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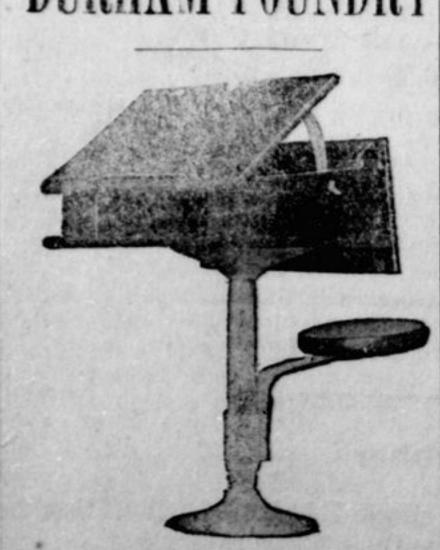
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# A SOLDIER OF COMMERCE

By JOHN ROE GORDON

"where are your beautiful niece and

find a secluded spot and talk things

over. I asked Alma, and she consented

Dellnikoff?" asked the governor.

know what keeps them."

his guests to supper arrived.

"I am filled with misgivings, your

"Something, I know not what. The

girl bewitched us all tonight. I had

never seen her so gay, so reckless. She

wine, and she seldom drinks any, and

now, when she is not here, with her

"Where is the American?"

floor he saw her long brown tresses.

"Yes: the inspector general."

"I did not see the young lady."

also an orderly."

"Was my niece here?"

"Wrong! What can be wrong?"

they will not forget."

something wrong."

CHAPTER XI.

Harvey Irons went toward but said the prince had not asked her has tricked us all! Where is the Amerthe river. Several times Harvey tried to speak, but Alma would not permit it. boats lay. Lanterns moved here and there, but most of the boatmen were taken, for it was the largest of the hayboats, and its cargo had not been touched.

ped upon the boat. "Charka of Ash-

"Who calls Charka of Ashkar?" ask-Axle Grease and Hoof ed the sleepy boatman as he emerged from the dingy little box he called his acted as if she had drunk too much

> hay and bargained for you to deliver it beauty and her wit to ensuare me, I at Astrabad with a passenger." "Good. You were long coming. The never said so, but she refused to marry

> him. She was in love with an Amerhay has been wanted many times. But I knew you would come, so I did not ican."

can do no more. Knowing that you telkis." were in danger of being killed or of being sent to Siberia, where your identity | Speak, man!" gone, I determined that I would set prison to see what has happened." you free if possible. I have purchased He called for his carriage. It was this hay, and Charka will deliver it- gone. He took the nearest one-one in you, rather - at Astrabad, where you which a Chinese mandarin had come will be safe from the persecutions of to the ball-and hurried to the prison.

my bravest? You have sacrificed and, trembling in every limb, she came yourself for me." "They dare not kill me," said Alma.

"They would do anything. But I ball?" cannot go like this. Give me just a moment. Let me take you in my arms!" Charka, with a fine sense of propri- to go to bed." ety, walked back to his little box.

said Harvey, taking her in his arms, "if the devotion of a life could pay you gasped. for what you have done, how gladly would I make you happy! But what of the guard started when he saw the can I do? It will be impossible for me pallor of the colonel's face. to see you now." "Some day-some day I will come to night?"

on her lips. "I will not go without you. I will go back and give myself

"Dear one, do not speak like that!

"What did the inspector general do?" rescue? Tell me what you did?"

Alma told Harvey the whole story. but it was for you!"

"Great heaven! What a woman! And now you want me to leave you to their vengeance! Russia does not forgive. You will be sent to Siberia. You must come with me or I shall re-

"And be killed! You must go at once. Kiss me, dear one! It may be Your doctor is the best adviser. the last."

