

BARON TRUMP'S MARVELLOUS UNDERGROUND JOURNEY

**by
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF WILHELM HEINRICH SEBASTIAN VON TROOMP, COMMONLY CALLED LITTLE BARON TRUMP

As doubting Thomases seem to take particular pleasure in popping up on all occasions, Jack-in-the-Box-like, it may be well to head them off in this particular instance by proving that Baron Trump was a real baron, and not a mere baron of the mind. The family was originally French Huguenot-De la Trompe-which, upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, took refuge in Holland, where its head assumed the name of Van der Troomp, just as many other of the French Protestants rendered their names into Dutch. Some years later, upon the invitation of the Elector of Brandenburg, Niklas Van der Troomp became a subject of that prince, and purchased a large estate in the province of Pomerania, again changing his name, this time to Von Troomp.

The "Little Baron," so called from his diminutive

stature, was born some time in the latter part of the seventeenth century. He was the last of his race in the direct line, although cousins of his are to-day well-known Pomeranian gentry. He began his travels at an incredibly early age, and filled his castle with such strange objects picked up here and there in the far away corners of the world, that the simple-minded peasantry came to look upon him as half bigwig and half magician-hence the growth of the many myths and fanciful stories concerning this indefatigable globe-trotter. The date of his death cannot be fixed with any certainty; but this much may be said: Among the portraits of Pomeranian notables hanging in the Rathhaus at Stettin, there is one picturing a man of low stature, and with a head much too large for his body. He is dressed in some outlandish costume, and holds in his left hand a grotesque image in ivory, most elaborately carved. The broad face is full of intelligence, and the large gray eyes are lighted up with a good-natured but quizzical look that invariably attracts attention. The man's right hand rests upon the back of a dog sitting on a table and looking straight out with an air of dignity that shows that he knew he was sitting for his portrait.

If a visitor asks the guide who this man is, he always gets for answer:-

“Oh, that's the Little Baron!”

But little Baron who, that's the question?

Why may it not be the famous Wilhelm Heinrich Sebastian von Troomp, commonly called "Little Baron Trump," and his wonderful dog Bulger?

CHAPTER I

BULGER IS GREATLY ANNOYED BY THE FAMILIARITY OF THE VILLAGE DOGS AND THE PRESUMPTION OF THE HOUSE CATS.-HIS HEALTH SUFFERS THEREBY, AND HE IMploRES ME TO SET OUT ON MY TRAVELS AGAIN. I READILY CONSENT, FOR I HAD BEEN READING OF THE WORLD WITHIN A WORLD IN A MUSTY OLD MS. WRITTEN BY THE LEARNED DON FUM.-PARTING INTERVIEWS WITH THE ELDER BARON AND THE GRACIOUS BARONESS MY MOTHER.-PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

Bulger was not himself at all, dear friends. There was a lack-lustre look in his eyes, and his tail responded with only a half-hearted wag when I spoke to him. I say half-hearted, for I always had a notion that the other end of Bulger's tail was fastened to his heart. His appetite, too, had gone down with his spirits; and he rarely did anything more than sniff at the dainty food

which I set before him, although I tried to tempt him with fried chickens' livers and toasted cocks' combs-two of his favorite dishes.

There was evidently something on his mind, and yet it never occurred to me what that something was; for to be honest about it, it was something which of all things I never should have dreamed of finding there.

Possibly I might have discovered at an earlier day what it was all about, had it not been that just at this time I was very busy, too busy, in fact, to pay much attention to any one, even to my dear four-footed foster brother. As you may remember, dear friends, my brain is a very active one; and when once I become interested in a subject, Castle Trump itself might take fire and burn until the legs of my chair had become charred before I would hear the noise and confusion, or even smell the smoke.

