

THE COURIER OF THE CZAR

By Jules Verne

ly 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."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ASIMULTANEOUS 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.

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

"That courier," said he, "is he a Russian?"

"Is he a Russian?" asked the grand duke.

"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 his companions in exile in a 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, and he, the grand duke, 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?"

"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 Riga on the 10th 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, to which the brother of the czar granted 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 to the chief of the merchants that

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 success 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 Strogoft, 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.

(To be continued.)

A REQUIEM.

(By Mary E. Mannix.)

For the last time before the hallowed altar,
Where, till they could no more, her eager feet
Had turned with faithful love that could not falter
In such familiar paths, in ways so sweet.

Scarcely more quiet now than in the hours
When days unnumbered, she was wont to pray,
Silent, and pale she lay amid the flowers,
Herself a flower more beautiful than they.

She loved them all, sweet bud and tiny blossom;
And weeping friends had laid them in their bloom,
Within the still, white hands and on her bosom,
Brightening the lonely journey to the tomb.

No hopeless sobs, no wallings of affliction,
Swept through the measure of the organ's swell,
But softly, like a happy benediction,
The solemn "Requiescat" rose and fell.

And who that loved her, as the words were spoken,
"Where shall we find a purer life than this?"
Retracting her short span of years unbroken,
But thought within his soul, "How true it is!"

Oh! where indeed? Her childhood's days were given
To Him who called her for His chosen bride,
And her sad pilgrimage from earth to heaven,
Followed the footsteps of the Crucified.

The cross by her frail, trembling arms uplifted
Was born unto the mountain's top-most height;
From the bruised flesh the weight was never shifted,
The bearer halted not for storm nor night.

She rests at last, that fair, sweet saint of ours;
Her eyes have cast the film of earth away,
Folded to sleep amid the silent flowers,
Herself a flower more beautiful than they.

A GENEROUS WILL.

Worthy of emulation was the will left by the late Mary Corrigan, of Philadelphia, who made the following numerous and handsome bequests: House of the Good Shepherd, \$15,000; Little Sisters of the Poor, \$12,000; St. James' Catholic Church, \$10,000; St. Catherine's Academy, in Austin, \$5,000; St. Joseph's Home for the Friendless, \$5,000; St. Vincent's Infant Asylum, \$5,000; Working Boy's Home, \$5,000; Chicago Industrial Home for Girls, \$5,000; St. Mary's Training School for Boys, \$5,000; St. Monica's (colored Catholic) Church, \$5,000; Epiphany School for Deaf and Dumb, \$5,000; St. Elizabeth's Hospital, \$5,000; St. Anthony's Hospital, \$5,000; St. Anthony's Hospital, \$5,000; St. Vincent de Paul's Society (St. James' conference), \$4,000; Visitation and Aid Society, \$4,000; Monastery of the Poor Clares, \$3,000; La Salle Institute, \$1,000; St. Leo's Church, \$1,000; St. Elizabeth's Corpus Christi, \$1,000; Church of the Epiphany, \$1,000. The will disposed of an estate valued at \$240,000, of which \$150,000 was set aside for the support of the decedent's two sisters during their lifetime.

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OUR FASHION LETTER

MRS. ROOSEVELT SPENDS BUT THREE HUNDRED ON DRESS.

American Walking Skirt Not Popular in Paris—English Women Say French Shoes are at Fault—New Ideas in Sleeves.

Recently published accounts of Mrs. Roosevelt spending only \$300 a year for her clothes not unnaturally have caused an immense amount of excitement among the feminine portion of the community, who realize that the price asked for gowns is far ahead of anything ever asked before and that the number of gowns required for a woman to be fashionably gowned is far larger and the ordinary seamstress' work demands a higher price.

In days gone by it was thought to be a mistake for women of gentle birth and large fortunes to be in the least conspicuously dressed in public places or on the street. If they wore gorgeous gowns they must needs hide them under a wrap or mantle, and of course would never think of going about so attired unless in their own private carriages.

Latest news from Paris admits that the attempt to popularize the American walking skirt there has not been so successful as for various reasons, many had hoped. "The Parisienne will be graceful if she dies for it. The short skirt is crude," is one explanation. Another is that the Parisienne almost always rides, and walks rarely; hence the dress has no purpose for her.

Above are shown some new models of fancy shoes for house wear or evening wear. Some of them are of leather, cut out in pieces of various colors; others are of various historical styles. The buckles represented with them are quite a new feature. They are infinitely varied in design, and are made of gold or silver, enriched with precious stones. Nearly all of them are worn very high up the foot. On the left is a model of a boot to be worn when out shooting or in an automobile. It is made either of yellow leather or of drab deerskin.