"Here, we must get out of this," said Charka, rushing from his box. "The soldiers will swarm along the river in

"My uncle has thought we were gone too long," said Alma, trembling with the up the system. weakness of reaction. "He has searched for us in the palace and, not finding us, has gone to the prison. He has questioned the servants and learned that we were there. Perhaps he has even discovered that the prince is locked in a cell. My dear one, hide under the hay. Charka, where can he hide? He is your friend, and your enemies is just such a food in its best form. | faith."

are after him!" With a sweep of his hand Charka It will build up the weakened showed them the immense cargo of hay. It rested upon many long planks and wasted body when a that met in the middle of the boat and extended some feet over each side. Under the planks was a vacant space. "Under there," said Charka. "There

Muscovites will soon be here." ment or death," said Harvey. "Come with me! We will go to America.

Come, my darling, come." Alma hesitated. Again sounded the alarm gun. Perhaps the thought of solitary imprisonment, perhaps the knout, perhaps Siberia, came to her.

"I will go," she said simply. The two crawled under the hay, and

Everything happened as Alma had supposed. The ball had been deprived. of its most brilliant lights. With Alma and Dellnikoff gone, it grew dull. A half hour passed, and Colonel Jurnien in the air a short time and return. They did not return." "Open that door to the dungeons!" The captain took down the bunch of keys. He trembled and turned white.

"What is the matter?" commanded Jurneiff. "The key is gone."

Jurneiff swayed. He no longer thought of promotion, but how to save himself from disgrace.

the locksmith." sleep and soon had the door open.

Jurneiff rushed in and began opening "The prince said they were going to the cells. In one he found Dellnikoff, sleeping as if drunk. He dragged him out to the light. "Drugged!" he exclaimed. "The girl

to be his wife. I sent him to her, and His cell was opened. It was empty.

they came to an agreement. But they "Fire the alarm gun! They are still wanted to be alone to talk. I do not in Tiflis! The guards will find them! "It is not so easy to leave off a con- Get out every man! Have the garrison turned loose! I must go and report to versation with a girl like Alma. It is almost time for the supper. I hope the governor."

In ten minutes the ball was over. Chinese mandarins and Persian princes The governor showed his anxiety as the time for him to take the highest of were hustled off and chattered together in bewilderment. Every Russian at the ball was sent out to hunt the fugitive, with orders to bring him back excellency," said Jurnieff. "There is dead or alive.

HAYBOAT STARTS.

HARKA of Ashkar pretended puffing up behind him. to waken from a deep slumber as four soldiers, led by a recall how she hated the prince. She ing down the wharf.

"Masters, I am here," said Charka, rubbing his eyes and blinking in the "He is in our prison. He is implilight of the lanterns they carried.

"And you think-what do you think? Assisted by a woman who is a traitor, would be lost and all hope of rescue "I cannot think. I am going to the tonight and must be, with his companion, somewhere in the city."

> "Well, am I the prisoner?" "No, you pig."

"Am I, then, the woman?" "Curses upon you!"

He dashed to the living apartments. shouts? I am a peaceful man from Ashkar, trying to sell my hay."

"Has my niece returned from the soldiers, with a laugh. "With the business of finding a prisoner of state on "She did return, colonei. I went to our minds, we must think of your hay!" her, but she dismissed me and told me As he spoke he thrust his bayonet deep into the hay.

Jurnieff ran to Alma's rooms. On the "By the gods," exclaimed another, "that is an idea! This man is from "What deviltry is here tonight?" he Astrakhan and would no doubt assist the American to escape."

He dashed to the prison. The captain ficer. "There is no American. It was a Russian who escaped." "Has any one visited the prison to-"Pardon! I forgot. But the Astra-

khans do not love the czar." "What! Do you mean Prince Dell-

"Yes, my colonel. He had with him hay." "By heaven, we will stab you! What

did you come to Tiflis for?" "To sell my hay. It has been pur-

"Insolent pig! And do you think we want hay from you?" "It is for beasts of a higher class I

keep my hay," said Charka calmly. A volley of curses answered him and

"They may be hiding in it." HIS is a common expres-

"Burn the hay!" laughed a soldier. "That will settle it." "Burn it if you dare! I have some-

thing in my pocket." "A pistol, which you would use on the

"No; a passport to safety signed by er. the governor.'

