

ing his calmness on learning this dis. to be frightened. Of those soldiers, of astrous news. He walked up and down those citizens, shut up in an isolated the room under the eyes of Ivan Ogareff. who covered him as a prey reserved for his vengennce. He stopped at the windows. He looked out upon the Tartar fires. He was trying to out limit. In any case no one for a mofind out the noise, the greater part of which was caused by the grating of the Ivan Ogareff was playing. No one lee 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 rather, had she already been for a long er of the czar." "Why?"

condemued 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 fach 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 himwhile 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 Krasnolarsk. Could he have suspected that I was the bearer of a letter addressed to your bighness and in Which all bis projects were divulged I should not now be standing before you."

"Yes, you would have been lost," an-

the grand duke, of a nervous temper. the garrison and population of irkutsk ament, had great difficulty in preserv. were too patriotic to allow themselves town at the farthest end of the Aslatic world, not one had dreamed of speaking of capitulation. The disdain of Russia for those barbarians was withment suspected the hateful'role which courier of the czar was nothing else

than a traitor. A circumstance altogether unnatural was the cause, from his arrival at Ir. know the hour for action. kutsk, of there being frequent relations between Ivan Ogareff and one of its layed. They must make an end of it bravest defenders, Wassill Feodor. One before the Russian corps should arrive knows with what anxiety this unhappy father was devoured. If his daughter, Nadia Feodor, had left Russia at night from the top of the rampart a the date assigned by the last letter he note fell into the hands of Sangarre. had received from Riga, what had become of her? Was she still trying to traverse the invaded provinces, or. sworn personal vengeance on the broth. time a prisoner? Wassill Feodor could kutsk to the Tartars. not find any solace for his sorrow except when he had some opportunity of "They say that that officer had been fighting against the Tartars, opportualties which were too seldom for his

liking. Now, when Wassili Feodor was informed of the unexpected arrival of courier from the czar he had a presentiment that this courier could give him some tidings of his daughter. I was only a very slight hope, but still

Wassili Feedor went to find Ivan Ogareff, who availed himself of this opportunity to have daily relations with the commandant. Ind the renegade think he could turn that circumstance to his own profit? Did he judge all men by himself? Could he believe that a Russian, even a political exile, could be so mean as to betray his country? Whatever was the case, Ivan Ogareff met with skillfully feigned engorness all the advances made to him by the father of Nadla The latter, the very next morning after the arrival of the protonded courier, went to the palace of the governor general. There he

be clung to it.

informed Ivan Ogareff of the circumtances under which his daughter had

voted himself more particularly to the examination of the Bolchala gate. which he intended treacherously to surrender. Twice at night he came to in spect that gate and the fortifications around it. He walked about there without any fear of exposing himself to the missiles of the besiegers, whose first posts were less than a verst from the Pamparts. He knew well that he was not exposed-nay, even that he was recognized. He had had a glimpse of a shadow which had glided to the foot of the ramparts.

Sangarre, risking her life, had just come to try to put herself in communication with Ivan Ogareff. Besides, the besieged for two days had enjoyed a tranquillity to which they had not been accustomed since the Tartars first invested Irkutsk. It was by order of

Ivan Oggreff. The lieutenant of Feofar-Khan had wished that all attempts to carry the town by sheer force should be suspend ed. Thus after his arrival at Irkutsk the artillery was absolutely silent Per haps-at least he hoped so-the vigi lance of the besieged would be some what relaxed. In any case, at the out could have imagined that the pretended posts several thousand Tartars were ready to hurl themselves against the gate when deprived of its defenders, when Ivan Ogareff should let them

Meanwhile that could not be long de

in sight of Irkutsk. The resolution of Ivan Ogareff was taken, and that very

It was the following night, the night from the 5th to the 6th of October, at 2 o'clock in the morning, that I van Ogareff had fixed for delivering up in------

CHAPTER XIX.

