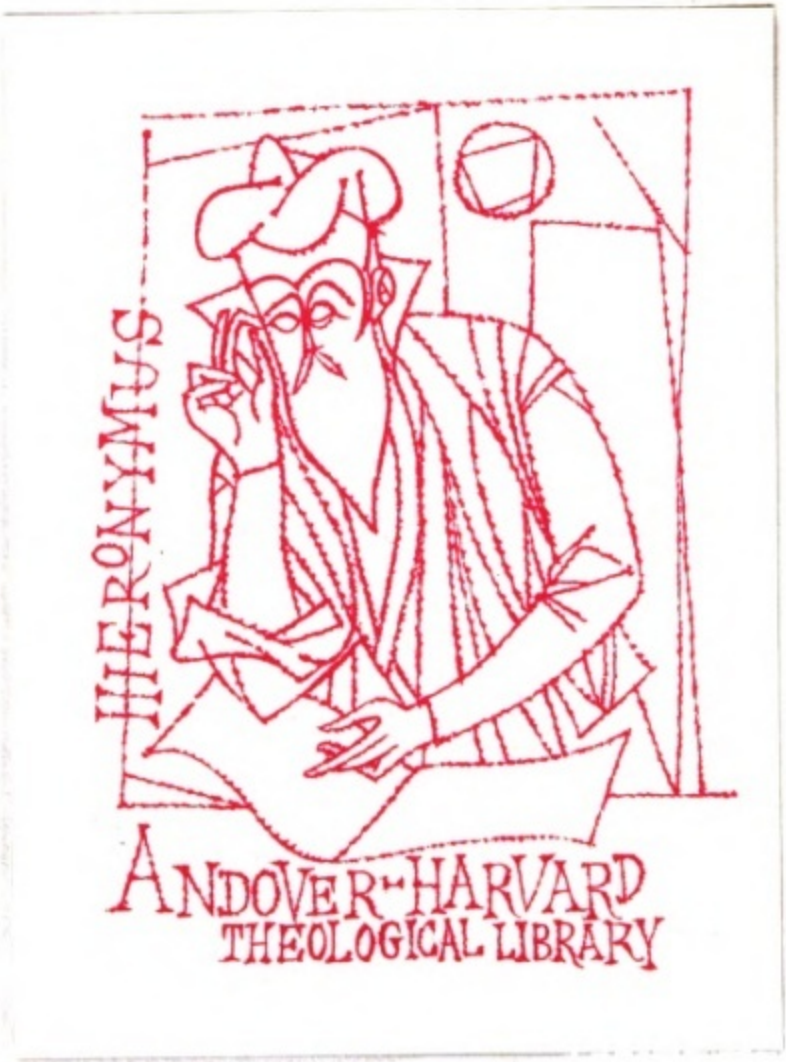
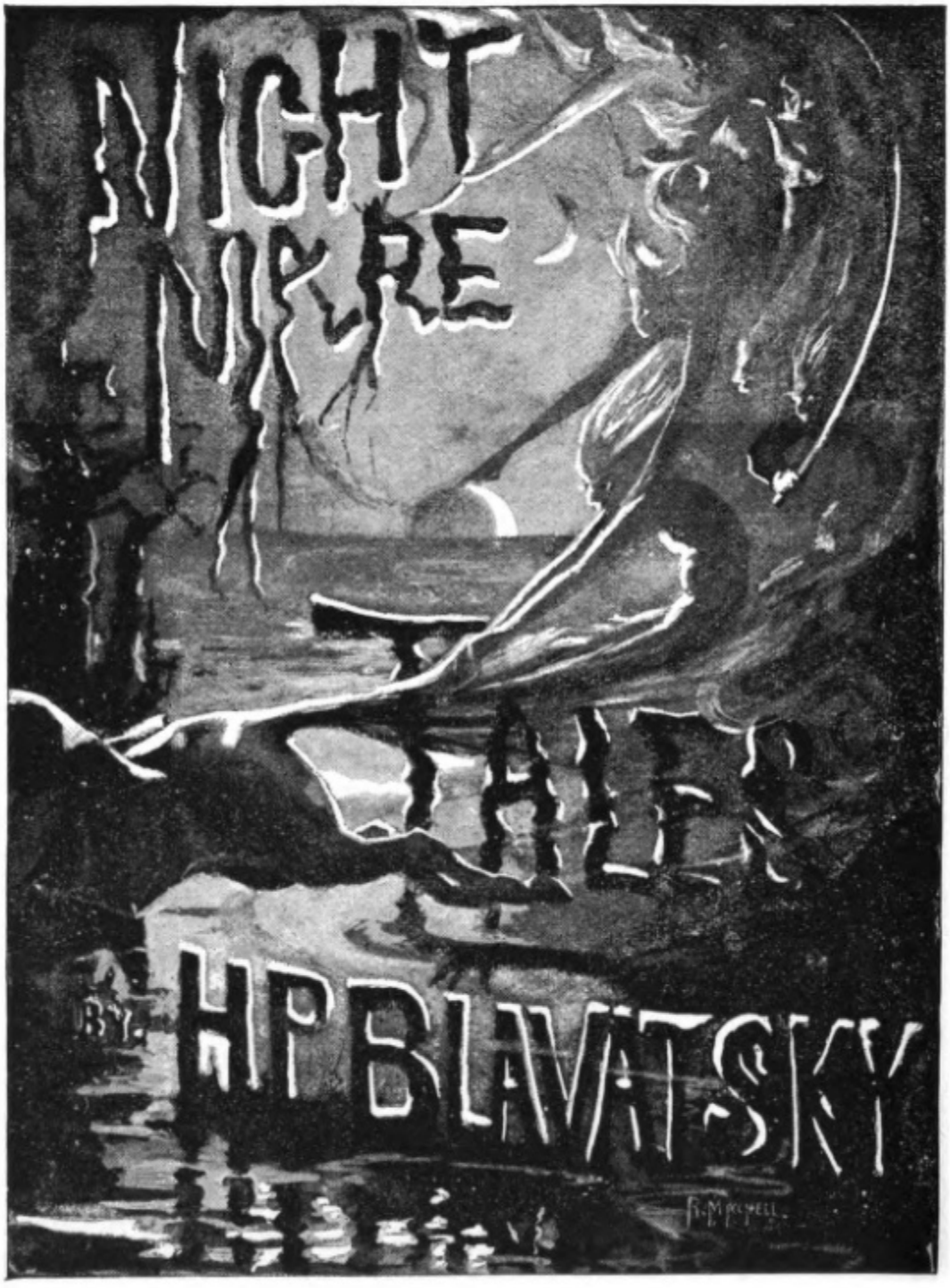
Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE H. P. B. PRESS,
42, Henry Street, Regent's Park,
LONDON, N.W.

