

THE COURIER OF THE CZAR

By Jules Verne

(Continued.)

"Have you changed your mind as regards the statement you made to me when, three days ago, I interrogated you at Omsk?"

"No."

"So you are ignorant of the fact that your son, Michael Strogoff, courier of the czar, has passed through Omsk?"

"I am ignorant of it."

"And that the man that you believed to have recognized your son at the posthouse was not he—was not your son?"

"He was not my son."

"And have you not seen him since among the prisoners?"

"No."

"And if he were shown to you would you recognize him?"

"No."

At this answer, which showed an inflexible determination to a row nothing, a murmur of approbation arose from the crowd.

Ivan Ogareff could not restrain a menacing gesture.

"Listen," said he to Marfa Strogoff. "Your son is here, and you go at once to point him out."

"No."

"All these men, taken at Omsk and at Kalyan, are going to die before your eyes, and if you do not point out Michael Strogoff you shall receive as many blows of the knout as there shall be men who have passed before you."

Ivan Ogareff had now realized that whatever threats he might utter and to whatever tortures he might subject her, the indomitable Siberian would not speak.

To discover the courier of the czar he now counted not upon her, but upon Michael Strogoff himself. He did not believe it possible that when the mother and the son should be brought into the presence of each other an irresistible impulse would not betray them.

Certainly if he had only wished to gain possession of the imperial letter he could simply have given orders for all these prisoners to be searched. But Michael Strogoff might have destroyed this letter after learning its contents, and if he were not recognized and he should gain Iritskat the plans of Ivan Ogareff would be all frustrated. Wherefore it was not only the letter which he must have from the traitor; he must have the bearer of it.

Nadia, at length understood all, and she now knew who was Michael Strogoff and why he had wished to travel, without being known, the invaded provinces of Siberia.

On the order of Ivan Ogareff the prisoners passed one by one before Marfa Strogoff, who remained immovable as a statue and whose regard expressed only the most complete indifference.

Her son was in the last ranks. When in his turn he passed before his mother, Nadia shut her eyes in order not to see him.

Michael Strogoff had remained apparently impassible, but his hands were bleeding from the pressure of the fetters.

Ivan Ogareff was conquered by the son and the mother.

Sangare, placed near him, only said one word—"Knout!"

"Yes," cried Ivan Ogareff, "let this old jade have the regard which she deserves! Knout! Knout! Knout!"

A Tartar soldier, carrying that terrible instrument of torture, approached Marfa Strogoff.

The knout is composed of a certain number of leather thongs, to the ends of which are attached twisted iron wire. One can easily understand that to be condemned to receive a hundred and twenty blows from such a whip is the same thing as to be condemned to death.

Marfa Strogoff knew it, but she also knew that no torture upon earth could make her speak, and she had already offered the sacrifice of her life for her son's safety.

Marfa Strogoff, having been seized by two soldiers, was thrown on her knees on the ground. Her robe, having been torn, exposed her naked back. A saber was fixed before her breast at the distance of only a few inches, and in case she should bend under the pain her breast would be pierced with the sharp point.

The Tartar raised the lash. He was waiting.

"Go on!" said Ivan Ogareff. The whip lashed in the air, but before the blow had fallen a powerful hand had wrenched it from the hands of the Tartar.

Michael Strogoff was there! He had leaped before this horrible scene! If at the posthouse of Ichim he had restrained himself at the blow from Ivan Ogareff, here before his mother, who was about to be struck, he was not able to master himself.

Ivan Ogareff had succeeded.

"Michael Strogoff!" he cried. Then, advancing, he said: "Ah, was this done by the man of Ichim?"

"Himself!" said Michael Strogoff, and, raising the knout, he tore with it the face of Ivan Ogareff himself.

"Blow for blow!"

"Well given!" cried the voice of a spectator, who fortunately hid himself in the tumult.

Twenty soldiers threw themselves on Michael Strogoff, and they were about to kill him. But Ivan Ogareff, from whom a cry of pain and rage had escaped, stopped them with a motion of his hand.

"This man is reserved for the justice of the czar!"

The letter to the imperial armies was found in the breast of Michael Strogoff, who had not had time to destroy it, and it was handed over to Ivan Ogareff.

The spectator who had uttered those words "well given" was no other than Alcide Jolivet. His companion

and himself, having halted at the camp of Zabelero, were present at this scene.

"My God," said he to Harry Blount, "these people of the north are rough men! Do we not owe some return to our companion of the journey? May Korpanoff or Strogoff succeed! What splendid revenge for the affair of Ichim!"

