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## CHAPTER I.





"SIRE, a fresh dispatch."  
"Whence?"  
"From Tomsk."  
"Is the wire cut beyond that city?"  
"Yes, sire, since yesterday."  
"Telegraph hourly to Tomsk, general, and let me be kept informed of all that occurs."  
"Sire, it shall be done," answered General Kisseff.  
These words were exchanged about two hours after midnight, at the moment when the fete given at the New palace was at the height of its splendor.  
An hour later General Kisseff, who had just re-entered, quickly approached his majesty.  
"Well?" asked the latter abruptly, as he had done the former time.  
"Telegrams reach Tomsk no longer, sire."  
"A courier this moment!" And, leaving the hall, his majesty entered a large antechamber adjoining.  
The czar had not so suddenly left the ballroom of the New palace when the fete he was giving to the civil and military authorities and principal people of Moscow was at the height of its brilliancy without ample cause, for he had just received information that serious events were taking place beyond the frontiers of the Ural. It had become evident that a formidable rebellion threatened to wrest the Siberian provinces from the Russian crown.  
Asiatic Russia, or Siberia, covers a superficial area of 1,700,208 square miles and contains nearly 2,000,000 of inhabitants. Extending from the Ural mountains, which separate it from Russia in Europe, to the shores of the Pacific ocean, it is bounded on the south by Turkistan and the Chinese empire, on the north by the Arctic ocean, from the sea of Kara to Bering strait. It is divided into several governments or provinces, those of Tobolsk, Yeniseisk, Irkutsk, Omsk and Yakutsk; contains two districts, Okhotsk and Kamchatka, and possesses two countries, now under the Muscovite dominion—that of the Kirghiz and that of the Tshovkshes.  
Two governor generals represent the supreme authority of the czar over this vast country. One resided at Irkutsk, the capital of western Siberia. The river Tshonna, a tributary of the Yenisei, separates the two Siberias.  
No rail yet furrows these wide plains, some of which are in reality extremely fertile. No iron ways lead from these precious mines which make the Siberian soil far richer below than above its surface. The traveler journeys in summer in a kibick or telga; in winter, in a sledge.  
An electric telegraph, with a single wire more than 8,000 versts in length, alone affords communication between the western and eastern frontiers of Siberia. On issuing from the Ural it passes through Ekaterinburg, Kasi-mov, Tionmen, Ishim, Omsk, Elansk, Kalyvan, Tomsk, Krasnolinsk, Nijni Udinsk, Irkutsk, Verke-Nertsckink, Strelinsk, Albazine, Blagowestsensk, Rade, Orlonskaya, Alexandrowskoe and Nikolaevsk, and 6 rubles and 19 copecks are paid for every word sent from one end to the other. From Irkutsk there is a branch to Klatka, on the Mongolian frontier, and from thence, for 30 copecks a word, the post conveys the dispatches to Peking in a fortnight.  
It was this wire, extending from Ekaterinburg to Nikolaevsk, which had been cut, first beyond Tomsk and then between Tomsk and Kalyvan.  
This was the reason why the czar, to the communication made to him for the second time by General Kisseff, had only answered by the words, "A courier this moment!"  
The czar had remained motionless at the window for a few moments when the door was again opened. The chief of police appeared on the threshold.  
"Enter, general," said the czar briefly, "and tell me all you know of Ivan Ogareff."  
"He is an extremely dangerous man, sire," replied the chief of police.  
"He ranked as colonel, did he not?"  
"Yes, sire."  
"Was he an intelligent officer?"  
"Very intelligent, but a man whose spirit it was impossible to subdue and possessing an ambition which stopped at nothing. He soon became involved in secret intrigues, and it was then that he was degraded from his rank by his