It so happened at the time of Bulger's low spirits that the elder baron had, through the kindness of an old school friend, come into possession of a fifteenth-century manuscript from the pen of a no less celebrated thinker and philosopher than the learned Spaniard, Don Constantino Bartolomeo Stropholofidgeguaneriusfum, commonly known among scholars as Don Fum, entitled "A World within a World." In this work Don Fum advanced the wonderful theory that there is every reason to believe that the interior of our world is inhabited; that, as is well

known, this vast earth ball is not solid, on the contrary, being in many places quite hollow; that ages and ages ago terrible disturbances had taken place on its surface and had driven the inhabitants to seek refuge in these vast underground chambers, so vast, in fact, as well to merit the name of "World within a World."

This book, with its crumpled, torn, and time-stained leaves exhaling the odors of vaulted crypt and worm-eaten chest, exercised a peculiar fascination upon me. All day long, and often far into the night, I sat poring over its musty and mildewed pages, quite forgetful of this surface world, and with the plummet of thought sounding these subterranean depths, and with the eye and ear of fancy visiting them, and gazing upon and listening to the dwellers therein.

While I would be thus engaged, Bulger's favorite position was on a quaintly embroidered leather cushion brought from the Orient by me on one of my journeys, and now placed on the end of my work-table nearest the window. From this point of vantage Bulger commanded a full view of the park and the terrace and of the drive leading up to the *porte-cochère*. Nothing escaped his watchful eye. Here he sat hour by hour, amusing himself by noting the comings and goings of all sorts of folk, from the hawkers of gewgaws to the noblest people in the shire. One day my attention was attracted by his suddenly leaping down from his cushion and giving a low growl of displeasure. I paid little heed to

it, but to my surprise the next day about the same hour it occurred again.

My curiosity was now thoroughly aroused; and laying down Don Fum's musty manuscript, I hastened to the window to learn the cause of Bulger's irritation.

Lo, the secret was out! There stood half a dozen mongrel curs belonging to the tenantry of the baronial lands, looking up to the window, and by their barking and antics endeavoring to entice Bulger out for a romp. Dear friends, need I assure you that such familiarity was extremely distasteful to Bulger? Their impudence was just a little more than he could stand. Ringing my bell, I directed my servant to hunt them away. Whereupon Bulger consented to resume his seat by the window.

The next morning, just as I had settled myself down for a good long read, I was almost startled by Bulger bounding into the room with eyes flashing fire and teeth laid bare in anger. Laying hold of the skirt of my dressing-gown, he gave it quite a savage tug, which meant, "Put thy book aside, little master, and follow me."

I did so. He led me down-stairs across the hallway and into the dining-room, and then this new cause of discontent on his part became very apparent to me. There grouped around his silver breakfast plate sat an ancient tabby cat and four kittens, all calmly licking or lapping away at his breakfast. Looking up into my

face, he uttered a sharp, complaining howl, as much as to say, "There, little master, look at that. Isn't that enough to roil the patience of a saint? Canst thou wonder that I am not happy with all these disagreeable things happening to me? I tell thee, little master, it is too much for flesh and blood to put up with."

And I thought so too, and did all in my power to comfort my unhappy little friend; but judge of my surprise upon reaching my room and directing him to take his place on his cushion, to see him refuse to obey.

It was something extraordinary, and set me to thinking. He noticed this and gave a joyful bark, then dashed into my sleeping apartment. He was gone for several moments, and then returned bearing in his mouth a pair of Oriental shoes which he laid at my feet. Again and again he disappeared, coming back each time with some article of clothing in his mouth. In a few moments he had laid a complete Oriental costume on the floor before my eyes; and would you believe me, dear friends, it was the identical suit which I had worn on my last travels in far-away lands, when he and I had been wrecked on the Island of Gogulah, the land of the Round Bodies. What did it all mean? Why, this, to be sure:-

"Little master, canst thou not understand thy dear Bulger? He is weary of this dull and spiritless existence. He is tired of this increasing familiarity on the part of these mongrel curs of the neighborhood and

of the audacity of these kitchen tabbies and their families. He implores thee to break away from this life of revery and inaction, and for the honor of the Trumps to be up and away again.” Stooping down and winding my arms around my dear Bulger, I cried out,-

“Yes, I understand thee now, faithful companion; and I promise thee that before this moon has filled her horns we shall once more turn our backs on Castle Trump, up and away in search of the portals to Don Fum’s World within a World.” Upon hearing these words, Bulger broke out into the wildest, maddest barking, bounding hither and thither as if the very spirit of mischief had suddenly nestled in his heart. In the midst of these mad gambols a low rap on my chamber door caused me to call out,-

“Peace, peace, good Bulger, some one knocks. Peace, I say.”

