The Canadian Champion

AND COUNTY OF HALTON INTELLIGENCER.

VOLUME 37. MILTON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1898. NO. 29

CANADIAN CHAMPION

—IS PUBLISHED—

EVERY THURSDAY MORNING,

At the Office of Publication,

MAIN ST., MILTON, ONT.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION: $1 a year in advance; if not so paid $2 will be charged.

TO SUBSCRIBERS—No paper will be stopped until all arrears are paid, except at the option of the proprietor. A post-office notice to discontinue is not sufficient.

ADVERTISING RATES.

SPACE	1 YR.	6 MO.	3 MO.	1 MO.
1 Column	$60 00	$35 00	$20 00	$7 00
½ Column	35 00	20 00	12 00	3 50
¼ Column	20 00	12 00	7 00	2 50
⅛ Column	12 00	7 00	4 00	1 50

Business Cards of ten lines or less $5 00 per annum. The number of lines to be reckoned by the space occupied, measured by a scale of solid nonpareil.

Advertisements without special instructions inserted till forbid, and charged accordingly.

Any Special Notice, the object of which is to promote the pecuniary benefit of any individual, company, institution, or fund, will be considered an advertisement, and charged accordingly.

Notices of births, deaths and marriages 25 cents each.

Transient advertisements ten cents per line, except those of lost, strayed, stolen, and wants which will be inserted at 50 cents for first insertion, and 25 cents for each subsequent insertion.

WM. PANTON,
Editor and Proprietor.

LEGAL.

D. DEWAR,
Issuer of Marriage Licenses.
OFFICE—Dewar's Block, cor. Main and Martin Street, Milton. Also agent for Sun Fire Insurance Company and The Sun Savings and Loan Company.

THOMAS. G. MATHESON,
County Crown Attorney, Barrister, Notary Public, Etc.
OFFICE—In Court House, Milton. 38

WILLIAM I. DICK
Barrister, Solicitor and Conveyancer,
MILTON, ONT
Office in the Town Hall.

G. E. McCRANEY,
Barrister, Solicitor, Notary Public.
OFFICE
Porter's Block (over P. O.), Milton, Ont.

VICTOR CHISHOLM,
Barrister, Solicitor, Etc., Notary Public.
MONEY TO LOAN AT LOWEST RATES.
OFFICE—Next door to Bank of Hamilton, Milton

J. W. ELLIOTT, B. A.,
Barrister, Etc., Notary Public.
MONEY TO LOAN.
OFFICE—In rooms occupied by Duncan Dewar Esq. (upstairs) Dewar's Block, Milton. 42

E. W. BOYD,
Barrister, Solicitor, Notary Conveyancer.
MONEY TO LOAN.
OFFICE—Booth's Block, Main St., Milton.
Office at Streetsville each Wednesday afternoon—Palace Bakery Block, Queen St. 19

LAIDLAW, KAPPELE & BICKNELL,
Barristers and Solicitors.
OFFICE—Over Imperial Bank, 34 Wellington St East Toronto. Entrance Exchange Alley.
WILLIAM LAIDLAW, Q. C. GEORGE KAPPELE
JAMES BICKNELL.

MEDICAL.

DRS. STUART & ANDERSON,
Physicians, Surgeons, Etc.
Dr. Stuart's Office at Residence, Opp. Town Hall.
Dr. Anderson's Office at Residence, Cor. Main and Court Sts.
12-ly MILTON, ONT.

DAVID D. WICKSON, M.D., C.M.
L.R.C., P. & S., Edinburgh.
L.F., P. & S., Glasgow.
OFFICE—Main st., one door west of Reformer Office.
RESIDENCE—Corner Main & Commercial sts., Milton, Ont. 22

VETERINARY.

JOHN R. CAMPBELL,
VETERINARY SURGEON,
Treats all classes of Domestic Animals.
Calls promptly attended to.
Office opposite the Thompson House, Main St., Milton.

DENTAL.

B. GOLLOP, L.D.S., D.D.S.,
DENTIST.
(Lately associated with Dr. Whaley, of Chicago.
Honor Graduate Toronto University.
OFFICE—Dewar's Block, upstairs.

T. T. HARRIS L.D.S.,
DENTIST, OAKVILLE.
Will visit Milton on the last Wednesday of each month.
OFFICE—Bennett House

BUTTER, EGGS AND POULTRY!
OUR SPECIALTIES.
Highest Price Obtained.
Returns Promptly Made.
References our shippers everywhere. Correspondence invited.
PARK, BLACKWELL CO., Ltd.
TORONTO. 3 mos

MUNYON'S CONVERTS

The People of Canada Are Satisfied and Convinced.

ALL WILL TESTIFY

That Munyon Has Kept Faith With The People and Made Good

HIS PROMISES

His Remedies are Becoming the Safeguard of the Home—The People Have Trusted and Have Not Been Deceived.

Mrs. D. Davis, Trenton, Ontario, Canada, says: "Mine has been a marvellous cure of eczema by Munyon's Remedies. When I began using these remedies I was covered from head to foot with scabs. I suffered the most intense agony from the irritation and pain. I felt so bad that I believed it impossible to ever get well I had used a number of remedies to effect a cure, but instead, I was getting worse I was in Grace hospital for three months, but they could not help me. I finally decided to try Munyon, and after using Munyon's Salve and other remedies I received immediate relief. The medicine seemed to help and cool the irritation. I am happy to say now that I have not a mark on my body and feel it is my duty to tell others of the wonderful cure which has been effected in my case. I have unbounded faith in Munyon's treatment and heartily recommend his remedies."