highness the grand duke and exiled to Siberia."  
"How long ago was that?"  
"Two years since. Pardoned after six months of exile by your majesty's favor, he returned to Russia."  
"And since that time has he not revisited Siberia?"  
"Yes, sire, but he voluntarily returned there," replied the chief of police, adding and slightly lowering his voice, "There was a time, sire, when none returned from Siberia."  
"Well, while I live Siberia is and shall be a country whence men can return."  
The czar had the right to utter these words with some pride, for often by his clemency he had shown that Russian justice knew how to pardon.  
"Did not Ivan Ogareff," asked the czar, "return to Russia a second time after that journey through the Siberian provinces, the object of which remains unknown?"  
"He did."  
"And have the police lost trace of him since?"  
"No, sire."  
"Where was Ivan Ogareff last heard of?"  
"In the province of Perm."  
"In what town?"  
"At Perm itself."  
"What was he doing?"  
"He appeared unoccupied, and there was nothing suspicious in his conduct."  
"Then he was not under the surveillance of the secret police?"  
"No, sire."  
"When did he leave Perm?"  
"About the month of March."  
"To go?"  
"Where is unknown."  
"And since that time it is not known what has become of him?"  
"No, sire, it is not known."  
"Well, then, I myself know," answered the czar. "I have received anonymous communications which did not pass through the police department, and in the face of events now taking place beyond the frontier I have every reason to believe that they are correct."  
"Do you mean, sire," cried the chief of police, "that Ivan Ogareff has a hand in this Tartar rebellion?"  
"Indeed I do, and I will now tell you something which you are ignorant of. After leaving Perm Ivan Ogareff crossed the Ural mountains, entered Siberia and penetrated the Kirghiz steppes and there endeavored, not without success, to foment rebellion among their nomadic population. He then went so far south as free Turkistan. There in the provinces of Bokhara, Kbokhand and Koondooz he found chiefs willing to pour their Tartar hordes into Siberia and execute a general rising in Asiatic Russia. The storm has been silently gathering, but it has at last burst like a thunderclap, and now all means of communication between eastern and western Siberia have been stopped. Moreover, Ivan Ogareff, thirsting for vengeance, aims at the life of my brother!"  
The czar had become excited while speaking and now paced up and down with hurried steps. The chief of police said nothing, but he thought to himself that during the time when the emperor of Russia never pardoned an exile schemes such as those of Ivan Ogareff could never have been realized.  
A few moments passed, during which he was silent, then, approaching the czar, who had thrown himself into an armchair, he said:  
"Your majesty has of course given orders that this rebellion may be suppressed as soon as possible?"  
"Yes," answered the czar. "The last telegram which was able to reach Nijni Udinsk would set in motion the troops in the governments of Yenisei, Irkutsk, Yakutsk, as well as those in the provinces of the Amur and Lake Balkal. At the same time the Kirghiz and the Cossacks on the frontier are advancing by forced marches toward the Ural mountains. But unfortunately some weeks must pass before they can attack the Tartars."  
"And your majesty's brother, his highness the grand duke, is now isolated in the government of Irkutsk and is no longer in direct communication with Moscow?"  
"That is so."  
"But by the last dispatches he must know what measures have been taken by your majesty and what help he may expect from the governments nearest to that of Irkutsk?"  
"He knows that," answered the czar, "but what he does not know is that

Ivan Ogareff, as well as being a rebel, is also playing the part of a traitor and that in him he has a personal and bitter enemy. It is to the grand duke that Ivan Ogareff owes his first disgrace, and what is more serious is that this man is not known to him. Ivan Ogareff's plan, therefore, is to go to Irkutsk and under an assumed name offer his services to the grand duke. Then, after gaining his confidence, when the Tartars have invested Irkutsk, he will betray the town and with it my brother, whose life is directly threatened. This is what I have learned from my secret intelligence, this is what the grand duke does not know and this is what he must know!"  
"Well, sire, an intelligent, courageous courier!"  
"I momentarily expect one."  
"And it is to be hoped he will be expeditious," added the chief of police, "for allow me to add, sire, that Siberia is a favorable land for rebellions."  
All communication was interrupted. Had the wires between Kalyvan and Tomsk been cut by Tartar scouts, or had the emir himself arrived in the Yeniseisk provinces? Was all the lower part of western Siberia in a ferment? Had the rebellion already spread to the eastern regions? No one could say. The only agent which feared neither cold nor heat, which could neither be stopped by the rigors of winter nor the heat of summer and which flies with the rapidity of lightning—the electric current—was prevented from traversing the steppes, and it was no longer possible to warn the grand duke, shut up in Irkutsk, of the danger threatening him from the treason of Ivan Ogareff.  
A courier only could supply the place of the interrupted electric current. It would take this man some time to traverse the 5,200 versts between Moscow and Irkutsk. To pass the ranks of the rebels and invaders he must display almost superhuman courage and intelligence. But with a clear head and a firm heart much can be done.  
"Shall I be able to find this head and heart?" thought the czar.

