

The Courier Of the Czar

By JULES VERNE

The gypsy, who had accompanied him to the camp of the Angara, urged him to put this project into execution. And, indeed, it was necessary to act without delay. The Russian troops of the government of Irkutsk were marching to the relief of Irkutsk. They were concentrating on the higher waters of the Lena and marching up the valley. They would surely arrive before six days. It was necessary, then, that Irkutsk should be delivered up by treachery before six days.

Ivan Ogareff did not hesitate any longer.

One evening, the 2d of October, a council of war was being held in the large room of the governor general's palace. It was there the grand duke resided.

This palace overlooked for a great distance the course of the river. From its front windows one could perceive the Tartar camp, and had the Tartars possessed artillery of a longer range they could have rendered it uninhabitable.

The grand duke, General Voranzoff, and the governor of the town, the head merchant, with whom had been joined a number of superior officers, had just passed divers resolutions.

"Gentlemen," said the grand duke, "you know exactly our situation. I have a firm hope that we shall be able to hold out until the arrival of troops from Yakoutsk. We shall then know well how to drive away these barbarous hordes, and it will not be my fault if they don't pay dearly for this invasion of Russian territory."

"Your highness knows that we can rely on the whole population of Irkutsk," replied General Voranzoff.

"Yes," said the grand duke, "and I render homage to its patriotism. Thank God, it has not as yet suffered from the horrors of an epidemic or a famine, and I have reason to think it will escape them. But at the ramparts I could not help admiring their courage. I trust the chief of the merchants hears my words, and I beg him to report them as such."

"I thank your highness in the name of the town," answered the chief of the merchants. "May I dare to ask you when you expect at latest the arrival of the army of relief?"

"In six days at most," answered the grand duke. "A sharp and courageous emissary has been able to penetrate into the town this morning, and he has informed me that 50,000 Russians are advancing by forced marches under the orders of General Kissely. They were two days ago on the banks of the Lena, at Kirensk, and now neither cold nor snow will prevent their arrival. Fifty thousand good troops, taking the Tartars on the flank, would soon relieve us."

"I would add," said the chief of the merchants, "that the day on which your highness shall order a sortie we shall be ready to execute your orders."

"Very well, sir," answered the grand duke. "Let us wait until the leading columns appear on the heights, and we will crush the invaders."

Then, turning to General Voranzoff, "We will visit tomorrow," said he, "the works on the right bank. The Angara will soon become icebound, and perhaps the Tartars will be able to cross it."

"Will your highness permit me to make an observation?" said the chief of the merchants.

"Make it, sir."

"I have seen the temperature fall many a time to 30 and 40 below zero, and the river has been filled with floating pieces of ice without being entirely frozen. This is owing no doubt to the rapidity of the current. If, then, the Tartars have no other means of crossing the river, I can assure your highness they cannot possibly cross in that manner." The governor general confirmed this assertion.

"It is a very fortunate circumstance," answered the grand duke. "Nevertheless let us be prepared for every emergency."

Then, turning to the head of the police, he asked him:

"Have you nothing to say to me?"

"I have to place before your highness," said the head of the police, "a petition which has been addressed to you."

"By whom?"

"By the exiles of Siberia, who, as your highness knows, are to the number of 500 in this city."

The political exiles, scattered all over the province, had indeed been concentrated at Irkutsk from the commencement of the invasion. They had obeyed the order to rally at the town and to abandon the villages where they exercised different professions. Some were doctors, others professors, either at the Japanese school or at the school of navigation. From the beginning the grand duke, like the czar, trusting to their patriotism, had armed them, and he had found in them brave defenders.

"What do the exiles ask for?" said the grand duke.

"They ask your highness' permission," answered the head of the police, "to form a special corps and to lead the sortie."

"Yes," said the grand duke, with an emotion which he did not seek to conceal, "these exiles are Russians, and it is indeed their right to fight for their country."

"I can assure your highness," said the governor general, "that we have no better soldiers."

"But they must have a leader," said the grand duke. "Who shall he be?"

"Would your highness like to have one," said the head of the police, "who

has distinguished himself on many occasions?"

"Is he a Russian?"

"Yes, a Russian of the Baltic provinces."

"What is his name?"

"Wassili Feodor."