HE plans of Ivan Ogareff had been laid with the greatest care, and, unless some unlikely circumstance should occur, they must succeed. It was necessary that the Bol

chaia gate should be without defend ers at the moment when he should deliver it up to the Tartars. Thus at that moment it would be indispensable that the attention of the besieged should be drawn to another point of the city. hence a diversion agreed upon with the emir. That diversion had to take place along the suburbs of Irkutsk, up and

down the right bank of the river. The attack on those two points would be made very earnestly and at the same time a feigned attempt to cross the An gara on its left bank. The Bolchain gate would then be probably abandoned. especially as on that side the advance posts, which were said to be at some distance off, would seem to have been collected together.

The fifth day of October had come

would not succeed. In that case the Tartars, discouraged for the time, without doubt would defer for a few days any new attack against the town. Besides, the troops expected by the grand luke might arrive any hour. The safety or the loss of lrkutsk hung on a thread. On that day the sun, which had risen

at twenty minutes past 6, had set at 5:40. Twilight would still have to struggle with night for two hours. Then space would be filled with thick darkness, for heavy clouds hung still in the air, and the moon would not appear. This profound obscurity would favor more completely the plans of Ivan Oga-

Already, for some days, an extremely keen frost had come as a prelude to the rigors of the Siberian winter, and on that night the cold was still more piercing. The soldiers posted on the right bank of the Angara, being forced any fires. They therefore suffered dreadfully from great lowering of the temperature. At some feet below them the ice blocks floated past, following the current of the river.

During all that day they had seen between the two banks. That circumstance, observed by the grand duke and his officers, had been considered as fortunate It was evident that if the bed

of the river became obstructed the passage of it would become altogether impracticable.

reff.

The Tartars would not be able to manage either rafts or boats. As for attempting to cross the river over the blocks of ice when the cold should have joined them, that was not possible. The field, newly cemented, would not have been strong enough for the passage over it of an attacking column.

> But Ivan Ogareff did not regret that eircumstance, although it appeared fa vorable to the defenders of Irkutsk, for the traitor knew well that the Tartars were not seeking to cross the Angara

and that at least on that side the attempt would only be a feint. Nevertheless toward 10 o'clock at night the state of the river visibly changed, to the extreme surprise of the, besieged and now to their disadvantage The

passage, up to that this impracticable, suddenly became possible. The bed of the Angara soon became free. The floating ice, which for some days had come down the river in great quantities, disappeared, and very little could be seen between the two banks.

The Russian officers, who had notleed this change in the state of the river, made it known to the grand Angara the floating ice had accumulated and found a barrier. We know the besiegers, hence the necessity for still safe with him.

the Russians to watch with greater at-

muin on the right bank, between the village of Poshkavsk and the town. Ivan Ogareff had resolved to employ this terrible means for setting fre to scabbard and returned to the combat. Irkutsk. He therefore made use of the immense reservoir which contained the combustible liquid. He had only to make a few canals to draw in streams

into the river. These he had made that very night, some hours before. The cotton wool had been cast on the waters of the Angara. In an instant, as if the current had been made of alcohol, all the river became a mass of flames, up and down the stream, with the rapidity of electricity. Volumes of blue flames covered the whole surface of the river and shot far up into the sky,

The few blocks of ice that came floating down the river, being seized by the burning liquid, melted like wax on the surface of a furnace, and the water. sent off as vapor, rose hissing to the clouds. At that very moment the firto hide their presence, had not kindled ing began at the north and at the south of the town. The batteries of the camp of the Angara threw an uninterrupted volley of shot and shell. Many thousand Tartars rushed to the assault of

the ramparts. The houses along the high banks, constructed of wood, took them in close ranks floating rapidly fire in every direction. An immense light dissipated the shades of night. "At last!" said Ivan Ogareff. And he

had good reason to applaud. The diversion which he had planned was ter-

rible. The defenders saw themselves placed between the attack of the Tartars and the disasters of an immense configration. The bells sounded, and every ablebodied man of the population bastened to the points attacked and to the houses which were being devoured by the fire, which was threatening to communicate itself to the whole city The Bolchaia gate was almost free. It was with difficulty that any defenders

had been left there. Ivan Ogareff re-entered his room then brilliantly lit up by the flames from the Angara that overtopped the balustrades of the ramparts. Then he prepared to leave it. But scarcely had be opened the door when a woman rushed into the room, with her garments dripping wet, her hair in disor der.