Munyon's Rheumatic Cure seldom fails to relieve in one to three hours and cures in a few days. Price 25c.
Munyon's Dyspepsia Cure positively cures all forms of indigestion and stomach troubles. Price 25c.
Munyon's Cold Cure prevents pneumonia and breaks up a cold in a few hours. Price 25c.
Munyon's Cough Cure stops coughs, night sweats, allays soreness and speedily heals the lungs. Price 25c.
Munyon's Kidney Cure speedily cures pains in the back, loins or groins, and all forms of kidney disease. Price 25c.
Munyon's Nerve Cure stops nervousness and builds up the system. Price 25c.
Munyon's Headache Cure stops headache in three minutes. Price 25c.
Munyon's Pile Ointment positively cures all forms of piles. Price 25c.
Munyon's Blood Cure eradicates all impurities of the blood. Price 25c.
Munyon's Female Remedies are a boon to all women.
Munyon's Catarrh Remedies never fail. The Catarrh Cure—price 25c.—eradicates the disease from the system, and the Catarrh Tablets—price 25c.—cleanse and heal the parts.
Munyon's Asthma Remedies relieve in three minutes and cure permanently. Price $1.
Munyon's Vitalizer, a great tonic and restorer of vital strength to weak people. $1.
A separate cure for each disease. At all druggists, mostly 25 cents a vial.
Personal letters to Prof. Munyon, 11 Albert street, Toronto, Ont., answered with free medical advice for any disease.

FRAZER & HENDERSON,
Licensed Auctioneers for the County of Halton.
Sales conducted promptly and economically. Valuators of all kinds of property.
J. A. FRAZER, Milton P. O. A. Q. HENDERSON, Omagh P. O.
N.B.—Communications to either address will receive prompt attention.

The Johnson-Williams Lumber Co.,
OAKVILLE, ONT.
Dealers in Lumber, Lath, Shingles, &c.
Painted Lumber a Specialty.
See sample at J. Somerville's factory, Milton

MILTON
PLANING MILL
Lumber, Lath, Shingles, Pickets, Cedar Posts, Etc.
JOHN SOMERVILLE
MILL STREET.

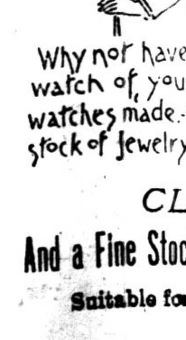
FRANKLIN HOUSE,
KING STREET, WEST,
HAMILTON. ONTARIO
The best of Wines, Liquors and Cigars Good stables. Attentive hostler. Rates, $1 per day.
1-1 S. COOK, Proprietor.

WANTED.
Industrious Men of Character.
THE LINSCOTT COMPANY, TORONTO.

WANTED—CANVASSERS.
"Queen Victoria: Her Life and Reign," has captured the British Empire. Extraordinary testimonials from the great men; send for copy free. Marquis of Lorne says: "The best popular Life of the Queen I have seen." Her Majesty sends a kind letter of appreciation. Selling by thousands; gives enthusiastic satisfaction. Canvassers make $15 to $40 weekly.
BRADLEY-GARRETSON COMPANY, (Limited) TORONTO.

If You Are Energetic and Strong,
If you are above foolish prejudice against canvassing for a good book, write and get my proposition. The information will cost nothing.
I have put hundreds of men in the way of making money; some of whom are now rich.
I can do good things for you, if you are honorable and will work hard.
T. S. LINSCOTT, Toronto.

Money to Loan.
Money loaned on first-class mortgage security.
G. E. McCRANEY,
19-1yr Barrister, Milton.

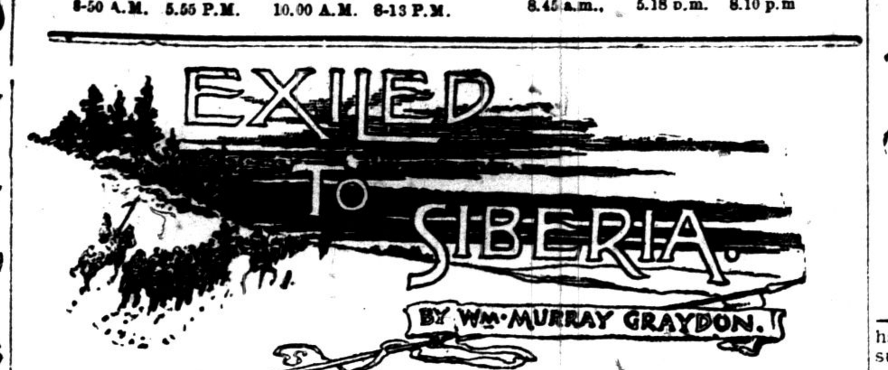

PARDON ME SIR, HAVE YOU THE TIME?
You surely do not want to go through life continually bothering somebody for the time o-day.
Why not have a 21 jeweled Elgin watch of your own—They are the best watches made—We have them, also a choice stock of Jewelry, Silverware,
CLOCKS,
And a Fine Stock of Fancy China Ware
Suitable for wedding presents.

