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A Cat's Paw

Or, The Maid of the Mill

CHAPTER XXIV.

And it was not yet dinner-time! The whole thing had been done in less than an hour and a quarter! He was at his wits' end, no doubt. He had never before experienced anything like such "a facer" as this. And the worst part of it was that he must go back and tell Fanny the truth—tell her they had not a shilling left—tell her that unless she happened to find some loose change in her pocket, they could not even pay for their dinner at the table d'hote. And yet will it be believed that a single drop could sweeten the whole of this bitter cup?—the mere chance, the possibility of seeing and speaking to Norah just once again!

He sought her in vain along the perron, up and down the terraces, round and round the gardens. Scores of handsome, well-dressed women were strolling and loitering about, but Mrs. Vandeleur had gone home and was nowhere to be seen. This dissapointment vexed him far more than his losses. He even found himself wondering with the wonder of some one else, as it seems to a man under strong excitement, that he should accept ruin so calmly, that everything real and tangible should thus count as nothing compared to a lost, hopeless, impossible love!

It was an ill-omened frame of mind in which to return home and consult his wife on what they should do next. No wonder the German servant he met in the passage, looking after him, shook her flaxen head, scared by the pale face and impatient gestures of the English Herr, usually so bright, and cordial, and kind. No wonder Fanny, still radiant from Tourbillon's undeclared admiration, felt a presentiment of what was coming when Gerard entered their sitting room with a bounce, and threw himself morosely, still gloved and hatted, into an armchair.

"That d——d Frenchman's been here, again!" was the remark with which he opened the conversation. "The place smells like a hair-dresser's shop!"

It was a vanity of Tourbillon's to affect some sweet and rare perfume of which the fragrance remained long after he had departed. Music, flowers, song, scent, and sentiment—all these were weapons of which he made judicious use at the proper time.

"The Count has been here," answered Fanny, preparing for battle. "You needn't swear, Gerard, all the same."

"I beg your pardon," he replied, bitterly. "You never were used to coarse language—never heard it, I should think, till you married me. It don't much matter now. You must be told the truth, and there's no time to pick and choose words, when the whole game is up!"

She was going to retort angrily, but something in his face stopped her.

"What truth?—what game?" said she, with clasped hands and anxious eyes. "What is it, Gerard? Tell me, dear. You're ill, I'm sure—or—or, you've lost more that you can pay?"

"A man can't well do that here!" he answered, with a grim smile. "Ready money seems to be the word with these foreigners; when you've got it, When you haven't, it's go to the devil whichever way you like, only don't be long about it! That's what I had best do, Fan. Look you here. It has come at last, and I haven't a shilling left in the world."

He hardened his face to meet the reproaches he expected, standing up and squaring his shoulders, with his hands in his pockets. It put him out of his calculations altogether, that she should run to him, and throw her arms round his neck.

"I don't care," she sobbed, forgetting all her lady's language and good grammar. "I don't care—I don't care no more nor nothing! Never heed it, deary,—never fear! I'll work my fingers for you to the bone. I will! Only you'll be my own, won't you? My own lad, as you've never been afore."

He was touched, softened. He looked down into her eyes with tears in his own. But to be thus taken possession of, while Norah was not two hundred yards off—and in such language, too! It grated horribly. I believe if she had spoken good English, and left out the appropriation clause altogether, she might on this occasion have conquered once for all.

"It needn't be quite so bad as that," said he, putting her away from him gently and tenderly enough. "If I could get back to England, something surely might be done. But how to clear out from here! How to pay for the lodgings and be allowed to leave the country, that is what puzzles me! Oh! what a fool I have been all through!"

That last sentence changed the whole current of her feelings. He had not met her as she wished. Her heart was getting sore again, and hardening every moment. She took her bonnet (such a sweet little bonnet, with one red rose at the side!) out of its drawer, and began to tie it on with trembling fingers, opposite the glass.

"You have been a fool, Gerard," she muttered. "Never a bigger fool than to-day! Ah! you've lost a deal more than money or money's worth, only you don't know it!" Then she turned on him with a fixed, resolute face, and said quite calmly—

"I'm going out for half an hour, Mr. Ainslie. I think, perhaps, I can be of service to you. Please hand me that parasol."

"Where are you going?" he asked, carelessly; "isn't it near dinner-time?"

She smiled—a hard, pitiless smile, that seemed to spare neither herself nor him.

