

КРАСНЫЙ ЦВЕТОК

(отрывок)

– Именем его императорского величества, государя императора Петра Первого, объявляю ревизию сему сумасшедшему дому!

Эти слова были сказаны громким, резким, звенящим голосом. Писарь больницы, записывавший больного в большую истрепанную книгу на залитом чернилами столе, не держался от улыбки. Но двое молодых людей, сопровождавшие больного, не смеялись: они едва держались на ногах после двух суток проведенных без сна, наедине с безумным, которого они только что привезли по железной дороге. На предпоследней станции припадок бешенства усилился; где-то достали сумасшедшую рубаху и, позвав кондукторов и жан-дарма, надели на больного. Так привезли его в город, так доставили и в больницу.

Он был страшен. Сверх изорванного во время припадка в клочья серого платья куртка из грубой парусины с широким вырезом обтягивала его стан; длинные рукава прижимали его руки к груди накрест и были завязаны сзади. Воспаленные, широко раскрытые глаза (он не спал десять суток) горели неподвижным горячим блеском; нервная судорога подергивала край нижней губы; спутанные курчавые волосы падали гривой на лоб; он быстрыми тяжелыми шагами ходил из угла в угол конторы, пытливо осматривая старые шкапы с бумагами и клеенчатые стулья и изредка взглядывая на своих спутников.

– Сведите его в отделение. Направо.

– Я знаю, знаю. Я был уже здесь с вами в прошлом году. Мы осматривали больницу. Я все знаю, и меня будет трудно обмануть, – сказал больной.

Он повернулся к двери. Сторож растворил ее перед ним; тою же быстрою, тяжелою и решительною походкою, высоко подняв безумную голову, он вышел из конторы и почти бегом пошел направо, в отделение душевнобольных. Провожавшие едва успевали идти за ним.

– Позвони. Я не могу. Вы связали мне руки.

Швейцар отворил двери, и путники вступили в больницу.

Это было большое каменное здание старинной казенной постройки. Два больших зала, один – столовая, другой – общее помещение для спокойных больных, широкий коридор со стеклянною дверью, выходившей в сад с цветником, и десятка два отдельных комнат, где жили больные, занимали нижний этаж; тут же были устроены две темные комнаты, одна обитая тюфяками, другая досками, в которые сажали буйных, и огромная мрачная комната со сводами – ванная. Верхний этаж занимали женщины. Нестройный шум, прерываемый

завываниями и воплями, несся оттуда. Больница была устроена на восемьдесят человек, но так как она одна служила на несколько окрестных губерний, то в ней помещалось до трехсот. В небольших каморках было по четыре и по пяти кроватей; зимой, когда больных не выпускали в сад и все окна за железными решетками бывали наглухо заперты, в больнице становилось невыносимо душно.

Нового больного отвели в комнату, где помещались ванны. И на здорового человека она могла произвести тяжелое впечатление, а на расстроенное, возбужденное воображение действовала тем более тяжело. Это была большая комната со сводами, с липким каменным полом, освещенная одним, сделанным в углу, окном; стены и своды были выкрашены темно-красною масляною краскою; в почерневшем от грязи полу, в уровень с ним, были вделаны две каменные ванны, как две овальные, наполненные водою ямы. Огромная медная печь с цилиндрическим котлом для нагревания воды и целой системой медных трубок и кранов занимала угол против окна; все носило необыкновенно мрачный и фантастический для расстроенной головы характер, и заведовавший ванными сторож, толстый, вечно молчавший хохол, своею мрачною физиономиею увеличивал впечатление.

