THE MYSTERY OF GRASLOV

CHAPTER VI.

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AN AMERICAN GIRL'S PLUCK. NOTHER glance from the window showed Frances that the car had come to a stop near a new bridge over a branch of Irtish. Involuntarily she sighed for the man who had built that bridge ; -Denton, whose eye was keen and steady, whose muscles were of iron. But Denton was miles farther on,

"Now," said Neslerov, as the girl sank back in her seat, "let us face this situation, my dear. Let us realize the true significance. We are practically alone, you and I. Save for the poor wretches in that village yonder, we are the only people on this earth just now. Can you realize the fullness of that statement? You are mine-absoletely and wholly mine."

"Oh, you cur! You coward!" ev. claimed Frances. Her hand went as if by instinct toward that pocket from which she had drawn her revolver on n previous occasion. Neslerov saw her face turn whiter still, and he laughed pleasantly.

"Of course I guarded against that." he said. "I knew you would, with your American impulsiveness, try to shoot me again. So, while you slept, I quietly took your little toy pistol from your pocket. I have it here. This, I believe, deprives you of the power to do any more mischief."

"Oh, you miserable coward! You thief!" said Frances in a tense voice. "I wish there was a good American fist here to strike that grinning face

"Undoubtedly," said Neslerov, with an exasperating coolness, "that would be pleasant for you, but it would be unfortunate for the American who owned the fist. One blow-peste! He would be torn apart by my agreeable savages vonder."

She could not resist the temptation to follow his finger as it pointed through the window on his side of the car. A short distance, on the banks of the stream, she saw a wretched, miserable village of rude buts. Men and women, dressed in leather, undressed skins, heavy cloths from Moscow merchants, stood in groups, all with their faces toward the car.

"Were I to say the word," said Neslerov, "these people would tear you limb from limb and would perform the same agreeable service for any fool who attempted to interfere between us." "Monster!" she gasped.

"Of course I am a monster to you," he said. "All Russians are monsters to those who do not like us. We may have our little peculiarities. One of them is that what we cannot get by fair means we get some other way. I spoke to your father, and I spoke I offered the honest love of a Russian prince, I was spurned. But now the game is mine, and I shall with. You shall become my wife before your father has time to return from the

"Never! I would prefer to be torn

apart by your villagers!' "You believe that now while you are in the heat of anger, but a short period of rest and contemplation will show you the folly of your refusal. Think of this. I shall go out now and obtain some food. We may remain here a week. Who knows? Before I leave you I wish to say that until you consent to have the priest of that village make you my wife you shall not be permitted to leave this car. I much prefer, as would any man, a wifting bride; but, denied this, I will compel you to phey. It will be the worse for you. I offered love-an affectionate embrace. You refused. Now I command! Think this matter settled only when we are

"Never! You have my revolver and, I suppose, one of your own. Shoot me if you will. I will not marry you?" "It will not be you I shoot. What do you think your father will do when he

finds you are left behind?" "Without doubt he will obtain a spe cial train and come here after me, Then, Prince Neslerov, beware!"

He smiled like a wolf and showed his "That is what I wanted you to say.

If when your father comes here you are not my wife, I will shoot him dead."

"You dare not!" she gasped. "I dare anything. No report of mine would be discredited at St. Petersburg.

I could prove that your father was a conspirator against the government and was shot while fighting my sol-

"There is a government of the United States of America!" "True, but at a distance, I do not

fear it. But consider what I have said. I will return with food."

He left the car, securing the doors to prevent her escape. When she saw him striding toward the village, she leaned against the window and studied the rude people.

"I am helpless-absolutely helpless!" she moaned. "Oh, if he had not taken my revolver I could have shot himor myself."

She looked about her for some meth-

ed whereby she could, if the need should come, take her own life rather than submit to his demands. She knew that if there were a priest in this squalld place he would obey Nesteroy, and mumble some words per feetly meaningless to her, but which would give Neslerov power over her. She walked the length of the apartment like a caged lioness.

Women turned into their huts and came out again. She saw Neslerov start back toward the car carrying a wooden tray. She shuddered again. God give me strength, courage,

calmness!" she murmured. "To lose consciousness would be to fall a vic-

his footstens sounded on the platform.

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toes, roast four! coffee and some coarse "It is not quite like our usual fare,"

hungry."

had a large traveling bag with him, et and aimed at Denton. and from it he took a bottle of wine. "We will pledge each other," he said, with a laugh.

"I do not wish any," said Frances. "Come, don't be charlish! Let us get closed with Neslerov. over the unpleasant part. Drink a toast to your future husband."