We also carry a full line of
-FLATT WARE-
made by the celebrated
"ROGER BROS.—1847."
See that the above trade mark is stamped on every article. We sell our 1847 Rogers' Knife at $4.75 per dozen. All other goods sold in proportion.
For Watch and lock Repairing no better place will be found. Our charge is moderate and our guarantee always made good. Terms for repairing strictly cash.
E. MARCHAND,
JEWELLER, MILTON

Travellers' Guide.

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY (N. N. W. Division
GOING NORTH: 8-50 A.M. 5.55 P.M.
GOING SOUTH: 10.00 A.M. 8-13 P.M.

CANADA PACIFIC RAILWAY
GOING EAST: 6.48 a.m., 10.48 a.m. 7.06 p.m.
GOING WEST: 8.45 a.m., 5.18 p.m. 8.10 p.m.



COPYRIGHT, 1897, BY THE WOOLFALL PUBLISHING CO.

The young girl sprang across the rines and threw herself in front of Maurice.

"I forbid you to shoot!" she exclaimed, facing the soldiers. "Release this man, or you shall all be punished! And you," she added to Captain Daroman, "you shall pay dearly for this insult."

The commandant swore a frightful oath. "Take her away!" he shouted to his men. "Drag her to one side and finish this dog here."

Half a dozen Cossacks advanced toward the courageous girl, but she held her ground and met them with flashing eyes. In another instant they would have seized her roughly, but just then a clatter of hoofs was heard, and a young Cossack officer, mounted on a black horse, galloped up to the party.

He surveyed the scene for a moment. Then, flinging the lines to a soldier, he leaped from the saddle and approached the girl, doffing his cap respectfully as he did so.

"Miss Lora," he said, "your father, the colonel, has sent me in search of you. He feared you had strayed off and lost your way."

A revolving bombshell could not have caused greater consternation than did the quiet speech of this young officer. The soldiers lowered their rifles instantly, and the convicts began to whisper excitedly among themselves, and Captain Daroman's face assumed an expression that none who saw it can ever forget.

"You have come just in time," replied the maiden. "I have suffered insult at the hands of that man," pointing to the trembling commandant, "and this convict here, who saved me from the wretch, was about to be shot for his noble deed."

The officer turned sternly and inquiringly toward Captain Daroman, who now came unsteadily forward. "Sudekin, who is that girl?" he asked, in a husky voice. "I thought she belonged to the free command yonder."

"She is the daughter of Colonel Melikoff, the governor of the mines," replied the officer. "She went out for a walk this morning and wandered up here from the lower diggings. I was sent in search of her. It looks as though you were in a pretty bad scrape this time, Daroman."

The commandant grew still paler. "But tell me," he whispered, "can nothing be done to smooth matters over? Why, I didn't even know that Colonel Melikoff had a daughter."

"She just came on a visit from Irkutsk," replied Sudekin, coldly. "Everything rests with her, Daroman. Don't talk to me."

The commandant hesitated a second or two, and then, in a cringing manner that must have been bitter as gall to his proud spirit, approached the girl.

"Miss Melikoff," he began, humbly, but at the first word she indignantly moved to one side.

"Before you dare speak to me," she said, angrily, "release that brave man there."

The commandant gave the necessary orders, and then, while the soldiers were unbinding Maurice, he made an abject apology, and in the most piteous tones begged that his offence might be overlooked, and kept from reaching her father.

It was a strange scene, the savage Captain Daroman suing for mercy in the presence of his own soldiers, and of the convicts who had felt so often his iron rule.

The girl listened calmly to his appeal, and when he had finished she walked proudly away like an offended princess, not deigning to give him so much as a glance.

"Take me home, Lieutenant Sudekin," she said. "I have heard quite enough."

The lieutenant pointed across the plain. "A sleigh was ordered to follow me," he replied. "I see it coming now." The conveyance quickly reached the spot, with a merry ringing of bells.

Miss Lora darted a grateful glance at Maurice, and stepped in among the furs. The driver whipped up the horses, and the sleigh sped rapidly off, attended closely by Lieutenant Sudekin on his black charger.

Captain Daroman watched it until it was dim in the distance. Then, turning on Maurice one glance so venomous and malignant that the lad shuddered, he put spurs to his pony and galloped off without a word.

"Get in line there," cried the subofficer, harshly. The convicts instantly obeyed, the Cossacks surrounded them with shouldered rifles, and the interrupted march was resumed as calmly and monotonously as though the event just witnessed had never occurred.

Maurice, assisted by his two companions, staggered forward with the utmost difficulty. He was suffering from a violent reaction. He had bravely attacked the commandant, and faced the certainty of death without a tremor, but the sudden restoration to hope was too much for him.

The officer in command perceived his enfeebled condition, and feeling doubtful as to the bearing which the recent incident would have on the young convict, he wisely concluded to be on the safe side and act with leniency.

He gave Maurice a few drops of vodka from his own flask, and mounted him on a pony until the mines were reached. This treatment was speedily effective, and Maurice was able to work as usual with his fellow-prisoners, for the officer refused to extend his leniency any further. He was kept rigorously apart from Phil and Platoff, however, and put to work some distance away.