"Do not burn his hay!" shouted the "Then let a woman hunt. It is the against the passport."

hay, jamming their bayonets deep into partook of anything he called to the it. The officer was slashing it with his refugees.

money, I will not stay in this place!" ficer, turning on Charka. "You call us from under and eat. It may be some dogs-we who are your masters?" "You should tell the mollah that. He ty." would be pleased."

"Are you a follower of the mollah?" "Who else? It is so written. Charka of Ashkar was never false to the

passport will save you from harm, but in the name of the czar I command you to depart at once. There will then be no chance of your doing mischief. my purse. In it you will find enough We know the fugitives are not with you are run down or emaciated, you now. But if they came you would give them shelter."

"It is robbing no one. There is plenty of hay, and you say the payment good to find a faithful friend." We will send you a sample free, has not been made. Go, or I will forget the passport."

> With assumed reluctance Charka went to the door of his box, into which two soldiers had gone to investigate, the wrapper of every bottle and came out with two sleepy Astra-of Emulsion you buy. "Behold the loving acts of the czar,

> > payment is made we are commanded to go to the Caspian." "It will destroy the hay. There wil

"Profits! You want profits from a "He and his orderly went into the fair and yet follow the mollah against dungeons where the prisoners for Siberia are kept. They soon came back, the czar?" returned one of the soldiers. Charka made a sign. The men at as the orderly was not well. The inonce began releasing the boat, amid spector general said they would go out the shouts and cries of soldiers and disturbed boatmen all along the river. Hundreds of soldiers flocked along the wharfs, invaded boats, routing out men and women that they might in-

spect the most secret places. Charka, grumbling and with much make believe anger, slowly got under way. The soldiers laughed as the hayboat began slowly to descend the stream. The boat was a most crude "The door must be broken in. Go for affair. Its only means of propulsion was a great lateen sail, useless on this The locksmith was roused from his quiet night. So the men resorted to long poles, and the big boat crawled along the bank.

The search throughout Tifis went on. Generals and colonels, many of them informed for the first time that. the abductor of Koura Biartelkis was an American, joined in the hunt. Officers in the brilliant uniforms they had worn at the ball rushed with those in working garb and searched bazaars, coffee houses and churches. There was not a square foot of ground in Tiflis that was not searched nor a building that was not entered.

Mystified, baffled and enraged, Jurnieff raved and cursed as he paced the prison corridor. But while he raved, and soldiers searched, Charka and his boat continued slowly down the river. By daylight Charka had made twenty miles and tied up at the rotting wharf of a small town. Leaving his men in charge, he went ashore to buy food. He returned with a sufficient supply for the THE SEARCH FOR THE FUGITIVES-THE day, and the boat went on. A little steam launch containing soldiers came

"Who are you?" demanded the officer. "Why do you leave Tiflis with a subordinate officer, came rush- load of hay? The markets are there." "There are no markets for me," said



"I took the precaution to bring my

purse." have I spent on the journey. Many her." nights I lay and thought of my profits. At last, when I reached Tiflis, there came a merchant who owned five camels. He purchased the hay and promised to come and take it away and pay me for it. But, alas, the soldiers I did not sell. I shall return to Astraof the czar came in the night and bad and thence to Constantinople by drove me away! I am Charka of Ashkar. They said that because I follow the mollah I am not fit to sell hay to camels."

mollah to buy your hay. He has many | boat. Well, my friend, where are you camels."

"Aye, and men and guns," muttered Charka as the launch sped on. "Have you seen two escaped prison-

ers?" came back a voice. "I have seen many men. No one in-

formed me he was an escaped prison-

"One was a woman."

In the little box of a house Charka The soldiers were crawling over the prepared a meal. Before he or his men

"It is safe," he said. "The launch is "Dogs of Muscovites! When I get my out of sight, and we are passing swamp lands where there are no villages or "What is that?" demanded the of- farms. We shall meet no one. Come

time before you reach a place of safe-

Harvey was the first to appear, and then the shining boots of Alma came wriggling from under the hay. They looked into each other's eyes and laughed. It was so good to be free. They "Then leave Tiflis. The governor's went into the little house and ate the meal Charka had prepared.