"I will not, I will not touch it!" "Drink-drink my health!" be commanded.

He held the cup in his right hand. With his left he grasped her by the hair. He bent back her head.

With a powerful effort she wrenched cried Neslerov,

tion. She clinched her fist and rained stunned. blow upon blow upon his face.

and exhausted almost in his arms.

"Curse you!" he spluttered between his swollen lips. "I have wasted my Denton as he drew his revolver. "Let kindness on you! I should have stary- me see if we can't settle you once for ed you. But I will delay no longer, all." I'll drag you to the priest, and in ten While it might be that not one of the minutes you will be the Princess Nesle. villagers sympathized with Neslerov, rov-and my slave for life. I'll break yet his act was not a crime to them. your heart, you devil!"

they saw him coming toward them place looked upon the eagerness of with his burden.

"What means this strange happen. a girl as natural. ing, little father?" asked a woman of One of them, realizing that the govan older man of the village. "Is the ernor's safety was necessary to their man killing her?"

cour eyes in your house, but meddle arm. not with others. The man's gold is The pistol fell to the earth near that good. He will not hurt her. She is of Neslerov and two villagers picked

authority as head of the house. The movement, drew a knife from his belt. the men spilled.

"He has married a Tartar," they said ged, half carried her into the nearest again,

pay. Call the priest at once!"

'Save me! I am an American! Gordon-the man who built-the road-is

she must become my wife. Proceed!" Frances. "My father will pay you

ped from the crowd.

Let us hear what she has to say."

"I am Neslerov, governor of Tomsk!" shouted the prince, now perfectly fren- on, the villagers too much aghast to my wife."

a cruel monster! I cannot marry him!"

Neslerov seized her by the wrist and bodily upon his foe. swung her toward the priest. The vil Denton, seeing an opportunity and lagers crowded round, awestruck at the knowing that nothing but a deathblow great name they had heard. They wet seemed likely to end the fight, met the knew the governor. Many of them had plunge and drove his knife into Nesle-

the priest. "No, no!" cried Frances, trying

wrench away from Neslerov. A boy slid quietly away from the crowd and ran.

"Stand there, curse you!" said Nesle The pain of his rude hand on her lovely to say. Here, you!" hair made Frances cry out in terror pain and shame. "I'll kill you if you

move again!" There was the sound of a quick and stealthy tread. There was a swish in

the air. There was a gasp, a murmur from the crowd, which fell back in consternation. A heavy Russian riding whip swung

through the air in an arc and, descending, cut the skin across the face of Ne-

"Curse you!" said a hearty American voice. "I'll have your life for this!" "Jack! Oh, Jack!" cried Frances, and then, the last vestige of her She nerved herself to meet him as strength deserting her, she fell uncon-

scious into Jack Denton's outstretched

CHAPTER VII. A DUEL

ESLEROV recoiled, and the writhing of his face in pain and fury, together with the long red cut made by the diate care. whip, gave him the expression of a de-

"You! You!" he gasped.

I arrived in time to foil this dastardly in to make an examination. attempt of yours to take advantage of a defenseless girl. I have been riding shock," he said, with assumed indifferalong the rallway from stream to ence. stream examining the bridges. I reach- as soon as we get to Tomsk." ed this place on my horse a moment ago. A boy saw me coming and hur- pered. "My father will be anxious." ried to tell me what was going on. I had no idea I should find a friend in as possible. You must not worry." need of help. But, thank God, I was

"You will never leave this place alive!" said Neslerov.

He plucked a revolver from his pock-A woman standing near held out her make me dr.nk, but I would not." hands and caught the form of Frances

and bore it into her house. Denton. with flashing eyes, leaped forward and

"It is a battle to the death between giants!" cried a man in the crowd. The pistol fell from the grasp of Neslerov, and the whip before wielded

The iron fingers of Denton would end that moment, but Neslerov would me when you are ill." wrench himself free and leap at his enemy with a curse and growl.

herself free and to her feet, and the A swinging, crashing blow from the ing himself on a stool near her bed, wine went to the floor with a smash. American's right hand sent the gov-Her eyes were glaring with despera- ernor to the ground, where he lay as if from the beginning."