"Sangarre!" cried Ivan Ogareff in the first moment of surprise and not imagining that it could be any other woman than the gypsy.

It was not Sangarre; it was Nadia. At the moment when, seeking refuge on the block of ice, the young girl had uttered that cry when she saw the fire spread over the current of the Angara. Michael Strogoff had seized her in his duke. Besides, it was explained in this arms, and he had dived with her to way that at some narrow portion of the seek even in the depths of the river a shelter from the flames After having swum under the waters Michael Stro that such was the case. The passage goff had fortunately put his foot on of the Angara was therefore open to ground at the quay, and he had Nadia

Michael Strogoff was touching at last

Ivan Ogareff, pale with fury and shame, remembered that he was carrying a sword. He drew it from the He had also recognized Michael Strogoff. A blind man! He had only, in short, to deal with a blind man.

Nadia, terrified at the danger which threatened her companion in such an unequal struggle, ran to the door, calling help.

"Shut that door, Nadia," said Michael Strogoff. "Do not call any one, and let me do it. The courier of the czar has nothing to fear today from this wretch. Let him come at me if he dare. I am waiting for him."

Meanwhile Ivan Ogareff, gathering himself together, as it were, like a tiger did not utter a word. The noise of his step, his very breathing, he would have wished to keep back from the ear of the blind man. He wished to strike him before even he had any warning of his approach, to strike him with a certain blow. The traitor did not dream of fighting, but of assassinating him whose name he had stolen.

Nadia, frightened, yet at the same time confident, contemplated with a sort of admiration that terrible scene. It seemed that the old coolness had come back to him.

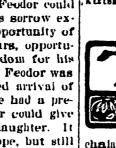
> Michael Strogoff had as his only weapon his Siberian knife, and he could not see his adversary, who was even armed with a sword. But by what favor from heaven was he able to overpower him?

Ivan Ogareff glanced at his adversary with a visible anxiety. That superhuman calminess worked upon him. In vain, appealing to his reason, he kept saying that in the inequality of such a combat all the advantage was in his favor. That immovableness of the blind man completely freue him. He had sought with his eyes the place where he must see his victim. He had found it. Who, then, we s preventing him from giving the tracking blow? At length he rand - a b' w and thrust his sword full a the breat of Michael Strogoff.

An imperceptible 1:ovement of the knife of the blind man turned the blow Michael Strogoff had not been touched and coolly seemed to wait another attack without, however, challenging it.

A cold sweat ran from the face of Ivan Ogareff. He recoiled a pace, then made another thrust. But the second blow, like the first, fell harmless. A simple parrying with the large knife had sufficed to turn aside the sword of the traitor. The latter, mad with rage and terror before that living statue, fixed his terrified look on the large open eyes of the blind man. Those eyes that seemed to read the very bot tom of his heart and which could not sec-those eyes seemed to have for him : an awful fascination.

Suddenly Ivan Ogareff gave a cry n unexpected light had "To the brain. "He can see!" cried he. "He can see" And, like a deer trying to re-enter its cave, step by step, terrified, he retreated to the lower end of the room. Then the statue took life. The blind man walked straight to Ivan Ogareff, and, placing himself in front of him, said' Yes, I see—I see the blow of the knowt with which I have marked you, traitor and coward! I see the place where I am going to strike you. Defend your life! It is a duel which I condescend to offer you. My knife will suffice meagainst your sword!" "He sees?" said Nadia. "God of mercy, is it possible?" Ivan Ogareff felt himself to be lost. But suddenly, taking courage, sword in front, he rushed upon his impassible adversary. The two blades crossed, but at the first clash of the knife of Michael Strogoff, grasped firmly in the hand of the Siberian hunter, the sword flew in pieces, and the wretch, pierced to the heart, fell dead to the ground. At that moment the door of the room, pushed from the outside, opened. The grand duke, accompanied by some officers, showed himself on the threshold. The grand duke advanced. He recognized on the ground the dead body of him whom he thought to be the courier of the czar, and then in a threatening voice he asked: "Who has slain this man?" "I," replied Michael Strogoff. One of the officers placed a revolver to his head, ready to fire. "Your name?" asked the grand duke before giving the order to shoot him dead.