That exile was the father of Nadia. Wassili Feodor, as is known, exercised at Irkutsk the profession of a doctor. He was an educated and charitable man and at the same time a man of the greatest courage and patriotism. When he was not occupied with the sick, he was engaged in organizing resistance. It was he who had united his companions in exile in common action. The exiles, up to that time scattered among the population, had borne themselves in battle in such a manner as to draw the attention of the grand duke. In several sorties they had paid with their blood their debt to holy Russia—holy indeed and adored by her children. Wassili Feodor had conducted himself heroically. On several occasions his name had been mentioned as the bravest of the brave, but he had asked neither for graces nor favors, and when the exiles formed a special corps he had no idea they would choose him as their leader. When the head of the police had pronounced that name before the grand duke, the latter replied that it was not unknown to him.

"Indeed," answered General Voranzoff, "Wassili Feodor is a man of valor and courage. His influence over his companions has always been very great."

"How long has he been at Irkutsk?" asked the grand duke.

"Two years."

"And his conduct?"

"His conduct," answered the head of the police, "is that of a man who submits to the special laws under which he lives."

"General," answered the grand duke, "have the goodness to present him immediately."

The orders of the grand duke were executed, and a half hour had not passed before Wassili Feodor was introduced into his presence.

He was a man some forty years old or more, tall, with a sad and severe countenance. One felt that all his life was summed up in this one word, struggle, and that he had struggled and suffered all his life. His traits reminded one remarkably of those of his daughter, Nadia Feodor.

More than any other thing the Tartar invasion had cut him in his dearest affection and ruined the last hope of that father, exiled to a distance of more than 8,000 versts from his native place. A letter had informed him of the death of his wife and at the same time of the departure of his daughter, who had obtained from the government permission to rejoin him at Irkutsk.

Nadia had to leave Irkutsk on the 15th of July. The invasion was on the 15th. If at that time Nadia had crossed the frontier, what had become of her in the midst of the invaders? One can conceive how this unhappy father must have been devoured with anxiety, since from that time he had received no news of his daughter.

Wassili Feodor in the presence of the grand duke bowed and waited to be interrogated.

"Wassili Feodor," said to him the grand duke, "your companions have asked to form a picked corps. Do you know that in that corps they must fight to the last man?"

"They know it," answered Wassili Feodor.

"They wish you for leader."

"I, your highness?"

"Do you consent to put yourself at their head?"

"Yes, if the good of Russia requires it."

"Captain Feodor," said the grand duke, "you are no longer an exile."

"I thank your highness. But am I to command those who still are exiles?"

"They are no longer."

It was the pardon of all his companions in exile, now his companions in arms, which the brother of the czar granted to him!

Wassili Feodor pressed with emotion the hand which the grand duke held out to him, and he left the room.

The latter turned then toward the officers.

"The czar will not refuse to accept the letter of pardon which I am drawing upon him," said he, smiling. "We need heroes to defend the capital of Siberia, and I have just now made some."

This pardon of the exiles of Irkutsk was indeed an act of wise justice and wise policy.

Night had now come on. Across the windows of the palace shone the fires of the Tartar camp and far beyond the Angara. The river was full of floating blocks of ice, some of which were stopped by the first piles of the ancient wooden bridges. Those which the current held in the channel floated down with great rapidity. Thus it was evident, as the chief of the merchants had observed, that the Angara could scarcely freeze along the whole of its surface. Thus the defenders of Irkutsk need not fear the danger of being assailed on that side.

Ten o'clock had just struck. The grand duke was about to dismiss his officers and retire to his apartments when a kind of uproar was heard outside the palace.

Almost immediately the door of the room opened, an aid-de-camp appeared and advanced toward the grand duke.

"Your highness," said he, "a courier from the czar!"

The grand duke had quickly moved toward his aid-de-camp.

"That courier!" said he.

A man entered. He had the air of one worn out by fatigue. He wore the costume of a Siberian peasant, much worn, even torn, and on which one could see bullet holes. A Russian bonnet covered his head. A scar, badly healed, crossed his face. The man had evidently followed a long and trying route. His shoes and stockings, in a bad state, even proved that he had made part of his journey on foot.

"His highness the grand duke?" said he on entering.

