I can trust you."

The Carpathian looked hard into Beverly's eyes. He was not unduly suspicious, but he was a Carpathian. It appeared the most natural thing in the world that Boris should want his prisoner put into the position of betraying himself. That again was an old Carpathian trick. He mused for a moment, his lids drawn almost together, while the heart of the American beat fast and he kept an eye on the doorway. Once there was a disturbance inside, and it seemed to Beverly that his heart would never slip down out of his throat again. Boris might appear at any moment.

"There is a way of access to the tower. It appears to have been a sort of lumber room. Doors have been sealed up which led to it from other parts of the house. There is only one entrance, and that is guarded."

"But the windows?" Beverly spoke impatiently, as if he had already been told so much.

"A coping about eight inches wide runs around the tower. You have noticed it."

"Eight inches! It is a roadway. Suppose you show me the way, arousing no suspicions."

"You Americans are venturesome," the Carpathian said. "Come with me, and I will pretend to show you out of the front door."

They arose and walked together down the hall. Two men stood there idly, but Beverly knew them to be guards. They saluted the young officer profoundly, and one of them held open the door.

The Carpathian took the door in his hand, and began to talk, as if continuing a conversation with Beverly.

"I hope I shall see you in Paris next year. I want to get a leave then. By the way, Olaf"—to one of the men—"go up to the room above and bring a package you will see on the dressing table."

The guard went, while the two young men talked on.

"I will walk with you," the Carpathian said, "as far as the bridge;" and then he turned to the other man. "Get my cape. It is in the hall."

"I will walk on," Beverly called out, and passed through the door; but as the servant's back was turned he followed the Carpathian's gesture and ran swiftly up the stairs. The shrubs were heavy here. The young officer took his cape and the package, and walked out. Ten minutes later he passed in through the stables and joined Beverly where he stood behind a stack of arms in the upper hallway.

"Come this way," he whispered, and led him to a door in the wall and up a short stairway. In another minute they came to a casement which led out upon a tiled roof. The Carpathian stopped. "Out here," he said, "you will find your way along the roof until you come to the place where you can climb the side of the tower. There is ivy. Quick!"

Some one was coming along the hallway. As Beverly stepped out upon the shelving tiles, he heard the officer speak in answer to the voice of Boris.

The sun had set, and the twilight was settling down. Lights began to shine out from the windows below. The night was cold, but Beverly took off his shoes. He must reach John Marr before the moon arose in its brilliancy. He pulled himself up by the ivy, and by crevices in the stones, until he stood upon the narrow ledge, fully fifteen feet above the lower roof. Then he realized that he did not know which of the tower windows led into Marr's room. As he clung to the ledge he seemed all at once to see the almost ludicrous difficulties of his position.

It was not a pretty fall to the stones below, but the slightest push from one of those windows would send him there. And how was he going to get in if he reached the right window? It was hardly likely that a strong, agile man like John Marr would sit beside an open window and pine for freedom with a ledge eight inches wide running underneath. But as the darkness grew Beverly put his hands in the ivy and

slipped cautiously along, the stones cold against his stockinged feet.

The first window was dark, and there seemed to be neither shutters nor bars to it. He stood still and listened. It seemed to him that he could have heard a breath, but there was only dead silence. To pass further, he must climb the sill. The next window was around the corner, and as Beverly turned he saw it was lighted. He heard voices, too—deep, earnest voices; and involuntarily he shrank back into the ivy and listened.

There was no doubt about John Marr being here. His strident, sarcastic voice was seemingly as strong as ever, and it was pitched high with temper.

"Release me from this place, and let me meet you on fair terms, and I will answer you. Do you expect to discuss any matter while I am in this condition?"

"I cannot forget," Boris said with some degree of patience, "that you were free, and that you tried to lure me into a camp of insurgents."

"Lure? You asked to go. Do you fear I might succeed a second time? How could I know that you were lying to me?" Evidently the fear of kings did not rest in the soul of John Marr. "It might be better for you that Russia should own Carpathia. You have no real ties here. You are tired of the whole affair. If you aren't, you are fonder of the desert than I imagine."

