

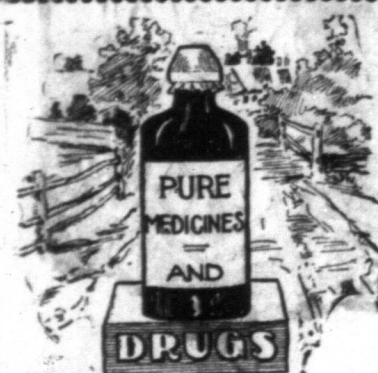
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Weak and impure Drugs do more harm than no Drugs at all. All our supplies are purchased from the most reliable houses in the trade, consequently they are fresh. Consider our qualities, compare our prices and you'll be satisfied that we give value.

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We have a large variety of Sewer Pipes from 4 to 24 inches, and the best Portland Cement at LOWEST PRICES.

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Minard's Liniment Relieves Neural-

THE COURIER OF THE CZAR

By Jules Verne

The Tartar boats were now only a hundred feet distant. They carried a detachment of Bokharian soldiers on their way to reconnoiter round Omsk.

The ferryboat was still two lengths from the shore. The boatmen redoubled their efforts. Michael himself seized a pole and wielded it with superhuman strength. If he could land the tarantass and horses and dash off with them, there was some chance of escaping the Tartars, who were not mounted.

But all their efforts were in vain. The soldiers from the first boat shouted.

Michael recognized the Tartar war-cry, which is usually answered by lying flat on the ground.

As neither he nor the boatmen obeyed this injunction, a volley was let fly among them, and two of the horses were mortally wounded.

At the next moment a violent blow was felt. The boats had run into the ferryboat.

"Come, Nadia!" cried Michael, ready to jump overboard.

The girl was about to follow him when a blow from a lance struck him, and he was thrown into the water. The current swept him away. His hand raised for an instant above the waves, and then he disappeared.

Nadia uttered a cry, but before she had time to throw herself after him she was seized and dragged into one of the boats.

In a few minutes the boatmen were killed and the ferryboat was left to drift away while the Tartars continued to descend the Irtysh.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE blow which had struck Michael Strogoff was not mortal. By swimming in a manner by which he had effectually concealed himself he had reached the right bank, where he fell exhausted among the bushes.

When he recovered his senses, he found himself in the cabin of a mujik, who had picked him up and cared for him and to whom he owed his life. For how long a time had he been the guest of this brave Siberian? He could not guess, but when he opened his eyes he saw the handsome bearded face bending over him and regarding him with pitying eyes. He was about to ask where he was when the mujik, anticipating him, said:

"Do not speak, little father, do not speak. Thou art still too weak. I will tell thee where thou art and everything that has passed since I brought thee to my cabin."

And the mujik related to Michael Strogoff the different incidents of the struggle which he had witnessed—the attack upon the ferry by the Tartar boats, the pillage of the tarantass and the massacre of the boatmen.

But Michael Strogoff listened no longer, and, slipping his hand under his garment, he felt the imperial letter still secured in his breast.

He breathed a sigh of relief. But that was not all.

"A young girl accompanied me," said he.

"They have not killed her," replied the mujik, anticipating the anxiety which he read in the eyes of his guest. "They have carried her off in their boat and have continued the descent of the Irtysh. It is only one prisoner more to join so many others which they are taking to Tomsk."

Michael Strogoff was unable to reply. He pressed his hand upon his heart to restrain his beating.

But, notwithstanding these many trials, the sentiment of duty mastered his whole soul.

He remembered the errand which he had undertaken. Indeed never by day or night was his emperor's mission for even a moment absent from his mind.

Not the presence of the greatest danger, the tortures of hunger and thirst, the weariness of excessive fatigue, not even all combined could cause him to forget that a momentous matter was entrusted to his courage, his zeal, his fidelity and his endurance. Michael Strogoff was worthy of this trust.

"Where am I?" asked he.

"Upon the right bank of the Irtysh, only five versts from Omsk," replied the mujik.

"What wound can I have received which could have thus prostrated me? It was not a gunshot wound?"

"No; a lance thrust upon the head, now healing," replied the mujik. "After a few days' rest, little father, thou wilt be able to proceed. Thou didst fall into the river, but the Tartars neither touched nor searched thee, and thy purse is still in thy pocket."

Michael Strogoff gripped the mujik's hand. Then, recovering himself with a sudden effort, "Friend," said he, "how long have I been in thy hut?"

"Three days."

"Three days lost!"

"Three days hast thou lain unconscious."

"Hast thou a horse to sell me?"

"Thou wishest to go?"

"At once."

"I have neither horse nor carriage, little father. Where the Tartar has passed there remains nothing."

"Well, I will go on foot to Omsk to

find a horse."

"A few more hours of rest and thou wilt be in a better condition to pursue thy journey."