"I am going to get you what you want," she answered. "I can't promise, but I fancy I can bring you back the best part of a hundred pounds."

"You are going to ask your Frenchman for it, I suppose," said he with a sneer. "Mrs. Ainslie, I've stood a good deal, but I will not stand that."

The hard smile deepened on her face.

"I am not going to ask my Frenchman, as you call him, for a shilling!" was her reply. "When the time comes perhaps his answer to such a request will be a kinder one than I've ever had from you!" and looking straight in his face while she delivered this parting shot, the miller's daughter sailed out of the room like a queen.

Women certainly make themselves acquainted far more rapidly than men with the details of "the world they live in." How could Fanny have learned that the Vandeleurs were at Homburg? How could she be sure of meeting Mrs. Vandeleur on her way from the Louisen-Brunnen at this particular hour? Sawdor had certainly transferred his patient to Von Saufen-Kelch, and Von Suafen-Kelch's directions was to drink a glass of this sparkling mineral fasting, walk gently for half an hour, and then—drink another! But how could Mrs. Ainslie tell that Norah would so scrupulously follow the honest German's simple prescription? Whatever might be the basis of Fanny's calculations, they were so correct that in less than ten minutes she met the very person she wanted within twenty paces of the spring.

There was no mistaking that lithe, undulating figure at any distance off. We must be allowed a sporting simile sometimes—Mrs. Vandeleur looked like a racehorse amongst hacks in every company she frequented, in none more than when surrounded by the elite of a London drawing-room. Now, as she was coming up the gravelled pathway, Fanny could not but acknowledge the grace of that tall, slender figure, with its gliding, snake-like ease of movement; the charm of that small, well-poised head, with its delicate temples, its golden chestnut hair, its pale, chiselled features, and deep, dark, melancholy eyes.

As the women met each other, face to face, Mrs. Ainslie had the advantage of being prepared for the encounter; Norah, on the contrary, was exceedingly startled and disturbed.

She had not seen Fanny since their well-remembered interview in the Rectory garden. She had thought of her indeed very often, and always with mingled feelings not devoid of that tender, though painful interest, which a woman's heart can still take in any object, even a successful rival, connected with the man she must no longer love. Being a well-conducted person, in a certain position, Mrs. Vandeleur's better judgment should of course have decided on keeping such an adventuress as Fanny at a distance, but Norah's character possessed a little Bohemian tinge of its own. She was not without sympathy for a recklessness prompted by affection, of which she felt herself quite capable under similar temptation. Though she hated Fanny for running away with the man they both loved, it was with an honest, open hatred that did not prevent admiratin for her daring, even something akin to respect for her success.

Altogether, if time had been given for consideration, she would probably have determined on meeting Mrs. Ainslie with the cold, formal greeting of a distant acquaintance; but time was not given, for the latter came on her almost too quickly for recognition, and with considerable tact under the circumstances plunged at once in medias res.

"Oh! Miss Welby, Miss Welby!" said Fanny in a broken voice, and seizing Norah's hands in her own, "I ask your pardon indeed, for I should say Mrs. Vandeleur, but things are so changed now with you and me. And we're ruined! — we are! We haven't a penny to bless ourselves left, and never a friend in this foreign country but yourself, Miss Welby,—I mean Mrs. Vandeleur; and if you won't help us, I'm sure I don't know what to do no more than a child—I don't! I don't!"

"Ruined!" repeated Norah, shocked, and, it must be admitted, utterly taken aback by so unexpected an ebullition. "Ruined, Fanny!" (she could not quite bring herself ta say Mrs. Ainslie). "My good girl, what do you mean? Has anything happened to your husband?" (Here her voice faltered a little.) "Is it sorrow, or sickness, or what is it? Of course, I'll help you, if I can."

Fanny carried the shapely, well-gloved hand she held up to her lips. Impulsive, impressionable, a natural actress, she threw herself unreservedly into the sentiment of the moment, and if such a paradox is admissible, could be sincere even in her duplicity.

"I knew you would," she murmured, her fine eyes filling with real tears; "I knew you would. I never'll forgotten what a kind heart you always had. It's money we want, Mrs. Vandeleur; money to take us back to England. We haven't so much as a florin left to get us a dinner!"

