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THE COURIER OF THE CZAR By Jules Verne

Michael Strogoff experienced a mingled sentiment both of surprise and pity. What, this young girl alone jour-neying to that faroff Siberia and at a time when to its ordinary dangers were added all the perils of an invaded country and one in a state of insurrection? How would she reach it? What would become of her?

The inspection ended, the doors of the carriages were opened, but before Michael Strogoff could move toward her the young Livonian, who had been the first to descend, had disappeared in the crowd which thronged the platforms of the railway station.

Nijni Novgorod, Lower Novgorod, sitnated at the junction of the Volga and the Oka, is the chief town in the district of the same name. It was here that Michael Strogoff was obliged to eave the railway, which at the time did not go beyond this town. Thus as he advanced his traveling would become first less speedy and then less

Nijni Novgorod, the fixed population of which is only from 30,000 to 35,000 inhabitants, contained at that time more than 300,000—that is to say, the population was increased tenfold. This addition was in consequence of the celebrated fair which was held within the walls for three weeks. Formerly Makariew had the benefit of this concourse of traders, but since 1817 the fair had been removed to Nijni Novgo-

The town, dreary enough at most times, then presented a truly animated scene. Six different races of merchants, European and Asiatic, were fraternizing under the congenial influence of

Michael Strogoff strolled through the town quietly, looking out for some inn. He was looking for supper rather than a bed, but he found both at the sign of the City of Constantinople.

His supper finished, Michael Strogoff instead of going up to his bedroom again strolled out into the town.

Why did not Michael Strogoff go quietly to bed, as would have seemed nore seasonable after a long railway journey? Was he thinking of the young Livonian girl who had for so many hours been his traveling companion? Having nothing better to do, he was thinking of her.

"Alone." he said to himself; "alone in the midst of these wandering tribes! And yet the present dangers are nothing to those she must undergo. Siberia! Irkutsk! I am about to dare al risks for Russia, for the czar, while she is about to do so for whom? For what? She is authorized to cross the frontier! And the country beyond is in revolt! The steppes beyond are full of Tarter bands!"

Michael Strogoff stopped for an instant and reflected.

"Without doubt," thought he, "she must have determined on undertaking her journey before the invasion. Perhaps she is even now ignorant of what is happening. But, no; that cannot be, for the merchants discussed before her the disturbances in Siberia, and she did not seem even surprised. She did not even ask for an explanation. She must have known it then, and, though knowing it, she is still resolute. Poor girl! Her motive for the journey must be urgent indeed! But, though she may be brave-and she certainly is so-her strength must fail her, and, to say nothing of dangers and obstacles, she will be unable to endure the fatigue of such a journey. Never can she pass

Irkutsk!" Indulging in such reflectious, Michael Strogoff wandered on as chance led him; but, being well acquainted with the town, he knew that he could without difficulty retrace his steps.

Having strolled on for about an hour, he seated himserf on a bench against the wall of a large wooden cottage which stood, with others, on a vast \$4444444444444444

open space.

He had scarcely been there five minntes when a hand was laid heavily on

his shoulder. "What are you doing here?" roughly demanded a large and powerful man who had approached unperceived.
"I am resting," replied Michael Stro-

"Do you mean to stay all night on the bench?" asked the man "Yes, if I feel inclined to do so," answered Michael Strogoff in a tone some-

what too sharp for the simple merchant he wished to personate.
"Come forward, then, that I may see

you." said the man. "It is not necessary," he replied, and be calmly stepped back ten paces or so.

The man seemed, as Michael observed him well, to have the look of a Boemian, such as are met at fairs and with whom contact, either physical or moral, is unpleasant. Then, as he look-ed more attentively through the dusk

ed more attentively through the dusk which was coming on, he perceived near the cottage a large caravan, the usual traveling dwelling of the gypsies who swarm in Russia wherever a few copecks can be obtained.

As the gypsy took two or three stepa forward and was about to interrogate Michael Strogoff more closely the door of the cottage was opened. He could just see a woman, who advanced quickly and in a language which Michael Strogoff knew to be a mixture of the

Mongol and Siberjan she said: "Anoth er spy! Let him alone and come to

supper. It is waiting for you."

Michael Stregoff could not help smiling at the epithet bestowed on him, dreading spies as he did above all

But in the same dialect, although his accent was very different, the Bohemian replied in words which signify: "You are right, Sangarre. Besides, we start tomorrow." "Tomorrow!" repeated the woman in

"Yes, Sangarre," replied the Bohemian, "tomorrow, and the Father himself sends us-where we are going." Thereupon the man and woman entered the cottage and carefully closed

"Good!" said Michael Strogoff to himself. "If these gypsies do not wish to be understood when they speak before me, they had better use some other lan-

From his Siberian origin and because he had passed his childhood in the steppes Michael Strogoff, it has been said, understood almost all the lan-guages in usage from Tartary to the of Ice. As to the exact signification of the words exchanged between the gypsy and his companion he did not trouble his head. For why should

An hour after Michael Strogoff was sleeping soundly on one of those Russian beds which always seem so hard to strangers, and on the morrow, the 17th of July, he awoke at break of day. He had still five hours to pass at

Nijni Novgorod. It seemed to him an age. How was he to spend the mornunless in wandering, as he had done the evening before, through the streets? By the time he had finished his breakfast, strapped up his bag, had his podoroina inspected at the police office, he would have nothing to do but start. But he was not a man to lie in bed after the sun had risen, so he rose, dressed himself and placed the letter with the imperial arms on it carefully at the bottom of its usual pocket within the lining of his coat, over which he fastened his belt. He then closed his bag and threw it over his shoulder.