"Take care of him, somebody," said

"Look out!" cried a woman.

gasp she succumbed and sank helpless had risen to his feet and was creeping upon his enemy with a dagger drawn. "Oh, you are an assassin, eh?" said

With their sordid understanding of He closed his arms tightly about her women having no rights, no freedom. and dragged her from the car. The no liberties save what their lords and villagers stared in astonishment as masters gave them, the men of this Neslerov to be married to so beautiful

own sprang upon Denton and drove "Let be!" growled the man. "Use a knife through the fleshy part of his

them up and hid them. Russian wives are accustomed to cru- Like a flash Neslerov was upon his elty from their husbands. A beating unarmed foe, and his knife was raised is but part of their demonstrations of to strike, but Denton, with a quicker women looked on with apathy, while He had ridden too often over the tundra to go unprepared for enemies, hu-

"Help! Save me from this man!" which the banks of the Irtish or its gasped Frances as Neslerov half drag- branches will probably never see

Steel flashed on steel.

The blood from the wound in Denmanded. 'Get him at once. Not only ton's arm was flung over the face and he, but all in the place, will receive clothing of Neslerov, while that from the bruises on the governor's face grew thick and dark, making him truly hide-

my father!" cried Frances, struggling With a grasp as of iron Denton seized the hand of Neslerov that held the A bent old man was seen shambling dagger, but with a wrench the govern-But the American scarcely felt the Hurry. We have been left behind in wound. He was not fighting now for

that car, and to save her good name life, nor for vengeauce. He was fight-"No! For pity's sake, do not!" cried He knew that if Neslerov killed him ing for that girl who lay in the but. well! Do not compel me to marry him! and was not killed himself, her life

A year ago she had told him she did not and never could love him. It had in rude and dangerous places, was dis-"What she has to say! Curse you!" agreeable to her. He said there were howled Neslerov. He did release her fine gentlemen at Paris, New York, for a moment and sprang forward. His London and St. Petersburg. She had fist shot out against the man's face, answered that she knew it. She pre-Without an effort in his own behalf he ferred their company to boors. They parted then and had not met till now.

Neslerov felt his right arm getting weaker. Denton's knife had slashed tery must have been cut, for the blood "He is his excellency, the governor," was thrown from the end of the sleeve. muttered the old man. "We mus Made desperate, he gathered all his strength for a final effort and sprang

With another curse, a spluttering of blood and a groan the governor of Tomsk sank to the ground at the foot

"Take care of him, you fellows; no need to let him die," said Denton, examining the wound. "His lung is not rov, grasping Frances by the bair touched. Nothing fatal here, I am glad The old priest came mumbling to-

ward him. "You know more about surgery than the rest. Get some water, bathe these wounds, take a few stitches in the long

trembling. "But what of you?" "I can take care of myself." He strode to the bank of the stream. over which he had but a few months before built a bridge, and bathed his wounds. Then he went into the hut to see Frances, as if nothing had hap-

RANCES lay on a rude bed, scarcel; conscious, and Dendown solemnly upon the lovely he would help him."

upturned face. He bent over her, touched her brow and felt her pulse. All writhing of his face in pain sense of his own injuries seemed to give it to you for lunch. Things like ed as it got under way. leave him as he saw her need of imme-

Frances felt his touch and looked up she might have worn had he been a "Yes, I!" said Denton. "Fortunately, stern and high priced specialist called

"You are merely knocked out by the "You will probably be all right "Yes, if I could get there," she whis-

"We must relieve his anxiety as soon "What will you do? And Nesleroy?" "Never mind Neslerov now, Keep

cool. You've got to be braced up a lit-

tle. I wish I had some wine." "There was some in the car," she answered. "Noslerov had it. He tried to Denton went to the car, still on the main track, and brought from it the remains of the bottle of wine Neslerov had opened. This he took with him to the way to the Obi."

the hut and offered some to Prances.

"I don't want it. I refused it before," she said. "Oh, don't you want it?" he asked fronically. "I suppose in your keen and subtle mind there is no distinction beclose on the threat of Nesleroy, and it tween a glass of wine offered by Nesleseemed as though the struggle would rov when you were his prisoner and by

> "I did not mean that " she said meekly. She reached out her hand, took the "Now, then." said Denton, coolly seat-

"tell me this whole miserable business

"I haven't thanked you yet, Jack," she said, with a return of color. "Never mind thanking me, I did merely what any other American would have done, and, seeing you in danger, it would not have been manly, indeed, to stand off. I accept your thanks, but let's get to the business. How did you happen to be here-with

"We were in Moscow," she said There was a meeting about the new rallway."

"Yes, I know. That was what took Neslerov there." "He had an interview with while in Moscow-he"-

"Why do you besitate? It to marry you, is it? You gave him the clous governor here and have him die one engine and a car, the same as that imperative knocking at the door. Papa and Vladimir is that they are conspirusual answer, I suppose." "Oh, Jack! There was but one an-

swer papa could give him. I do not has to say," like the prince, and papa knows I will never marry a man I do not love."

you." said Denton soberly. "He told him about you-and about Vladimir-and the prince got angry." "About Viadimir! Who is he?"