wered the grand duke. "And how did You escape?" "By throwing myself into the Irtish."

"And how did you enter Irkutsk?" "During a sortle that was made this before your highness."

"Well done, Michael Strogoff." anshown courage and zeal during this his daughter to Wassill Feeder. difficult mission. I shall not forget me?

"None if it be not that of fighting by the side of your highness," answered Iven 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 was captain in the corps of the coutiers of the czar, and he withdrew. Ivan Ogareff had just now played with have stopped on receiving news of the nuccess 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 nothing would prevent her setting off. would even live in that palace. , He By this statement Ivan Ogareff had would know all the secrets of the de. just committed gratuitously an act of tense. He held, therefore, the situation real cruelty. With one word he could his hand. No one in Irkutsk knew him. No one could tear off his mask. He resolved, therefore, to begin the tier under the elreumstances previouswork without more delay.

Tyan Ogareff, having every facility of seeing, observing and acting, spent the next day in visiting the fortifica- the date of the order forbidding any one tions. Everywhere he was received with cordial congratulations by the officers, soldiers and citizens. This coubound them to the empire. Ivan Oga- spite of derself, on the European territherefore recounted to them all the tory of the empire. wealls of his journey, and this with a iracity that was never wanting. Then word. He did not say it. Wassili Feoarolily, without at first insisting on it dor withdrew heartbroken. After that oe much, he spoke of the gravity of interview his last hope was destroyed. the altuation, exaggerating, as he had During the two following days the grand duke, grand duke several times asked for the successes of the Tartars and the pretended Michael Strogoff and had gate, being free at the hour fixed, would the forces at their disposal. To listen him repeat all that he had heard in the be given up to the thousands of Tarwhim, the succor would be insufficient imperial cabinet of the New palace. tonid it even come, and it was to be Ivan Ogareff, prepared for all those that a battle fought under the questions, answered without ever besi-The of Irkutsk would be as disas- tating. He did not conceal designedly Irkutsk were constantly on the alert. and of Krasnolarsk.

sinister insinuations. He took prepared with the greatest secrecy: mey mould penetrate by degrees that the Tartars were already masters soft visited the various posts which had Ty case he added always that it to repel the invaders. end itself to the last man, and

to leave European Russia and told him now what was his anxiety in her regard.

Ivan Ogareff did not know Nadis, alvery night to repel a Tartar detach. though he had met her at the post ment I folned in with the defenders of house of Ichim the day on which she the town. I was able to make myself | was there with Michael Strogoff. But known, and they at once conducted me then he had paid no more atiention to her than the two journalists, who were at the same time in the posthouse. He wered the grand duke. "You have could not therefore give any news of

"But at what time," asked Ivan Oga-Tou. Have you any favor to ask of ref. "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

Tartar invasion!" Wassili Feodor hung down his head. He knew Nadia, and he knew well that reassure Wassili Feodor.

