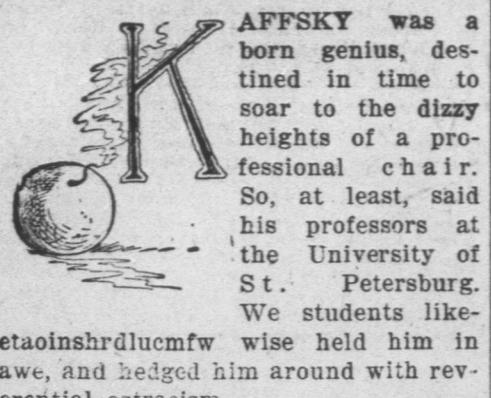


BETRAYED BY LOVE.



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But to our utmost astonishment their request was refused, and Kaffsky was removed from the Lithuanian fortress only to be immured in the more terrible fortress of Peter and Paul.

The excitement caused by the arrest was assuming dangerous proportions. Nobody had cared a rap for Kaffsky a week before, and he was already a most popular hero now.

Perhaps it was hatred for the heartless informer—who had already been arrested, no doubt, to save him from being lynched—and sympathy for Anna Pavlona, whose womanly feelings had got the better of her philosophy. She had completely broken down.

She had been taken to her bed, had refused all food, had forwarded petition after petition to the minister of the interior, and when it became clear that she might just as well be sowing salt on the seashore, her mind gave way. The doctors sent her mother and herself in post haste to the Crimea.

In October a few of us met in St. Petersburg once more—but only a few. The police had made a tremendous haul among the students the day the university closed session, and many were now in their distant native villages expelled from the university; others in prison, others again on the road to Siberia.

Kaffsky, we learned, was among the latter—condemned to the mines as a dangerous conspirator, in spite of the intercession of the professors; Anna Pavlona was dead, according to others; but it came to pretty much the same thing in the end.

I had heard of many evil things done by diabolical reformers, but this was the most crying injustice I had ever actually witnessed; and when talking with a friend who was a relative of one of the ministers I told him so.

He was astounded at what I told him, and asked me to draw up an account of Kaffsky's case in writing. He would see, he said, that justice should be done.

I had no difficulty in obtaining precise particulars. I discovered even the name of the forwarding prison, over 1,000 miles away, in which Kaffsky was then interred, and having made out a very strong case, I gave my friend the paper, and he presented it to his relative, the minister.

A week passed, then a fortnight, and still there was no answer.

One day my philanthropic friend shook his head, said my data were all wrong, said that Kaffsky was the most dangerous conspirator that had ever been tripped up in the very nick of time, and that he would advise me to keep aloof from political reformers in future, as it was evident they could make black appear white without an effort.

Six years later I heard that Kaffsky was no more. He died of disease, or was shot in a tumult, or disposed of in some such way. The particulars were not very precise, but he was really dead, that was certain.

"Nothing else but death is certain in Russia," I remarked to an ex-minister to whom I had been telling the whole story after dinner.

"So you are going to write about it, you say?" he asked me, "to ease your feelings?"

"I am," I replied.

"Very well, then, if you will come here in two or three days I will supply you with a most interesting postscript."

And he did.

His statement was based on official documents and this is the gist of it.

"When the terrorist movement was at its height the leaders were invisible and ubiquitous. We suspected that they were in the university, but that was only a guess. Once or twice Kaffsky appeared to be in the movement, but we had no proof, and could get none. It then occurred to General O. of the secret department to employ a spy who had never played the part of a detective before."

"I know. You mean the scoundrelly informer, Boorman," I broke in.

"Boorman! Boorman! Was he? O, of course he was. Yes. No. Boorman was not the detective, Boorman, I see, was nearly as dangerous as Kaffsky; he was Kaffsky's right-hand man, and he got the same punishment."

This announcement took my breath away, but it only deepened the mystery.

"Two thousand three hundred rubles was what it all cost, and dirt cheap, too," he went on.

"You mean the detective's reward?" I asked.

"Yes, that, of course, was over and above her regular salary, which was fifty rubles a month. It was the only clever stroke of business she ever did."

"She!" I repeated. "Was it a woman, then?"