"Vladimir Paulpoff, an ironworker, now sent"-"Never mind, we will get to that

where Gordon is to take a house in his eyes. Denton made no show of sen-

"Yes, Jack. Do you know him?" "I've had him turn out some fron for

mnall bridges. Well?" "He is so intelligent, and was anxious to learn, to improve, I helped him. I used to send him books, papers, magazines, scientific works anything I could get hold of that would help him. He studied hard, poor fel-

Tears glistened in her eyes, and she turned away her head. She had quarreled with this man and had said she would never marry him, and their friendship had been almost cut asunder. But he had saved her from Ne-

sicroy. Now he was chiding her.

there must be an explanation to this affair, and I'd like to know what it is to be. It is no triffing matter to cut the governor of a Russian province to

casm. "Neslerov and I indulged in a few pleasantries. He doesn't feel as

never noticed it. Oh, Jack, forgive me!" Frances. quiry," he said, putting the bandaged hand behind him. "This Vladimiryou met-there was an attachment-so far, so good. Now, bow did that lead to this affair?"

found a drosky at the station and was driven to the shops. Shops, house-all were deserted. I found Neslerov there with a painting under his arm. He was taking it away. It was a beautiful pic- this for me!" she said. ture, a beautiful face. I asked the prince where Vladimir was. He said ger." that all the Paulpoffs-father, mother and Vladimir-had been sent to Sibe-

"Sent to Siberia! That big simple hearted fellow! For what?" "Conspiring with others to kill the ezar. We were alone; the drosky driver went out, and Neslerov tried to kiss

"Yes, I shot him. I would again. 1

governor, and he promised that if he on the engine. ton stood a moment looking discovered that Vladimir was innocent It was an exciting start, though the

"He might as well have said that it stared, then laughed as the little old he discovered the moon was cheese he'd engine puffed and screeched and scrap that are rarely corrected in Russia."

"When we left Perm, Neslerov was was accustomed to overcoming difficulon the train. Of course, as papa did ties. And the way he made it groan at him with about the same expression not know anything about the shooting and work would have made glad the in the house of the Paulpoffs he greet heart of the man who had abandoned ed Nesierov as a friend. Everything it on the siding six months before. went well till we had crossed the bor In the car was silence. Neslerov der and come into Nesierov's own prov. was too weak to talk; Frances would at last we are in a position to strike." ince. At this place-I had been sleep not talk to him if he wished. She reing-I woke up. The car had become mained at her end of the car, save to detached from the train. I was alone go in mercy to him and offer him wawith Neslerov. He took my revolver ter at intervals. At such times be from me and dragged me here and or would look up at her with an earnest, plotting again." dered the priest to marry us. Then inscrutable expression on his face. She you came

"Yes, I think I came just in time," said Denton. Then a stern look came again upon

his face. "Frances," he said, "I do not know, of course, how this matter will end. If Neslerov wishes, he can destroy me. If then I may find a way to assist this Viadimir. I think we shall soon be on

With these words be left the but and threatening mob of villagers. "There he is" growled an old man.

evidently the leader. "He tried to kill his excellency. Kill him!" "Kill him!" said another. "It is the governor's command. He put the iron road, the bridge, the devil wagons, not wish it, and we must avenge the wrong. Kill him!"

CHAPTER IV. DENTON TURNS LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER. "Take me to the governor,

he said.

"The governor is resting," growled a reputation is so bad that if it were fellow whose face was a mass of greasy hair. "You will kill him." "Nonsense! Take me to the governor. If you kill me, he will die."

"Why is that, builder of bridges? Is there a god who avenges the death of Americans?" "It will need no god to do that now. better care than you can give him. He rov. is badly injured. It is necessary that I do not care." be shall be taken to Tomsk at once. I Denton nedded and went back to his

on your bands?" "No. Let us see what the governor

It was a solemn crowd that marched in two columns, with Denton between, ed as the grimy bridgebuilder stepped through so much trouble of late that "Everybody knows that-who knows to the hur of the village priest, where into the ear, which was stopped at the the slightest sound jarred upon her, Nesleroy lay.

> "Hold your peace. Wait till you hear emerged from her car and flew to her lice. them speak together," was the reply. father's arms. Neslerov looked up at his conqueror.