The tears had come to Norah's blue eyes, too, and for a moment Fanny's heart smote her to meet so kindly a sympathy; but it hardened again directly with the jealousy that survives in such hearts, long after love is dead, for Norah exclaimed all unconsciously—

"You don't mean that Gerard—that Mr. Ainslie is starving! Gracious heavens! and I to know nothing of it! You mustn't stay a minute! You must go to him directly. Tell me at once. How much money do you want?"

Fanny reflected. "A hundred pounds," said she, "would take us to England and set us up again. At least, would put us in the way of getting a livelihood."

"A hundred pounds only!" echoed Norah, with that glorious contempt for a hundred pounds entertained by every woman who does not know what it is to live on her own resources, and by a good many who do. "You shall have it directly. Come with me this instant. The idea of poor Gerard having no dinner for want of a hundred pounds!"

She had forgotten all about his folly, his inconstancy, and even his wife, though the latter was walking by her side; forgotten everything but that her Gerard, whom she used so to love, was starving, and she could help him! But could she help him? The doubt came on her like the shock of a shower-bath. Mrs. Vandeleur's stock of ready-money was usually at a low ebb; in fact, she seldom wanted any. The servants always had change, and Mr. Vandeleur paid all her bills, to do him justice, without a murmur, though they were of no trifling amount, Norah being inclined to carelessness on such matters,—so that really she seldom found occasion to put her hand in her pocket. To-day she knew she had one florin in a ridiculous little porte-monnaie she insisted on carrying about, because she had given its fellow to the girl at the well. This was the whole of her capital. She remembered there was neither kreutzer, nor groschen, nor sou, nor halfpenny, nor any denomination of coin, foreign or British in the jewel-case at home. Stay! The jewel case! Might not jewels help her out here, as effectually as gold? She glanced down to her shapely arm; at its wrist dangled a bracelet, in which were set two or three precious stones, of undoubted value—a trinket, not in the best taste, but worth a good deal of money: one of Vandeleur's many gifts since her marriage. Surely, this was the very thing.

"In here, Fanny!" she exclaimed, hurrying her companion into a flashy little shop, or rather stall, displaying beads, crystals, drinking-cups, views of the Taunus, rubbish for all tastes, and cheap jewellery of every description.

In a moment her bracelet was dashed on the counter, and under inspection by a German Jew, with a dim gold ring on a dirty forefinger, who shook his head depreciatingly, of course, as he would have shaken it by instinct if requested to advance a hundred florins on the Koh-i-noor diamond.

It was no novelty to this cautious speculator thus to examine feminine personalities. Everybody in Homburg passed his shop five or six times a day, and he was in the hourly habit of pricing all kinds of articles at one-third of their market-value, and even giving for them as much as half. A kind little man, too, in manner, and a friendly, notwithstanding his faith, his profession, and his grimy hands.

Mrs. Vandeleur was always a little impetuous. "There!" said she in her native language—"take that; the stones are real, and it's good gold. Give me a hundred pounds sterling for it—and be quick."

He spoke English, of course, in his own way, as he spoke half-a-dozen European tongues. Poising the bracelet in his hand, he looked blandly into Norah's face, and observed—

"A hundred gulden, honorable lady—a hundred gulden (mintz); or you shall have your English money at 11 48, the rate of exchange this morning in Frankfort, and—and——," observing the cloud on his customer's brow, "anything else you like out of my shop, for an andenken, honorable lady. There is bric-a-brac and French clocks, and ver' goot Turkish shawls behind there, and slippers, and amber, und so weiter, und so weiter," bowing lower and looking more persuasive with every fresh enumeration.

"One hundred pounds!" repeated Norah, shutting her lips tight, as was her habit when very much in earnest. "It's worth more than two, I know. Take it, or leave it! There's another shop three doors lower down."

"Fifty, honorable lady. Sixty—seventy!" expostulated the buyer, increasing his bid every time he looked at Mrs. Vandeleur's unyielding face. "Eighty and five! Well, well, to favor a gracious and honorable lady, let us say a hundred, and ten guldees thrown back. Not a florin! Not a kreutzer! Ah! he it so. Bot I sall gain nozing, gar nichts, ven I send him to Frankfort to be sold;" and the old fellow counted out the money in French and German paper with an admirable assumption of combining the courtesy due to a lady with the satisfaction of performing a charitable action.

Norah crumpled it all up together and left the shop, scarce deigning to return a nod for the many bows and entreaties for her future custom, with which the little man ushered her out.