"Yes, revenge indeed," said Harry Blount. "But Strogoff is a dead man. For his sake it would perhaps be better not to remember him any longer."

"And allow his mother to perish under the knout?"

"Do you believe that he has acted better by his rash haste than his mother and his sister?"

"I don't believe anything; I know nothing," answered Alcide Jolivet, "only had I been in his place I should not have acted otherwise. What a slush! Eh, what—the devil, we must boil over sometimes. God would have placed water in our veins and not blood had he wished us to remain always and everywhere imperturbable!"

"What a splendid incident for a newspaper article!" said Harry Blount. "If Ivan Ogareff would only communicate to us the contents of that letter!"

Ivan Ogareff, after having wiped off the blood which covered his face, had broken the seal of the letter. He read it again and again for a long time, as if he wished to fathom its contents.

Then, having given his orders that Michael Strogoff, strongly fettered, should be sent on to Omsk with the other prisoners, he took command of the troops encamped at Zabelero, and amid the deafening sounds of drums and trumpets he marched to the town where the emir was awaiting him.

They had not long to wait for the Lieutenant of Feofar. Resounding bugles announced his arrival.

Ivan Ogareff—the Hashed, as they already began to call him—dressed this time in the uniform of a Tartar officer, arrived on horseback before the tent of the emir. He was accompanied by a body of the soldiers from the camp of Zabelero, who drew up along the sides of the plateau, in the middle of which he remained only during the salute to the amusements. One could see a deep gash cutting obliquely the face of the traitor.

Ivan Ogareff presented to the emir his principal officers, and Feofar-Khan, without departing from the coldness which was the main foundation of his dignity, received them in a manner which made them satisfied with their reception.

Alcide Jolivet and Harry Blount then joined the crowd and looked on in such a manner as not to lose any detail of a feast, which was to furnish a hundred good lines for the newspapers. They gazed with astonishment on Feofar-Khan in his magnificence, his women, his officers, his guards and all the oriental pomp, of which the ceremonies of Europe can give no idea. But they turned away with disgust when Ivan Ogareff presented himself before the emir, and they waited, not without some impatience, for the feast to begin.

"Do you see, my dear Blount," said Alcide Jolivet, "we are come too soon, like good citizens who must needs come or lose their money. All this is only the rising of the curtain. It would have been better taste to have arrived only for the ballet!"

"The obligatory ballet, faith. But I think the curtain is about to rise."

Alcide Jolivet spoke as if he were at the opera, and taking his glass from the case, he prepared to have a look at, as a connoisseur, the first subjects of Feofar's troop.

But a tedious ceremony was to precede the amusements.

Meanwhile most of the prisoners had passed before the emir, and in passing each of them had to prostrate the forehead to touch the very dust as a sign of servility. It was the slavery which commenced with humiliation. When the unfortunates were too slow in bending, the rude hand of the guards cast them violently to the earth. Alcide Jolivet and his companion could not assist at such a spectacle without feeling the greatest indignation.

"This is cowardly! Let us go away!" said Alcide Jolivet.

"No," replied Harry Blount; "we must see all."

"See all! Ah!" cried Alcide Jolivet suddenly, seizing the arm of his companion.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the former.

"Look! Blount, it is she!"

"She?"

"The sister of our fellow traveler. Alone and a prisoner! We must save her!"

"Restrained yourself," coldly replied Harry Blount. "Our intervention in behalf of this young girl would be more hurtful than useful to her."

Alcide Jolivet, ready to rush forward, stopped himself, and Nadia, who had not perceived them, being half veiled by her hair, passed in her turn before the emir, without attracting his attention.

In the meantime, after Nadia, Marfa Strogoff had arrived, and as she did not throw herself quickly enough into the dust the guards brutally pushed her.

Marfa Strogoff fell.

Her son made a terrible movement, which the soldiers who were guarding him could with difficulty master.

But old Marfa raised herself, and they were about to drag her when Ivan Ogareff intervened, saying:

"Let this woman remain!"

As for Nadia, she was thrown back among the crowd of prisoners. The look of Ivan Ogareff had not fixed it

seir upon her.

Michael Strogoff was then led before the emir, and there he remained erect, without lowering his eyes.

"Your face to the ground!" Ivan Ogareff cried out to him.

"No!" replied Michael Strogoff. Two guards wished to force him to bend, but it was they who were thrown to the ground by the hand of the robust young man.

Ivan Ogareff advanced toward Michael Strogoff.

