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 J. S. T. SCOTT, Editor and Publisher

**A TRUE STORY OF THE  
 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

(Original.)

A member of the Russian revolution-ary committee in New York recently came upon a man the sight of whom startled him.

"Why, Sergius, I thought you were dead."

"But you see I am alive."

"Your name certainly came through our secret press as having been executed, together with a number of others."

The man addressed seemed haunted by some danger, some memory—what it was his friend could not tell. He looked about him as though he feared a policeman or a Cossack was coming from behind to cut him down.

"Come with me," said the other. "I will take you where you will feel more comfortable. You cannot have been in this free country long or you would not fear your shadow. When did you arrive?"

"Yesterday."

When they were settled at a table in a cafe with something warm before them to restore the courage of the newly arrived man he told the following experience:

"You know, of course, of the putting down of the revolution in the Baltic provinces. You also know that my father's paper did not support the revolution, though it was liberal. Since the czar had promised liberty of the press we supposed we were safe. But the troops were all about us, and whenever they entered a town they would declare martial law and by their drumhead courts martial proceed to get rid of those they thought proper to destroy. One day our peaceful village received such a visitation. Some countries fear hurricanes, some fear earthquakes. I would prefer either to what came upon us. The soldiers respected no one, old or young, sick or well, male or female. My father was arrested as editor of our paper, and I, having written for it, was also arrested. I was ill at the time, but that made no difference.

"We were tried by the 'drumhead,' which should be named the 'black death,' and, of course, convicted. It mattered not whether we were innocent or guilty, a certain number must be sacrificed to strike terror into those who remained. There were about eighty of us selected to be shot, my father and I among the number.

"It is a horrible thing—that which is common at home today—to be marched out in a gang to be shot down like dogs. Men and women were driven together to a pen while our fellow citizens looked on without power to help us. I can see my horror-stricken companions wailing, praying or hearing their end in silence. I can see—he put his hands over his eyes—"my father standing among the rest and the look he gave me—me whom he had brought up from a babe. I can see that line of death, hear the word of command from the officers. I saw these men raise their pieces and bring them to an aim. The suspense between the aim and the fire was too much for me, weakened as I was by illness. I fainted and as the balls mowed down my companions I fell, too, but from another cause.

When I came to myself, remembering the horrible situation, I supposed that I was in the agonies of death. Then, in darkness, suffocating, a load upon me, it occurred to me that I had been buried alive. I had struck the truth. After the execution the bodies were gathered and thrown into a trench dug for the purpose. The bullet intended for me had gone over my head, and I was not hurt. I was thrown in with the rest and all were covered over with earth, but not deep or I would not be here with you today.

"But I was not thinking of this then. I was working as well as my strength would permit—of course it was greatly magnified by my situation—and at last scrambled out. As I lay on the surface gasping to fill my lungs I saw it was night. There was a chance for my life.

"I lay still for some time, listening. There was no sound near me that I could hear. No sentry was needed to guard the dead. Perhaps the troops that had stricken us had passed on to the next town. At last I gained sufficient strength and courage to crawl away. You remember Ivan Drovnosky. Well, his house was not in the town. It was on the outskirts and near the shooting pen. I went there and called him up. When he saw me standing at his door he thought I was my ghost. I told him my story, and he took me in and concealed me.

"Fortunately, as you know, we were not far from the German border, and my friends advised and helped me to reach it. They furnished me with a disguise and started with me, since I was too weak to get on by myself. Of course I had a better chance than one the police were looking for. No one looked for me, for I was supposed to be dead. I reached the border safely and, traveling through Germany, took a steamer for the United States.

"But I cannot shut out that dreadful scene. I see strong men and weak women waiting for the slaughter. I see their neighbors, their children, who have followed them to the place of execution. I see again and again always that fearful line, their pieces aimed at our breasts. Every night I wake suffocating in that pit wedged in among the dead, my companions, and begin anew that fearful struggle for air, for life. I dread to live more than I dread to die."

"Cheer up, my old friend. In this land where there is no czar, no Cossacks, where the people are the only rulers, the visions that haunt you will fade away."

MORRIS WYNNE.

**Channing Pollock  
 On Stage Realism**

*He Analyzes and Describes  
 It and Gives Examples.  
 Other Views.*

By CHANNING POLLOCK,  
 Author of "The Little Gray Lady" and  
 dramatizer of "The Pit," "In the Bishop's  
 Carriage," etc.

Notwithstanding the fact that most dictionaries define the word clearly, it is quite certain that any dozen persons would give as many interpretations to the phrase, "realism in dramatic art." To the average admirer of Lottie Blair Parker and Jerome Eddy realism means cows. The devotee of Ibsen will tell you that realism means immorality. There are as many different expositions of the subject as there are various kinds of plays. The Century Dictionary declares that realism is "the representation of what is real in fact," and surely this makes "Shore Acres" without live stock as realistic as "Way Down East," with its bovine accessories; "The Music Master," with its wholesome character types, as realistic as "Hedda Gabler," with its morbid digging into souls. My own definition of realism would be: Artificiality so blended with art as to seem reality.

There is no intention of declaring that "Way Down East" is not a realistic play because its production includes cows any more than there is the intention of insisting that "Shore Acres" is not a realistic play because it does not include cows. When the scene shown on the stage requires such animals there is no question in my mind of the legitimacy of using them. Under these circumstances they give the verisimilitude of truth. Anything which does that makes for realism. Clyde Fitch's comedies are full of cows. Their bodies are stories which we recognize as dramatizations of everyday life, their legs are incidents which appeal to us as honest duplications of commonplace episodes, their horns are speeches such as come from the mouths of people we know. The author who makes his characters talk and act precisely as the men and women about us do talk and act is a realist. The motor car dialogue in "Man and Superman" is realistic, the return from the funeral in "The Climbers" is realistic, and the entire story of "Alabama," full of trenchant truth and simple sincerity, will always stand as the



CHANNING POLLOCK.

high point at which realism and idealism meet. I lay claim myself to some sort of photography in the second act of "The Little Gray Lady," where Anna Gray retires for the night. The winding of the alarm clock, the concealing of the purse and watch under her pillow, the placing of that pillow itself in a white slip, all are superficially realistic.

It seems to me that there can be no question as to public enjoyment of such material. Now and then some poetic idyl like "Peter Pan" may charm us for a while, but generally our preference lies in that kind of dramatic matter which we recognize from its appearance. Those things which we have seen other people do, those emotions which we ourselves have experienced, strike us most forcibly in plays. If a man says to you that his wife has fallen from a balloon you are curious. But unympathetic, because you have never been up in a balloon. If, on the other hand, he tells you that he is out of work and that his family is hungry, your heart aches for him, because you know what hunger means.

The decline of romantic drama in this country may be traced directly to the lack of fellow feeling for the man whose sword and not his spirit is broken at the end of the third act.

We are only at the beginning of realism on the stage in America. We are being hampered and held back by the same kind of theatrical managers who told Tom Robertson that it was not right to conclude an act without a couplet and by the same kind of laymen who found indecency in "Margaret Fleming."

The spirit which declares every innovation dangerous is as detrimental to the achievement of the best in the theater as in the negroes which brands everything deep and vital as immoral. Despite these obstacles there can be no question that every year brings us nearer to the accomplishment of genuine realism.

So long as we who love the play feel while we think, the most appreciated kind of drama will be that kind which most truthfully depicts everyday life, and the greatest dramatist will be the man who can inject into the dull and ordinary that which makes it interesting and extraordinary.

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