"Not an hour!" replied the mujik, recognizing the fact that it was useless to struggle against the will of his guest. "I will guide thee myself. Besides," he added, "the Russians are still in great force at Omsk, and thou couldst perhaps pass unperceived."

"Friend," replied Michael, "heaven reward thee for all thou hast done for me."

"Reward! Only fools expect reward on earth," replied the mujik.

Michael Strogoff went out of the hut. When he tried to walk, he was seized with such faintness that without the assistance of the mujik he would have fallen, but the fresh air quickly revived him. He then felt the wound in his head, the violence of which his fur cap had lessened. With the energy which he possessed he was not a man to succumb under such a trifle. Before his eyes lay a single goal—far distant, it is true, but he must reach it! But he must pass through Omsk without stopping there.

"God protect my mother and Nadia," he murmured. "I have no longer the right to think of them."

Michael Strogoff and the mujik soon arrived in the mercantile quarter of the lower town, and, although under military occupation, they entered it without difficulty. The surrounding earth-work had been destroyed in many places, and there were the breaches through which the marauders who followed the armies of Feofar-Kahn had penetrated.

The mujik was conducting his guest straight to the posting house when in a narrow street Michael Strogoff, coming to a sudden stop, sprang behind a jutting wall.

"What is the matter?" quickly asked the mujik, much astonished at this sudden movement.

"Silence!" hastily replied Michael Strogoff, with his finger on his lips.

At this moment a detachment debouched from the principal square into the street which Michael Strogoff and his companion had been just following.

At the head of the detachment, composed of twenty horsemen, was an officer dressed in a very simple uniform. Although he glanced rapidly from one side to the other, he could not have seen Michael Strogoff owing to his precipitous retreat.

The detachment went at full trot into the narrow street. Neither the officer nor his escort concerned themselves about the inhabitants. Several unlucky ones had scarcely time to make way for their passage. There were, therefore, a few half-strided cries, to which the shouts of the lance gave an instant reply, and the street was immediately cleared.

When the escort had disappeared, "Who is that officer?" asked Michael Strogoff, returning toward the mujik. And while putting the question his face was pale as that of a corpse.

"It is Ivan Ogareff," replied the Siberian, but in a deep voice which breathed hatred.

"He?" cried Michael Strogoff, from whom the word escaped with an accent of fury which he could not conceal. He had just recognized in this officer the traveler who had struck him at the posting house of Ichim, and, although he had only caught a glimpse of him, it burst upon his mind at the same time that this traveler was the old Zingari whose words he had overheard in the market place of Nijni Novgorod.

The mujik and Michael resumed their way and arrived at the posting house. To leave Omsk by one of the breaches would not be difficult after nightfall. As for purchasing a carriage to replace the tarantass, that was impossible. There was none to be let or sold. But what was Michael Strogoff now for a carriage? Was he not alone, alas? A horse would suffice him, and, very fortunately, a horse could be had. It was an animal of mettle, capable of enduring much fatigue, and Michael Strogoff, accomplished horseman as he was, could make good use of it.

The horse cost a high price, and a few moments later Michael was ready to start. It was then 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Michael Strogoff, compelled to wait till nightfall in order to pass the fortifications, but not desiring to show himself in the streets of Omsk, remained in the posting house and there partook of food.

There was a great crowd in the public room, it being the resort of numbers of the anxious inhabitants, who at this eventful period collected there to obtain news. They were talking of the expected arrival of a corps of Muscovite troops, not at Omsk, but at Tomsk, a corps intended to recapture that town from the Tartars of Feofar-Kahn.

Michael Strogoff lent an attentive ear to all that was said, but took no part in the conversation.

Suddenly a cry made him tremble, a cry which penetrated to the depths of his soul, and these two words, so to speak, rushed into his ear:

"My son!"

To be Continued.

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REV. DR. MORRIS WECHSLER,
Rabbi of the Cong. Bnai Israel.
New York, Jan. 3, 1901.

Dr. Taft Bros. Medicine Co.
Gentlemen,—Your Asthmalene is an excellent remedy for Asthma and Hay Fever, and its composition alleviates all troubles which combine with asthma. Its success is astonishing and wonderful.

After having it carefully analyzed, we can state that Asthmalene contains no opium, morphine, chloroform, or ether. Very truly yours,
Rev. Dr. Morris Wechsler.

Avon Springs, N. Y., Feb. 1, 1901.

Dr. Taft Bros. Medicine Co.
Gentlemen,—I write this testimonial from a sense of duty, having tested the wonderful effect of your Asthmalene, for the cure of Asthma.

My wife has been afflicted with spasmodic asthma for the past 12 years. Having exhausted my own skill as well as many others, I chanced to see your sign upon your windows on 130th street, New York. I at once obtained a bottle of Asthmalene. My wife commenced taking it about the first of November. I very soon noticed a radical improvement.

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Yours respectfully,
O. D. PHELPS, M. D.



Feb. 5, 1901.

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Trial bottle sent absolutely free on receipt of postal.

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