It was the elder baron. With sombre mien and stately tread he advanced and took a seat beside me on the canopy.

“Welcome, honored father!” I exclaimed as I took his hand and raised it to my lips. “I was upon the very point of seeking thee out.”

He smiled and then said,-

“Well, little baron, what thinkest thou of Don Fum’s World within a World?”

“I think, my lord,” was my reply, “that Don Fum is right: that such a world must exist; and with thy

consent it is my intention to set out in search of its portals with all safe haste and as soon as my dear mother, the gracious baroness, may be able to bring her heart to part with me.”

The elder baron was silent for a moment, and then added: “Little baron, much as thy mother and I shall dread to think of thy being again out from under the safe protection of this venerable roof, the moss-grown tiles of which have sheltered so many generations of the Trumps, yet must we not be selfish in this matter. Heaven forbid that such a thought should move our souls to stay thee! The honor of our family, thy fame as an explorer of strange lands in far-away corners of the globe, call unto us to be strong hearted. Therefore, my dear boy, make ready and go forth once more in search of new marvels. The learned Don Fum’s chart will stand thee by like a safe and trusty counsellor. Remember, little baron, the motto of the Trumps, *Per Ardua ad Astra*-the pathway to glory is strewn with pitfalls and dangers-but the comforting thought shall ever be mine, that when thy keen intelligence fails, Bulger’s unerring instinct will be there to guide thee.”

As I stooped to kiss the elder baron’s hand, the gracious baroness entered the room.

Bulger hastened to raise himself upon his hind legs and lick her hand in token of respectful greeting. The tears were pressing hard against her eyelids, but

she kept them back, and encircling my neck with her loving arms, she pressed many and many a kiss upon my cheeks and brow.

“I know what it all means, my dear son,” she murmured with the saddest of smiles; “but it never shall be said that Gertrude Baroness von Trump stood in the way of her son adding new glories to the family ’scutcheon. Go, go, little baron, and Heaven bring thee safely back to our arms and to our hearts in its own good time.”

At these words Bulger, who had been listening to the conversation with pricked-up ears and glistening eyes, gave one long howl of joy, and then springing into my lap, covered my face with kisses. This done, he vented his happiness in a string of earsplitting barks and a series of the maddest gambols. It was one of the happiest and proudest days of his life, for he felt that he had exerted considerable influence in screwing to the sticking-point my resolution to set out on my travels once again.

And now the patter of hurrying feet and the loud murmur of anxious voices resounded through the castle corridors, while inside and out ever and anon I could hear the cry now whispered and now outspoken,-

“The little baron is making ready to leave home again.”

Bulger ran hither and thither, surveying everything, taking note of all the preparations, and I

could hear his joyous bark ring out as some familiar article used by me on my former journeys was dragged from its hiding-place.

Twenty times a day my gentle mother came to my room to repeat some good counsel or reiterate some valuable caution. It seemed to me that I had never seen her so calm, so stately, so lovable.

She was very proud of my great name and so, in fact, were every man, woman, and child in the castle. Had I not gotten off as I did, I should have been literally killed with kindness and Bulger slain with sweet-cake.

CHAPTER II

DON FUM'S MYSTERIOUS DIRECTIONS.-BULGER AND I SET OUT FOR PETERSBURG, AND THENCE PROCEED TO ARCHANGEL.-THE STORY OF OUR JOURNEY AS FAR AS ILITCH ON THE ILITCH.-IVAN THE TEAMSTER.-HOW WE MADE OUR WAY NORTHWARD IN SEARCH OF THE PORTALS TO THE WORLD WITHIN A WORLD.-IVAN'S THREAT.-BULGER'S DISTRUST OF THE MAN AND OTHER THINGS.