"Suppose I give up my throne. Suppose I join with you, and let your plans go through. What then?"

"You will have done a very sensible thing," said Marr, with great coolness.

"Will you give me your daughter?"

"That I will not!" the old man almost yelled. "Do you suppose I have spent my life earning money for you to waste? You! You aren't even a legitimate child. You have no right to any title. I will make no such poor bargain as this."

"My regard for your daughter makes me patient with you."

"You need not disturb yourself concerning me. I will not stay here long. I left orders with my agents in Paris. They will look for me. I am an American citizen."

"I have known occasions when American citizens were not particularly well looked after by their government."

"They did not happen to be citizens who had contributed very liberally to the campaign fund of the administration," Mr. Marr said with great suavity.

"I can keep you here in this castle until you rot," Boris declared. "I have proof

that you tried to overthrow my government, that you had designs upon my life. Oh, I know the Russians would have let you kill me, and have felt relieved when it was over. I do not intend to give up this throne, and I do intend to marry your daughter with or without your consent. She is anxious to see you. I want to restore you to her, as I want to give her everything else in this world that she desires. It rests with you."

There was silence for a moment, broken by a laugh from Marr which was not a pleasant one.

"You must love my daughter indeed. Your kindness to her father proves it."

"It is the political prisoner who is kept here. When you have given your consent to my marriage to your daughter, when you will promise to use your influence to make your daughter my wife, you cease to be dangerous."

"And so you need influence? I thought as much. Suppose I promise you all this, what certainty have you that I will keep my promise?"

"I shall ask you, in the first place, to write your daughter a letter telling her that you are kept away by business, and committing her to my care. You will tell her in another letter, a little later, that I have your sanction in offering her my hand."

"But she knows that I am sane. *You!* A fortune hunter, an adventurer with a paper crown! Faugh! Why don't you strike me, to prove to me what a good husband you would make my daughter?"

"For fear I might be tempted to strike you were you free, I will leave you bound," Boris said, and Beverly could hear that the words came through gritted teeth.

A moment later the door clanged, and Marr was alone. A second later, Beverly heard the sound of one hard, dry sob. He waited for a moment, for the sound chilled him. Then he came close to the window sill, and, taking a firm hold, peered in. Marr was sitting in a wooden chair, beside a table on which were the dishes of what had evidently been a luxurious dinner. He was not starving on bread and water, and he had no scruples about accepting the hospitality forced upon him.

Beverly saw that the prisoner was secured by an ingenious arrangement which, he reflected, had doubtless been planned for the king himself by Lubona. It would have been a brilliant idea to confine the Carpathian monarch in the house of an American citizen, and to have fed him from the latter's table while he was watched over by the faithful servants of the Lubona family.

It was more than clever to choose the house of a man who also had reasons for desiring a change of government. Everybody would believe that it was Marr, and not Lubona, who had been responsible for the king's incarceration. It was too good a plan to have gone so far astray.

The room was well furnished. There were chairs, and tables, and books, and on the hearth a smoldering fire. But from each of Marr's ankles ran a slender steel chain, attached to a staple in the wall. They were so arranged that while he could almost reach the wall and the window, he could not quite do so. Where one chain was lax, the other held him tight. There was no possible chance of his getting near enough to the staples to work at them, or near enough to the window to attract attention. The fire, too, was just out of reach.

Beverly waited until the place was absolutely still, and the old man sat with his head in his hands. Then he carefully lifted one leg over the window sill, and jumped to the floor. He had expected to see some signs of relief on Marr's face, but if there was any change it grew grimmer.

"What do *you* want?" the prisoner asked harshly.

"I came to tell you that your daughter is well——"

"A piece of information already received from your master."

"It is my wish to restore you to her. I am here without the knowledge of the king, and tell you that there may be a way of escape, and to plan with you. Boris has ordered me to leave the kingdom. I have made every effort to see you here." Beverly's words sounded stiff and meaningless to himself.

