

THE DELAWARE REGISTER:

OR

FARMERS', MANUFACTURERS' & MECHANICS' ADVOCATE.

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FOR THE DELAWARE REGISTER.

THE FOREST CABIN. A Russian Tale.

In the deep secluded forest that lies between Peter-haw and Warsaw, was the simple cabin of an exiled Polisher, who fell under the displeasure of the imperious Catharine, and at the partition of his beloved country was given the cruel choice of death or Siberia. He chose the latter, and after remaining many years in cheerless exile, the rumored news of the death of the haughty Empress reached his melancholy abode—but, after braving incredible hardships he heard on the borders of Poland, that Catharine yet lived; having entirely recovered from her indisposition. Only one of his large and interesting family survived the rigors of a Siberian habitation, and this was a young and lovely maiden about sixteen years of age, the friend, the solace of her afflicted father. Dorisky had often hunted in the deep forest before alluded to, and now thought its sombre shades might prove a friendly shelter to screen himself and this precious daughter from the observation of Catharine or her minions. Accordingly, they reached it, unnoticed, and the first care of Dorisky was to build a humble shelter for her he loved. He selected the most retired spot in the centre of the forest, and with the assistance of his affectionate child he erected a humble cabin embowered amid the thick foliage, and in the attire of a woodman he procured many conveniences from a distant village, which he conveyed to his secure but solitary dwelling. Although the young and lovely Varella had passed the principal part of her life in the cheerless deserts of Siberia, her education had not been neglected. She received all that was useful, and many accomplishments from her elegant mother, whose last advice was, to cultivate and improve the rare talents with which nature had endowed her. Her father taught her several languages, with mathematics, geometry, &c., and at the early age of sixteen she was his companion and friend. Her face and person were faultless in the eyes of her admiring father, and oft the unbidden tear would course down his manly cheek as he traced in the dear being before him the exquisite beauty of his departed Solvina, whose unrivalled loveliness once shone conspicuous at the court of the good Stanislaus;—now, her peerless daughter was an inhabitant of the dreary wilderness, and the wild wolf's neighbor. But her beloved father was safe, and she was happy. In one of his solitary rambles he heard the low moans of a person in apparent distress; he hastened to the spot and found a young and noble Russian who had been thrown from his horse and badly bruised. He was habited in a rich hunting dress and wore on his breast the insignia of honor. The soul of Dorisky was touched with his deplorable situation, and with a prompt humanity he flew to his assistance. A deep wound appeared on his temple, and his senses were benumbed by the violence of the blow. Dorisky

kindly supported him in his arms and bound up his wound with a part of his own dress; then lifting him on his horse he supported him in his arms until he came within a few paces of his humble dwelling; then for the first time the idea of his own immediate safety, if the stranger should recover, flashed through his mind and checked the rapidity of his course; but instantly suppressing the unworthy thought, he stood before the low door of his humble cabin and in a few words communicated his adventure to Varella. She assisted her father in recovering the slow-reviving stranger, and with the most attentive kindness she guarded his sleepless couch, and prevailed on her fatigued parent to retire to rest, but the stranger, in a fit of wild delirium, tore the bandage from his wound, and it profusely bled afresh. The agitated girl endeavored to stanch it, but in vain; and she hastily awoke her father. He came to the bedside of the invalid, but all their united efforts were for a time unsuccessful, and ere the wound was closed the stranger had fainted with the loss of blood. At last he opened his eyes, and gazing wildly around, inquired where he was and why he was in this dreary abode instead of his own father's palace. Dorisky begged him to be composed and said he would tell him all when he was better able to hear it, but the noble stranger, with a faint smile exclaimed, "I shall never be better, for I feel a weight at my heart that presses like the heavy chill of death; and now, whoever you are, hear me. My father is one of the chief men of the Russian court, high in the Empress's favor, and I am his only son. With a party of my young friends I engaged in a hunting expedition, and after destroying many elk we were returning towards Warsaw, when my vicious beast carried me far from my companions, and at length becoming ungovernable, threw me on the ground, where I should have perished miserably had you not fortunately discovered me. I cannot now reward you as you deserve, but if you can give my father intelligence of my being here, he will liberally remunerate you; in my pocket you will find his address; tell him that the last words of his dying son were"—Here the stranger sunk back quite exhausted, and the daughter of Dorisky bathed his pale face, with a view to revive him, but the fainting was long, and his eye lids slightly raised, soon to reclose forever. It was an awful scene. The lifeless body, the bloody bed and floor, were indistinctly seen by the glimmer of the dim lamp that shone in this solitary dwelling. Dorisky and his duteous child gazed on each other for some time in silence; at last, the former observed, "my dear, we must deliberate on what is expedient for us to do in this unpleasant affair; but at present I insist on your taking some rest." She reluctantly obeyed, and after Dorisky had arranged every thing in the best manner in the apartment he proceeded to examine the body before him, in order to assist his determination respecting it. All the habiliments of the deceased were of the finest texture, and he discovered that the beautiful youth, now cold in death, was a descendant of the noble house of Poniatowski, and that his father held the first rank in the empire, as well as in Catharine's favor. He knew if his residence was known at the imperial court, death would be the consequence, and he resolved to give a humble grave in