"Why do you bring him here?" asked

timent or compassion. "I understand you commanded these I thought at one time we'd be killed by man. Viadimir-poor fellow! I met him in villagers to kill me," he said, standing some savages. But Mr. Denton and the "I am quite well aware that you the forge-in his shop-one day while at the side of the bed and looking cold- prince-oh, iet's get on; I'm tired out were at Perm, old woman, and also Jansky's curt remark. He watched the railway was being put through by and sternly at his victim. "I just and hungry." Perm. Papa and I went there. He is wanted to say before they kill me
Denton beard and wondered.

Denton beard and wondered.

In every new experience he h sist-that in that case you would probknew him. He is so handsome ard ably die here for tack of proper care."

> murderer. I had no desire to kill you. back to the Ohi," said Denton. "If the You were all in the game, and you are You attacked me, and I defended my- road doesn't want this engine, I can still at it, let me tell you." self. I am going back to Tomsk, pro- use it at the Obi bridge." vided your savage villagers don't kill me, and I merely came to ask if you Mr. Gordon, after visiting the prince of which she had heard, would be pleased to go."

"How?" he asked.

"I will take you to Tomsk if you "And that American! He is a brave promise never again to molest Mr. one too!" they said. Gordon or his daughter."

"I promise," said Neslerov, "I will

He was followed at a short distance low spoken tones. by several young men, among whom "I cannot understand you." said ed Mamma Paulpeff. was the boy who had run to tell him Denton. "You first said tell the truth, that a woman was being roughly then you yourself told the first deliberhandled by Neslerov, and who had ate lie. Why?" taken his horse to shelter. He ordered Frances looked at him coelly. the boy to bring the horse. Mounting. he was soon out of sight. He did not was a good deal in what Neslerov said. go far, however. He rode along the Then, again, you and my father have track until he reached a siding a short | work to do, a career to make, money

distance from the bridge, where there to earn, and with the enmity of Newas an old construction engine. Denton examined the old hulk. It it well. It is better as I said it. Let was fit only for drawing one or two it pass." cars. Denton carried water from the

fire of wood. Soon after the villagers were surprised to see a wheezy, rickety old en- tremor in her voice. "Thanks to you, gine coming slowly, with a prodigious I am home again-in my temporary boise, into view. Denton's horse had home," no difficulty in keeping up with it.

car, and then Denton went for "The train is ready," he said "The train! What train?" "The train that is to carry you to the

Obi, where you will join your father."

The old engine was coupled to the

"But there is no train!" "There is a train, and as the steam is up and the track clear I suggest by train from Moscow to Perm. 1 haste. Your father is probably anx- poffs, was promoted at the request of of Tomsk."

> "Yes, but Nesierov will be a passen-"And you?"

the villagers. The backs of two seats small mining town peopled by convicts. were turned down, a bed was made for | To this town the Paulpoll's had been him, and he lay there quiet and seem sent. Vladimir was useful in the over the door!" he commanded savageingly content. "Of course, I know that you are seri- be could do the work of two, and in his

He took her to the car and made her

"Engineer, conductor, guard-all."

ously wounded," said Denton to him simple obedience to the mandates of ther bidding. The aged woman was then returned to Moscow, but did not "and the possibility of your doing any his superiors he never uttered a com- seized, cords were fastened to her tell my father anything about the mat mischief is small, but I want to tell plaint. The old people did menial work. ter, save that Viadimir was sent to You before we start that if I catch you cooking for the convicts we had no in the doorway Jansky had indicated, Siberia. We soon after started for the at any tricks I will kill you as I would families or cleaning in the houses of with her timus bung above her head.

Ohl and stopped at Perm. We saw the | Neslerov nedded, and Denton went

But it had a man in charge of it who

would not speak, nor he. Suddenly at a siding toward which

he had been aiming Denton turned the that he and Papa Paulpoff had a long engine to the right and brought the little train to a standstill. They had been on the road sixteen hours and had traveled 210 miles.

he had taken from the Paulpeffs' house Frances and Nesleroy both looked un at Perm. he finds it advisable to keep silent, as the train stopped and saw the grimy engineer enter the car.

"There is a village near here," he said, "and just beyond this siding there not yet revealed." is a small signal box. I have just viswas met at the door by an angry, ited it, and there is a train coming this way from Tomsk. Undoubtedly, as fully now to what I say. It is quite there is no regular train due, this is a searching party out after Frances Gordon. Now, I have no wish to start an international controversy. What story

shall we tell?" "Tell the truth," said Frances. "It through our country. The czar does does not, as a rule, barm any person who is innocent."