The rest of the day was not destined to pass uneventfully. During the noon period of rest an ominous incident occurred, and one from which Maurice drew an inference favourable to himself. Twenty mounted Cossacks rode up to the mines, headed by a middle-aged officer with dignified bearing, who sternly asked for Captain Daroman.

When told that the commandant had not accompanied the convicts to the mines, he appeared much concerned, and presently the whole party rode away at full speed.

Trudging home at sunset, three different squads of soldiers were encountered, and on reaching the settlement suppressed excitement was visible on the faces of all whom they met. Within the prison much whispering was going on among the convicts, and the new arrivals were speedily acquainted with a dozen different versions of what was indeed a startling tale.

The facts of the case, as gleaned from these different stories, which had entered the prison in some unaccountable manner, appeared to be as follows:

Captain Daroman, on leaving the convict gangs that morning, had returned in haste to the prison, changed his clothes in his own apartment, armed himself heavily, and then galloped away on a fresh horse, in what direction none observed.

Shortly after his departure a troop of soldiers arrived from the lower diggings with a warrant for his arrest. It was no secret that the commandant had sought safety in flight, and now half the force in barracks was scouring the country in pursuit.

Maurice was jubiliant as he sat on the bare platform, eating his frugal supper, with Phil and Platoff by his side. Their fellow-convicts had been crowding about them, eagerly discussing the momentous affair, and now at last they were comparatively by themselves.

"And how do you think this will affect me, Platoff?" asked Maurice. "Will it lighten my sentence, or is it even possible that I shall obtain a fair hearing from the gove'nor, and be permitted to tell him our story? I feel sure that I should convince him of the truth."

Platoff gravely shook his head.

"Don't be too hopeful, my friend," he replied. "There are complications in this affair, that you are unable to see. To me, with my knowledge and experience, they are only too plain. You have performed a brave deed, it is true, and protected from insult the daughter of Colonel Melikoff, but at the same time you have broken the severest of prison rules, and committed a flagrant crime, for which the penalty is death."

"And would not the one offset the other?" demanded Maurice, with indignation. "Would the circumstances count for nothing?"

"Colonel Melikoff is known as the most stern and rigid disciplinarian in all Siberia," answered Platoff, soberly. "I fear that he may insist on making your case an example to the other prisoners. You assaulted an officer—an unpardonable crime."

"Yes, and saved his daughter," asserted Maurice, hotly. "Can he overlook that?"

"He can overlook anything," said Platoff, grimly. "Listen! I can tell you what kind of a man Colonel Melikoff is in a few words. Do you remember in one of Victor Hugo's romances the gunner who allowed a huge cannon to tear loose from its fastenings on shipboard during a storm, and then, after a terrific combat, in which his life was jeopardized a hundred times, overturned the monster and saved his comrades?"

"Yes, I have read that," said Maurice.

"Very well," resumed Platoff. "The commander of that vessel first rewarded that man for his bravery, then shot him for his negligence. Colonel Melikoff is a second Marquis de Lautenac."

"But you don't think I'm in any danger of being shot?" asked Maurice, in a horrified whisper.

"No," said Platoff; "it's not that bad. You may know all to-morrow, and then it is possible that I shall have something to say to you."

Platoff refused to explain himself any further, and presently, in spite of his troubles, Maurice was sleeping soundly.

The morning verification was presided over by Lieutenant Sudekin, who, it seemed, had been appointed temporary commandant of the prison. Before starting for the mines it was whispered among the convicts that Captain Daroman had not been caught, and this rumour was presently verified, for the working gangs started out that morning in custody of less than half the usual guard of Cossacks, and the cordon of troops around the prison was correspondingly small. It was soon evident that the new commandant had no intention of dealing more leniently with the convicts than his predecessor. All that day the boys toiled hard under the watchful eyes of the overseers, and not the slightest conversation was allowed.

Two or three days passed thus, and still Maurice heard nothing from Colonel Melikoff, nor was the fugitive commandant recaptured.

"He's sure to be caught sooner or later," said Platoff. "It's only a question of time."

On the fifth day, however, many of the absent troops returned, and it began to look as though Captain Daroman had made good his escape, for the time at least.

"They have forgotten me," said Maurice one night, as he sat on his hard bed, thinking of the pretty, dark-eyed girl, who had passed like a vision across the wretched monotony of his life. "She believes me to be some low criminal, no doubt," he added, bitterly, to himself.

"No," said Platoff, glancing up from the cup of tea he was drinking. "Be assured Colonel Melikoff has not forgotten you. He never overlooks a crime against his rules and discipline of the prison, as you will know before long."

A week passed by—a week of heart-sickening toil and misery—and then Platoff's prediction came true, though not just in the way he had anticipated.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STOLEN INTERVIEW.

It was bitterly cold, and the snow was falling thickly, but weather counts for nothing at the mines of Kara, and the convicts, shivering in their thin garments, worked with feverish energy, hoping to put some warmth into their aching limbs and bodies.

Phil and Platoff were driving their picks into the hard stratum of clay and gravel, and Maurice, in company with half a dozen others, was wheeling the stiffened clods to a distance. Close by stood the watchful overseers, stamping their feet continually and clapping their arms together, while in the background, out of the snowy mist, loomed the soldiers, pacing to and fro in their heavy coats or grouped about the feeble fires, where the tea was warming for the noonday lunch.