According to the learned Don Fum's manuscript,

the portals to the World within a World were situated somewhere in Northern Russia, possibly, so he thought, from all indications, somewhere on the westerly slope of the upper Urals. But the great thinker could not locate them with any accuracy. "The people will tell thee" was the mysterious phrase that occurred again and again on the mildewed pages of this wonderful writing. "The people will tell thee." Ah, but what people will be learned enough to tell me that? was the brain-racking question which I asked myself, sleeping and waking, at sunrise, at high noon, and at sunset; at the crowing of the cock, and in the silent hours of the night.

"The people will tell thee," said learned Don Fum.

"Ah, but what people will tell me where to find the portals to the World within a World?"

Hitherto on my travels I had made choice of a semi-Oriental garb, both on account of its picturesqueness and its lightness and warmth, but now as I was about to pass quite across Russia for a number of months, I resolved to don the Russian national costume; for speaking Russian fluently, as I did a score or more of languages living and dead, I would thus be enabled to come and go without everlastingly displaying my passport, or having my trains of thought constantly disturbed by inquisitive travelling companions—a very important thing to me, for my mind

possessed the extraordinary power of working out automatically any task assigned to it by me, provided it was not suddenly thrown off its track by some ridiculous interruption. For instance, I was upon the very point one day of discovering perpetual motion, when the gracious baroness suddenly opened the door and asked me whether I had pared the nails of my great toes lately, as she had observed that I had worn holes in several pairs of my best stockings.

It was about the middle of February when I set out from the Castle Trump, and I journeyed night and day in order to reach Petersburg by the first of March, for I knew that the government trains would leave that city for the White Sea during the first week of that month. Bulger and I were both in the best of health and spirits, and the fatigue of the journey didn't tell upon us in the least. The moment I arrived at the Russian capital I applied to the emperor for permission to join one of the government trains, which was most graciously accorded. Our route lay almost directly to the northward for several days, at the end of which time we reached the shores of Lake Ladoga. This we crossed on the ice with our sledges, as a few days later we did Lake Onega. Thence by land again, we kept on our way until Onega Bay had been reached, crossing it, too, on the ice, and so reaching the station of the same name, where we halted for a day to give our horses a well-deserved rest. From this point we proceeded in a

straight line over the snow fields to Archangel, an important trading-post on the White Sea.

As this was the destination of the government train, I parted with its commandant after a few days' pleasant sojourn at the government house, and set out, attended only by my faithful Bulger and two servants, who had been assigned to me by the imperial commissioner.

My course now carried me up the River Dwina as far as Solvitchegodsk; thence I proceeded on my way over the frozen waters of the Withegda River until we had reached the government post of Yarensk, and from here on we headed due East until our hardy little horses had dragged us into the picturesque village of Ilitch on the Ilitch. Here we were obliged to abandon our sledges, for the snows had disappeared like magic, uncovering long vistas of green fields, which in a few days the May sun dotted with flowers and sweet shrubs. At Ilitch I was obliged to relinquish from my service the two faithful government retainers who had accompanied me from Archangel, for they had now reached the most westerly point which they had been commissioned to visit. I had become very much attached to them, and so had Bulger, and after their departure we both felt as if we were now, for the first time, among strangers in a strange land; but I succeeded in engaging, as I thought, a trustworthy teamster, Ivan by name, who made a contract with me for a goodly

wage to carry me a hundred miles farther north.

“But not another step farther, little baron!” said the fellow doggedly. I was now really at the foot hills of the Northern Urals, for the rocky crests and snow-clad peaks were in full sight.

I turned many a wistful look up toward the wild regions shut in by their sheer walls and parapets, shaggy and bristling with black pines, for a low, mysterious voice came a-whispering in my inward ear that somewhere, ah, somewhere in that awful wilderness, I should one day come upon the portals of the World within a World! In spite of all I could do Bulger took a violent dislike to Ivan and Ivan to him; and if the bargain had not been made and the money paid over, I should have looked about me for another teamster. And yet it would have been a foolish thing to do, for Ivan had two excellent horses, as I saw at a glance, and, what’s more, he took the best of care of them, at every post rubbing them until they were quite dry, and never thinking of his own supper until they had been watered and fed.

