

**NADIA, OR, OUT OF  
THE BEATEN TRACK,  
VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649654475

Nadia, Or, Out of the Beaten Track, Vol. I by R. Orloffsky & Langenau

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Cover @ 2017

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**R. ORLOFFSKY & LANGENAU**

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NADIA;  
OR,  
OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF  
R. ORLOFFSKY,  
BY THE BARONESS LANGENAU.

~~Knodat (Antarctica) Siberia.~~



VOL. I.

London:  
SWAN SONNENSCH. LOWREY & CO.,  
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.  
1888.

Slav 4341.18.411  
~~Slav 4349.2.411~~

831  $\frac{43}{3}$



Mrs. J. R. Corbridge  
(3 vols.)

BYLER & TANNER,  
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,  
PROMM AND LONDON

# NADIA ;

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Out of the Benten Track.

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## CHAPTER I.

**I**N one of the southern provinces of Russia, about five versts from the Volga and ten from the district town of C—, lies a large village named Bialastolby.<sup>1</sup> Like most of these black-earth villages, it was situated on the ground of a large hollow, and its low-walled, thatched houses were scattered on one of its sloping sides. It would be rather difficult to say how it came by its strange name. Old people asserted that some seventy or eighty years ago, one of its former possessors, whom a most benevolent ukase of the Emperor Paul had condemned to an eternal residence on his estate, had had the fancy to enclose the large manor house with high walls of sandstone, and to place as gateway two white stone pillars at the very beginning of a long avenue of old lime-trees, which led directly up to the house. But of all those memorials of lordly power, there re-

<sup>1</sup> White pillars.



mained not the slightest trace now-a-days, and even the family of the former proprietor had utterly disappeared, as people only disappear in Russia. The avenue of lime-trees, strongly damaged by the inexorable hand of time, still led from the village to the manor house, but the approach to it was free on all sides. The stately old house seemed to keep a cheerful and vigilant watch over the silent steppe; from the high place on which it was built, the eye roamed freely over the broad expanse of fields, softly blending with the tints of the far-off horizon, over the village on the opposite side of the river and the broad dike with which it was dammed up. These surroundings were certainly very plain; yet, when the cloudless June sky looked lovingly down upon the green and waving sea of corn, almost as boundless as the sky itself, or when the rays of the evening sun played on the cross and the windows of the village church, gilding the heights of the slumbering dike, it was hardly possible to avoid falling in love with this colourless landscape; it breathed such a wonderful peace, such an innate power, this silent steppe!

It was only on one side, behind the house, where the old garden sloped down to the embankment, that the landscape was set in a frame of thick verdure. Ancestral, wrinkled lime-trees, slender young poplars, and curly elms enclosed here with their many-coloured leaves a perfectly different and strange world. From the terrace, which faced the

garden, it looked much like a green wilderness, in which the farther the eye tried to dive, the more impenetrable the darkness grew, as if wanting to hide the entrance into it with impervious walls. Every notion of a possible broad and vast expanse like the steppe disappeared here; the eye lost itself in the depths of a shade, hardly ever lighted up by a stray sun-ray. Yet it was worth while penetrating into this wilderness, if only to experience a new feeling after the overwhelming uniformity of the steppe. The garden soon merged into the wood, the declivity got steeper and steeper, suddenly sweeping down into an almost perpendicular ravine, out of the depths of which a small river, after having worked itself out from under the embankment, continued its way sturdily on towards the Volga. But it was not very quiet, this little river, the shores of which lowered themselves down into the hollow, where they began to narrow and darken, being thickly covered with moorgrass and burdocks, mixed with crawling, catching shrubs. The river itself was foaming and roaring, dashing quickly over its stony bed; around it rose, like a secular guardian, the silent and gloomy-looking trees of the still untouched oak forest.

Biälastolby had belonged for about forty years to Anna Grigorievna Koretzky. She had spent her childhood there, and it had been given to her as a dowry when she was married, at nineteen years of

age, to Alexis Nicolaievitch Koretzky, an officer of the life guard, who happened once to spend a few days in the district town of C——. Here she had brought up her two sons, Dmitry and Volodia ; and when she had found herself a widow in the year 1863, eleven years ago, she resolved to stay on and to keep the reins of government with as steady a hand as during the life of her husband. It was with a smile of proud satisfaction that she told whoever would hear it, that the 5,000 deciatines belonging to her now yielded twice as much as formerly during serfage time, and that her estate had never been encumbered nor her trees cut down. Her household was in perfect order, without being famous either for luxury or waste, and the massive healthy buildings on her estate were proofs of her being an excellent manager, in spite of her disliking and avoiding the introduction of all sorts of modern improvements. She enjoyed the respect of all her neighbours, though she was neither cultured nor intellectual ; and her house, though far from being one of the first of the district, was never empty, the high officials considering it their duty to keep up their relations with her, however little she seemed to care for their good graces.

The Koretzkys were descended from a Polish family of the same name, but having lived for many years in Russia, they had lost sight of all their former relations, and even dropped the title of prince. They were very poor, and had never been able to reach