И когда больного привели в эту страшную комнату, чтобы сделать ему ванну и, согласно с системой лечения главного доктора больницы, наложить ему на затылок большую мушку, он пришел в ужас и ярость. Нелепые мысли, одна чудовищнее другой, завертелись в его голове. Что это? Инквизиция? Место тайной казни, где враги его решили покончить с ним? Может быть, самый ад? Ему пришло, наконец, в голову, что это какое-то испытание. Его раздели, несмотря на отчаянное сопротивление. С удвоенною от болезни силою он легко вырывался из рук нескольких сторожей, так что они падали на пол; наконец четверо повалили его, и, схватив за руки и за ноги, опустили в теплую воду. Она показалась ему кипятком, и в безумной голове мелькнула бессвязная отрывочная мысль об испытании кипятком и каленым железом. Захлебываясь водою и судорожно барахтаясь руками и ногами, за которые его крепко держали сторожа, он, задыхаясь, выкрикивал бессвязную речь, о которой невозможно иметь представления, не слышав ее на самом деле. Тут были и молитвы и проклятия. Он кричал, пока не выбился из сил, и, наконец, тихо, с горячими слезами, проговорил фразу, совершенно не вязавшуюся с предыдущей речью:

– Святой великомученик Георгий! В руки твои предаю тело мое. А дух – нет, о нет!..

Сторожа все еще держали его, хотя он и успокоился. Теплая ванна и пузырь со льдом, положенный на голову, произвели свое действие. Но когда его, почти бесчувственного, вынули из воды и посадили на табурет, чтобы поставить мушку, остаток сил и безумные мысли снова точно взорвало.

– За что? За что? – кричал он. – Я никому не хотел зла. За что убивать меня? О-о-о! О Господи! О вы, мучимые раньше меня! Вас моллю, избавьте...

Жгучее прикосновение к затылку заставило его отчаянно биться. Прислуга не могла с ним справиться и не знала, что делать.

– Ничего не поделаешь, – сказал производивший операцию солдат. – Нужно стереть.

Эти простые слова привели больного в содрогание. "Стереть!.. Что стереть? Кого стереть? Меня!" – подумал он и в смертельном ужасе закрыл глаза. Солдат взял за два конца грубое полотенце и, сильно нажимая, быстро провел им по затылку, сорвав с него и мушку и верхний слой кожи и оставив обнаженную красную ссадину. Боль от этой операции, невыносимая и для спокойного и здорового че-

ловека, показалась больному концом всего. Он отчаянно рванулся всем телом, вырвался из рук сторожей, и его нагое тело покатилося по каменным плитам. Он думал, что ему отрубили голову. Он хотел крикнуть и не мог. Его отнесли на койку в беспамятстве, которое перешло в глубокий, мертвый и долгий сон.

