Monarch of Blood and Song

KING NICHOLAS

PRINCESS XENIA OF MONTENEGRO

FAT Czar Nicholas of Montenegro, aged seventy-one, lately sprained his ankle, and lay three days under a fig tree, in the Dvorska Ulica, and scrawled mysterious symbols.

Under the fig tree Nicholas sometimes administers, or as Montenegrins say, "inflicts," justice. When a mountaineer, beautifully dressed in knives and revolvers, came to Nicholas and asked for justice, Nicholas lost his temper. The mountaineer demanded that a next door neighbor should be hanged for stealing his pipe, which petition Nicholas rejected, not because hanging is too severe, but because, said he, "I am writing a poem."

This reply astonished the brave Montenegrin, who believed that real poetry was never written down. A real poem is learnt by heart and chanted by a bearded bard to the deafening music of the gusla, to the clashing of yataghans and swords, and to the explosion of precious gunpowder.

But now Nicholas is not only writing a poem; he is preparing a complete edition of all his poems in the Servian language. It will be printed at Agram and read throughout the vast territory in which the Servians live; in Montenegro itself (when anyone can read), in Macedonia to the south, as far east as Roumania, and as far north as Styria. For the Serbs are Europe's most scattered race, outnumbering the Hungarians and many other nations that cut a figure in the world.

Fat old Nicholas is a genuine poet. His verse is full of the primitive, heroic, epic spirit. Compared with it the effusions of his royal neighbor, Carmen Sylva, are the thinnest of skim milk. The old man comes of a stock which always spilt ink as fast as blood. Nearly all the Peters, Danilos, Mirkos and Tomos who preceded him as "Vladikas" of Montenegro were masters of the goosequill. His great-uncle, Peter II, was the best of Servian poets, and also a tolerable warrior, for he wrote his first ode on a mud wall in Rjeka with the blood of a butchered Turk.

Fat old Nicholas maintains the heroic strain. Poetry and war, he holds, are but branches of the same sovereign profession. You can even combine the two; for when Nicholas was busy besieging Niksic, in 1878, he spent part of the day writing songs about the defending Turks. He agrees with Homer that slaying and plundering enemies and carrying off beautiful maids are the fit recreations of a poet, and the fit recreation of a warrior is the celebration of his own exploits.

Nicholas' muse is limited in scope. In fact, he rejects all the muses except Calliope, Clio and Terpsichore, who stand respectively for the epic, history and the dance. Terpsichore is tolerated by rough Nicholas because a warrior has a right to dance on his enemies' graves. Nicholas has composed some lively "kolas," or round dances, for men and maids. For such a swashbuckling sovereign he is tolerant of women; indeed, his best political poem, "Balkanska Carica," the "Empress of the Balkans," is dedicated to Montenegro's fair. If there were a muse of drink, she also would be permitted, for the warrior-king has written tolerable drinking songs, with admirable precepts. One is that while there are Turks in sight you should keep warily sober; but that when you have cut off the heads of a dozen Turks and bagged your weapons and money you have a right to drink to their shades. Pursuing this line of thought he bursts out again:

"Drink! drink, and you'll be sound and jolly;
Drink, brave landsmen, for in wine
Is red blood; and when thou drinkest—
If enough—the world is thine!"

Nicholas is a newspaper man. He runs a poetical journal named the Dove, which was founded by his poetical cutthroat ancestor, Peter II. In this Nicholas printed his first poem, "Vukasain," which describes an incident in the fall of the medieval Servian empire. There, too, he printed his "O Namo, O Namo!" a political confession, which has risen to be the national song of the Pan-Servians in Montenegro, Servia, Turkey, and Austria.

Turks, pashas, "bussurmans" and padishas are the objective of Nicholas' best poems. They inspire many dainty and sonorous lines, such as "Drink ye blood from the black Turk's skull," "When fifty Moslems fell from Vuka's hand," "Our emerald valley's blossom red; it is the blood the Turk has shed;" "the glorious slaughter of the Moslem captives," and so on.

Like Homer and other true epic poets, Nicholas ignores the moral conventions of war. He exalts equally Montenegrins who have died for their country and Montenegrins who have merely tortured Turks, butchered them in their sleep or dropped poison into their drink. The Hague convention plays but a small role in the poetry of Cettigne. There is a touching Montenegrin poem describing Holy Night, 1702, when the brave hillmen rose and butchered in cold blood defenseless Turks. When you read Nicholas' verses you conclude that a hero needs only two qualifications—first, he should be superhumanly courageous, and secondly, he should be endowed with a fine equipment of rascality.

Yet this adipose literary prince has a real warrior's chivalry. He is a knight and a gentleman. He hates the Turks as Turks; but as warriors and blood-lovers he welcomes them, and he is grateful to them for supplying the potentialities of combat. That explains many queer inconsistencies in his verse.