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A BEWITCHED LIFE.

(As Narrated by a Quill Pen.)

Introduction.

IT was a dark, chilly night in September, 1884. A heavy gloom had descended over the streets of A———, a small town on the Rhine, and was hanging like a black funeral-pall over the dull factory burgh. The greater number of its inhabitants, wearied by their long day's work, had hours before retired to stretch their tired limbs, and lay their aching heads upon their pillows. All was quiet in the large house; all was quiet in the deserted streets.

I too was lying in my bed; alas, not one of rest, but of pain and sickness, to which I had been confined for some days. So still was everything in the house, that, as Longfellow has it, its stillness seemed almost audible. I could plainly hear the murmur of the blood, as it rushed through my aching body, producing that monotonous singing so familiar to one who lends a watchful ear to silence. I had listened to it until, in my nervous imagination, it had grown into the sound of a

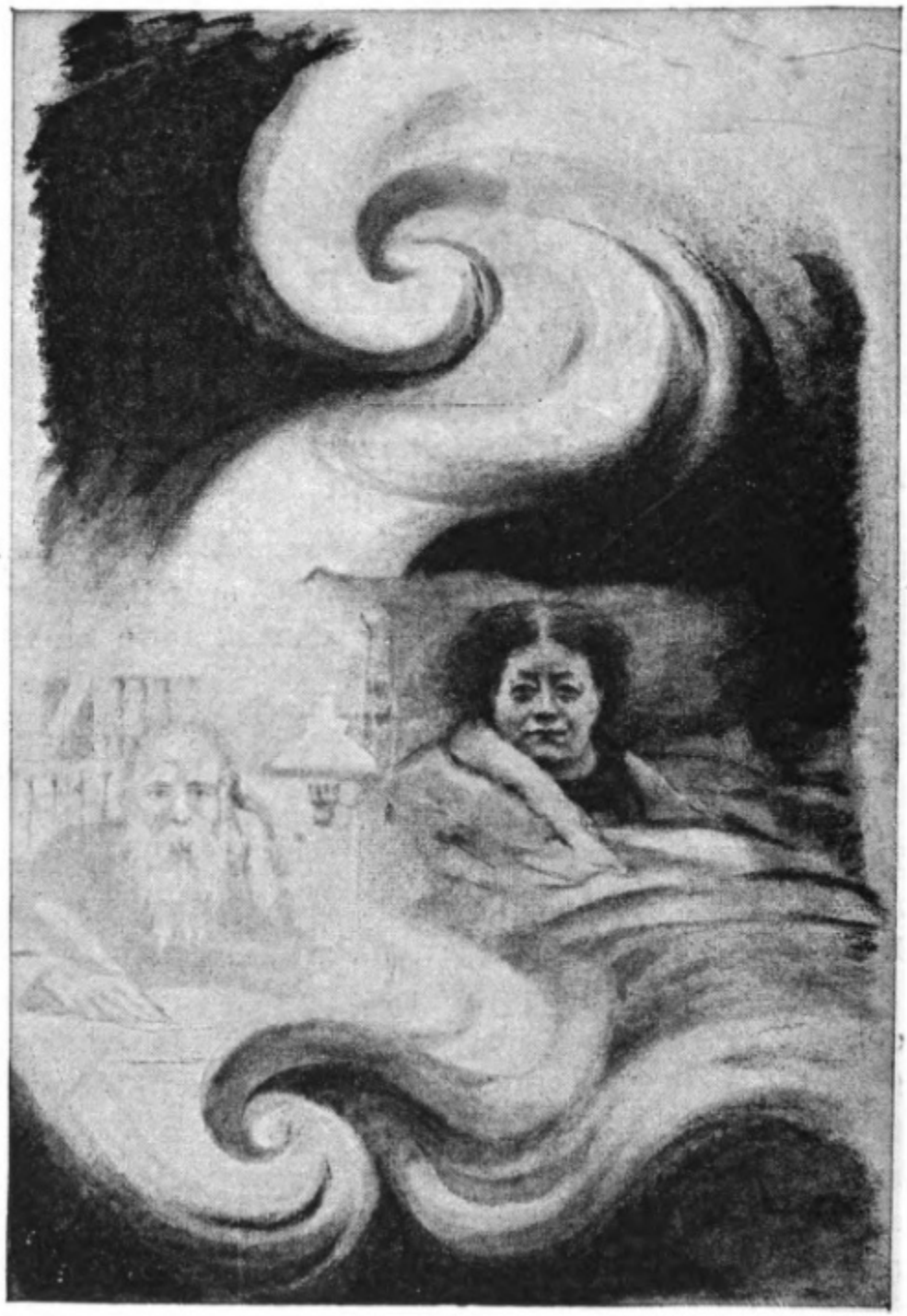
Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

distant cataract, the fall of mighty waters . . . . . when, suddenly changing its character, the ever-growing

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"singing" merged into other and far more welcome

distant cataract, the fall of mighty waters . . . . . when, suddenly changing its character, the ever-growing



Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"singing" merged into other and far more welcome

THE CAVE OF THE ECHOES.

A Strange but True Story.*

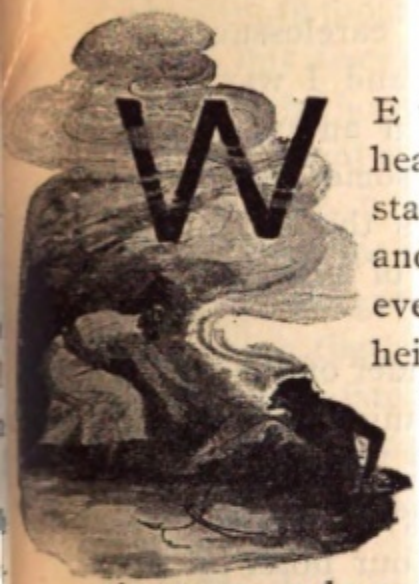
IN one of the distant governments of the Russian empire, in a small town on the borders of Siberia, a mysterious tragedy occurred more than thirty years ago. About six versts from the little town of P——, famous for the wild beauty of its scenery, and for the wealth of its inhabitants—generally proprietors of mines and of iron foundries—stood an aristocratic mansion. Its household consisted of the master, a rich old bachelor and his brother, who was a widower and the father of two sons and three daughters. It was known that the proprietor, Mr. Izvertzoff, had adopted his brother's children, and, having formed an especial attachment for his eldest nephew, Nicolas, he had made him the sole heir of his numerous estates.

Time rolled on. The uncle was getting old, the nephew was coming of age. Days and years had passed in monotonous serenity, when, on the hitherto clear horizon of the quiet family, appeared a cloud. On an

* This story is given from the narrative of an eye-witness, a Russian gentleman, very pious, and fully trustworthy. Moreover, the facts are copied from the police records of P——. The eye-witness in question attributes it, of course, partly to divine interference and partly to the Evil One.—H. P. B.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE LUMINOUS SHIELD.