<i>V. GARSHIN</i>	<i>V. GARSHIN</i>	<i>V. GARSHIN</i>
<p>THE SCARLET FLOWER <i>(excerpt)</i> <i>Translated by E.L. Voynich</i></p>	<p>THE RED FLOWER <i>(excerpt)</i> <i>Translated from the Russian</i> <i>(Philadelphia, Brown Brothers, 1911)</i></p>	<p>THE SCARLET BLOOM <i>(excerpt)</i> <i>Translated by R.Smith</i></p>
<p>'In the name of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor Peter I., I declare this lunatic asylum open to inspection.' These words were uttered in a loud resonant voice. The asylum clerk, who was entering the patient's name in a large ragged book on an inky table, could not refrain from smiling. But the two young men in charge of the patient did not smile; they could hardly stand on their feet, so exhausted were they after two days and nights spent without sleep, alone with the madman, whom they had just brought by train. At the last station but one his fury had increased; they had managed to obtain a straitjacket, and, with the help of a gendarme and the railway officials, had put it on the patient. In this condition they had brought him to the town and presented him at the hospital</p> <p>He was terrible. Over his grey coat, which he had torn to ribbons during his fit of fury, was fastened the coarse sacking strait-jacket, cut low at the neck, with its long-sleeves tied behind, and binding his arms across his chest His inflamed, widely-distended eyes (he had not slept for ten days) burned with a fixed, fiery glare; the corners of his under lip twitched with a nervous convulsion; the curly, tangled hair had fallen over his forehead like a mane; and he tramped up and</p>	<p>"In the name of His Imperial Highness, Emperor Peter the First, I have come to make an inspection of this insane asylum!"</p> <p>These words were spoken in a loud, shrill, ringing voice. The secretary of the asylum, entering the name of the new inmate in a large, much-worn book which lay on an inksoiled table, could not resist a smile. But the two young men who brought the patient felt little inclination to laugh. They could hardly stand upon their legs after having passed forty-eight hours without sleep, alone with the madman, whom they accompanied on the train. At the railroad station preceding the last his violence increased greatly, and, with the assistance of the conductors and a gendarme, a straight-jacket, which had been obtained somewhere, was placed upon the patient. In this manner he was brought to the city and into the hospital.</p> <p>He was frightful to see. His gray suit, torn to shreds during the attack, was partially concealed by the coarse canvas jacket, whose long sleeves clasped his arms crosswise on his breast and were tied behind. His bloodshot, distended eyes he had not slept for ten days sparkled with a motionless, fiery lustre; the lower lip twitched convulsively; tangled, curly hair fell with a</p>	<p>"In the name of His Imperial Majesty the Lord Emperor Peter the First, I order a revision of this Asylum!"</p> <p>These words were uttered in a loud, strident, resounding voice. The clerk who had registered the patient in a large dilapidated book lying on an ink-bespattered table could not restrain a smile. But the two young men who had escorted the patient did not smile. They could scarcely keep on their feet after forty-eight hours without sleep, passed alone with the lunatic whom they had just brought along by train. At the station immediately preceding their destination the attack had increased in its intensity, and they had succeeded in obtaining a strait-jacket from somewhere, which, with the assistance of the train-conductors and a gendarme, they had placed on the patient, and had brought him to the town, and finally to the Asylum in this dress.</p> <p>He was dreadful to look at. Over his body and above his grey suit, which had been torn into rags during his paroxysms, was stretched a jacket of coarse canvas opened in front ; its sleeves, which were fastened behind, forced his arms crosswise against his chest. His bloodshot eyes (he had not slept for ten</p>

down the entry office with quick, heavy steps, curiously examining the old cases full of documents and the leather-covered chairs, and glancing now and then at his escort

'Take him into the ward to the right'

'I know, I know. I was here with you last year. We inspected the asylum. I know everything; it will be difficult to deceive me' said the patient.

He turned towards the door. The hall-porter opened it for him, and, with his quick, heavy, resolute gait, he walked out of the office, holding his frenzied head erect and high, and hurried, almost at a run, down the right-hand corridor into the lunatic ward. The attendants could hardly keep pace with him.

'Ring. I can't; you've tied my hands.' The porter opened the door, and the new arrival entered the asylum.

It was a large stone building of the old-fashioned state-barrack type. Two large halls – the dining-hall and a general living-room for quiet patients, a wide corridor with a glass door leading to the gardens and flower-beds, and about a score of separate rooms in which the patients lived—occupied the ground floor. There were on this floor also two dark rooms –one lined with mattresses, the other with boards, and a huge gloomy, vaulted bathroom. The upper floor was occupied by the women. A confused noise, broken by shrieks and howls, came from that quarter. The asylum was built to accommodate eighty persons; but, as it served for several provinces, up to three hundred patients were crowded into it, Four or five beds were placed in each little cell; and during the winter, when the patients were not allowed out into the garden, and all the iron-grated windows were fast shut, the air be-

crest over his forehead; with quick and heavy footsteps he walked back and forth from one corner of the office to the other, searchingly examining the old cabinets containing documents, the oilcloth-covered chairs, and occasionally giving a glance at his fellowtravellers.

"Take him into the ward to the right."

"I know, I know. I have been already with you during the past year. We examined the hospital. I know all, and it will be difficult for you to deceive me," said the madman.

He went towards the door. The attendant opened it before him; with a rapid, heavy and resolute gait, his distraught countenance lifted high, he walked out of the office, and, almost running, veered to the right in the direction of the department indicated. His guides could hardly keep up with him.

"Ring the bell. I can't. You've tied my hands."