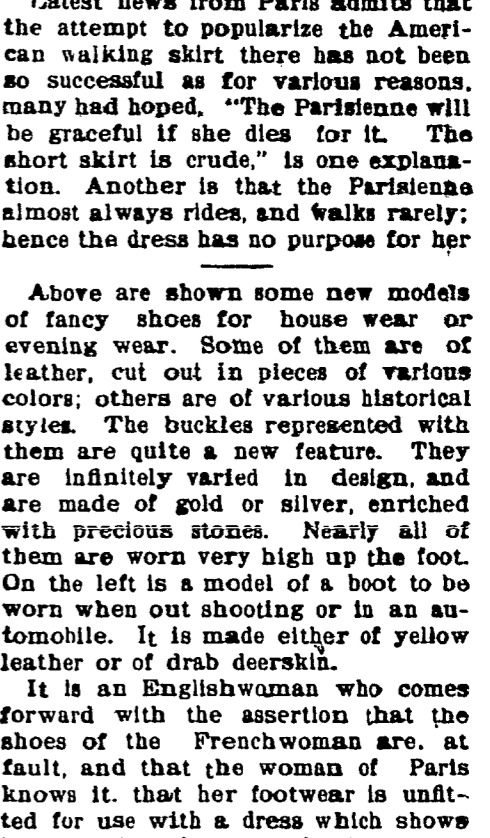
It is an Englishwoman who comes forward with the assertion that the shoes of the Frenchwoman are, at fault, and that the woman of Paris knows it, that her footwear is unfitted for use with a dress which shows it. American boots and shoes, the Englishwoman confides, are the shapeliest in the world. The Frenchwoman can find none which she considers slightly except those with high heels. And certainly they are not suited for use with a dress of "sensational" length. The Englishwoman bids the American to keep to her conclusions on the subject, however, for her idea is right.

And how are American women meeting the matter of new walking skirts for the winter? There is a general confession of the need of them, even by carriage folk. For there are times when even they must walk, and a skirt without a train is a necessity of every wardrobe. The cloth for this serviceable costume is nearly certain to be Oxford gray, black or brown, dark, double-faced. The most modish of them are cut to flare at the hem.

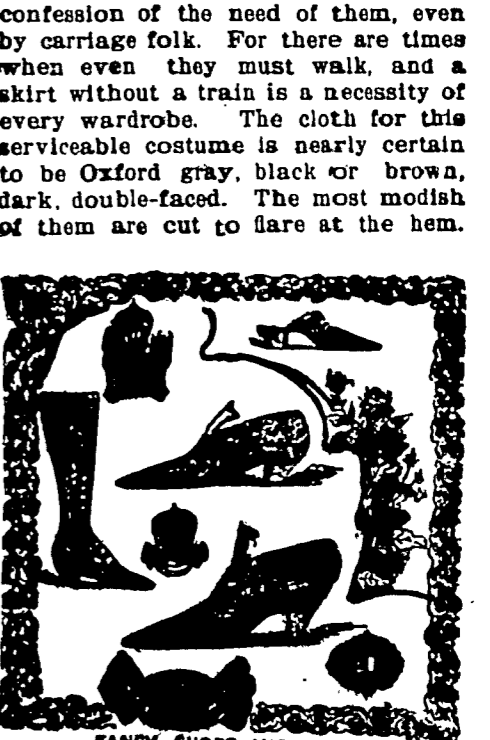
verely cut steel buttons are employed on the waist for simulated fastenings and to end the tabs. On the skirt only the latter use is made of them. Nothing could be more taking than the way (for a slight figure) the stripes of cloth are put onto the waist and skirt, to give the effect of a dress in one piece.

Under this irreproachable coat is worn a blouse of finest white linen, the full lower sleeves of which peep out through the flowing sleeves of the coatee. The costume is so made that it may be worn with furs (preferably chinchilla) as a complete suit; or a long coat, as cover, converts the costume into a dress. The hat is white smooth felt with a swirl of black satin de chine and a huge black bird. Chinchilla, ever charming (for dark women) also comes in the new stole shape, the tuff of "bag" cut. There are three tails at either end, and young women cross one portion of the boa over the other.

Chinchilla is among the few furs which big folk and little may wear with equal becomingness, unless they be yellow haired. It may be conceivably that the light-haired woman who would wear chinchilla, like the woman who does not know what style of hair-dressing becomes her, is hopeless.



FANCY SHOES AND NOVELTIES



And if the fullness is in the cut of the skirt rather than in a flounce set on, so much the better. Heavy stitchings give body to the hem of the skirt. Now the length? Even American women are not agreed. Those whose affairs take them out at all hours generally prefer ankle length, so that the frock need not be held up not at all except when going up and down the stairs of the elevated. No reputable skirt can compass that disadvantage.

Did I say that there are no sleeves tight from shoulder to wrist? Once in the greatest while an old-style, plain tailor-made sleeve appears. But they are seen so seldom that they are noticeable. In general the severest of cloth gowns are formed to curve out at the wrist, half down over the hand. And more than likely there is a trimming at the top of the sleeve of cloth applications, of braiding, or of stitchery. Blahop sleeves, flowing, and bell sleeves are on the new fur garments. I am not sure that one's heart does not most go out to a simply stunning sleeve on a taffeta frock in shades of roses color. The sleeve is merely an inverted leg of mutton affair, but such cachet as comes from the cut! I am willing to admit that much which helps the picture scheme is in the rich drapery of plum colored taffeta, trimmed with strips of black panne velvet. And in a hat of plum colored taffeta, velvet and plum colored feathers tucked under the brim, the charming design shows really, that there are only things in it that you consider absolutely necessary.

The postoffice authorities only can estimate the carelessness of women in sealing and addressing letters. To permit one's correspondents to pay postage for one's letters is not the right thing by any means.

News of mutual friends should be given with great care as to reliability. Friendship is often shattered by mail

"The gypsy, who had accompanied him to the camp of the Angars, 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 Irkutsk. 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 so far 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 30,000 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 600 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 these patriots, had armed them, and he had found in them brave defenders.

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

"I am sure that your highness would permit us to form a special corps and to lead the attack on the Angara, and to