"No." said Neslerey: "not as a rule. But we are in a part of the world where customs are different from yours. If you tell the truth, you will never ENTON presented an unruffled make the world believe you. But you stand? will not understand; I cannot tell you.' "I know what you mean," said Fran-

ces scornfully. "You mean that your

known that you had that car left behind to compel me to marry you everybody will be sure I am your wife. Is that It?" "Yes; something like that." "But, then, there is my word," said

Denton. "Your story will be believed by your The case is simply that Neslerov needs people, my story by mine," said Nesle-"Let us each tell what we please.

not be another train to the Obi in four whistle of a speeding locomotive was ness to act. Then, while Mamma Paulnew experience to have a man want days. Do you desire to keep your pre- borne to him by the breeze. It came - poff was alone in her hut, she heard an he was on, but a modern locomotive of Paulpon and Vladimir had just gone American make, Gordon was in the to the mine, Denton, the American car with some officials from Tonisk. had left the but but a short time be-"Hey! That you, Denton?" he gasp-fore. Mamma Paulpoff had been

> side of the construction engine. "My She turned whiter still and stepped the priest. "Heard you not what his left behind in a car. Seen"-

afterward. You started for the Obi, and an expression of hatred came into it? Where is Neslerov?" asked Gordon, and working his way inside, "Oh, he is in there," said Frances

> In every new experience he had he with Frances Gordon he had been made heaven compared to what you demore and more astonished by the un- served." "You cannot help me - you would certain moods, the whims, the strange turns her caprice would take. "That is for you to say, I am not a "Hitch on to this train and hard her "What! You still persist in that lie!

> This attachment was soon made, and having visions of horrible punishments and congratulating him apon his escape from the savages, assisted in dishing a whip he carried. The other "In the same car you came thus far transferring to him some of the com- two did the same, but their whips were forts to be found in the other ear. The heavier.

"But how? There is no train due for Russian officials swarmed around him and praised his courage.

said Neslerov weakly. order the villagers to permit you to The train started back toward Tomsk. It had about ninety miles to of God!" cried Mamma Paulpoff. Denton then went to the car and ex- | go to reach the Obi. During the jouramined it. He discovered where a new Denton and Frances found themflaw in the iron had weakened the selves side by side in the rear car, are receiving a visitor who is suspectwith no one near enough to hear their ed."

"Because I thought it over. There ed the frightened old woman. slerov you would be ruined. I studied

"Here we are at Vashlov," he said. river and filled the boiler and built a "For the time being you are home "Yes." she replied, with the slightest

> TESLEROV lay in his palace in Tomsk, slowly recovering. His heart was filled with rage, and he longed for vengeance. His closest confident now was Jansky, who, owing to his meritorious conduct in the apprehension of so great

CHAPTER X.

JANSKY, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE.

He had told Jansky the story of the ride from Moscow, and it was of course colored to suit his purpose. Jansky had received his commission-the first important one since his arrival at Tomsk -to watch the American and find an opportunity to wreak vengeance.

Tomsk was the village of Tivoloffsky, a mines. With his tremendous strength ly.

This new life came hardest upon the old people, and it was their sufferings that made Vladimir curse under his

One day Jansky entered the room where Neslerov sat or half reclined. "Well, what is it? I see you have

something to say," said Neslerov. "I have, your excellency," replied the superintendent of police. "It concerns him-your enemy."

"The American?" "Yes. I have obeyed your commands -he has been constantly watched. And

Neslerov sat up straight. "What? Tell me at once." "It is not yet revealed what the man's object is, but he and the Paulpous are

"They and the American. He has

visited them twice. It was overheard conversation about a picture." Neslerov glanced at a painting that

"What can be know about the picture?" asked the governor.

"I do not know. That is, as I said, "Jansky," he said, "I know what the object is if you do not. Listen carepossible the American has discovered the existence of the original of that picture you see there. It is a small medallion, probably in a locket. It was lost some years ago by a member officer who had done no whipping. of my family and bears relation to a

great mystery-the mystery of Gras-Jansky shut his eyes and seemed to be thinking.

"Jansky, your life and mine depend on your action now. Do you under-"I understand nothing."

"That picture, if it is the one I mean. Jansky. must be brought to me. The Ameri- not feel our punishment." can, if he proves to be interested in it, not wish him to know. There are ways throat, whereby even an American could disappear in Siberia. And, Jansky, Vladi- ed. mir Paulpoff is a most dangerous plotter even here. He ought to be placed where he can do no more mischief." "I begin to understand," said Jansky

He bowed and left the palace and rode toward Tiveloffsky.