The doorkeeper opened the door and the travellers entered the hospital.

This was a large stone building, an old governmental structure. Two large chambers one a dining-room, the other a general apartment for calm patients a wide corridor with a glass door at one end facing the flower garden, and about twenty separate chambers occupied by the patients constituted the ground floor. Here also were fitted up two dark rooms one lined with cushions, the other with boards both of which were used for confining the violent, and a large vaulted chamber a bath room. The upper floor was occupied by women. A discordant din, accompanied by groans and cries, came from there. The hospital was originally constructed for eighty souls, but as it served for several of the neighboring districts it really harbored about three hundred. Each of the little chambers contained four or

days) blazed with a fixed and intense glare. His lower lip was twitching with a nervous tremor, whilst his tangled, curly hair fell manelike over his forehead. With rapid, agitated steps, he paced from corner to corner of the office, gazing inquisitively at the old shelves laden with documents, and the chairs covered with a kind of oilcloth. Occasionally he glanced at his recent fellow-travellers.

"Take him to the ward. To the right."

"I know—I know; I was here with you last year. We went over the Asylum. I know all about it, and it will be difficult to deceive me," said the patient.

He turned towards the door. The keeper opened it before him, and, with the same rapid gait, holding his head well up, he left the office, and, almost running, went to the right, to the ward for mental patients. Those who were escorting him could scarcely keep up with him.

"Ring! I cannot. You have tied my arms."

The porter opened the door, and they entered the Asylum.

It was a large stone building, an old Government structure. Two large halls – one the dining-hall, the other a general room for quiet patients; a wide corridor with a glass door leading into a flower-garden, and some twenty separate rooms where the patients lived occupied the lower story. Here, also, were two dark rooms – one lined with mattresses, the other with boards – in which violent patients were placed; and an enormous, gloomy, vaulted room, which was the bath-room. The upper story was occupied by women, whence there came a confused din, interspersed with yells and howling. The Asylum had been built for eighty patients, but as it was the

came intolerably close.

The new patient was taken into the bath-room. Even on a healthy person that room would have produced a dismal impression, and on his excited, overstrung imagination the impression was morbidly vivid. It was a great, vaulted room, with a clammy stone floor, and was lighted by a single window in a corner; the walls and vaulted roof were painted dark red; two stone baths, like two oval pits filled with water, were sunk in the floor (which was black with dirt), with their rims on a level with it. A huge brass stove, with a cylindrical cauldron to heat the water, and a complete array of brass pipes and taps filled up the corner opposite the window. The whole place wore an appearance which seemed to a morbid imagination unusually gloomy and fantastic; and the dismal face of the bath-keeper, a fat, taciturn Oukrainian, still further strengthened the impression.

Thus, when the patient was taken into this terrible room to have a bath, and, in accordance with the system of treatment adopted by the head doctor of the asylum, a large blister was placed on the back of his neck, he was seized with horror and fury. Absurd fancies, one more monstrous than another, crowded through his brain. What was this? The inquisition? Some place of secret execution, where his enemies had resolved to make an end of him. Perhaps, hell itself. At last the idea came into his head that he was to be put to the question.

The attendants undressed him in spite of his desperate resistance. His disease had doubled his muscular strength, and he easily tore himself from the hands of several keepers, dashing them to the ground; at last, four of them got him down, and, taking him by the

five beds; during the winter the patients were not permitted in the garden, and, all the iron-barred windows being kept tightly shut, it would become very suffocating.

The new patient was taken to the bathroom. This room would have produced a painful impression even upon a healthy man; upon a diseased and excited imagination it had a still more distressing effect. It was a large vaulted room with a stone floor, and lighted with but one corner window; the walls and the arches were painted dark red; on the level with the floor, which was thick with dirt, were incased two stone bathtubs; these seemed like two oval pits filled with water. The enormous copper stove, with a cylinder boiler for warming the water, and with an elaborate system of tubes and stopcocks, occupied a place opposite the window. Everything bore for a deranged mind a gloomy and fantastic character, and the bathroom attendant, a stout man, an ever-silent Little Russian, increased this impression by his sombre countenance.