His tarantass, too, was quite new and solidly built and well furnished with soft blankets, all in all as comfortable as you can make a wagon which has no other springs than the two long wooden supports that reach from axle to axle. True, they were somewhat elastic; but I could notice that Bulger was not overfond of riding in this curious vehicle with its rattley-bang

gait up and down these mountain roads, and often asked permission to leap out and follow on foot.

At length Ivan reported everything in readiness for the start; and although I would have fain taken my departure from Ilitch on the Ilitch in as quiet a manner as possible, yet the whole village turned out to see us off-Ivan's family, father, mother, sisters, and brothers, wife and children, uncles and aunts and cousins by dozens alone making up people enough to stock a small town. They cheered and waved their kerchiefs, Bulger barked, and I smiled and raised my cap with all the dignity of a Trump. And so we got away at last from Ilitch on the Ilitch, Ivan on the box, and Bulger and I at the back, sitting close together like two brothers that we were-two breasts with but a single heart-beat and two brains busy with the same thought-that come perils or come sudden attacks, come covert danger or bold and open-faced onslaught, we should stand together and fall together! Many and many a time as Ivan's horses went crawling up the long stretches of mountain road and I lay stretched upon the broad-cushioned seat of the tarantass with a blanket rolled up for a pillow, I would find myself unconsciously repeating those mysterious words of Don Fum:-

“The people will tell thee! The people will tell thee!”

So steep were the roads that some days we would not make more than five miles, and on others a halt of

several hours would have to be made to enable Ivan to tighten his horses' shoes, grease the axles, or do some needful thing in or about his wagon. It was slow work, ay, it was very slow and tedious, but what matters it how many or great the difficulties, to a man who has made up his mind to accomplish a certain task? Do the storks or the wild geese stop to count the thousands of miles between them and their far-away homes when the time comes to turn their heads southward? Do the brown ants pause to count the hundreds of thousands of grains of sand which they must carry through their long corridors and winding passages before they have burrowed deep enough to escape the frost of midwinter?

There had been many Trumps, but never one that had thrown up his arms and cried, "I surrender!" and should I be the first to do it? "Never! Not even if it meant never to see dear old Castle Trump again!"

One morning as we went zigzagging up a particularly nasty bit of mountain road, Ivan suddenly wheeled about and without even taking off his hat, cried out,-

"Little baron, I cover the last mile of the hundred to-day. If thou wouldst go any farther north thou must hire thee another teamster; dost hear?"

"Silence!" said I sternly, for the fellow had broken in upon a very important train of thought.

Bulger, too, resented the man's insolence, and

growled and showed his teeth.

“But, little baron, listen to reason,” he continued in a more respectful tone, removing his cap: “my people will expect me back. I promised my father-I’m a dutiful son-I-”

“Nay, nay, Ivan,” I interrupted sharply, “curb that tongue of thine lest it harm thy soul. Know, then, that I spoke with thy father, and he promised me that thou shouldst go a second hundred miles with me if need were, but on condition that I give thee double pay. It shall be done, and on top of that a goodly present for your *golubtchika* (darling).”

“Little baron, thou art a hard master,” whimpered the man. “If the whim took thee thou wouldst bid me leap into the Giants’ Well just to see whether it has a bottom or not. St. Nicholas, save me!”

“Nay, Ivan,” said I kindly, “I know no such word as cruelty although I do confess that right seems harsh at times, but thou wert born to serve and I to command. Providence hath made thee poor and me rich. We need each other. Do thou thy duty, and thou wilt find me just and considerate. Disobey me, and thou wilt find that this short arm may be stretched from Ilitch to Petersburg.”

Ivan turned pale at this hidden threat of mine; but I deemed it necessary to make it, for I as well as Bulger had scented treachery and rebellion about this boorish fellow, whose good trait was his love of his horses, and

it has always been my rule in life to open my eyes wide to the good that there is in a man, and close them to his faults. But, in spite of kind words and kind treatment, Ivan grew surlier and moodier the moment we had passed the hundredth milestone.