With increasing regularity the long string of wheelbarrows continued to load and unload, and when midday came the weary toilers with the picks had uncovered a large surface of smooth and yellow sand.

... him to approach.

The overseer came forward and looked at it with evident satisfaction. "That is good work," he said, briefly. "To-day you may have 30 minutes' rest."

Some of the convicts cheered and flung their caps into the air. Even this insignificant privilege was something to be thankful for. Picks and barrows were tossed aside, and sitting down on stones and clods of earth the hungry men began to devour greedily the black bread and tea that were served out to them.

The Cossacks stacked their arms, with the exception of two or three sentinels, and gathered about the fires, rubbing their hands and stamping their feet.

Ten or fifteen yards from the spot where the convicts were grouped the brow of a rocky hill sloped to the river. It was barren and rugged, strewn with bowlders and a half dozen stunted birches. A few feet below the crest a spring of icy water poured out, and after falling in numerous cascades down the slope emptied into the Kara river. At this spring the prisoners were often allowed to drink, for the waters of the Kara were slightly brackish and, moreover, were usually muddy and tainted from the mining operations.

To-day but few of the men were thirsty. One or two climbed painfully up the slope, and filling their tin cups came back to their places. Maurice was sitting on an upturned wheelbarrow slowly eating his bread and looking wistfully at Phil and Platoff, who were some yards away, near the bank of the river. He turned his eyes toward the spring. The snow was falling thickly over the rocky crest of the hill, and suddenly against the gloomy whiteness of the sky he saw an arm thrust from the rocks. Thinking it only a delusion, he rubbed his eyes and looked again. No; he was not mistaken. It was a human arm, and it was beckoning him to approach. He watched it closely for a moment or two. Twice it vanished and then appeared again, and still it continued to motion him forward. A sudden thrill of hope made his heart beat wildly, but with great self-command he checked all show of emotion and assumed a careless attitude.

Presently he ventured to look about him. No one else apparently had seen the signal. The convicts were engrossed in their bread and tea, the overseers were sitting by the fire with their backs toward the hill, and the soldiers off duty for the time were chatting loudly among themselves.

Maurice hastily gulped down the remainder of his tea, and taking the tin cup in one hand and his hunk of bread in the other he rose slowly to his feet and commenced to ascend the hill with careless, hesitating steps. He trembled constantly with excitement, fearing each second to be called back, but no such summons came, and at last he gained the spring and sat down on a flat stone beside the outpouring water.

Close over his head was the nook among the rocks where he had seen that wavering arm. Not daring to look behind him, he glanced down into the hollow. Some of his fellow-prisoners were looking at him in a careless manner, but neither the overseers nor the soldiers were paying any attention. He dipped his cup into the spring, and as he raised it to his lips a soft voice whispered, with a strangely familiar accent:—"You saw my signal. You have come. Be on your guard. Don't move. Don't speak a word."

The cup almost dropped from Maurice's trembling hand, but with a great effort he recovered himself and drank as though nothing had happened.

"I am Lora Melikoff," continued the speaker after a pause. "I have not forgotten your brave deed. I am going to do what I can for you in return. You speak my language, do you not?"

Maurice inclined his head without speaking.

"Your noble act has put you in great peril," resumed Lora; "more so than you think. My father is grateful, it is true, but he is stern—ah, you do not know how stern and severe—and he declares that you must be punished as an example to the other men. I have implored him in vain, and last night I listened when he was talking to some officers. They will either shoot you or send you to the Province of Yakutsk. One is as bad as the other. I have not time to tell you of Yakutsk, but it is a terrible place. In a week an officer is expected from St. Petersburg on a tour of inspection, and then your fate will be decided. You must try to escape, though it is almost hopeless. Do you know anything of the country? Could you find the Pacific Ocean, do you think? There are vessels at Vladivostock from every part of the world."

Maurice tremblingly held his bread to his lips, as though he were eating, and said in a low whisper:—"I have two friends. One of them is a Russian, a man who knows the country. He has spoken of Vladivostock and knows the way down the valley of the Amur."

Then he added, with sudden alarm: "There are guards down the other slope. They can see you surely."

"I do not fear them," said Lora, calmly. "There is but one, and him I have bribed to allow me to reach this spot. You say you have two friends. It will be more difficult for three to escape, I fear, and yet I may be wrong. Three can do more than one. But I have much to say, and little time in which to tell it. Listen closely now to every word, and be careful that your actions do not betray you. I have placed a small package under the stone on which you are sitting. It contains tools which may help you to escape from the prison at night. You must conceal it in some way about your clothes. I have written on a scrap of paper your best plan for getting free of the prison. Heed it carefully and be sure to destroy the writing. It will be difficult and dangerous, and success is very doubtful, but if you once gain the outside of the prison stockade, you can place yourself in security for a few days at least. After that you must do the best you can, and I shall pray constantly that you may reach Vladivostock and get safely away from Siberia. Now, here is what you must do when you are outside the prison: Go directly to the Kara river, and follow its channel up to this very spot, so that it will be impossible to track your footsteps. Two miles along this ridge is a cave among the rocks. It lies in among seven pine trees, and is difficult to find. No one but myself knows it, and I discovered it by accident two years ago, when my father first came here from Moscow. In this cave I have already hidden clothes and money. To-day or to-morrow I shall find a way to convey food there, and to-morrow night you must attempt to escape. If you can reach the cave, you are safe for a while. Remain there for a week or two, and then, when the pursuit has abated, or is being conducted far from here, it will be time to start for the distant Pacific. If your friend is a clever man, he may guide you there in safety. You will find clothes for three in the cave. Now you had better go. Don't attempt to get the package at present. Wait until you start back to the prison at night."