The grand duke went up to him.

"Are you a courier from the czar?" he asked him.

"Yes, your highness."

"You come from—"

"Moscow."

"You left Moscow?"

"The 15th of July."

"You are called?"

"Michael Strogoff."

It was Ivan Ogareff. He had taken the name and position of the man whom he believed to be powerless. Neither the grand duke nor any other person in Irkutsk knew him. He had not even needed to disguise his features. As he had the means of proving his pretended identity, no one could doubt him. He came, then, sustained by a will of iron, to hasten by treason and assassination the conclusion of the drama of the invasion.

After the answer of Ivan Ogareff the grand duke made a sign, and all his officers retired.

The fictitious Michael Strogoff and he remained alone in the room.

The grand duke looked at Ivan Ogareff for some seconds and with the greatest attention. Then he asked him:

"You were on the 15th of July at Moscow?"

"Yes, your highness, and on the night from the 14th to the 15th I saw his majesty the czar at the New palace."

"You have a letter from the czar?"

"Here it is."

And Ivan Ogareff handed to the grand duke the imperial letter, reduced to dimensions almost microscopic.

"Was that letter given to you in that state?" asked the grand duke.

"No, your highness, but I was compelled to tear open the envelope in order to better conceal it from the Tartar soldiers."

"Have you, then, been a prisoner of the Tartars?"

"Yes, your highness, during a few days," answered Ivan Ogareff. "It is on that account that, having set out from Moscow on the 15th of July, I only arrived at Irkutsk on the 2d of October after a journey of sixty-nine days."

The grand duke took the letter. He unfolded it and recognized the signature of the czar, preceded by the sacramental formula, written with his own hand. Hence there was no possible doubt concerning the authenticity of that letter nor indeed concerning the identity of the courier. If his fierce look at first inspired mistrust, the grand duke did not allow it to be seen, and soon the mistrust disappeared altogether.

The grand duke remained some moments without speaking. He was reading slowly the letter in order to thoroughly gather the sense of it.

Taking up again the speech, he asked:

"Michael Strogoff, do you know the contents of this letter?"

"Yes, your highness. I might have been compelled to destroy it to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Tartars, and if that should happen I wished to bring its contents to your highness."

"Do you know that this letter enjoins us to die at Irkutsk rather than surrender the city?"

"I know it."

"Do you also know that it points out the movements of the troops who have combined to check the invasion?"

"Yes, your highness. But those movements have not succeeded."

"What do you mean?"

"I wish to tell you that Ichim, Omsk, Tomsk, not to speak of other important towns of the two Siberias, have been one after another occupied by the soldiers of Feofar-Khan."

"But has there been a battle? Have our Cossacks ever met the Tartars?"

"Several times, your highness."

"And they were repulsed?"

"They were not in sufficient strength."

"Where have the encounters taken place of which you speak?"

"At Kalyvan, at Tomsk."

Up to this time Ivan Ogareff had only told the truth, but with the object of fighting the defenders of Irkutsk by exaggerating the advantages obtained by the troops of the emir, he added:

"And a third time before Krasnoarsk."

"And that last engagement?" asked the grand duke, whose firmly set lips scarcely allowed the words to pass.

"It was more than an engagement, your highness," answered Ivan Ogareff; "it was a battle."

"A battle?"

"Twenty thousand Russians, coming from the provinces of the frontier and from the government of Tobolsk, came into collision with a force of a hundred and fifty thousand Tartars, and in spite of their courage they have been annihilated."

"You lie!" cried the grand duke, who endeavored, but in vain, to master his anger.

"I tell the truth, your highness," coolly replied Ivan Ogareff. "I was present at that battle of Krasnoarsk, and it is there where I was made prisoner!"

The grand duke became calm, and by a sign he gave Ivan Ogareff to understand that he did not doubt his veracity.

"On what day did this battle of Krasnoarsk take place?" he asked.

"On the 2d of September."

"And now all the Tartar forces are concentrated around Irkutsk?"

"All."



"And you would number them at"—

"Four hundred thousand men!"

A new exaggeration of Ivan Ogareff in reckoning the numbers of the Tartar army and tending always to the same end.

"And I must not expect any succor from the provinces of the west?" asked the grand duke.