"You are about to die," said he. "I shall die," deeply answered Michael Strogoff. "But your face to the ground, Ivan, will not be the less bear and forever the infamous mark of the knout!"

Ivan Ogareff at this answer became horribly pale.

"Who is this prisoner?" demanded the emir in a voice the more menacing because of its calmness.

"A Russian spy," answered Ivan Ogareff.

In making out Michael Strogoff a spy he knew the sentence pronounced against him would be the more terrible.

Michael Strogoff moved toward Ivan Ogareff.

The soldiers stopped him.

The emir then made a gesture before which the whole crowd bent their heads. Afterward he motioned with his hand for the Koman, which was brought to him. He opened the book and placed his finger on one of the pages.

It was chance, or, rather, as these oracles think, God himself, who was about to decide the fate of Michael Strogoff. The people of central Asia give the name of "fal" to this practice.

After having interpreted the sense of the verses touched by the finger of the judge they apply the sentence, whatever it may be.

The emir had left his finger resting on the page of the Koman. The chief of the ulamas, then approaching, read with a loud voice a verse which finished with these words:

"And he shall see no more the things of the earth." "Russian spy," said Feofar-Khan, "you came to see what is passing in the camp of the Tartars! Look, then, with all your eyes! Look!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CITY S. S. ASSOCIATION.

Annual Meeting Held Last Evening—

Officers Elected For Ensuing Year.

The annual meeting of the City Sunday School Association was held last evening in the Y. M. A. hall of Portland Street Methodist Church.

The meeting opened with prayer, and then the S. S. choir gave a selection. A report was read by the president, dealing with the past year's work.

Miss A. R. Rodgers, secretary, also reported for the year. The treasurer, Miss A. E. Eetey, reported that there was on hand at the beginning of the year a balance of \$6.82; receipts amounted to \$11.69; total, \$18.51. Expenses were \$13.75, leaving a balance of \$4.77.

Mrs. Rodgers reported for the primary department. Mrs. Bullock's report for the temperance department was read by Robert Reid.

Interesting addresses were given by Rev. Geo. M. Young, of Fairville, who took as his subject, Training the Teachers. Rev. Mr. Colpitts spoke along the same lines.

A resolution was put and unanimously carried, calling upon the various Sunday schools in the city not to patronize the circus on the occasion of the excursion.

The election of officers for the ensuing year resulted as follows: President, R. T. Hayes; vice president, Rev. A. H. Foster; primary superintendent, Miss McAlary; teacher training, Wm. Kingston; Y. M. A. secretary, Rev. Geo. M. Young; home department, R. M. Curry; membership, E. W. Patterson; treasurer, T. Graham; secretary, Miss A. R. Rodgers.

Miss A. E. Eetey, C. H. Doig, William Young, W. G. Parks, K. J. Wilson, R. Reid, E. M. Sippell, Rev. E. A. New, J. York, J. L. Thorne, Mrs. Seymour, James Robinson.

LATE SHIP NEWS.

Domestic Ports.

HALIFAX, NS, March 9—Ard, barkin Mary Hendry, from New York.

HALIFAX, NS, March 9—Sid, str Duncan, Pedersen, for New York; Mercator, Kalsen, for Jamaica via Cuban ports.

British Ports.

LIVERPOOL, March 9—Sid, str Tulaslan, for Halifax and St John, NB, via Moville.

LIVERPOOL, March 9—Sid, bark Jusker, for New York.

QUEENSTOWN, March 9—Sid, str Cedric (from Liverpool), for New York.

LIVERPOOL, March 9—Ard, str Montcalm, from St John, NB; Ivernia, from Boston.

Sid, str Welshman, for Portland.

QUEENSTOWN, March 9—Ard, str Cyrille, from Boston for Liverpool (and proceeded).

Foreign Ports.

BOSTON, March 9—Ard, str Saxonia, from Liverpool; Vera, from Fowey, Eng; Foremost, from Antwerp; Baker, from Halifax, NS; Boston, from Yarmouth, NS; str Henry May, from Portland for Bridgeport (in the roads, for harbor).

CHATHAM, Mass, March 9—Light south winds; cloudy at sunset. Passed south, str Kanawha, from Boston for Norfolk.

NEW YORK, March 9—Ard, str Oceanic, from Liverpool.

NEW YORK, March 9—Ard, bark Delcy Read, from Charleston.

NEW YORK, March 9—Sid, str Harry Miller, from St John for New York.