"But you"—cried Maurice, quite forgetting himself—"you have placed yourself in peril for my sake. How can I ever thank you? How can I ever hope to repay such a debt of gratitude?"

"Hush," said Lora; "not so loud. You will betray yourself." Her voice had a touch of haughtiness, of offended pride, that showed Maurice instantly the gulf between himself, a degraded convict, wearing the prison stripes, and this aristocratic young Russian, the daughter of famous Col. Melikoff.

"Forgive me," he said, humbly. "I forgot—I was so grateful—that was all. I did not think—"

"It is a debt," she interrupted, coldly; "a sacred obligation on me, an obligation that is doubly binding since my father refuses to acknowledge it. But do not think that I regard you as those men yonder, those thieves, assassins, robbers. I have heard something of your history. You are Englishmen, you and your friend. You are very young, and I prefer to believe that you have fallen into bad company and sinned through ignorance. Don't think that I sympathize with your views, for those who plot against our Czar are wicked men. If through any aid of mine you can reach your own country again, please try to think better of Russia."

"I shall never forget you," said Maurice, "but your opinion of me is wrong, I assure you. I am neither a revolutionist nor a Nihilist, and I have never plotted against Russia. I am an American, Miss Melikoff, and my story, could you but hear it, would give you some different ideas of your own land. My mother was—"

"Hush!" said Lora, suddenly. "The guards are coming. I must slip away at once. I will never see you again, but I shall pray for your escape. Goodby."

"Goodby," exclaimed Maurice, fervently, and as he rose to his feet the harsh voice of the overseer summoned the men to work, and he went slowly and sadly down the slope.

Through the long hours of that afternoon he worked as though in a dream, and more than one sharp reprimand was hurled at him by the angry overseer. Little did he care for that. A wild hope of freedom was seething through his brain, a vision of far-off America and friends he had never expected to see again, yet there was bitterness mingled with his joy.

This Russian girl believed him guilty of the crimes with which he was charged. She believed that he had plotted against her native land, against the Czar, whom she honoured and revered.

Carried away by his feelings, Maurice even began to find some excuse for the tyrannical and despotic means that had placed him in his terrible situation. If only he could have a chance to tell her his story, he thought, she would be convinced and believe him. And now he would never see her again, never have a chance to explain, and she would always be ignorant of the truth.

The agitated expression of his face was noticed by his companions. They regarded him curiously, wondering evidently what bit of joy could be mingled with his wretched existence. But the watchful eye of the overseer, trained on the work that was being done, failed to note these signs.

He drew the flat, heavy parcel from under a stone.

When the coppery sun went down, the labour ceased.

Now came the most difficult part of all, but Maurice was equal to the task. Before the convicts formed in line for the homeward march he carelessly climbed the hill with his cup, and stooping, under pretence of getting a drink, he dexterously drew the flat, heavy parcel from under a stone and hid it in the folds of his shirt beneath the heavy overcoat. There it rested snugly all through the long tramp back to the prison, and when the evening verification was over and the convicts were eating their supper on the platforms his heart was beating fast at the thought of what lay next to it—the precious means that might be destined to lead to safety and freedom.

CHAPTER XV.

AGAINST GREAT ODDS.

It must be remembered that some alterations had been recently made in the disposition of the prisoners. Phil and Platoff had been removed from the central apartment of the prison to a kamera, or separate cell, which they shared with four other convicts, coarse, villainous-looking fellows, of a low and vicious grade. They were locked up securely in this cell every evening, and their supper was served to them here on the sleeping platforms. It was a dreary, ill-smelling apartment, with a decayed plank floor, and one small window crusted with dirt, that opened on the prison courtyard.

On this particular evening Maurice ate his supper in silence, replying only in monosyllables to the queries of Phil and Platoff concerning his strange behaviour that afternoon.

The other inmates of the kamera hurried through their meals and retired to their own corner of the platform. Maurice waited until the sound of heavy breathing assured him that they were asleep, and then, drawing the package frm his bosom, he proceeded to open it before the astonished eyes of his two companions, briefly explaining as he did so how it came into his possession.

The outer covering was quickly removed, and the dim light of the tallow candle burning at their side revealed a strong-bladed knife, a flat steel wedge with a sharp edge, a small sealed bottle, and a scrap of paper covered with close writing. This latter Platoff seized and held close to the candle. As he read, his face flushed and his hands trembled with suppressed excitement.

"Ah, this is indeed fortunate!" he said, turning to Maurice. "Your bravery has obtained you a rich reward. She is truly a noble girl! Now, repeat carefully what she told you, in order that I may know how to form my plans."

"And you really think escape will be possible?" asked Maurice, eagerly, and in a whisper he related in detail all that has passed, explaining the location of the cave, and by what signs it could be discovered.