Two days passed, during which Jancan start within the hour. There will engine. But he did not start. The sky watched and kept himself in readi-

> girl and the governor of Tomsk got backward as she saw the dark and forbidding face of Jansky. Behind beast!" yelled Jansky. "I'm all right," said Frances as she Jansky were two of the Tomsk po-"You are Mamma Paulpoff." "Did Denton save you? What was Jansky, slipping his foot in the door

"I am; you know me; I was at breasts. The withered skin was cut as coolly. "We've had a lively experience. Perm," faltered the trembling old wo with a knife. One scream came from ceived no worse punishment. This is

"We had done nothing, your excel- Vladimir most fiel"

"It is not so!" wailed the old woman, "Don't tell me," said Jansky, bran-

wall. "Don't lie to me again," thundered Jansky. "I have been watching you every day since you came to this place.

I say you are still conspiring.

"Let me tell you, it will be worse for you if you do not tell the truth. You

"It is not so! I swear it in the name

"Oh, do you not? But you were here when he came. Did he come to see you, your husband or your son?" "Who of whom do you speak?" ask-"Of whom would I speak save that accursed American? He has twice by the side of Mamma Paulpoff and made attempts upon the life of the gov-ernor of Tomsk. Yet the governor in the kindness of his heart has not m

"Ah, it is impossible! He is so good-"Good and kind, ch? In what man-

third attempt was made it would go

lested him. But he was warned if a

ner does he display it?" "Oh, he came-he came"-The old woman stumbled and floundered. It had been borne in upon her understanding by Papa Paulpoff that on no account must she breathe a word which Jansky spoke

came," murmured the old woman in de-

you must know why he did come here. Out with it, now, if you value your "My life! Ah. you would not harm a helpless old woman!" For answer Jansky brought his whip

down on her bony shoulders.

"Will you tell why the American vis-ted this house?" the answer." Then the cynical backeited this house?" "I know not!" for bowed and escaped. "Take her; tie her thumbs - there,

His two gallant men needed no fur-

to the waist. "Now, then, old hag," said Jansky, 'understand I have come for the truth and will have it. If you do not give

it to me, I will kill you. I will get the truth from Paulpoff, who has more lense than you. Now, what was the business that brought the American

A rude hand tore away her garments

here?" "I know not!" whispered the woman,

with a great sob. "The lash!" roared Jansky,

One of his police swung his heavy whip, and the lash came down across the naked shoulders. A livid mark told the course, and Mamma Paulpoff cried out in agony.

"This must be known:" said Jansky.

"The lash! Twice!" ordered Jansky, A white line and a red one marked

officers of the czar must take these steps to protect his empire. With the lesson you have had, tell the truth.

sky, almost beside himself. "The lash! Three times" "Your arm is weak," said the police

with a scream, her head fell back. Her eyes glazed.

"Hold! Quick! Release her and restore her to consciousness!" ordered "She is unconscious and can-

Groans came from her as they work "God, take me from this awful pain!" she murmured.

"She feels again" said Jansky in

Again she was raised and the cords were fastened to her thumbs. "No. I do not know."

savage glee. "String her up!"

ing to kill both. The American and Vladimir will be taken to the pris Tomsk and shot. Tell the truth. It will save them and you." "I know nothing!" said the old wom-

"It was but a pleture-to take a picture!" cried Mamma Paulpoff in tones that plerced the air. Her weakness had come too late. Both whips coiled round her shrunken

that conspiring son of yours. It show them lay the still form upon the floor ed the mercy of the ezar that you re- and then led the way to their horses.

"Then Neslerov was right, and the

the first to step across the chreshold. "My God!" ae said. "Who has been

Papa Paulpoff stood stupefied, looking at the upturned face of his wifedead-bruised-her breast covered with blood. "The police!" wailed the old man

ed over the dead body of his mother. touched her blood with the tips of his fingers and wiped them on his own "If this is Nesierov or the order of

live for vengeance!" a wooden table and wrecked it com-

the postmaster general fixing the tariff at one cent for four characters, says a writer in the Electrical Review. certain politician was willing to take to any person concerning the visit of the risk of being the first fool, but claimed to have only one cent in "Come, out with it!" stormed Jansky. change. The Washington operator "He came-I do not know why he said to Baltimore for him, "4," which h?" The reply came back "one "I will tell you. He came to conspire n'clock. This customer seems to have

A cynical bachelor listened to some vomen who were discussing female suffrage and was asked by one of them for his views on the question. He replied thus with great deliberation: "I once heard of a woman who was asked "Have mercy!" cried the unfortunate. Low she had voted at the recent elec-

eventeenth anniversary! I never et a awernary, or the china anni-

40 By Ashley Towne

men was he entered with bowl of gruel, some steaming pota-

> he said, "but it is better than being in time." He set the dishes on a table he improvised out of the back of a seat. He

"I will not!" "I will make you!"