VINEYARD HAVEN, Mass, March 9—No arrivals.

Passed, str Duncan, from Hillsboro, NB, for New York.

NEW YORK, March 9—Ard, bark (supposed) Andromeda, from Trapani.

Ard below, str Duchesse of Cornwall, from Ausa.

To cure Headache in ten minutes use Kummfort Headache Powders, 10 cents.

BORDEN CRITICISES LAURIER'S ACTION.

Regarding the Autonomy Bill—Asks the Premier Why He Did Not Consult Sifton and Other Cabinet Ministers

OTTAWA, March 9.—The house opened at three o'clock with galleries crowded by the bulk of the three hundred delegates here today from Montreal, Quebec and Toronto, trying to impress Laurier that the country's interest demanded legislating trading stamps out of existence.

First came the presentation of over 110 petitions against the bill. He opened the book and placed his finger on one of the pages.

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ity in a constitutional sense, yet in the practical working out of responsible government in a country of such vast extent as Canada, it is found necessary to attach special responsibility to each minister for the public affairs of the province, or district with which he has close political connection, and with which his colleagues may not be so well acquainted."

I would admit to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that taking his own stand of ministerial responsibility expressed in this order in council, the minister of interior was in this case the minister above all others who should have been consulted, in the first instance about those very provisions which at the present time are causing some discussion in the country, and if we may believe all we hear, some dissension on the other side of the house. The prime minister has been a very strict stickler for constitutional usage in some of his dealings with his ministers in days gone by. I will advert to only one case. We remember that the right hon. gentleman felt himself constrained to ask for the portfolio of public works at that time held by Hon. Mr. Tarte, because Mr. Tarte had seen fit in the words of the prime minister, to advocate a policy which had not yet been accepted by the government.

Well, if that be a reason, have not the colleagues of the right hon. gentleman a right to demand his portfolio at the present time, because he came down to parliament and has seen fit not only to advocate, but to place before parliament and the country a measure in which his colleagues have not all agreed."

Laurier replied at some length, remarking he had little information to give of which the opposition leader was not aware already, defending his position on constitutional grounds, but declining to notice the reference to Fielding's semi-obscure. Laurier's ding that Borden was adopting Japanese army tactics, so as to know on which hill to plant his batteries, drew from the opposition leader the retort that whatever happened he would not retire within the lines of torres vedras.

After some further discussion the house went into supply on the railway estimates and adjourned at eleven o'clock, after Foster had heckled Emerson on many items to his heart's content.

FISKE STOCK COMPANY.

Hazel Kirk, a most pleasing pastoral drama, will be given tonight by the popular Fiske Stock Company at the Opera House. The drama will be given in the best manner and will be interspersed with new, bright specialties, moving pictures and musical numbers. There will be the usual Saturday matinee, and on Saturday night the famous play of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde will be presented, when those who wish to see this great story should secure their seats at once.

BOSTON IDEA.

"Oskosh people" remarked the periodical idiot, "are getting quite Bostonian in their ways."

"What's the answer?" queried the wiser man.

"The last time I was there," explained the p. l., "I saw a sign in a tailor's window which said, 'These Pants On Sale \$3.00—Marked down from \$10.00'."

There is a Market-Place Where You May Buy "Peace of Mind."

If You Are "Pinched for Money,"

and yet own something which you would like to turn into cash—if you could do it "quietly and privately;" or,

If Your Tenant is Always in Arrears,

and your house is good enough to attract a desirable tenant; or,

If Your Employees are Careless

of your interests, and too secure of their "pull" with you; or

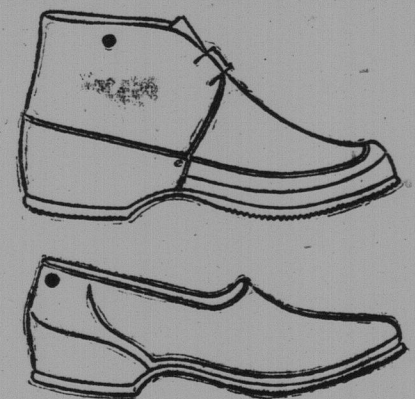
If Your Wife is Growing Old

through trying to "manage" incompetent or wasteful servants; and these things get on your nerves, then

The "STAR" Want Ad. Columns Afford a Market-Place Where You Can Buy Peace of Mind.

FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC

PUNCHED



RUBBERS

A hole PUNCHED in a Rubber indicates that it is a Factory Imperfect or Out of Style or in some way inferior and liable to prove unsatisfactory.