Platoff listened intently, keeping meanwhile a watchful eye upon the sleeping convicts.

"Did I not read Melikoff's character rightly?" he said, when Maurice ended. "And so he proposes shooting you or sending you to Yakutsk. For my part I should prefer the shooting."

"Where is Yakutsk?" asked Maurice.

"It is a province 1,000 miles to the north of Kara," replied Platoff, grimly, "inhabited by a barbarous, half civilized race, who dress in skins and live six and seven in one small hut. The exile who goes there is domiciled with one of these families and suffers a fate worse than death. And yet," added Platoff, with bitter indignation, "I have known Russian women of refinement and education to suffer this most degrading of punishments. But keep up your courage, my boy. You shall not go to Yakutsk if I can prevent it. I must say that circumstances are strongly in our favour. In fact, we could hope for nothing better, for if once we get away from this prison the cave will afford us a secure hiding place until, as the girl says, the pursuit has spread far from here. Then for the valley of the Amur and Vladivostok, and I for one shall never be retaken alive."

A fearful expression that the boys had never seen there before appeared on Platoff's face.

"But now," he continued more calmly, "we must consider the most dangerous and important step. We are not yet out of the prison, and whether we shall ever get out depends on our own coolness and daring. Without this paper it would be hopeless, but here, you see, is a description of the prison, which makes our task much easier.

"This is what the girl says:—

"'The prison lies in a large courtyard, inclosed by a stockade on three sides. This courtyard is broad and constantly guarded by armed soldiers, but the western end of the prison is built close to the stockade, and the narrow avenue between is visited only at intervals by a single sentry. With the bottle of chloroform stupefy the inmates of your cell. With the tools loosen a board in the floor and crawl under the prison, which is built on piles. Gain the western end, scale the stockade and go straight to the Kara river. Destroy this writing.'"

"That last injunction is important," said Maurice. "How shall we do it?"

For answer Platoff placed the scrap of paper in his mouth, and after chewing it for a moment swallowed it with a slight grimace.

"That disposes of that question," he said, "and now we must find a hiding place for our treasures."

This was by no means an easy matter, but after much consideration the knife and the wedge were driven into the underside of the platform far back from the edge, and the bottle was placed in a crack in the wall and covered with a piece of dry plastering taken from another locality. Just at this point the candle exhausted its last drop of tallow and went out, and at the same time the tramp of the guard was heard in the corridor.

"No more talking now," whispered Platoff, "or we will be suspected. To-morrow night we will make the attempt. Keep up your courage and spirits."

Morning came, a cold, dreary day, with the snow still falling at intervals, and the convicts started as usual for the mines. The boys found it a difficult matter to conceal their feelings under the watchful eyes of the overseers, but they managed to pass through the ordeal remarkably well, and nothing occurred to arouse the suspicions of their companions or of the guards. They assumed a dull, listless expression at work and devoured their lunch with an apparent greed which they were far from feeling.

As for Platoff, he kept purposely away from them all day, and joined the other gang on the return march at night. The evening verification was another dreadful ordeal, but it passed without incident, and five minutes later Maurice and his six companions were eating supper in their cell. The chosen time was at hand.

The dishes were taken away by one of the guards, and the door was bolted on the outside. Platoff waited until all were stretched on the platform, and then he blew out the candle, leaving the room in apparent darkness. It was not entirely so, however, for a dim glare shone through the window from the fires in the courtyard, which the guards had built to warm themselves, and when their eyes became accustomed to it the boys could see plainly every object in the room.

They remained quietly on their backs until it became evident that their fellow-prisoners were asleep. Platoff gave the signal for action by rising cautiously and moving on tiptoe to the end of the platform. Satisfied with the inspection, he came back and whispered to the boys, "Lie very still and don't make a sound."

Then crossing the room, he took the bottle from its hiding-place in the wall and approached the sleeping men. Maurice saw him tear a strip of cloth from his coat and apply it to the bottle two or three times, and immediately a peculiar odour was perceptible in the room.

Platoff rapidly and cleverly applied the chloroform to three of the sleeping men, and then turned to the fourth, a tall, repulsive ruffian of the name of Jocka, who was lying on his side with his arms over his face.

The saturated rag was within three inches of his nose, when he suddenly rose to an upright position, and, facing Platoff, said, in a loud whisper: "Not so fast, my friend! I thought something was up, and I have kept an eye on your movements. If you are going to leave, I intend to go with you. Oh, don't get angry! You can't help yourself, you see. Be reasonable or I shall call in the guard. How would you like that?"

The boys, trembling with fear at this unexpected interruption, awaited Platoff's answer. They were little prepared for what followed. For a brief moment Platoff faced the ruffian, who was smiling with the insolence of power, and then with a fierce leap he clutched him by the neck with one hand and with the other forced the wet rag against his nose.

For a few seconds the fellow struggled furiously with arms and legs; then, suddenly relaxing in Platoff's grasp, he dropped limly on the platform just as Maurice and Phil hurried to the spot to render assistance.

"It's all right," said Platoff, in a voice that showed how deeply he was moved. "The scoundrel can't do us any harm now. It would have ruined our plans to have had to take him along. I hope the noise of the scuffle was not heard in the corridor—"

"Listen! What's that?"