No sooner was she in the street, than she pushed the packet into Mrs. Ainslie's hands. "Take it, Fanny," she said, "and welcome. Heartily welcome! "Only," and here her eyes looked wild, and her voice came as if she were choking, "whatever happens, don't—don't tell him that it comes from me?"

They were close to her own door, and dropping her veil over her face, she ran in without another word. Mr. Vandeleur had got tired of waiting, and gone off to dinner. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that Norah would go at once to her own room and soothe her feelings with the refreshment of "a good cry."

(To be continued.)

LEADING MARKETS.

The Ruling Prices in Live Stock and Breadstuffs.

BREADSTUFFS.

Toronto, Feb. 16.—Wheat— The market is very firm, with buyers at 88c for No. 2 red and white east and middle freights; some holders are asking 90c Goose is steady at 75c to 76c for No. 2 east Spring is firmer; No. 1 hard, 94½c for No. 1 northern, 91½c for No. 2 northern and 82½c for No. 3 northern at Georgian Bay ports, and 6c more grinding in transit.

Flour—Is scarce and very firm. Local exporters quote $3.25 for 90 per cent. patents in their bags east or middle freights, but could not get any at that price, and millers, would probably not accept less than $3.35 at least. It is said that with wheat at 88c the flour could not be sold at any sort of a fair profit for less than $3.50 without covering. Manitoba flour is firm at $4.80 to $4.90 for cars of Hungarian patents $4.50 to $4.60 for second patents and $4.40 to $4.50 for strong bakers', bags included, on the track Toronto.

Millfeed—Is firm at $17 to $17.50 for cars of shorts and $16 for bran in bulk east or west. Manitoba millfeed is firm at $21 for cars of shorts and $19 for bran, sacks included, Toronto freights.

Barley—Is steady. No. 2 sold today at 43c and 44c low freights. No. 3 extra is quoted at 42c and No. 3 at 40c east or west.

Buckwheat—Is firmer at 49c for No. 2 east or west.

Rye—Is firmer at 55c for No. 2 east or west.

Corn—Is steady for Canadian and firmer for American. Cars of Canada mixed are quoted at 37½c and yellow at 38c west. American is quoted at 33½c to 54c for No. 2 yellow, 52½c to 53c for No. 3 yellow and 51½c to 52c for No. 3 mixed in car lots on the track Toronto.

Oats—Are firm at 32½c for No. 1 white and 32c for No. 2 white east; No. 2 white are quoted at 32½c middle freights.

Rolled Oats—Are firm at $4.10 for cars of bags and $4.35 for barrels on the track Toronto, and 40c more for broken lots.

Peas—Are steady with sales to-day at 63c for No. 2 west and 64c east, both lines.

COUNTRY PRODUCE.

Butter—Receipts continue fairly large, but the demand is active and quotations all round are unchanged. Creamery, prints .....20c to 22c
do solids 15½c 20c
Dairy lb. rolls, choice 15c 17c
do large rolls 15c 16c
do tubs, good to choice...15c 17c
do medium 13c 14c
do poor 10c 12c

Cheese—Quotations are unchanged at the recent decline of ½c per pound Twins are quoted at 11½c and large at 10½c.

Eggs—Arrivals of new laid continue very light. Quotations are steady to firm at 35c for new laid and 32c to 33c for fresh gathered, cold-storage and limed.

Potatoes—There are few cars coming forward and the market has a firm tone. Quotations are unchanged at 80c for cars on track here. Potatoes out of store are held at 95c to $1.

Poultry—There is little doing in any line. The bulk of the demand is for chickens, receipts of which are very light. Chickens are quoted at 14c to 15c, old fowl at 6c to 7c and turkeys at 14c to 15c.

Seeds.—The local demand continues light and trade is quiet. Quotations for outside points are unchanged as follows:—Red clover, $5.25 to $5.75 for ordinary grades and $6 to $6.35 for choice to fine, alsike at $4.25 to $6, and timothy at $1.15 to $1.50, and flail-thrashed at $1.75 to $2, all per bushel.

Dressed Hogs—Receipts of cars here are still light. Quotations are unchanged at $6 per cwt. for light and $5.75 for heavies.

Baled Hay—There is plenty of hay in the country but little of it is coming forward yet and the market keeps steady at $9 per ton for car lots on track here.

Baled Straw—Receipts are light and the demand is fair. Car lots on track here are quoted unchanged at $5 to $5.50 per ton

MONTREAL MARKETS.