"Open your mouth. Swallow wine. I will choke you!" he cried.

im. He clutched her round the waist kill him." and struggled with her. She exerted He turned without a look at the fallall her strength. She was like a fero- en man and started toward the hut into cious tigress. Her nails scratched his which Frances had been carried. face and tore his hair. Her blows cut his lips on his teeth. But he was a At the cry, which was echoed in the powerful man and used his strength crowd, Denton turned suddenly. The Neslerov?" against this captive woman. With a destardly Neslerov had feigned. He

"Where is your priest?" Neslerov de-

"Come," said Neslerov roughly. "This half the length of Denton's finger. young woman and I are to be married.

"I command you to marry us!" shout- power of this monster of brutality that A tall man of about middle age step-"It is wrong," he said. "Who you been a quarrel. She didn't want to get are I know not, but it is not the way to married, and he asked her if his rough win a wife. Release the young woman, exterior, the result of years of hard work

zied. "I command you, old dotard, to step between or utter a word. say the words that will make this girl "Please do not." cried Frances. "He through the sleeve of his coat and has stolen me from my father! He is found the bone near the elbow. An ac-

felt the knout at his command. "It must be done," again muttered

by Denton dropped to the ground.

"It is you or I! One of us must die!" cup and drained it.

Curses deep and terrible burst from Denton in Russian. "I don't want to

would be made such a hell in the

Denton and Neslerov kept fighting

of his adversary unconscious.

cuts and bandage him up." "Yes, little father." said the priest,

> CHAPTER VIII. THE INTERVIEW IN THE HUT.

blacksmith of Perm?"

or got it away and cut to the bone low! He grew to-I think he loved me "Of course you returned his affect tion. You've done it so-I mean it came quite easy."

> "One could not know Vladimir without admiring him." she said suddenly. with a great accession of spirit. "I fail to see why I should be put through this entechism by you."
> "You needn't be if you don't want to," he answered coldly. "This is a nice, quiet village. Neslerov is lying not far away, somewhat cut up now, but he will get over that. I could go on my way and leave you if my questions are distasteful. The thing is that

gay over them as I do; that's all." "Oh, I see your hand is bandaged-I "We were following a course of in-"I wanted to see Vladimir and went

me. I fought him; I shot him." "You shot Neslerov?"

She went with him. At the sight of sist his superior in his plans and ambithe engine she understood. "You are a wonderful-you are doing

andlence was small. The villagers breath.

"The Paulpoffs?"

"Either you or some one must tell, What brought the American here? Was it concerning a picture?" "I know not!" said the woman

the blows of the whip. Mamma Paulhung on the wall. It was the painting poff screamed in her awful torture. Her limbs grew weaker, and she hung by the cords tied to her thumbs. The thumbs were black. "You will learn!" said Jansky. "The

> What brought the American here?" "I know not!" answered the woman. "Hell's furies upon her;" said Jan-

> "Let me tre." A smile of horrible cruelty crossed his face as he stepped by the side of the woman. His whip whistled in the air. It fell-once-twice-thrice, and

They cut her down laid her on the must know or suspect something I do floor and poured liquor down her

> "Now, bag, tell me why the American came here? Was it to kill the governor or to kill the czar?" "You lie. The charge against him

an, remembering her husband's warnings. "The lash, both of you! Kill the old

That right ' had mir came nome from the mine with Papa Paulpoff. He was

wringing his hands pitifully, "They The old woman crouched against the have killed Mamma Paulpoff! They will kill you-and me!" Vladimir's gentle, placid face became distorted with leonine rane. He stoop-

> the czar," he thundered into the ears of the terror stricken old man. "I will rend them all! From this moment I He brought his clinched fist down on

this thing!" he cried. "So will I smash

The First Telegram.
The first record I find of electricity. sarning money was on April 1, 1844, The only telegraph line then existing was the government line from Baltimore to Washington. As the government had no use for it, consent was obtained to charge for private messages.

a gang of conspirators as the Pafilpoffs, was promoted at the request of Neslerov to a nost where he could as-

MIGHT ALL BRING SOME. Yes, we have been married seventeen

"So will I crush them who have done

"Good! Then if you know he did not, cents were earned.

s on the 8th of October, and we are to invite all our friends to help us

"Tear the rags from her back!"