Bulger watched him with a gaze so steady and thoughtful that the man fairly quailed before it. Hour by hour he became more and more restive, and upon leaving a roadside tavern, for the very first time since we had left Ilitch on the Ilitch, I noticed that the fellow had been drinking too much *kwass*. He let loose his tongue, and raised his hand against his horses, which until that moment he had been wont to load down with caresses and pet names.

“Look out for that driver of thine, little baron,” whispered the tavern-keeper. “He’s in a reckless mood. He’d not pull up if the Giants’ Well were gaping in front of him. St. Nicholas have thee in his safe keeping!”

CHAPTER III

**IVAN MORE AND MORE
TROUBLESOME.-BULGER WATCHES HIM
CLOSELY.-HIS COWARDLY ATTACK UPON
ME.-MY FAITHFUL BULGER TO THE
RESCUE.-A DRIVER WORTH HAVING.-HOW I**

WAS CARRIED TO A PLACE OF SAFETY.-IN THE HANDS OF OLD YULIANA.-THE GIANTS' WELL.

When we halted for the night it was only by threatening the man with severe punishment upon my return to Ilitch that I could bring him to rub his horses dry and feed and water them properly; but I stood over him until he had done his work thoroughly, for I knew that no such horses could be had for love or money in that country, and if they should go lame from standing with wet coats in the chill night air, it might mean a week's delay.

Scarcely had I thrown myself on the hard mattress which the tavern-keeper called the best bed in the house, when I was aroused by loud and boisterous talking in the next room. Ivan was drinking and quarrelling with the villagers. I strode into the room with the arrows of indignation shooting from my eyes, and the faithful Bulger close at my heels.

The moment Ivan set eyes upon us he shrank away, half in earnest and half in jest, and called out,-

“Hey, look at the *mazuntchick* ! [Little Dandy!] How smart he looks! He frightens me! See his eyes, how they shine in the dark! Look at the little demon on four legs beside him! Save me, brothers! Save me-he will throw me down into the Giants' Well! Marianka will never see me again! Never! Save me, brothers!”

“Peace, fellow,” I called out sternly. “How darest thou exercise thy dull wit on thy master? Get thee to bed at once, or I’ll have thee whipped by the village constable for thy drunkenness.”

Ivan clambered up upon the top of the bake oven, and stretched himself out on a sheepskin; then turning to the tavern-keeper, I forbade him under any pretext whatever to give my servant any more liquor to drink. “*Akh, Vasha prevoskhoditelstvo* [Ah, your Excellency!]” exclaimed the tavern-keeper with a gesture of disgust, “the fools never know when they have had enough. It matters not what the tavern-keeper may say to them. They tell us not to spoil our own trade. *Akh!* [Ah!] they don’t know when to stop. They have throats as deep as the ‘Giants’ Well!’”

“The Giants’ Well! The Giants’ Well!” I murmured to myself, as I again threw myself down upon the bag of hay which did service as a mattress for those who could afford to pay for it. It’s strange how those words seem to be in every peasant’s mouth, but I thought no more about it at that time. Sleep got the better of me, and with my usual good-night to the elder baron and the gracious baroness, my mother, I dropped off into sweet forgetfulness.

It is a good thing that I had the power of falling asleep almost at will, for with my restless brain ever throbbing and pulsating with its own over-abundance of strength, ever tapping at the thin panels of bone which

covered it, like an imprisoned inventor pounding on his cell door and pleading to be let out into the daylight with his plans and schemes, I should simply have become a lunatic.

As it was, with the mere power of thought I ordered sweet slumber to come to my rescue, and so obedient was this good angel of mine, that all I had to do was simply to set the time when I wished to awaken, and the thing was done to the very minute.

As for Bulger, I never pretended to lay down any rules for him. He made it a practice of catching forty winks when he was persuaded that no danger of any kind threatened me, and even then, I am half inclined to believe that, like an anxious mother over her babe, he never quite closed both eyes at once.