"None, your highness—at least before the end of winter."

"Very well. Listen to this, Michael Strogoff: Should no relief come to me, neither from the west nor the east, and were there 600,000 Tartars, I would not give up Irkutsk!"

The wicked eye of Ivan Ogareff lightly blinked. The traitor seemed to say that the brother of the czar was reckoning without treason.

The grand duke, of a nervous temperament, had great difficulty in preserving his calmness on learning this disastrous news. He walked up and down the room under the eyes of Ivan Ogareff, who covered him as a prey reserved for his vengeance. He stopped at the windows. He looked out upon the Tartar fires. He was trying to find out the noise, the greater part of which was caused by the grating of the ice on the river.

A quarter of an hour passed without his putting another question. Then, again taking up the letter, he read a passage of it and said:

"You know, Michael Strogoff, that there is question in this letter of a traitor against whom I have to be on my guard?"

"Yes, your highness."

"He is to attempt to enter Irkutsk disguised to win my confidence; then, at the proper time, to deliver up the town to the Tartars."

"I know all that, your highness, and I also know that Ivan Ogareff has sworn personal vengeance on the brother of the czar."

"Why?"

"They say that that officer had been condemned by the grand duke to a most humiliating degradation."

"Yes, I remember. But he deserved it, that wretch, who was afterward to serve against his country and to lead there an invasion of barbarians!"

"His majesty the czar," answered Ivan Ogareff, "relied especially on the fact that you were aware of the criminal projects of Ivan Ogareff against your person."

"Yes; the letter informed me of it."

"And his majesty told it to me himself, while warning me to mistrust that traitor above all during my journey across Siberia."

"Have you ever met him?"

"Yes, your highness, after the battle of Krasnoarsk. Could he have suspected that I was the bearer of a letter addressed to your highness and in which all his projects were divulged I should not now be standing before you."

"Yes, you would have been lost," answered the grand duke. "And how did you escape?"

"By throwing myself into the Irish."

"And how did you enter Irkutsk?"

"During a sortie that was made this very night to repel a Tartar detachment I joined in with the defenders of the town. I was able to make myself known, and they at once conducted me before your highness."

"Well done, Michael Strogoff," answered the grand duke. "You have shown courage and zeal during this difficult mission. I shall not forget you. Have you any favor to ask of me?"

"None if it be not that of fighting by the side of your highness," answered Ivan Ogareff.

"Let it be so, Michael Strogoff. From this day I attach you to my person, and you shall be lodged in this palace."

"And if in conformity with the intention which is attributed to him Ivan Ogareff should present himself before your highness under a false name?"

"We would unmask him, thanks to you who know him, and by my order he should die under the knout. Go."

Ivan Ogareff gave the military salute to the grand duke, not forgetting that he was captain in the corps of the couriers of the czar, and he withdrew. Ivan Ogareff had just now played with success his base role. The grand duke's confidence had been accorded him full and entire. He could abuse it when and where he thought proper. He would even live in that palace. He would know all the secrets of the defense. He held, therefore, the situation in his hand. No one in Irkutsk knew him. No one could tear off his mask. He resolved, therefore, to begin the work without more delay.

Ivan Ogareff, having every facility of seeing, observing and acting, spent the next day in visiting the fortifications. Everywhere he was received with cordial congratulations by the officers, soldiers and citizens. This courier of the czar was like a tie which bound them to the empire. Ivan Ogareff therefore recounted to them all the details of his journey, and this with a vivacity that was never wanting. Then, adroitly, without at first insisting on it too much, he spoke of the gravity of the situation, exaggerating, as he had done while addressing the grand duke, both the successes of the Tartars and the forces at their disposal. To listen to him, the succor would be insufficient

should it even come, and it was to be feared that a battle fought under the walls of Irkutsk would be as disastrous as the battles of Kalyvan, of Tomsk and of Krasnoarsk.

Ivan Ogareff was not at first lavish in these sinister insinuations. He took care they should penetrate by degrees into the minds of the defenders of Irkutsk. He seemed to answer only when a great many questions were put to him and then as though with regret. In any case he added always that it must defend itself to the last man, and they must blow it up rather than surrender it!