When they brought the patient into this terrible room to give him a bath, and also, in accordance with the doctor's orders, to place on the nape of his neck a big Spanish fly, he became terror stricken. Thoughts distressing and absurd, one more monstrous than the other, flew about in his head. What was this? An Inquisition? Some secret torture chamber where his enemies had resolved to end his life? Perhaps it was hell itself? Finally he came to the conclusion that it was a test of some kind. Despite his desperate struggles he was undressed. His strength doubled by his disease, he easily threw several of the attendants who tried to hold him on the floor; but in the end four of them mastered him, and, holding him by the hands and feet, lowered

only one available for some distance around there were nearly three hundred accommodated within its walls. Each small cubicle held four or five beds. In winter-time, when the patients were not allowed into the garden and all the iron-barred windows were tightly closed, the building became unendurably stifling.

They led the new patient into the room in which were the baths. Even on a sane person this room was calculated to produce a feeling of depression, and on a distorted, excited imagination the impression would be so much the greater. It was a large vaulted room with a greasy stone floor, and lighted by one window in a corner. The walls and arches were painted a dark red. Two stone baths, like two oval-shaped holes, and full of water, were let into, and on a level with, the floor, which had become almost black from the accumulated dirt of ages. A huge copper stove with a cylindrical boiler for heating the water, and a whole system of copper tubes and taps, filled the corner opposite the window. Everything bore an unusually gloomy and, for a disordered mind, fantastic character, which impression was further heightened by the forbidding physiognomy of the stout, taciturn warder in charge of the baths.

When they led the patient into this terrifying room in order to give him a bath, and, in accordance with the curative method of the principal medical officer of the Asylum, to place a large blister on the nape of his neck, he became terrified. Fantastic ideas, each one more monstrous than the other, came crowding into his head. What was this? An inquisition? A place for secret executions where his enemies had decided to put an end to him? Perhaps even Hell itself?

hands and feet, put him into the warm water. It seemed to him boiling, and through the frenzied brain flashed a fragmentary, incoherent thought of torture by scalding water and red-hot iron. Choking, and convulsively beating the water with hands and feet (as far as the firm hold of the keepers allowed), he shrieked out in strangled tones an incoherent speech, such as no one could imagine without hearing it. Prayers and curses were jumbled together in it. He shrieked and shouted until he was exhausted; and then, with bitter tears, softly murmured a sentence in no way connected with the former one: –

'Blessed martyr, holy St George. Into thy hands I give my body. But my spirit – no, oh no!'

The keepers still held him, although he had calmed down. The warm bath and an ice-bag placed on his head had produced their effect. But when he was lifted out of the water and seated on a stool to have the blister put on, what remained of his strength and of his frenzied fancies burst out afresh.

'Why? Why?' he cried, 'I have done no willing wrong to anything. Why should you kill me? Oh – o – oh! Oh God! Oh martyrs tortured before me! Save me, I implore.' . . .

The burning touch of the blister against the back of his neck made him struggle frantically. The attendants could not hold him, and were at a loss what to do.

'There's nothing for it,' remarked the soldier, who was performing the operation; 'we must take it off.'

These simple words made the patient shudder. 'Take it off I Take what off? My head!' he thought, and closed his eyes in deadly terror. The soldier took a coarse towel by the two ends, and drew it quickly and

him into the water. Boiling it seemed to him, and in his crazed mind there flashed an incoherent and fragmentary thought about having to undergo a test with boiling water and red-hot iron. Almost smothered in his speech by the water which filled his mouth, he continued to struggle convulsively with arms and legs, which were held fast by the attendants. He gave utterance to both prayers and curses. He shouted till his strength was gone, and finally, with hot tears in his eyes, he ejaculated a phrase which had not the least connection with his other utterances:

"Great martyr St. George! I give my body into thy hands. But the soul no; oh, no! . . ."