"A very pretty story indeed. You forget that I last saw you with the king. Your entrance is admirably planned. I may be supposed to be ready to listen to you after the interview I have just had with the young adventurer who calls himself the king of this country." Marr laughed again. "Doubtless he would like to get me out of here without coming down from his lofty perch. You may tell him for me that I am not going."

"But your daughter?"

"She is an American girl, and if she can't take care of herself, this is an excellent opportunity for her to learn;" but Beverly could see that this was bravado, pure and simple.

"Your daughter does not know that you are imprisoned. She does not know that Boris is the king. The best thing that you

can do is to tell me where your men are, and let me bring them here to get you out of this place."

"Oh, that's the information you are fishing for! An admirable plan indeed!"

Beverly's patience gave out. He went to the fireplace, picked up a heavy iron rod which lay there, and went toward one of the staples. Under his strong pressure it was the work of only a few minutes to prize it out. In a short time Marr was free, except that he held the chains in his hands, still attached to his ankles.

"Put those in your pockets. You are a strong, agile man; come with me. We can slip along this wall, drop to the ground by holding to the ivy, and get away." Beverly spoke with strong excitement.

But Marr hesitated.

"Why are you so anxious to help me, if it is not a plot to put me again into the hands of that fellow Boris—to let him kill me, perhaps?"

"Because I, too, love your daughter."

"You! And you expect me to give her to you for helping me out of this place? Understand that I will do nothing of that sort. Rather than have her marry you, I would give her to that adventurer. After all, he is a prince, and most girls are pleased with a title. He would give up everything for her. My schemes would all go through. I should get all of my concessions. If it is a choice between you two, I shall choose him."

"I ask for nothing," Beverly said. "I want nothing but to relieve your daughter's mind, to take you back to her. There is only the slenderest chance that I shall be allowed to come near her again. I am ordered out of the country. I cannot go with the knowledge that you have left your daughter alone at the mercy of——" Beverly broke off because there was a lump in his throat. He was helpless indeed.

"You can have no interest in me or my daughter. I should have known from the beginning that you were here only to work disaster for me."

"I may have come to Carpathia for that purpose," Beverly said, "but I swear to you that I gave it up long ago. If the story is ever told it will be told by some other pen."

Marr looked at him curiously.

"You *were* here, then, to work disaster for me. You are your father's own son. And you think that it can all be wiped out in a moment by taking me out of this place."

"I do not see what my father has to do with it."

"Your father ruined the work of my life. He drove me from America."

A light suddenly fell upon Beverly.

"Oh!" he cried, "you think I am Hardin. My name is Beverly. I was sent here by the New York *Herald* to see what you were up to. I happened to be wearing Hardin's cap. I see how you made the mistake."

He had not finished his words before Marr was on his feet, and Beverly had another example of the singular combination of qualities that went to make up this financier.

"Why didn't you tell me this some time ago? Young man, you have a great deal to learn in practical journalism. I thought you were the son of that old devil Hardin, and I spent considerable valuable time trying to put you into such a tight box that you would be a disgrace to his name. As I haven't had my revenge on him, I'm very glad you escaped it."

He looked at Beverly with new and familiar eyes. Old John Marr belonged to the class whose interviews are what the slang of the reporters calls "fat." He felt a comradeship with the men of the pen which they by no means reciprocated. With great power, he had great vanity, and he loved to see himself as a figure in that daily writing down of events which eventually becomes history. If he were to lose all that he expected to gain, there could be no salve for his hurt quite so soothing as the knowledge that the story of his revolution was to be told, and told under his own eyes, his own hand guiding the pen.

"It is nonsense to say that you will never tell the story," he said. "There is no pen so well calculated to tell it. Ah!" His eyes narrowed, and a smile took the corners of his old mouth. "I am not sure that between us we cannot bring the king to terms at last. We ought to. We can make a pretty story of his persecution of American citizens. We can ask for enough money to put us on our feet for life." He spoke as if he too were a poor man.