WE were a small and select party of light-hearted travellers. We had arrived at Constantinople a week before from Greece, and had devoted fourteen hours a day ever since to toiling up and down the steep heights of Pera, visiting bazaars, climbing to the tops of minarets and fighting our way through armies of hungry dogs, the traditional masters of the streets of Stamboul. Nomadic life is infectious, they say, and no civilization is strong enough to destroy the charm of unrestrained freedom when it has once been tasted. The gipsy cannot be tempted from his tent, and even the common tramp finds a fascination in his comfortless and precarious existence, that prevents him taking to any fixed abode and occupation. To guard my spaniel Ralph from falling a victim to this infection, and joining the canine Bedouins that infested the streets, was my chief care during our stay in Constantinople. He was a fine fellow, my constant companion and cherished friend. Afraid of losing him, I kept a strict watch over his movements; for the first three days, however, he behaved like a tolerably well-educated quadruped, and remained faithfully at my heels. At every impudent attack from his Mahomedan cousins, whether intended as a hostile demonstration or an overture of friendship, his only reply would be to draw in his tail between his

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

FROM THE POLAR LANDS.

(A Christmas Story.)

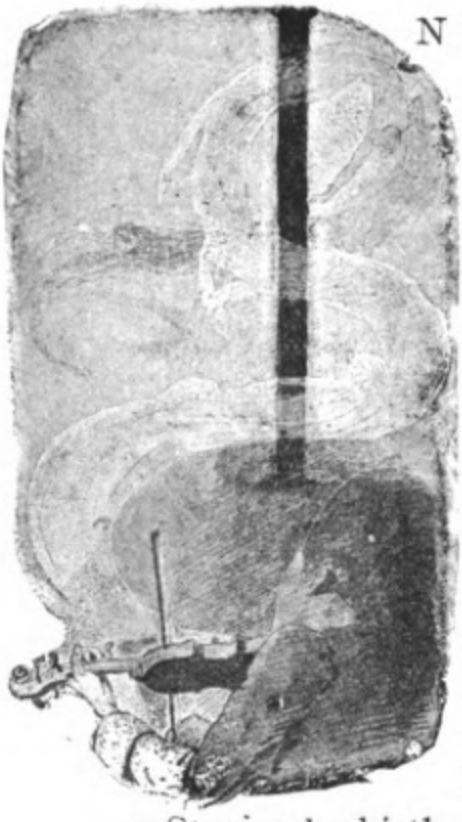
UST a year ago, during the Christmas holidays, a numerous society had gathered in the country house, or rather the old hereditary castle, of a wealthy landowner in Finland. Many were the remains in it of our forefathers' hospitable way of living; and many the mediæval customs preserved, founded on traditions and superstitions, semi-Finnish and semi-Russian, the latter imported into it by its female proprietors from the shores of the Neva. Christmas trees were being prepared and implements for divination were being made ready. For, in that old castle there were grim worm-eaten portraits of famous ancestors and knights and ladies, old deserted turrets, with bastions and Gothic windows; mysterious sombre alleys, and dark and endless cellars, easily transformed into subterranean passages and caves, ghostly prison cells, haunted by the restless phantoms of the heroes of local legends. In short, the old Manor offered every commodity for romantic horrors. But alas! this once they serve for nought; in the present narrative these dear old horrors play no such part as they otherwise might.

Its chief hero is a very commonplace, prosaical man —let us call him Erkler. Yes; Dr. Erkler, professor of

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE ENSOULED VIOLIN.

I.



N the year 1828, an old German, a music teacher, came to Paris with his pupil and settled unostentatiously in one of the quiet faubourgs of the metropolis. The first rejoiced in the name of Samuel Klaus; the second answered to the more poetical appellation of Franz Stenio. The younger man was a violinist, gifted, as rumour went, with extraordinary, almost miraculous talent. Yet as he was poor and had not hitherto made a name for himself in Europe, he remained for several years in the capital of France—the heart and pulse of capricious continental fashion—unknown and unappreciated. Franz was a Styrian by birth, and, at the time of the event to be presently described, he was a young man considerably under thirty. A philosopher and a dreamer by nature, imbued with all the mystic oddities of true genius, he reminded one of some of the heroes in Hoffmann's *Contes Fantastiques*. His earlier existence had been a very unusual, in fact, quite an eccentric one, and its history must be briefly told—for the better understanding of the present story.

Born of very pious country people, in a quiet burg among the Styrian Alps; nursed "by the native gnomes who watched over his cradle"; growing up in the weird atmosphere of the ghouls and vampires who play such a prominent part in the household of every Styrian and Slavonian in Southern Austria; educated later, as a

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

3 2044 054 114 665

DATE DUE

DEC 2 0 2001

DEC 0 2 2004

DEMCO, INC. 38-29

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY