

**THE BRACELET OF
GARNETS AND
OTHER STORIES**

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The bracelet of garnets and other stories by Alexander Kuprin & Leo Pasvolksy

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ALEXANDER KUPRIN & LEO PASVOLSKY

**THE BRACELET OF
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THE BRACELET OF GARNETS



A. K. Reynolds

THE
BRACELET OF GARNETS

AND OTHER STORIES

BY
ALEXANDER KUPRIN

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY
LEO PASVOLSKY
EDITOR OF "THE RUSSIAN REVIEW"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
WILLIAM LYON PHELPS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT YALE UNIVERSITY

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P R E F A C E

THE translator's task is sometimes rendered difficult not so much by the actual work of turning into another language the writings of the author, as by the necessity of choosing among the author's works those which ought to be presented to the readers of the other language. It is a great privilege, therefore, to base one's choice upon what the author himself considers his best work. My choice of stories was based upon the list contained in the following letter:

"MY DEAR MR. PASVOLSKY:—I feel flattered because you have asked me to make a selection of my works for translation, especially since we have no literary treaty either with America or with England. I consider the following of my works the most successful: *An Evening Guest*; *The Læstrygonians*; *A Bracelet of Garnets*; *Demir-Kayá*; *The Jewess*; *Emerald*; *The Horse-Thieves*; *The Park of Kings*; *An Insult*; *Sulamith*; *A Coward*, besides those which you mention in your letter.

"A. KUPRIN."

I have chosen from this list those stories in which I consider Mr. Kuprin to be at his best. And he is at his best in two types of stories.

There is wholeness about Kuprin as a writer, which breathes of the strength and power of Russia herself; not the chiselled and filed out artificiality of words which is often used as a substitute for natural strength and charm, but simplicity, which is power itself, an extensive knowledge of life, and a deep and sincere love for it. When he writes in this style, Kuprin creates an atmosphere which inevitably carries us away; we live in the beauty or the horror of that bit of life which the magic pen of the writer conjures up before us. This manner Kuprin uses in some of his fairly long stories. The other style, in which Kuprin seems to me at his best, is the very short story, of three or four pages. And he is really a master of this most difficult manner of short-story writing.

I have tried to present Kuprin in both of these manners. In "A Bracelet of Garnets" one cannot but become transported into that atmosphere of a "love that repeats itself but once in a thousand years." In "The Jewess" one is carried away by the impelling beauty of a Jewish woman, fascinatingly lovely, though living in filth and ignorance in a road-house. In "The Horse-Thieves" the tints of horror are sombre and black, but irresistibly compelling. In "The Læstrygonians" the magic of words is so complete that, even after laying the book aside, one still sees oneself on the beautiful Balaklava Bay, with the sinuous lines that mark the darting courses of the fish radiating and intertwining in all directions.

In some of the very short stories Kuprin finds it possible to compress into a few pages what another

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writer may not express in a volume. "The Legend," "Demir-Kayá," "The Garden of the Holy Virgin" were chosen for this reason. The latter was written on the first anniversary of the war and is really a striking expression of the reaction of a writer, who loves Life as Kuprin does, to the diabolic fury of destruction of life that has struck the world like a tempest, sent forth by the grim breath of Death.

LEO PASVOLSKY.