"I want none of his money. He hasn't any. And let me tell you that I saw Boris take your letter from Lubona's dead body. He has proof against you. You must know it."

"Forged. Lubona is dead, and of course they will put everything on Lubona's shoulders. My dear young man, it can be made very hot indeed for the King of Carpathia. Don't you see that he will never dare to insinuate that Russia was behind me?"

"Behind you in case you won," Beverly said dryly.

"Nobody is behind anybody in case they lose;" and with this piece of philosophy, Marr went toward the window and looked out. "What on earth could be sillier than for a man like me, an American citizen, to start out to fight the King of Carpathia? What would I do it for? What would I get for it? I had a few miners. Boris wanted my daughter, and he imprisoned me to get rid of me; a young newspaper man discovered the plot, released me, and"—he waved his hands expressively—"it is a lovely story."

"It is a good enough story if it has any sort of an ending," Beverly added. How he hated this old man with his thin, Jewish face and dry old figure! It made him sick to think that this was *her* father. How could so lovely and pure and beautiful a flower have come from such a wicked, vulgar old stalk as this? "We are not out yet," he went on. "There are no facilities for telling a newspaper story to the world from this tower, and unless we get away before the moon comes up we shall probably be picked off and buried like Lubona, with honors, and the world will hear nothing whatever of our side of the story."

Marr was looking at the ledge, and at the ground below. Then he shuddered and drew back.

"I cannot do it," he said. "I am no coward, but the sight of that ledge and the fall below turns me sick and dizzy. I cannot go."

"Tell me where your men are. I will get away and bring them here."

Marr looked at him again with suspicion.

"I have no men. My miners are scattered. I know of no armed body."

"This is no time to trifle," Beverly said roughly. "Do you want to stay here in this hole? I can do nothing alone. I tell you again that you are letting your imagination get the better of you, if you think you can intimidate Boris. He is a determined man. He can wear you out. Every hour you stay here makes him more and more able to win your daughter. They are friends. She likes him. She is, after all, only a young girl. She can be influenced."

Beverly groaned as he realized his own meanness. He feared more than anything else in the world, more than the danger that encompassed her father—which he believed to be in reality slight—that Boris would find time to win the woman he himself loved. At heart, he knew that this fear, and this alone, was the driving power of his own actions. He wanted to restore Marr to his daughter and have him tell her a story

that would make her despise the king, make her fear him, when he knew she had almost come to love him. Beverly had imagination enough to see that a woman cannot take a helpless man, handsome, young, dependent upon her, and care for him for twenty four hours, and then put him out of her heart again into the outer world in which she keeps strangers. It is not a hard matter for him to open the doors into her heart's sanctuaries after that. He has left the reception room of acquaintanceship far behind.

"I cannot go this way," Marr said. "I would surely fall."

Beverly went over and tried the door. The lock was massive, but he could see that the key was in it on the outside.

"Wait here," he said. "Stay by the door."

He went back to the window, pulled himself out to the ledge by the ivy branches, and moved swiftly along until he came to that dark window just around the corner. Then he vaulted in. Standing quite still, he struck a match and looked around. It was, as he had supposed, a lumber room. Here were piled all the trash that an ancient family can accumulate in centuries—old moth eaten garments, wormy furniture, and dust, dust, dust. Beverly looked for the door and went to it. It was unlocked. Softly, softly, he opened it an inch or two and looked out.

Facing him was the door behind which he knew Marr must be standing. The light was dim, but he could see that the key was in the lock, and at the other end of the passage he could see the guards playing cards around an oil lamp. If he moved they would be likely to hear him on the creaking old floor and turn. He went back into the room and struck another match, and then he hastily gathered together all the inflammable material in sight, feeling for it, striking match after match, and carefully building a fire.

In five minutes he had a crackling, roaring flame. He opened the door, and the red fire darted after him, swept by the draft from the window. He lifted his voice in a mighty yell, whose meaning any nation can interpret: "Fire! Fire!"

With one bound he turned the key of the room where John Marr stood, and pulled him into the passage. Together they rushed upon the guards, who had started up in a panic. Before they knew what had happened, the two fugitives were on the stairs, past the turn, and in the lighted part of the building. Beverly opened the first door he

came to and pushed Marr in, as the whole household rushed up the tower stairs, looking for the fire. He saw Boris fly by, consternation in his face, and then, although there were a dozen men in the passageway, he opened the door and stepped boldly out.

The two Americans went quickly down the steps into the hall below. Beverly reasoned that Marr's face was not known to more than two or three of the men, and they would never dare stop him, when he was accompanied by the king's friend, without the king's orders.

The main hall was empty, and Beverly made an instant decision. If they fled on foot, morning would be certain to discover them. They must get to Carpath, and to the English legation. The American legation was situated over a tobacconist's shop, and practically went out of existence when the representative was enjoying himself in Paris, as at present. Quick as a flash Beverly had the chest back from the tapestry door, had pulled Marr through it, and was running toward the stables, praying that there might be horses there.

The older man was as active as the younger, and followed him without a word or a sound. The door into the stable was easily opened. Beverly gave an exclamation which came from his heart as he looked within. Standing in the stalls were two horses, and only two, saddled and bridled. Evidently the king intended to ride away within a short time. The call of fire had drawn off the stable men, and as fast as he could move Beverly opened the door into the alley way, and he and Marr, mounting, rode out into the night.

#### XXIV.

BEVERLY turned in his saddle and looked back, feeling like a criminal, for the ancestral castle of the Lubonas was wrapped in flames. The old wooden lining of the stone walls was being licked up like wax in the hot fire.

He wondered what Boris would do to them for stealing his horses. Would he make the man he had fought with, and the father of the woman he wanted to marry, stand trial in the Carpathian courts for horse stealing? It seemed almost a humorous idea.

The fugitives were on a well traveled road after they had gone half a mile, and Beverly had settled down to the steady trot which he intended to keep up through the long miles to Carpath. Already his mind was

full of visions of possibilities which, like all air castles in the mind of a young lover, would not come down, however much he bombarded them with reason. He was going to restore her to her father, and they must all leave the country. She would hate Boris when she knew the truth, and he—well, he had shared dangers with her, and she trusted him. There were possibilities. He could not but know that there were possibilities.

They had crossed the bridge, finding it quite unguarded, and were going along the road that led under the mountains where they had played at hide and seek with Lubona. Up there, not so very far as the crow flies, she had sat on that ruined wall where he had held her in his arms. A sharp little thrill went through Beverly's heart as he wondered whether she, too, remembered.

He was brought back to earth by a jerk. Marr was leaving the road and going up one of these ravines. Beverly drew in his own horse and rode after him.

"Where are you going?"

"I have business in this direction."

"If you want to go to your daughter, this is not the way. It is the next turning."

Marr stopped suddenly, and half turned his horse until he faced Beverly.

"I am going to the men who were to strike the first blow for the downfall of Boris' throne. You are exactly the fellow I want to come with me. You can do more for me than a thousand men. You can put the sympathies of the world with us. Boris will follow us, but he has only a small guard, and he will take the straight road to Carpath. He can be overpowered. This country is always ripe for revolution. It is in a state of yeast now. Come with me."

"No."

"You told me back there that you loved my daughter, and yet you refuse to give yourself the opportunity——" Marr broke off suddenly.

Beverly's head went down on his chest, and then was lifted again.

"Where are your men? They have long left the ravine where you expected to find them. I myself saw them go."

"They are all about. I can gather them when I will. Some of them are in Boris' own forces. I want to select a spot, and send out a message. I am frank with you, for I believe you will not betray me to the king."

"I swear to you that I will never betray you to the king!" At the vehemence with which he said it, a nicer ear than Marr's

might have hesitated. Men like Beverly are not in the habit of taking oaths unnecessarily. "But there is but one safe thing for you to do—go to Carpath, and from there out of the country."

"That I will not do."