Montreal, Feb. 16.—Grain—Owing to the continued severe storm, the railways are unable to keep their freight moving, and farmers are unable to deliver it. Oats have now been on the way about a month, other lots being more fortunate. No. 2 oats, Montreal inspection, are quoted firm at 37½c to 38c for car lots in store for local account, the demand being reported fair. No. 3 are quoted at a spread of ½c to 1c below. No. 2 oats, low freights west, for export, 31c; No. 2 peas, 64c; rye, 52c; No. 2 barley, 43½c; No. 3 extra barley, 42½c; No. 3, 41½c.

Flour—Quotations given out by the large Manitoba millers are 15c apart. Patents range from $4.90 to $5; strong bakers', $4.60 to $4.70; winter wheat patents, $4.25 to $4.35; straight rollers, $3.90 to $4; extras, $3.50 to $3.65; straight rollers, in bags, $1.80 to $1.90, and extra, in bags, $1.65 to $1.75.

Feed—One of the large millers advanced prices on bran yesterday to $19. Manitoba bran, in bags, $18 to $19; shorts, $20 to $21 per ton; Ontario bran, in bulk, $17 to $17.50; shorts, $19.50 to $20; mouille, $26 to $27 per ton, as to quality.

Rolled Oats—The association price seems to be in force, $2.15 being asked for bags and $4.40 for brls on track.

Hay—Owing to bad weather, deliveries are light, and prices are temporarily firmer. We quote:—No. 1, $9 to $10; No. 2, $8 to $8.50; clover, mixed, $7 to $7.50; clover, $6.50 to $7 per ton in car lots.

Cornmeal—Prices are steady at $1.65 to $1.75 a bag.

Beans—Choice primes, $1.45 per bush.; $1.40 in car lots.

Provisions.—Heavy Canada short cut pork, $18 to $18.50; light short cut, $17.50 to $18; American short cut clear, $17 to $17.50; American fat backs, $18 to $18.50; compound lard, 8c; Canadian lard, 8½c to 9c; kettle rendered, 10½c; hams, 11½c to 13c; bacon, 14c; fresh killed abattoir hogs, $7.50; country dressed hogs, $6.75 to $7; light hogs, $5.25 to $5.40.

Eggs—New laid, 38c to 40c; candled selected, 32c to 34c; limed, 28c to 30c; refrigerator, 28c to 30c.

Butter—Winter creamery, 19½c to 20c; full grass, 21c; western dairy 15c to 15½c; rolls, 16c to 16½c.

Cheese—Ontario 11c to 11½c; township, 10½c to 10½c.

Potatoes—Per 90-lb. bag, 75c; 60c to 65c in car lots.

Poultry—Turkeys, 13c to 14s; ducks, 12c to 13c; chickens, 12c; fowls, 8c to 9c; geese, 9c to 10c.

BUFFALO GRAIN MARKETS.

Buffalo, Feb. 16.—Wheat, spring, firm; No. 1 northern Chicago, c.i.f., $1; winter nominal. Corn weak; No. 2 yellow, 52c; No. 2 corn, 50½c to 50¾c. Oats steady; No. 2 white, 48½c; No. 2 mixed, 46½c. Barley, 55c to 65c asked for western in store. Rye, no offerings.

LIVE STOCK MARKET.

Toronto, Feb. 16.—Deliveries of cattle at the Western Market were light to-day, and buying was active on limited offerings in the morning. The receipts were 40 cars, containing 653 cattle, 539 sheep and lambs, 1,166 hogs and 26 calves.

The best butchers' were sold at firm prices. A load of choice animals brought $4.55 per cwt. The demand was fair for all the choicest classes, but medium and lower descriptions were quiet. Butchers' cows did not seem to be much wanted, but their prices kept about steady.

Owing to the snow blockades on the railway lines the call from the country for feeds and stockers was light, and though the offerings were limited sales were not brisk. The prices were nominal at current quotations.

There was no new feature in the sheep trade to report. The arrivals, though light, were about equal to the demand. Prices continued steady at Tuesday's levels.

Veal calves were wanted, and sales in them were brisk. Values held firm.

Good butchers' were in fair demand while medium and lower grades were quiet and weak. Quotations follow:—Good loads, $4 to $4.35; fair to good, $3.70 to $4.10; common to fair, $3 to $3.50, and cows, $2.60 to $3.20 per cwt.