"It must be the guard," whispered Maurice. "We are lost!"

"Yes, you are right," said Platoff. "The footsteps are coming this way. It is too late for concealment. He will smell the chloroform. Get behind the door there, quick! Such a chance of escape is worth great odds, and I'm going to take them."

He had no time to say more. As Maurice and Phil darted to one side the door creaked and opened. A bar of light shone in from a lamp in the corridor, and was followed by a sturdy Cossack, who entered in a stealthy manner. His suspicions were well founded, as he must have realized a moment later, for Platoff's muscular arms fastened on his throat, and he was pressed bodily to the floor, unable to utter a sound.

"The chloroform—quick!" whispered Platoff.

Maurice seized the rag from the platform, and at his bidding held it to the soldier's face.

"There, that will do," said Platoff, and he laid his burden quietly down.

He turned to Maurice, his face white and ghastly in the lamplight. "If they discover us now, we will be shot," he gasped. "Tear off your clothes, quick! Don't lose a second! There is but one chance left to us. We must try it."

"What do you mean?" demanded Maurice, in bewilderment.

"This," whispered Platoff, fiercely, pointing to the unconscious soldier. "That man is about your size and weight. His uniform will fit you nicely. The captain of the guard will pass through yonder corridor in a few minutes. You must be there to receive him with this Cossack's uniform and gun. Do you understand now?"

CHAPTER XVI.

A DARING EXPLOIT.

Maurice attempted to speak, but the words stuck in his throat. He was positively stunned by the daring of Platoff's plan. And yet what if it were possible to carry the ruse through? Its supreme audacity was really in its favour.

"Did you hear me?" hissed Platoff, grasping him roughly by the shoulders. "Nerve yourself, or all is lost! Our only salvation lies with you."

These words roused Maurice from his stupor. He alone could retrieve the disaster that confronted them.

"Yes," he whispered, "I understand. I will do what you say." With a firm hand he tore off his prison garb, the ugly grey shirt and trousers. Platoff had already stripped the Cossack of his uniform, and with feverish haste he assisted Maurice to pull on the dark green blouse and trousers, the high boots and the low cap.

"Now," he whispered, "take the gun and go out in the corridor. Bolt the cell door and pace slowly up and down. Keep your face away from the lamplight when the officer of the guard comes past. He may say something to you. If he does, answer as best you can and in a gruff voice. Above all be cool and resolute. If the officer passes without suspicion, draw the bolt of the door and give a slight rap with your hand. Now go. Every second is precious."

He pushed him gently into the corridor and closed the door softly. A sudden shudder of fear passed over Maurice as he realized his situation, and then his presence of mind returned. He softly drew the bolt into its socket, and placing the rifle on his shoulder began to pace the corridor, which was probably 40 feet long by 10 in width. Six doors opened upon it, three on each side, and at each extremity lay other corridors running at right angles.

A rude lamp hanging from the ceiling dimly lit up the scene, and at intervals from some of the neighbouring cells could be heard a cough, or a fragment of whispered conversation.

With feelings that can be better imagined than described, he continued his solitary vigil. From his own cell came no sounds at all, but he had no doubt that Platoff and Phil were hard at work.

Occasionally he heard the tramp of the sentries in the other corridors, and once from the main portion of the prison came a clink of glasses and a coarse laugh.

"They won't be inclined for merrymaking a few hours from now if all goes well," thought Maurice, with grim satisfaction. Then his thoughts turned to Lora, and in trying to imagine her joy on learning of his escape he forgot the ordeal in store for him. That unpleasant fact was brought to his memory with startling abruptness. In the neighbouring corridor a rifle butt was dropped heavily to the floor, voices were heard in conversation, and then a second or two later footsteps approached.

Fired with a sudden inspiration, Maurice decided to look danger in the face. Pulling the visor of his cap over his eyes, he wheeled round and paced down the corridor with a slow, regular step. Years ago, before entering college, he had spent two years at a military school, and the instructions there received he now put into use. The most rigid martinet could have found no fault with his bearing as he marched forward to meet the approaching peril.

The lamp was behind him, so that his face was in shadow. the effect he had aimed to produce.

The footsteps were now close at hand, and suddenly an officer turned the angle, a young lieutenant with dangling sword and a pair of eyeglasses that gave him a fierce expression.

The lieutenant took a long pull at the contents.

Maurice coolly saluted and dropped his rifle to the floor.

"Everything right, is it?" asked the officer, thickly, and Maurice noted with some uneasiness that he had been drinking.

"All's well," he responded, gruffly, though his voice trembled in spite of his effort to control it.

Under his glasses the lieutenant stared fixedly, and with a sinking heart Maurice returned the gaze, believing that his identity was suspected. The next word reassured him.

"Russo," said the officer, "have you got a drop of vodka about you?"

Maurice felt himself trembling like a leaf, and then, hardly conscious of what he was doing, he plunged his hand into the pocket of his coat. Something hard slid into his grasp, and he drew out a small flask.

"Ah, you sly dog," exclaimed the lieutenant, and seizing the flask he took a long pull at the contents and handed it back. Maurice mechanically restored it to his pocket, and when he looked up the lieutenant was half-way up the corridor. A moment later and he vanished around the angle.

To be Continued.