the forest, to the noble count. In the morning he communicated his resolution to his daughter and she concluded it *must* be right, for his judgment ever governed hers. They buried him in his full hunting suit, a short distance from the Forest Cabin, and strewed his early grave with various evergreens, and the next day, as Dorisky was hunting as usual, he found the horse of the young stranger, nearly famished. He led him home, and he proved a valuable acquisition to them in their solitary abode. Dorisky preserved the jewels which he took from the body, with a book and some papers, in order to restore them to some of the Poniatowski family, when he could do so with safety.

Several months passed away, and the lone inhabitants of the Forest Cabin had lighted an additional lamp in honor of the festival of some favorite Saint, when the trampling of horses was heard near their dwelling. An indescribable sensation thrilled through the heart of the agitated girl as she clasped her beloved parent to her arms and hid her face in his bosom. He had no time to administer consolation, when the door was rudely swung open and the room was filled with armed men. The chief of the band looking round the apartment espied the tasselled bugle horn which belonged to the stranger and hung against the mud walled cabin, a glittering, but useless ornament;—he pointed to it with his sword and in an instant the father of Varella was torn from her encircling arms and given into the custody of a band of soldiers. In vain he protested his innocence, as to the young count's death, and related in strong but simple language, the circumstances of that hunting scene. They were deaf to all his protestations, and merely told him, "he must tell his story at Warsaw." He begged to speak with his agonized daughter, but even this was denied him, and the stern commander of this ferocious party ordered four of his company to stay in the cabin, not so much to guard this beautiful blossom, as to search the house and grounds for further confirmation of the supposed murder of the young count. The last gaze of the distracted Dorisky fell on the frail form of his lovely daughter as it lay in deep insensibility on the earthen floor of the cabin, unregarded by the brutal Russian soldiers, who were only intent on ransacking every box, chest and closet in this humble dwelling. When the deserted Varella recovered from this temporary suspension of life she found herself alone and in total darkness. She called her father, and endeavored to persuade herself that the last sad hours were but a dream. Alas! no kind voice answered her phrenzied screaming, and she threw herself on her father's vacant bed, and overcome with grief and fatigue sunk into a feverish slumber on his pillow. When the first dawn of gray morning appeared, the rough voice of an unfeeling soldier bade her arise and procure them something to eat. She tremblingly obeyed the coarse summons, and set before them the best provision the cabin afforded. Just as they were preparing to eat, one of the men came in and told the others that he had discovered the count's horse, saddle and bridle; and, darting a fierce look at Varella, he observed, "we shall find the *body* next, if these vile peasants have not burned it." The poor girl shuddered, changed color, but feared to reply.—When this melancholy breakfast was ended, three of