The bull trade was quiet. We quote:— Heavy bulls, $3.60 to $4.10; feeding bulls, $3.25 to $3.50, and light bulls, $2.50 up.

Butchers' and export cows were still in light demand. We quote:—Export cows, $3.20 to $3.50; butchers' cows, $2.75 to $3.10; and canners, $2.25 up.

No change took place in the prices of sheep. Export ewes, $3.75 to $4; export bucks, $3 to $3.25; butchers' sheep, $3.50 to $4; grain-fed lambs, $5 to $5.50; barn-yard lambs, $4.50 to $5 per cwt. Calves were quoted at $2 to $10 each, and 4 to 6c per lb.

Milch cows continued in fair demand. We quote:—$25 to $50 each.

Hogs were unchanged. We quote as follows:—Selects, 160 to 200 lbs. of prime bacon quality, off cars, Toronto, $4.75; fats and lights, $4.50; sows, $3 to $3.50; stags, $2.50 to $3 per cwt.

AMONG CANNIBALS.

British Captgin Entertains [illegible] on Roast Po[illegible]

A despatch f[illegible] patches rece[illegible] ently from I[illegible] culars of th[illegible] of the British [illegible] Mary Hendry, [illegible] land commanded by Capt. Foote, from [illegible] Southern Nigeria, after having [illegible] several weeks trading on the A[illegible] coast. Capt. Foote states that [illegible] ing his stay on the coast he [illegible] tained at dinner King Ogby, [illegible] er of the Iakrimen, [illegible] Southern Nigeria. The [illegible] arch was much im[illegible] vessel, and while [illegible] pork enquired [illegible] meat! The King has over 1,000 slaves, numerous wives and a crowd of children.

When King Ogby was leaving the ship Capt. Foote asked him for a piece of tanned skin with which to make a pair of slippers, and the next day a slave came to the vessel with a parcel from the monarch. It contained the hide of a negro, from the neck to the waist, who had been killed by order of King Ogby to procure his skin! Capt. Foote added that he was informed that the tribesmen eat little else than human flesh.

INSURANCE RATES

Modern Conditions Have Increased Fire Risk

A despatch from Toronto says:—The Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association of Ontario are seriously considering the advisability of raising their rates in order to meet the increased hazard that modern conditions have created. At the Parliament Buildings on Thursday afternoon their annual convention opened. Representatives from thirty-four companies doing business in the province were present, and James McEwing, of Drayton, was in the chair.

The meeting was largely taken up with the reading of a series of papers showing how modern improvements had increased the danger of fire, and a debate took place as to the wisdom of appointing an influential committee to draft a new set of regulations and of recommending increased rates.

The average man wastes a lot of wind airing his views.

JAPANESE ARE FIGHTERS

Score Another Big Victory off Port Arthur.

A despatch from Chefoo says: News of Second Bombardment of Port Arthur was brought here by British Steamer Chefoo. The bombardment took place on Wednesday, and lasted nearly an hour. The Japanese shells killed and wounded a number of people and damaged houses on the hillsides. People are fleeing from Port Arthur and the Steamer Chefoo brought a large number of foreigners and others.

TRANSPORT BLOWN UP.

A report has been received at St. Petersburg from Viceroy Alexieff saying that the Russian torpedo boat transport Yenisein has been blown up as the result of accidentally striking a mine at Port Arthur. The Yenisein and Capt. Stepanoff, 3 officers and 91 men were lost.

FOUR KILLED, 54 WOUNDED.

The Japanese naval attache at Washington has received an official cablegram from Tokio to the effect that the total casualties of the Japanese at Port Arthur were four killed and 54 wounded. Not one of the ships was damaged to an extent that would injure its fighting power. The officers and crews of the Japanese are reported to have engaged in the action with the same calmness which would have characterized their conduct during ordinary naval manoeuvres.

RUSSIA SHELLS STEAMERS.

Baron Hayashi, the Japanese Minister at London, has received a despatch from Tokio announcing that on Feb. 11 two Japanese merchant steamers, the Nakanoura Maru and Zensho Maru, while on their way from Sakata to Otaru (on the island of Hokkaido), were surrounded and shelled by four Russian warships, presumably the Vladivostock squadron off the coast of Herunshi. The Nakanoura Maru was sunk but the Zensho Maru escaped and arrived safely in port.

WILL MOBILIZE TROOPS.