Although Nadla had passed the fronly described. Wassili Feodor, by comparing the date at which his daughter was certainly at Nijni Novgorod and to leave it, would without doubt draw this conclusion-that Nadia could not have been exposed to the dangers of

Ivan Ogareff might have said that During the two following days the catastrophe. that day the garrison and population of the battles of Kalyvan, of that the government of the czar had All the measures which were required been altogether taken by surprise by Degreen was not at first lavish the invasion; that the rising had been fore threatened were taken.

minds of the defenders of Ir. of the line of the Obi when the news been strengthened by their orders. The He seened to answer only when reached Moscow, and finally that noth- picked corps of Wassill Feodor occumany questions were put to ing was ready in the Russian provinces pied the north of the town, but with of them as though with regret, to throw into Siberia troops sufficient the injunction to march at once to

Afterward. Ivan Ogareff, entirely ing. The right bank of the Angara was at blow it ep rather than sur free in his movements, began to study protected by the only artillery at their Irkutsk, the state of its fortifications, disposal. detenders of Irkutsk could their weak points, in order eventually With these measures taken in time, incoursed Ivan Ogaver to make use of those observations if thanks to the opportune recommenda-But any circumstance should prevent the tions of Ivan Ogaref, there was every construction of his treason. He de Fewer to hope that the prepared attack

tention than ever. Before twenty-four hours the capital of In the camp of the Augara there was

castern Siberia ought to be in the hands of the emir and the grand duke in the plenty of agitation, as was proved by power of Ivan Ogareff. During all that the lights constantly flitting about. At day an unusual movement was taking a verst up above, as also down below place in the camp of the Angara. From the point where the fortification slopes the windows of the pulace and from the down to the river, there was a dult houses of the right bank one could see distinctly that important preparations tars were on foot, waiting for some were being made on the opposite signal. Again an hour passed by. heights.

Nothing new. Numerous Tartar detachments were Two o'clock in the morning was about seen moving toward the camp and thus to strike from the clock tower of the hourly re-enforcing the troops of the cathedral of Irkutsk and no movement emir. This was the preparation for had taken place to disclose the hostile the diversion which had been agreed intentions of the besiegers. The grand upon, and it was being made in the duke and his officers began to ask most ostentatious manner. Moreover, themselves if they had not been led Ivan Ogareff did not conceal from the into error, if it had really entered into ; grand duke that some attack was to be the plan of the Tartars to attempt to

feared on that side. He knew, he said, surprise the town. that an assault would be made at the | The preceding nights had not by any two extremities of the town along the means been so calm. Firing had been river, and he counseled the grand duke kept up from the advanced posts, and to re-enforce those two points more di- shells had hissed through the air, and this time there was nothing of the kind. rectly menneed.

The preparations that had been no- The grand duke, General Voranzoff, ticed, coming to the support of Ivan their aids-de-camp, waited therefore, herself unexpectedly face to face with Ogaref's recommendations, it was nec- ready to give their orders according to essary to take some account of them. the circumstances. Thus after a council of war which was It has been stated that Ivan Ogareff

held at the palace orders were given to occupied a room in the palace. It was concentrate the defense on the right a pretty large room, situated on the bank of the Angara and at the two ex- ground floor, and its windows opened tremities of the town, where the forti- out upon a side terrace. One need only fied terraces rested on the river. step a few paces on this terrace to This was precisely what Ivan Oga- overlook the course of the Angara. A reff wished. He evidently did not reck - profound darkness reigned in that on that the Bolchaia gate would re- room. Ivan Ogareff, standing near a main without defenders, but they would window, was waiting for the hour of be there only in a small number. Be action to arrive. Evidently the signal sides, lyan Ogarell was about to give could only come from him. Once this -dia, but the young girl, with a knife in to the diversion such importance that signal was given, when most of the de her hand, placed her back to the wall the grand duke would be obliged to op- fenders of Irkutsk should have been pose it with all his disposable forces. called to the points openly attacked. And indeed an incident of an excep- his plan was to leave the palace and tionable gravity, devised by Ivan Oga- to go and accomplish his work. He reff, was to powerfully aid in the ac- waited then in the dark, like a tiger

complishment of his projects. For even ready to spring upon its prey. if Irkutsk had not been attacked at Meanwhile, some minutes before, 2 the czar was like a tie which an invasion and that she was still, in points distant from the Bolchaia gate o'clock, the grand duke asked that Mi-