On one page he extols massacre and treachery against the Turk; on the next he writes poetical praise of Suleiman Pasha, with whom he crossed swords in 1878. Then a little further on is a touching poem, "The Lament of Osman Pasha," which describes the Turkish defense of Plevna against a Russian army five times as strong.

With this brave spirit in him, Nicholas permits no man to offend the few Turks who live in his barren land. This motive inspires one of his finest poems. A white-bearded Podgoritza Turk limped to the Dvorska Ulica fig tree and complained to Nicholas that two chieftains had reviled him and called him "old carrion." He demanded justice.

"Return," said Nicholas, "tonight and you will get it." When the Turk returned he found Nicholas under the fig tree by the light of a torch. Behind sat the two insulters, looking uncomfortable and abased. "You shall have justice!" said Nicholas, whereupon he took up a copybook and declaimed to the Turk and to the prosecutors an ode running something like this:

"Thee, old lion, they insult, they laugh at thee; they deride thee; they call thee carrion! Thou carrion? Thou? Thou that has conquered half the world; thou that hast watered they Arab steed in the Mincio and challenged under Vienna's white walls the emperors of the west.

"Yes, old lion! We that on battlefields have met and measured words, we love one another as only enemies love! And we shall meet again on battlefields, old lion, and slay and love one another."

And here, at the thought that he might some day slay the Turk, fat Nicholas embraced his racial enemy and sent him on his way with the echo: "Old lion, old lion," ringing in his ears.

This the Age of Concrete

Comparatively New Material Pushing Into Popularity for an Infinitude of Uses.

At present a comparatively new material is pushing its way into popularity, and that for an infinitude of uses. Portland cement, as it was first called, was first made known to the world about 1824 at Portland, England, where it was first manufactured, and came into favorable notice in connection with submarine construction where ordinary stone work had utterly failed. It was not until 1895, however, that it was manufactured in the United States, and it was only within the last decade that it has begun to supplant brick and stone as a building material. Made by the calcination of marl, clay, slag and other materials, it absorbs water freely and is mixed with sand and broken rock in varying proportions, the strongest being one part of cement to two of sand and four of "aggregate." It sets almost as soon as mixed; continues to absorb water and to harden for many days, and gains strength for many years.

Millions of bags have been used in constructing the Panama canal; no fortification is considered complete without it; great hulks and lighters are built of steel skeletons coated with concrete, and the belief is very common that it must soon replace both wood and brick in house construction. Indeed, the high price of lumber, the greater cost of brick, owing to higher fuel and wages, with the resultant use of inferior lumber and brick weakened by modern processes which hasten the burning but leave the product much more porous and softer than those made in the old way, must tend to increase the use of concrete for dwellings and small buildings of all kinds. Immense areas of sidewalk and pavement are laid yearly and swiftly increasing, and in the stupendous tunnels, sewers, bridges, dams, sea-walls and other public structures, concrete has largely replaced brick and stone.—National Magazine.

Financier.

"He's one of our most successful financiers."

"That so? I didn't know he was rich."

"He isn't. But he's supporting a family of five on $12 a week."—Detroit Free Press.

TAKE NEEDED REST IN TIME

Great Mistake Made in Waiting Until Exhausted Nature Makes Imperative Demand for Relief.

A few weeks' vacation is the wisest investment for anyone who has voluntarily or involuntarily overtaxed his bodily or mental capacity. It is absolutely essential for the preservation of health that we get out of harness and change the monotony of our daily surroundings from time to time.

Do not wait until some incurable disease has developed, but do something to avoid it. This is the most pleasant way as well as the wisest. A stitch in time saves nine.

Go back to nature, and, for awhile at least, live the simple life as you were meant to. Listen to the song of the birds and caress the picturesque flowers and everything that is beautiful in creation.

If people would only recognize how much suffering and how many unnecessary expenses they would save by allowing themselves a short vacation every summer, there would not be as much sickness and suffering as there is.

A few weeks spent on Nature's bosom will heal many an ill which unfavorable conditions have inflicted upon you and fortify you for another year's struggle.—The Naturopath.

He who flatters women most pleases them best, and they are most in love with him who they think is most in love with them.—Lord Chesterfield.

DON'T MARRY A GENIUS.

History Shows Men of Extraordinary Talent Neglected Their Wives.

[illegible]

It Never Fails.

[illegible]

PEE WEE OFFICIATES

How an "Abnormal" Child's Funeral Resurrected Love.

By ORA M. M'DERMOTT.

[illegible]

"Please Come!"

WOMAN WORKS OUT PROBLEM

Mrs. Sarah Erickson Declares the Hen Lays an Egg at the Same Hour She Was Born.

[illegible]

BURNED AND ITCHED BADLY

[illegible]

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"The place should seek the man," said he.

[illegible]

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SYNOPSIS.

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXXII.—(Continued.)

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A Crisis at the Court-House.

[illegible]

"Do You Mean We Ain't Going to Be Pore Any Longer, Grandfather?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Painter in His Old Age

Retired Rear Admiral Wins Distinction With His Landscapes Done in Water Colors.

[illegible]

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