This done, he had no wish to return to the City of Constantinople, and, inbill and left the inn. By the way of precaution Michael Strogof, went first icasus would start at the appointed . hour. As he did so the thought for the first time struck him that since the young Livonian girl was going to Perm it was very possible that her intention ? was also to embark in the Caucasus, in

Michael Strogoff found himself in the central square when the report spread that the head of police had been summoned by a courier to the palace of the governor general. An important dis- i patch from Moscow, it was said, was the cause of it.

"The fair is to be closed," said one. "The regiment of Nijni Novgorod has received the route," declared another. "They say that the Tartar's menace

"Here is the head of police?" was t shouted on every side. A loud clapping of hands was suddenly raised, which subsided by degrees and finally was succeeded by absolute silence. The head of pelice arrived in the middle of the central square, and it was seen by all that he held in his hand a dispatch.

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wing announcements:
"By order of the governor of Nijni

"All Russian subjects are forbidder o quit the province upon any pretext

"All strangers of Asiatic origin are commanded to leave the province with-in twenty-four bours."

CHAPTER IV. UST as the reading of the proclamation by the head of the police came to an end an idea darted instinctively into the mind of Michael Strogoff. "What a singular coin

eidence," thought he, "between this proclamation expelling all foreigners of Asiatic origin and the words exchanged last evening between those two gypsies of the Zingari race! 'The Fath himself sends us where we wish to go, that old man said. But 'the Father' is the emperor. He is never called anything else among the people. How could those gypsies have foreseen the measure taken against them? How could they have known it beforehand, and where do they wish to go? Those are suspicious people, and it seems to me that to them the government proclamation must be more useful than in-

But these reflections, though certain ly correct, were completely dispelled by another, which drove every other thought out of Michael's mind. He forgot the Zingaris, their suspicious words, the strange coincidence which resulted from the proclamation. The remem brance of the young Livonian girl suddenly rushed into his mind.

"Poor child?" he thought to himself. "She cannot now cross the frontier."

In truth the young girl was from Riga. She was Livonian, consequently Russian, and now could not leave Russian territory. The permit which had been given her before the new measures had been promulgated was evidently no longer available. All routes to Siberia had just been pitilessly closed to her, and whatever was the motive which was taking her to 'Irkutsk, she was now forbidden to go This thought greatly occupied Mi-

chael Strogoff. He said to himself, vaguely at first, that without neglecting anything of what was due to his important mission it would perhaps be possible for him to be of some use to this brave girl, and this lea pleased him. Knowing how serious were the dangers which he, an energetic and vigorous man, would have personally to encounter through a country of which, however, the roads were familiar, he could not conceal from himself how infinitely greater they would prove to a young, unprotected girl. As she was going to Irkutsk, she would be obliged to follow the same road as himself; she would have to pass through the bands of invaders, as he tending to breakfast on the bank of the | was about to attempt doing himself. Volga near the wharf, he settled his I If, moreover, and according to all probability, she had at her disposal only the resources necessary for a journey to the office of the steam packet com-pany and there made sure that the how could she manage to accomplish it would render not only perilous, but expensive?

"Well," said be, "It she takes the route to Perm it is nearly impossible which case he should accompany her. I but that I shall fall in with her. Then pecting it, and as she appears to be as anxious as myself to reach Irkutsk she will cause me no delay."

But one thought leads to another Michael Strogoff Lag till now reasoned on the supposition of doing a kind ac-tion, of rendering a service, but now another idea flashed into his brain, and the ghestion presented itself under

quite a new aspect.
"The fact is?" said be to himself. "that I have mist more need of Ler's than she can have of me. Her presence will be useful to diswing off suspicion from me. A man trafeling alone ross the steppes may be easily gness ed to be a conrier to the czar. At, on the contrary, this young girl accounted nies me, I shall appear to the eyes of all the Nicholas Kerpanon of Kly podorojna. Therefore the must accompany me. Therefore I deast and her again at any cost. It is not probable that since yesterday evening she has been able to get a carriage and leave Nijni Novgorod. I must look for her. And may God guide me!"

Michael left the great square of Nijni Novgorod, where the tumult produced by the carrying out of the prescribed measures had now reached its height. Recriminations from the banished strangers, shouts from the agents and Cossacks who were using them so brutally, all together made an indescriba ble uproar. The girl for whom he searched could not be there. It was now 9 o'clock in the morning. The steamboat did not start till 12. Michael Strogoff had therefore nearly three hours to employ in searching for her whom he wished to make his traveling companion.
. To be Continued.

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from all symptoms. I feel that I can
consistently recommend the medicine

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

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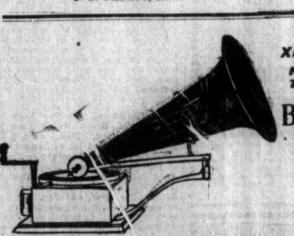
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