"Charka, you have done well," said Alma. "I took the precaution to bring to pay you-for your hay." Charka took the purse and opened it.

The shining gold brought a gleam to "Let them ask again," he said. "You have kept your word with Charka. No

Muscovite dog shall take you from this boat while I am alive." "Good Charka!" said Alma. "It is so

> CHAPTER XIII. THE STORM ON THE CASPIAN.

the poling while the third man slept. At times, under the cover of favoring darkness, Harvey would be made over, I think it well to puremerge from his hiding place, and while Alma kept watch for pursuing be suitable to go with the rest of the Russians Irons assisted with the boat to give one of the hardworking Astrakbans a rest. On the third day they brooklyn Eagle.

saw a boat overhauling themi.

"We must keep well under cover till that boat has passed us," said Harvey, "What do you make it out to be, Char-

It was a long, low vessel, without masts, with high bow and stern. It was propelled by four rowers, two on each side, and a fifth man sat in the stern with a paddle to steer. "We have nothing to fear from that."

said Charka. "That is a Turkish cayik. Some rich merchant perhaps from Constantinople has brought his pleas. ure boat all the way to the fair. Think of carrying a boat across land!"

"That may be so or not," said Har. vey. "A boat might be built at Tiffis after the Turkish model. It is safer for us to be out of sight."

The long boat came on rapidly, and Harvey and Alma again crawled under the hay.

Charka grumbled enviously as he saw the four rowers bending to their task. The Turkish cayik seemed more anxious to avoid the hayboat than Charka was to avoid the cayik. It steered to the opposite side of the river, the efforts of the rowers were donbled, and at a burst of speed it went

At night they were within sight of the village of Salain. Though it was a dark night, Charka, who had the lives of his passengers in mind, forbade them coming from under the hay.

"The steamboat of the Muscovites has not yet returned up the river," he said. "It is lying at Salain to watch the boats that go out upon the Cas-This was too much for the inquisi-

tiveness of Harvey. He crawled to the edge of the hay to observe what was "Charka," he said, "that Turkish boat is up to something. I notice the

Russian is going to intercept it. There's business of some kind going on. Get nearer, that we may hear the conversation."

As they came opposite the lights of the town they saw the Russian boat shoot out from the land and in the radius of the strong electric light in her bow saw the cayik evidently trying to escape. "They are after the Turk! We are

"Keep a cool head, Charka," said

Harvey. "Remember, a precious life depends upon your shrewdness." "I know." "Stop where you are!" came a voice

in for it, too!" wailed Charka.

from the Russian. "We will inspect Knowing the uselessness of refusing, Charka made his way toward the launch, which had now steamed up

alongside the cayik. "It is true, most excellent sirs," a Turkish voice from the cayik was saying. "I am an Osmanli. It is also true that I am Hafiz Effendi, who once acted as merchant in those goods the men of Georgia and Circassia had to sell. I stole nothing, but when a father wished to place his beautiful daughter in the house of a wealthy prince I carried on the negotiations. But that is all done. Even the other day a girl was stolen, but it was an American, not an Osmanli, who stole

"Yes, and we want that American now!" growled the officer in command. "What have you in those sacks?"

"Nothing, excellent sir, but some of the goods I took to the fair and which way of the caravan."

"Go on," said the officer, and the cayik shot away. "Now, you," said the officer to Char-

"Enjoy yourself, fanatic. Go ask the ka. "Hello! It is that slow old hay-"I, too, my master, am going to As

trabad," said Charka, "Does every one who goes to the falat Tiflis go from there to Astrabad?"