A Russian Imperial ukase, dated Feb. 10, was issued on Friday. It commands that all the troops in the military establishments in Siberian military districts be placed in readiness for war, that all the divisions in the Far Eastern Vi[illegible] Royalty be brought to wa[illegible] and that the army [illegible] in the Siberi[illegible] for active [illegible] are empo[illegible] necessary [illegible]

$5,000,[illegible]

The Russian [illegible] ed an appropriatio[illegible] from the City of St [illegible] the merchants of [illegible] mised to give $[illegible] City of Moscow [illegible] there have co[illegible] it is ex[illegible] available [illegible] reac[illegible],000. [illegible] the officials in th[illegible] promised to co[illegible] per cent [illegible] thou[illegible]

ment was watched by thousands of persons on shore, who had gathered in anticipation of a collision. The American gunboat Vicksburg, the British cruiser Talbot, the French cruiser Pascal, and the Italian cruiser Elba also witnessed the engagement and saluted the victorious flag. The Korietz was utterly overmatched. The broadsides from the Japanese vessels raked her continuously until she sank. Many of her crew were killed by shells or drowned. Those of the survivors who swam ashore were captured by Japanese soldiers.

As the cruiser Variag was steaming out of the harbor she was met by a hail of shells, and her mast speedily fell. Her crew fought with desperate energy for several hours. According to one report, after she had taken refuge among the Polynesian Islands, her captain ordered the crew to save themselves, and then himself blew up his ship.

FRANCE GROWING ANGRIER.

A despatch from Paris says: The feeling against the Japanese is growing here. Angry indignation is expressed at what is described as their brutal violation of the law recognized by civilized States in attacking the Russians without a formal declaration of war. Such a treacherous act, it is declared, proclaims the barbarism of the Japanese. The Nationalist press is particularly noisy and violent. The bulk of other press opinion is naturally for Russia. The Journal des Debats, discussing the proposal of Secretary of State Hay, sees in it an intention to side directly with Japan by raising the Manchurian question. It says that if the United States does not desire more than the maintenance of the open door she ought to be satisfied with the assurances Russia has given to all the powers. Russia will simply refer the United States to her former statement. The Journal advises the United States to abstain from a step that is destined to end in her own confusion.

RUSSIA'S ARTILLERY.

A despatch from London says: According to a despatch mailed from St. Petersburg Russia comm[illegible]

[illegible] velo[illegible]ments will c[illegible] the naval blows. [illegible] quiet reserve of a[illegible] impressive. There [illegible] termin[illegible] tion, which [illegible] not demonstrativ[illegible] The Japanese have entered the s[illegible] gle with clenched teeth.

BOXERS TO AID [illegible]

There is great anxiety in oil[illegible] circles at Vienna over despat[illegible] from Pekin reporting that China [illegible] tends to send 200,000 Boxers to Manchuria to destroy the railroad.

40,000 MORE RESERVISTS.

A despatch to the London Times from St. Petersburg says that Russia will mobilize 40,000 more [illegible] servists. Nine thousand men and 22,900 tons of stores are at Sebastopol awaiting shipment to the Far East. The officials of the Ministry and Marine, particularly Grand Duke Alexander, are greatly annoyed that the Admiral at Port Arthur allowed himself to be surprised. Admiral Alexieff, Viceroy of the Far East, received a share of the re[illegible]

RUSSIANS FOUGHT [illegible]

The newspapers at Tok[illegible] are printing a great variety of war stories, none of which has official corroboration. Most of them are apparently based on belated versions of the fighting at Port Arthur, although the facts are treated as though they were new. Later accounts of the engagement with the Variag and Korietz at Chemulpo indicate that the Russians made a brave fight against an immensely superior force. The engage-

to ho[illegible] would los[illegible] of view, its [illegible] head of the I[illegible] be s[illegible]pped [illegible] to r[illegible]ke [illegible]

to go[illegible] refrained fo[illegible] ing the military [illegible] paign into the heart of [illegible] ritory."

CHINA MAY TAKE A H[illegible]

A Hong Kon[illegible] Gen. Yuan [illegible] Ch[illegible]

starved [illegible] ca[illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] to obtain [illegible] roses to raise the required [illegible] himself.

Gen. Ma has been ordered to Sha[illegible] Hai-Kwan to hold it against [illegible] occupation.

The Chinese Min[illegible] Wednesday that whi[illegible] pledged to strict neutrality, y[illegible] Japan has notable victories it may be difficult to keep the Chinese in hand.