> that incident would have sufficed to he could give to Ivan Ogareff-shouad draw the chief body of the defenders be brought to him. An aid-de-camp to the place where Ivan Ogareff wish- 'came to his room, the door of which ed precisely to bring them. It would was closed. He called him. Ivan Ogacause at the same time a most terrible reff. motionless near the window and

> All the chances were then that the care not to answer. The grand duke was then informed that the courier of the czar was not at that moment in the tars who were waiting under the thick palace. cover of the forest on the east. During

ment that action had been agreed on with the Tartars, who were ready for entered by the door which had been the assault. Ivan Ogareff opened the left open. window of his room and placed himself

Below him in the shade flowed the waters of the Angara, which roared as they broke against the piles of the buttresses.

der, which he threw into the river. It was by the order of Ivan Ogareff that torrents of mineral oil had been cast of naphtha had been discovered above

his goal. He was at Irkutsk. palace of the governor!" said he to Na dia. In less than ten minutes afterward both arrived at the entrance to that palace, the massive stone walls of which were being licked by the long flames from the Angara, without, how murmur, which proved that the Tar-, ever, their being able to set the struc ture on fire. Beyond, the houses on the bank were all in flames.

> Michael Strogoff and Nadia entered without difficulty into that palace. which was open for all. In the midst of the general confusion no one noticed them, although their clothes were dripping wet. A crowd of officers came for orders, and soldiers running to execute them blocked up the grand salon on the ground floor.

There Michael Strogoff and the young girl, in the midst of so great a crowd. found themselves separated from each other. Nadia, distracted, ran along the lower rooms, called her campanion and asked to be led before the grand duke. A door leading into a room that was inundated with light opened itself before her. She entered, and she found him whom she had seen at Ichim. whom she had seen at Tomsk, in the presence of that man whose cursed hand an instant later would have deliv ered up the city.

"Ivan Ogareff!" eried she.

On hearing his name pronounced the miserable wretch trembled. His true name being once known, all his plans would be ruined. He had only one thing to do-to kill the being, whoever it might be, who had just pronounced

resolved to defend herself. "Ivan Ogareff" cried again Nædia knowing well that detested name would bring succor to her.

"Ah, you shall be silent?" said the traitor.

"Ivan Ogareff!" cried a third time the intrepid young girl in a voice whose hate had increased tenfold the force. Drunk with fury, Ivan Ogareff drew a dagger from his belt, rushed upon Nadia and forced her back into a coruer of the room. It was all over with her when the wretch, suddenly knock ed down by a tremendous blow, rolled

"Michael!" cried Nadia.

It was Michael Strogoff, Michael Strogoff had heard the appeal of Nadia Guided by her voice, he had arrived at the room of Ivan Ogareff, and he had

"Fear nothing, Nadia," he said as he placed himself between her and Ivan Ogareff.

"Ah," screamed the young girl, "tak care, brother! The traitor is armed! He can see well!"

Ivan Ogareff had risen, and, believ ing that he had the advantage over a blind man, he threw himself upon Michael Strogoff. But with one hand Mi chael seized the arm of him who could see well and with the other, turning on the surface of the Angara. Springs aside his weapon, he threw him a sec ond time to the ground.

"Your highness," answered Michael Strogoff, "ask me rather the name of the man stretched at your feet."

"That man I have recognized. He is a servant of my brother. He is the czar's courier."

"That man, your highness, is not a courier from the czar. He is Ivan Ogareff."

"Ivan Ogareff?" eried the grand duke. "Yes: Ivan the traitor." "But you-who are you?" "Michael Strogoff."

(To be continued.)

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and along the right bank of the river chael Strogoff-it was the only name

invisible in the darkness, took good

Two o'clock struck. It was the mo-

to repel an attack on points never beat the north angle of the side terrace. The grand duke and General Voran-

Ivan Ogareff drew a flint from hispocket and lit with it a piece of cotton where the danger should be most presswool impregnated with priming pow-

to the ground.