Beverly was learning to think quickly. He remembered the French diplomat who concealed an important letter by ostentatiously displaying it on his mantelpiece. Boris would never think of looking for them in the hut. He might go to Leo Lubona's house, but the hut was too obvious. Boris knew them both. He would think them too level headed for a piece of stupidity like hiding in the hut.

"I know exactly the place you want." Beverly was making no promises, but evidently Marr concluded that his last argument had been decisive. "There is a herder's hut on the hillside where the son of the woman who keeps the farm below, whom your men know, generally sleeps. We will go there. The boy can be sent away on a message."

"I intended to go to this woman's house."

"Boris has seen your men there."

"Come on, then."

Beverly had not expected to find the boy there, but the lad lay in the bunk in the corner, sleeping as calmly as if a king, and a man who had hoped to be a king, had not occupied it since he had been routed out of it a few days earlier. He was a stolid soul, much like one of his own pigs. Marr sat down by the fireplace, and, taking a piece of paper from his pocket, wrote a line on it, and bade the lad carry it to his mother.

"You have carried food before," he said sternly. "See that you tell no one."

"Let me tell him to hasten," Beverly said, and he followed the boy out of the hut. He had awakened grumblingly, and was muttering over the fools who would not let a man sleep, when Beverly put something into his hand which made his palm itch. It was a large gold piece. In all his life the lad had only seen one before.

"Give me that note," Beverly whispered, "and go at once to the house of Father Leo, carrying him this, instead. Let no one see you, and you shall have another of these."

Beverly did not finish this sentence, but reeled under a powerful blow, and turned to grapple with John Marr.

"You traitor, you scoundrel!" the old man fairly hissed. "Would you betray me? I will kill you!"

He had the steel chain in his hand, and

was dealing Beverly powerful strokes about the head. But the journalist was the younger and stronger. He wrenched the chain from Marr's hand, and made a motion which Marr evaded; but Beverly did not intend to strike him. He gave the chain a powerful throw over the old man's shoulder, and it wrapped itself, lasso like, around the one solid thing in the room—the iron crane in the fireplace, put there to support the pig scalding kettles of the farmer. Then Beverly sprang back a step, and before Marr knew that he was caught, the tightening chain tripped him and brought him to the floor.

Beverly held Marr's arms while he took the other chain and gave it a turn about his vanquished antagonist's legs. "I beg your pardon," the young man said, "but there is nothing else to do. I cannot and I will not let you ruin yourself. Your men are scattered. You know yourself that if you are caught you must make terms with Boris. You defied him, but had you not been protected by your daughter, and by his love for her, you would never be embarking upon this reckless project now. I have sent for Miss Marr. She shall decide whether she will be the morganic wife of a third rate king, in order to further schemes which you cannot carry through by any other means."

But as he looked at the bound man, Beverly's heart was heavy. It was not likely that any girl would look at one who had treated her father in such an ignominious fashion as this. The old man lay on the floor, his hair disheveled, cursing himself for a fool in trusting a liar.

"I told you no lies. I promised not to betray you to the king. I have betrayed you to nobody. Your daughter has every right to see you, to plead with you, to take you away. I give you into her hands. She, and she alone, can save you. The king, seeing you with her, will give her all she asks—all she wants to ask. It rests with her. She shall have the choice. In any case, Boris owes her too much to make her unhappy." And then, as a rare indulgence, Beverly allowed himself a bit of cynicism. "At least, as long as she knows that he is making her unhappy."

It was a long and lonely vigil, and the late waning moon was lighting the rocks as on that other night, when at last Beverly heard voices, and the scramble of horses' feet. He wanted to say a word to Elinor before she saw her father. He must make some sort of an explanation, and he would do it as delicately as he could. There was

no water in the hut, and his brandy flask was empty, so that the blood and the marks of the blows of the chains were still on his face, but he had forgotten that. His heart was in his throat and his hands trembled. He could have cried like a nervous woman, as he went out to Elinor Marr. Fighting, work, life, never daunted Beverly. But now that he must perhaps seem contemptible in the eyes of the woman he loved, must make his labored explanations, which presently her father would distort, it was too much for him. And yet he hungered and longed to see her.