"O, yes; didn't I tell you?—and a woman with the making of a saint in her, too. Ha, ha, ha! She is now a god-fearing sectarian—a pietist of some kind."

"Well, I remarked, "she would need good long course of penance, were it only to atone for the fate of poor Anna Pavlona, whose life she snuffed out."

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed, till the big tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks. "Why, hang it, man, Anna Pavlona was herself the detective. But that was the only clever thing she ever did. She soon after left the service, found salvation, as they term it, in some obscure sect, and is a pious bigot now."

Pitiful Outlook.

"Mamma."

"Well?"

"You licked me last week for whaling Jimmie Watts and papa licked me yesterday 'cause Johnny Phelps walloped me."

"Well?"

"I'm wondering what'll happen sometime when it's a draw."

AFFSKY was a born genius, destined in time to soar to the dizzy heights of a professional chair. So, at least, said his professors at the University of St. Petersburg. We students likewise held him in awe, and hedged him around with reverential ostracism.

That same Kaffsky used to squander his days and nights over mathematics and chemistry and half a dozen kindred sciences, as if life were to last for eternity. We did not believe in a man having so many irons in the fire, and we limited our efforts to the accomplishment of one single task—the regeneration of mankind—as a preliminary step to the remodeling of Russian society.

We had weighed Kaffsky in the political balance—the only one in vogue at Russian universities ten years ago—and had found him sadly wanting.

He was a member of none of the three churches—outside of which there is no salvation—that of the sworn conspirators, who edited a forbidden journal, Land and Liberty, hatched plots against the state and sometimes helped to carry them out; that of unsown conspirators, from whom the former were usually recruited; and the bulk of students who sympathized with everything and everybody who embarrassed the government.

And to crown all, we had just heard of his impending marriage. "A nice time to be thinking of marrying and feathering his nest!" we remarked to each other, "just when the pillars of the social edifice are giving way, and we are doing our best to pull them down in order to build something better."

When the name of the future bride was mentioned those among us who knew her were staggered a bit. Anna Pavlona Smirnova was not a Venus. But if she had much less beauty than her photograph—which is a common failing of women—she had a good deal more wit, which is not by any means so common.

Although apparently young enough to be his daughter, Anna Pavlona was Kaffsky's senior by five or six years, and, to make matters still more mixed, she was red radical at heart.



Formerly her democratic views had got her into hot water with the authorities, and it was not without considerable difficulty that she had obtained her present position as teacher in a girls' gymnasium, which enabled her to live in modest competency with her widowed mother.

The police, we knew, had twice or thrice made elaborate inquiries about him, had noted his comings in and goings out, and had set a watch upon his actions. Platoff, when arrested a week ago, chanced to have Kaffsky's card in his pocket, and was subjected to a long secret cross-examination about his dealings with him.

"As well suspect the stone sphinxes at the Nikolai bridge as that p'ec of stuck-up selfishness called Kaffsky," exclaimed Lavroff.

"There must be some reason for the suspicion," cried Brodsky; "there's always fire where there's smoke, and as we know there's no fire here, then there cannot possibly be any smoke. It's a matter of smoked glass spectacles."

This remark struck us all as the acme of cleverness. It was warmly applauded. "Well, who could have smoked the government's spectacles?" somebody asked.

"Boorman, Boorman; he alone has a grudge against Kaffsky," cried half a dozen voices.

Now, none of us had a doubt that he was the Judas Iscariot. His hang-dog expression, his slouching gait, his furtive glance and stammering deviltry proclaimed the nature of the spirit that lived and worked within him.

The present case strengthened our suspicion, for Boorman and Kaffsky had quarreled years before.

Summer vacations were at hand. The last of the examinations would take place in ten days, and then we would disperse over the length and breadth of the empire, many of us never to return again.

Suddenly we were stunned and stupefied by a bolt from the blue in the shape of a rumor that Kaffsky had been arrested.

He and Alexieff had gone to the theater the night before. They had walked home together and made an appointment for the morrow at the university; but at about 2 a. m. Kaffsky had been spirited away, and was now in the secret wing of the Lithuanian fortress.

A written request was presented by some of the professors, who were beside themselves with indignation, that

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