The attendants still held him, though he had ceased to struggle. The warm bath and the Spanish fly had produced the desired effect. But when they removed him almost insensible from the water and set him down on the tabouret, the remainder of his strength and insane thoughts once more broke forth.

"Why? why?" shouted he. "I did not wish anyone harm. Why kill me? Oh, oh, oh! Oh, Lord! Oh, you martyrs before me! I pray to you, deliver me. . . ."

Feeling a burning on the nape of his neck, he began his struggles with the attendants anew. The nurse could not manage him, and did not know what to do. "You can't do anything with him," remarked the soldier who assisted in the operation. "It must be removed."

These simple words brought the patient into a trembling. "Removed? . . . Remove what? Remove whom? Remove me?" cried he, and in deathly agony he closed his eyes. The soldier grasped the two ends of a rough towel, and pressing it down tightly drew it quickly across the neck of the patient, causing the Spanish fly to come off, together with the outer skin,

Eventually he became possessed of the idea that this was to be some kind of trial. They undressed him, in spite of his frantic resistance. With a strength rendered twofold by his affliction, he easily wrenched himself free from several warders, hurling them to the ground; but eventually four of them threw him down, and, having seized him by his arms and legs, lowered him into the warm water. It seemed to him to be boiling, and into his disordered brain flashed disjointed fragmentary thoughts about trial by boiling water and red-hot iron. Choking with the water, convulsively struggling with his arms and legs, by which the warders were firmly holding him, he screamed out disjointed sentences, surpassing in reality any possible description. Supplications alternated with curses. As long as he possessed the strength to do so, he continued to cry out in this fashion; then, becoming quiet, and with scalding tears, and having no connection with anything he had previously said, he murmured: "Holy and greatest of all martyrs – St. George! – into thy hands I surrender my body. But my spirit! – no, never!"

The warders continued to hold him, although he had become quiet. The warm bath and the bag of ice placed on his head were having their effect. But when they took him, almost unconscious, out of the water and laid him on a bench in order to apply a blister, the balance of his strength and the fantastic ideas again returned.

"Why? Why?" he shouted. "I never wished anyone harm! Why kill me? O-O-O-O Lord! Oh, you have already tormented me. I implore you! Spare me!"

The burning hot application to the back of his neck made him struggle desperately. The attendants, unable

<p>heavily across the back of the patient's neck, scraping off the blister, and with it the outer skin, and leaving a bare, red, grazed place. The pain of this operation, almost unbearable even for a calm and healthy person, seemed to the patient to be the end of everything. He made one frenzied effort, and tore himself from the hands of the keeper, and his naked body dropped on the stone flags. He thought that his head had been cut off. He would have cried out, but could not. He was carried to his pallet in a fainting fit, which gradually passed into a long, profound, dead sleep.</p>	<p>and leaving an ugly looking sore. The pain produced by this operation, not to be endured even by a sane and healthy person, seemed to the madman to be the end of all. He burst forward most ferociously, released the hold of the attendants, and his naked body rolled on the stone floor. He thought that they had chopped off his head. He wished to cry out, but could not. He was carried away on a litter in an insensible condition, which soon passed into a long and sound sleep.</p>	<p>to cope with him, did not know what to do. "You can do nothing," said the soldier who had performed the operation; "we must rub." These simple words sent the patient into convulsions of fear: "Rub! Rub what? Rub whom? Me!" he reflected, and in mortal terror he closed his eyes. The soldier, taking the two ends of a coarse towel and pressing heavily, quickly drew it across the nape of the patient's neck, tearing from it both the blister and the outer layer of skin, and leaving an open red sore. The painfulness of this operation, almost unendurable even for a quiet and sane person, seemed to the patient the end of all things. He made a desperate effort with his whole body, wrenched himself free of the warders, and his naked body slid along the stone slabs. He thought they had cut off his head. He wished to cry out, but could not. They carried him to his cubicle in a state of unconsciousness, which passed into a profound, deathlike sleep.</p>
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