Though entirely sobered by daybreak, yet Ivan went about the task of harnessing up with such an ill grace that I was obliged to reprove him several times before we had left the tavern yard. He was like a vicious but cowardly animal that quails before a strong and steady eye, but watches its opportunity to spring upon you when your back is turned.

I not only called Bulger's attention to the fellow's actions, and warned him to be very watchful, but I also took the precaution to examine the priming of the brace of Spanish pistols which I carried thrust into my belt.

We had scarcely pulled out into the highway when a low growl from Bulger aroused me from a fit of

meditation; and this growl was followed by such an anxious whine from my four-footed brother, as he raised his speaking eyes to me, that I glanced hastily from one side of the road to the other.

Lo and behold! the treacherous Ivan was deliberately engaged in an attempt to overturn the tarantass and to get rid of his enforced task of transporting us any farther on our journey.

“Wretch!” I cried, springing up and laying my hand on his shoulder. “I perceive very plainly what thou hast in mind, but I warn thee most solemnly that if thou makest another attempt to overturn thy wagon, I’ll slay thee where thou sittest.”

For only answer and with a lightning-like quickness he struck a back-hand blow at me with the loaded end of his whipstock.

It took me full in the right temple, and sent me to the bottom of the tarantass like a piece of lead.

For an instant the terrible blow robbed me of my senses, but then I saw that the cowardly villain had turned in his seat and had swung the heavy handled whip aloft with intent to despatch me with a second and a surer blow.

Poor fool! he reckoned without his host; for with a shriek of rage, Bulger leaped at his throat like a stone from a catapult, and struck his teeth deep into the fellow’s flesh.

He roared with agony and attempted to shake off

this unexpected foe, but in vain.

By this time I had come to a full realizing sense of the terrible danger Bulger and I were both in, for Ivan had dropped his whip and was reaching for his sheath-knife.

But he never gripped it, for a well-aimed shot from one of my pistols struck him in the forearm, for I had no wish to take the man's life, and broke it.

The shock and the pain so paralyzed him that he fell over against the dashboard half in a faint, and then rolled completely out of the wagon, dragging Bulger with him. The horses now began to rear and plunge. I saw no more. There was a noise as of the roar of angry waters in my ears, and then the light of life went out of my eyes entirely. I had swooned dead away.

It seemed to me hours that I lay there on my back in the bottom of the tarantass with my head hanging over the side, but of course it was only minutes. I was aroused by a prickling sensation in my left cheek, and as I slowly came to myself I discovered that it proceeded from the gravel thrown up against it by one of the front wheels of the tarantass, for the horses were galloping along at the top of their speed, and there on the driver's seat sat my faithful Bulger, the reins in his teeth, bracing himself so as to keep them taut over the horses' backs; and as I sat up and pressed my hand against my poor hurt head, the whole truth broke upon me:-

The moment Ivan had struck the ground Bulger had released his hold upon the fellow's throat, and ere he had had a chance to revive had leaped up into the driver's seat, and, catching up the reins in his teeth, had drawn them taut and thus put an end to the rearing and plunging of the frightened beasts and started them on their way, leaving the enraged Ivan brandishing his knife and uttering imprecations upon mine and Bulger's heads as he saw his horses and wagon disappear in the distance. Now was it that a mad shouting assailed my ears and I caught a glimpse of half a dozen peasants who, seeing this, as they thought, empty tarantass come nearer and nearer with its galloping horses, had abandoned their work and rushed out to intercept it.

Judge of their amazement, dear friends, as their eyes fell upon the calm and skilful driver bracing himself on the front seat, and with oft repeated backward tosses of his head urging those horses to bear his beloved master farther and farther away from the treacherous Ivan's sheath-knife.

As the peasants seized the animals by the heads and brought them to a standstill, I staggered to my feet, and threw my arms around my dear Bulger. He was more than pleased with what he had done, and licked my bruised brow with many a piteous moan.

"St. Nicholas, save us!" cried one of the peasants, devoutly making the sign of the cross; "but if I should live long enough to fill the Giants' Well with pebbles, I