The moonlight struck him full as he came out of the door, and he saw a picture before him which printed itself on his brain. He never forgot the slightest detail of it, for it seemed to kill all hope. Elinor Marr was slipping down from her horse, with Boris, King of Carpathia, holding out his arms to help her to the ground.

But in another minute she had seen Beverly, and with a bound her hands were on his arms, her face looking up to his, her beautiful eyes full of unshed tears, her lips drawn down with anxiety.

"Oh, you are not killed, but you are hurt, you are hurt!"

She gave way to the emotion which up to that moment he had felt; but at the sight of her face, at the blessed knowledge of what he saw there, he was the strong man again. He saw in her eyes the love that would make her put away father and mother. With a heave the world turned over, and he was right with it again.

Beverly put his arms around her shoulders, and spoke to her gently. There was no need to say anything now of their relations to each other. He had said it that night on the old wall, and tonight she had answered him.

"Elinor," he said at last, "you must be calm. Be yourself for a moment." He put his hand under her chin and kissed her solemnly on the lips. "Think with me," he said. "Are you alone? How came Boris here?"

"Do you mean Count Festin? Where is he?" She looked around.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes. When your note came, Father Leo had gone away. He saw that the old castle was on fire, and he and Linda both ran. I did not read the note, but the boy said that a man was here killing you. I got a revolver and a horse and came."

"Through that wood alone?"

"Yes. I would have come through fire! Had you not done more for me? On the



way I met Count Festin and some men. I told him. He turned, as I knew he would, and rode back with me. His men are coming behind. Where is the man who hurt you?"

"Elinor," Beverly began, and then he stopped. How could he explain it all quickly enough? He knew now that she would believe everything he said implicitly. How could he ask her to plead with Boris?

"Why do you hesitate? What is it?" she asked anxiously.

"Miss Marr, he is trying to tell you that your father is inside, waiting to see you. He brought him here to see you. He finds it hard to tell all of his deeds of heroism at once," Boris' cool voice said behind them.

"My father!" she said. "I knew you would find him!"

She gave Beverly another grateful look and rushed away. Beverly caught at her, and would have spoken, but she was gone. He turned and faced Boris' cynical, smiling face with hate enough in his heart to have killed the man where he stood.

"If you had a thousand devils of fathers in there, you could not take her away from me now. She will believe me!"

Boris' face grew grave, and he looked away over the waving tree tops.

"I found that out tonight when she thought you were killed, or hurt, and called upon me to revenge you, to save you. I find you have always been the hero, and I have been the poor silly boy who got you into scrapes, according to her version." He smiled whimsically. "It began to sound true as she pictured it. She is the sweetest woman that ever lived, but she cares only for you."

Suddenly Boris put out his hand.

"I have behaved like a cad—like these barbarians. I have been in the wilderness too long. I have lost my manners."

But Beverly did not take the proffered hand.

"And you have sent the sweetest woman in the world in there without an explanation, to have her feelings hurt, to be humiliated?"

Boris let his hand drop, and Beverly never had another opportunity to take that of a king.

"I have just made the explanation to her father. I took the liberty of relieving him of his chains. I had the key to those anklets of his in my pocket. I set him on his feet, and we came to terms. He is to hold his tongue concerning his grievances, and I will hold mine. You may be trusted not to print your side of the story. You may not even have the compensation of

writing up Lubona's rebellion. I fear you will entirely lose your reputation with your newspaper."

"I have no thanks to offer you. You owe all this and more to Miss Marr."

"I owe her more than I can ever repay."

There was a constraint between the young men which they could never overcome. Beverly was sore, feeling that he had been taken advantage of, even in his revenge, conscious that Boris knew that he would never tell the truth of his late actions and state of mind to Elinor, because he could not hurt her gentle heart. So far as it lay with him to undeceive her, Count Festin would always be to her a pleasant memory, a vanished friend. Beverly knew that this must be one of the conditions he had made with Marr. He did not know for weeks, not until he was long out of the country, that Boris had granted certain mining concessions to Marr, on condition that a part of the stock was transferred to Beverly. He wished to pay his debt to the young American in some fashion, and this was the only way.