If the defenders of Irkutsk could have been discouraged, Ivan Ogareff had chosen an efficient means. But the garrison and population of Irkutsk were too patriotic to allow themselves to be frightened. Of those soldiers, of those citizens, shut up in an isolated town at the farthest end of the Asiatic world, not one had dreamed of speaking of capitulation. The disdain of Russia for those barbarians was without limit. In any case no one for a moment suspected the hateful role which Ivan Ogareff was playing. No one could have imagined that the pretended courier of the czar was nothing else than a traitor.

A circumstance altogether unnatural was the cause, from his arrival at Irkutsk, of there being frequent relations between Ivan Ogareff and one of its bravest defenders, Wassili Feodor. One knows with what anxiety this unhappy father was devoured. If his daughter, Nadia Feodor, had left Russia at the date assigned by the last letter he had received from Iriga, what had become of her? Was she still trying to traverse the invaded provinces, or, rather, had she already been for a long time a prisoner? Wassili Feodor could not find any solace for his sorrow except when he had some opportunity of fighting against the Tartars, opportunities which were too seldom for his liking. Now, when Wassili Feodor was informed of the unexpected arrival of a courier from the czar he had a presentiment that this courier could give him some tidings of his daughter. It was only a very slight hope, but still he clung to it.

Wassili Feodor went to find Ivan very next morning after the arrival of the pretended courier, went to the palace of the governor general. There he informed Ivan Ogareff of the circumstances under which his daughter had to leave European Russia and told him now what was his anxiety in her regard.

Ivan Ogareff did not know Nadia, although he had met her at the posthouse of Ichim the day on which she was there with Michael Strogoff. But then he had paid no more attention to her than the two journalists, who were at the same time in the posthouse. He could not therefore give any news of his daughter to Wassili Feodor.

"But at what time," asked Ivan Ogareff, "had your daughter to leave Russian territory?"

"At nearly the same time as you," replied Wassili Feodor.

"I quitted Moscow on the 15th of July."

"And Nadia also had to leave Moscow on that date. Her letter told me so expressly."

"She was at Moscow on the 15th of July?" asked Ivan Ogareff.

"Yes, certainly at that date."

"Very well," replied Ivan Ogareff. Then, recollecting himself, he added: "But, no; I was forgetting. I was about to confound dates. It is unfortunately too probable that your daughter has had to cross the frontier, and only one hope remains—that she may have stopped on receiving news of the Tartar invasion!"

(To be Continued)

PARKER'S HAIR BALM
Cleanses and beautifies the hair. Promotes its growth. Prevents itching. Restores color. Keeps the scalp cool. Prevents dandruff and itching. Price, 25c. Sold at Druggists.

(First published Feb. 14, 1902)

Notice of Appointment.
Public notice is hereby given that on the 13th day of February, 1902, the undersigned was, by the probate court of Allen county, Kansas, duly appointed, and has qualified, as Administrator of the estate of Mahlon R. Remsburg, deceased.
MARGARET A. C. REMSBURG, Administratrix.
CAMPBELL & GOSHORN, Attorneys.

(First Published February 14, 1902)

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given that it is the intention of the Board of County Commissioners of Allen county, Kansas, to build a bridge across Beer Creek, in Carlyle township, near the section line between section 19, township 25, range 18 and section 23, township 25, range 18, east, in said county and state. That the estimated cost of said bridge is fifteen hundred dollars (\$1500.00) and that said Board of county commissioners intends at their next regular meeting, which convenes Monday, April 7th, 1902, to appropriate one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) to pay for the cost of the construction of said bridge.
By Order of the Board.
JAMES LICKIA, Chairman.
Attest: C. A. Frank, County Clerk.

(First Published February 14, 1902)

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given that it is the intention of the Board of county commissioners of Allen county, Kansas, to build a bridge across Onion Creek, in Logan township, on or near the section line between section 19, township 25, range 18 and section 21, township 25, range 17, in said county and state. That the estimated cost of said bridge is one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) and that said Board of county commissioners intends at their next regular meeting, which convenes Monday, April 7th, 1902, to appropriate one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) to pay for the cost of construction of said bridge.
By Order of Board.
JAMES LICKIA, Chairman.
Attest: C. A. Frank, County Clerk.

