

were exiled from farms and families until they brought us back. After weeks of search they found us in the Apple Mountains. Their leader shouted across the ravine that unless we gave in they must keep on our trail, and escape was impossible. As we went back, around each of us rode ten armed men.

"The three students were sent in different directions up into the worst of the Arctic wilderness—Yakutsk. Here each slept in a little 'yurt' (mud hut) with wild Mongolians and their cattle, sealed in winter, stifling, lined thick with rotting straw rags, and animal filth. If the exile walked out to breathe, the watchful natives dragged him back. To such yurts two young girl friends of mine—Rosa Frank and Vera Sheftel, students from the medical college in St. Petersburg were sent, each alone, and spent years without a word from civilized people. In such places even men have gone insane. But I leave my story. Of the three students one is dead, another is dying of consumption, and the third escaped, returned to the old struggle in Russia, was caught, and given eight years as a hard-labor convict, and, having again escaped, is to-day renewing the struggle.

"As punishment for my attempt I was sentenced to four years' hard labor in Kara and to forty blows of the lash. Into my cell a physician came to see if I were strong enough to live through the agony. I saw at once that, afraid to flog a woman political without precedent, by this trick of declaring me too sick to be punished they wished to establish the precedent of the sentence, in order that others might be flogged in the future. I insisted that I was strong enough, and that the court had no right to record such a sentence unless they flogged me at once. The sentence was not carried out.

"Back in Kara I rejoiced to meet

seventeen women politicals, with whom I lived in four low cells. Here we had books and writing materials, and were quite comfortable, discussing plans for the future struggle.

"A few weeks later eight of the men politicals escaped in pairs, leaving dummies in their places. As the guards never took more than a hasty look into that noisome cell, they did not discover the ruse for weeks. Then mounted Cossacks rode out. The man hunt spread. Some of the fugitives struggled through jungles, over mountains and through swamps a thousand miles to Vladivostok, saw the longed-for American vessels, and there on the docks were recaptured. All were brought back to Kara.

"For this we were all punished. One morning the Cossack guards entered our cells, seized us, tore off our clothes, and dressed us in convict suits alive with vermin. That scene cannot be described. One of us attempted suicide. Taken to an old prison, we were thrown into the 'black holes'—foul little stalls off a low, grimy hall which contained two big stoves and two little windows. Each of us had a stall six feet by five. On winter nights the stall doors were left open for heat, but in summer each was locked at night in her own black hole. For three months we did not use our bunks, but fought with candles and pails of scalding water, until at last the vermin were all killed. We had been put on the 'black hole diet' of black bread and water. For three years we never breathed the outside air. We struggled constantly against the outrages inflicted on us. After one outrage we lay like a row of dead women for nine days without touching food, until certain promises were finally exacted from the warden. This 'hunger strike' was used repeatedly. To thwart it we were often bound hand and foot while Cossacks tried to force food down our throats.