"Not all, excellent captain; but at Muscovite woman and an unbeliever. We do not wish to kill, so we leave." Harvey stood aghast. Alone he could not handle the sails. He shouted to

them to come back, but they paid no

attention to him. He returned to Alma. "The fools have left us! Charka was thrown overboard by a broken rope, and I told them to go in the small boat to rescue them. They took the boat, preferring that in the storm to remaining on this boat with us. They say, my darling, we have brought a curse upon them "

[TO RE . ONTINUED.]

PEG DRESSES.

A Grandmother's Hint About Gewos and Their Wearing. "The way to be well dressed," said

grandmother, "is never to have 'peg dresses.' That was my mother's rule, and I have always made it mine. "What are 'peg dresses?" Why, gowns

that hang in one's closet, are not often worn and get a little out of style. They are apt to be the 'best gowns,' by which I mean those for dressy occasions. Most of us have but one, which is worn so seldom that it becomes a problem to keep it always in style, for there is a limit even to the changing of sleeves and alteration of the adornment of lace. When that is reached the owner must be firm with herself and discard the dress in its present form. For this reason I think it a good plan to have this gown of rather inexpensive material and let its beauty be in the way it is made; then when it must step down from its high estate WO days and two nights they we can put the scissors to it with betcontinued thus, traveling conter grace, for I have always found that stantly. Two of the men did it takes moral courage to attack a rich gown which is just too much out of fashion to wear. As this dress must chase a material that will afterward wardrobe either as fancy waist, trimming or perhaps as silk petticoat."-

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PRISON ALARM. OVERED by their long cloaks. unnoticed by the few who were in the streets, Alma and

Winding through the narrower streets, met twice by sentries and giving the password, which she knew, Alma led him safely to the wharf where the hayasleep. Alma knew where the boat of Charka of Ashkar was moored and hurried to it. It could not well be mis-

"Charka!" she said as the two step-

"It is I, Charka, who purchased your

"M. Irons," said Alma, turning to Harvey and putting out her hands, "I

your enemies." "But what of you, my darling girl, Marie was asleep. He roared for her,

"Oh, if love could repay you, dear,"

"Come with me now," raining kisses

It is ungrateful!" "So it is, darling. You have cut off your hair, your beautiful hair, that I loved. How did you accomplish my

"I even gave myself up to abandon for your sake, dear one," concluded Alma. "I permitted his lips to touch mine; I allowed his arm to encircle my waist. Oh, the thought of it burns,

main and fight for you."

The dull boom of a cannon smote kinds of advertised remedies-

no time."

Charka lay down on the boat as if

sion we hear on every side. Unless there is some organic trible, the condition can doubt be remedied.

"It shall not! Hark! The alarm gun Do not dose yourself with all get his opinion. More than likely you need a concentrated fat food to enrich your blood and tone saber.

> Scott's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil

other foods fail to nourish. you will be safe. Hurry! The dogs of give it a trial: it cannot hurt "I say truly I would do so if they his eyes. "You shall not go back to imprison- you. It is essentially the best possible nourishment for delicate where you will be safe and happy. children and pale, anaemic girls.

> Be sure that this picture in the form of a label is on SCOTT & BOWNE Chemists

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CHAPTER XII.

"Ho, there, on board this hayboat!" Charka, with a sad wail. "Many days shouted the officer.

cated in the abduction of Koura Biar-"What has happened?" "A prisoner of the czar has escaped! he escaped from the prison at Tiflis

> "Why am I awakened with these "Oh, your hay!" shouted one of the

"Shut your mouth, fool!" said the of-

"How much you love the czar!" replied Charka. "It is fear, not loyalty, that makes you curse me and stab my

chased, but not yet paid for."

a bayonet pricked his leg. "Charge the hay!" said the officer

soldiers of the czar?"

officer as one of the soldiers made a only way." light by twisting a wisp of the hay A curse for his insolence came floatinto the flame of the lantern. "We are ing back. The launch continued down after prisoners. We do not wish to run the river.

"Loosen your boat from its moorings and take yourself to the Caspian." "But my hay is already sold."

our master," said Charka to his men. "We have sold our hay, but before

be no profit from the fair." said apa.