(First Published February 14, 1902)

Notice
Notice is hereby given that a petition will be presented by the City Council, for and in the name of the City of Iola, Kansas, to Hon. L. Stillwell, Judge of the District Court in and for Allen county and the District of Kansas, at the court room in the court house in Iola, Allen county, Kansas, on Saturday, the 1st day of March, 1902, at the hour of 9 o'clock a. m., or as soon thereafter as same can be heard, asking the said judge to make findings as to the advisability of adding to said city of Iola the territory adjoining said city described as follows:

1st. All that tract or parcel of land known as the Iola Park Association's park, or the Fair ground park, being all that part of the northeast quarter of section thirty-four, township twenty-four (24), range eighteen (18), bounded as follows: Commencing at a point 25 chains south of the northeast corner of said section; thence running west 25 75-100 chains; thence south 11 26-100 chains; thence east 25 75-100 chains; thence north 11 26-100 chains to the beginning; excepting from said tract the right of way of the S. K. R. R. Co., formerly the I. L. & G. R. R. Co., and further excepting all that described tract lying east of said right of way of said railroad, except as hereinafter described as part of said park—commencing at a point 25 125-100 chains south, by 25 75-100 chains west of said northeast corner of said section; thence running west 10 42-100 chains to the middle of the Neosho river; thence down the middle of said river to a point equal to 9 65-100 chains south; thence east 11 42-100 chains; thence north 7 52-100 chains; thence west 2 chains; thence north 3 15-100 chains to the place of beginning; excepting one (1) acre in (as near as possible) a square form in the northwest corner of said boundary—commencing at a point 65 feet south of the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of said section; thence west 40 feet; thence south 60 feet; thence east 40 feet; thence north 60 feet to the place of beginning—and all said tract being about thirty-five (35) acres more or less.

(REAL.) A. H. CAMPBELL, Mayor.
Attest: W. M. Knap, City Clerk.

FARMERS!

Do you need any repairs for machinery? If so, call at the

Iola Iron and Metal Works

on South Jefferson Avenue. Repairs for anything and everything.

S. COLCHENSKY,
Agent.

THEY TASTE VERY MUCH LIKE THE OTHERS

FRANKLIN'S SINGLE BINDER

Ben Franklin's Toast.

Franklin was dining with a small party of distinguished gentlemen when one of them said, "Here are three nationalities represented. I am French, my friend here is English and Mr. Franklin is an American. Let each one propose a toast." It was agreed to, and the Englishman's turn came first. He arose, and in the tone of a Britain bold said, "Here's to Great Britain, the sun that gives light to all the nations of the earth." The Frenchman was rather taken aback at this, but he proposed, "Here's to France the moon whose magic rays moves the tides of the world." Franklin then arose, with an air of quaint modesty, and said, "Here's to George Washington, the Joshua of America, who commanded the sun and moon to stand still—and they stood still." Our Youth's Friend.

Stock Paule.

A panic in Wall street, involving millions of dollars, is no more nerve-racking than the panic which seizes the man who realizes that he is hopelessly in the grasp of constipation, dyspepsia or any form of stomach or bowel trouble. Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin is the only guaranteed cure for these troubles. Kinne & Son, Moran; W. J. Waters, LaHarpe and C. B. Spoucer, Iola.

A Cashier Testifies.

Gentlemen:—After twenty years of aches and pains caused by constipation brought on by sedentary habits, I have found more relief in two bottles of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin than all of the hundreds of other remedies I have tried, and I take pleasure in giving you this testimony, believing you have the finest preparation made for stomach trouble.

Very truly yours,
D. F. LANGE,
Cashier Wabash R. R., East St. Louis.
Sold by Kinne & Son, Moran; W. J. Waters, LaHarpe, and C. B. Spoucer, Iola.

For Stomach Troubles

"I have taken a great many different medicines for stomach trouble and constipation," says Mrs. S. Geiger of Dunkerton, Iowa, "but never had as good results from any as from Chamberlain's Stomach & Liver Tablets." For sale by W. L. Crabb & Co., Campbell & Burrell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIMULTANEOUS movement brought all the members of the council toward the half open door. A courier from the czar arrived at Irkutsk! If the officers had reflected for an instant on the improbability of that fact, they would have certainly considered it impossible.