On the other side, in Boris' heart was his dislike of a man who had done much for him, and to whom the king himself, naturally a generous nature, had behaved badly. His sudden passion for Elinor, the possibility of having her for his own, had gone to his head. Almost an absolute monarch, he had harked back to the ways of his ancestors, who stole their wives. Born of lawlessness, his own public opinion, perhaps nothing would have saved Boris except the trust and sweetness of the woman he loved. When he found her, that night, sobbing aloud as she rode alone through the wood on her way to the man she loved, and when she threw herself upon his care, a newer and a better manhood was born in the hot headed boy. A crazy passion which destroys every obstacle, which is a blight, was not the feeling that he could hold for a woman like this. She was worthy of better things. The demon in Boris died under her tears for another man, the fires were drowned. She might love another, but he too could be worthy of her trust.

"I ask one additional service of you," Boris said. "I ask you to let Miss Marr continue to think me Count Festin. She will perhaps have no unkind feeling toward me then. I fear she has already imbibed some prejudice against the King of Carpathia. Her father will take her away."

Boris had drawn on his riding gloves, and was preparing to go, when Elinor came out. He smiled at her.

"Are you going?" she said.  
 "Yes. My men will be here in a moment. I hear them now. I must go on. I will leave two or three to escort you to Carpath." He hesitated again. "I hope you will be happy."

Elinor held his hand in both of hers. She looked at him fondly. To her, he was like a sweet, big brother.

"But we shall see you again tomorrow."

"Not tomorrow. I must go far up into the country, perhaps even to Russia."

"But we are going so soon."

Boris took his hand away, and drew a great ruby from his finger.

"Won't you take this—as a wedding gift? Your father has told me that he can deny nothing to you."

Her face flushed crimson, but she let him put the ring on her finger.

"I am sorry you must go, but I suppose it is on the king's business."

"Yes," he said, "on the king's business."

They watched him ride on to meet the coming men, give orders to some to stay, and then disappear in the dark wood. Elinor put her arm in Beverly's, and smiled at him. The going of a dynasty of kings could not have dampened her happiness.

"Let us go and see father. He wants to talk to you about going home."

Half way to the door, as they were walking together like two children, he stopped.

"Oh," he said, "you never call me by my right name. It isn't Hardin, it is Beverly. I am the newspaper man whom Count Lubona——"

"Don't speak of that man. What do I care what your profession is? I don't care whether you have any name or not. I know *you*!"

And there was only one answer to that; but he thanked her father for having told her. And with no more battles to fight, no more explanations to make, they went inside the hut.

THE END.

### THE WIND.

BROTHER, I hear your hand  
 Tap at the window pane;  
 I haste to admit you, and  
 Lo, you are gone again!  
 Brother, I hear your song,  
 Wonderful, wild, and free;  
 Though it be not for long,  
 Sing it awhile to me.  
 Stirring the lattice vines,  
 Often you come at the gloaming,  
 Pungent with hints of the northern pines,  
 A rover restlessly roaming;  
 Now in the depths of the night,  
 Shouting a mad refrain;  
 Ah, then the foam is white!  
 Eager the arms of the main!  
 Now in the heat of the day,  
 Soft as a lover's sigh;  
 Ah, then the scents of the hay  
 And the hedgerow blooms blow by!  
 Brother, I pray you tarry;  
 Fain would I have you spare  
 A passing word of the songs you heard  
 In the land from which you fare.  
 Wind of the north, of the south,  
 Wind of the east, of the west,  
 Kissing the Creole's mouth,  
 Chilling the Eskimo's breast;  
 Brother, I hear your song,  
 Wonderful, wild, and free,  
 Though it be not for long,  
 Tarry, and sing to me!

*Philip Rodney Paulding.*