## CHAPTER II.

THE door of the imperial cabinet was again opened, and General Kisseff was announced.  
"The courier?" inquired the czar eagerly.  
"He is here, sire," replied General Kisseff.  
"Have you found a fitting man?"  
"I will answer for him to your majesty."  
"Has he been in the service of the palace?"  
"Yes, sire."  
"You know him?"  
"Personally, and at various times he has fulfilled difficult missions with success."  
"Abroad?"  
"In Siberia itself."  
"Where does he come from?"  
"From Omsk. He is a Siberian."  
"Has he coolness, intelligence, courage?"  
"Yes, sire; he has all the qualities necessary to succeed even where others might possibly fail."  
"What is his age?"  
"Thirty."  
"Is he strong and vigorous?"  
"Sire, he can bear cold, hunger, thirst, fatigue, to the very last extremities."  
"He must have a frame of iron."  
"Sire, he has."  
"And a heart?"  
"A heart of gold."  
"His name?"  
"Michael Strogoff."  
"Is he ready to set out?"  
"He awaits your majesty's orders in the guardroom."  
"Let him come in," said the czar.  
In a few minutes Michael Strogoff, the courier, entered the imperial library.  
The czar fixed a penetrating look upon him without uttering a word, while Michael stood perfectly motionless.  
Michael Strogoff was a tall, vigorous, broad shouldered, deep chested man. His powerful head possessed the fine features of the Caucasian race. His well knit frame seemed built for the performance of feats of strength. It would have been a difficult task to move such a man against his will, for when his feet were once planted on the ground it was as if they had taken root. As he doffed his Muscovite cap locks of thick curly hair fell over his broad, massive forehead. When his ordinarily pale face became at all flushed, it arose solely from a more rapid action of the heart, under the influence of a quicker circulation. His eyes of a deep blue looked with a clear, frank, firm gaze.  
The slightly contracted eyebrows indicated lofty heroism—"the hero's cool courage," according to the definition of the physiologist. He possessed a fine nose, with large nostrils, and a well shaped mouth, with the slightly projecting lips which denote a generous and noble heart.

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### RAILROAD TIME TABLES.

#### ILLINOIS CENTRAL.

Corrected to April 18, 1902.

South Bound	121	103	101
Lv. Cincinnati	8:00pm	8:15am	
Lv. Louisville	7:30am	9:40pm	12:01pm
Lv. Owensboro	8:25am	8:50pm	
Lv. H. Branch	10:35am	8:25pm	
Lv. Central City	8:01am	1:06am	2:25pm
Lv. Nortonville	12:45pm	1:46am	4:02pm
Lv. Evansville	8:30am	4:00pm	8:30am
Lv. Hopkinsville	11:30am		3:25pm
Lv. Princeton	1:45pm	2:38am	4:47pm
At. Paducah	8:25pm	3:37am	6:00pm
At. Paducah	4:05pm	8:40am	6:05pm
At. Fulton	8:20pm	4:45am	7:10pm
At. Paducah	8:25pm	5:31am	
At. Cairo	9:25pm	6:15pm	9:25pm
At. Rives	8:25am		
At. Jackson	8:45am		
At. Memphis	8:50am		10:40pm
At. N. Orleans	7:40pm		9:35am

North Bound	122	102	104
Lv. N. Orleans	7:35pm	9:30am	
Lv. Memphis	7:00am	8:40am	
Lv. Jackson	8:50am	10:07pm	
Lv. Rives	9:15am	11:35pm	
Lv. Paducah	8:51pm		8:51pm
Lv. Cairo	8:00am	8:20am	5:25pm
At. Paducah	7:40am	11:30am	1:25am
At. Paducah	7:50am	11:35am	
At. Princeton	9:20am	12:45pm	2:44am
At. Hopkinsville	8:10pm	3:10pm	10:35am
At. Evansville	8:40am	8:10pm	10:40am
At. Nortonville	10:40am	1:30pm	3:35am
At. Central City	11:20am	2:10pm	4:12am
At. H. Branch	12:20pm	3:05pm	5:05am
At. Owensboro	4:30pm	6:10pm	8:10am
At. Louisville	4:55pm	6:35pm	7:45am
At. Cincinnati	5:15pm	11:40am	

Lv. Paducah	8:25pm	6:30pm	
Lv. Princeton	8:40pm	6:45pm	
Lv. Hopkinsville	8:55pm	7:00pm	

#### ST. LOUIS DIVISION.

South Bound	286	376
St. Louis	7:00am	12:15pm
Chicago	9:40am	10:10pm
Cardinals	2:50am	6:10pm
Parker	11:10am	2:00am
Paducah	12:20pm	4:10am
Paducah	8:05pm	7:45am

North Bound	285	375
Lv. Paducah	12:15pm	6:15pm
At. Parker	2:35pm	10:15pm
At. Cardinals	4:05am	12:30am
At. Chicago	7:00am	10:30am
At. St. Louis	7:00pm	6:30am
At. St. Louis	7:50pm	6:25am

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In effect April 13, 1902.

#### SOUTH BOUND.

Lv. Paducah	7:00am	2:15pm
Union Depot	7:15am	2:30pm
Paris	9:25am	4:30pm
Hollow Rock Junct.	10:30am	5:27pm
Jackson	12:40pm	7:35pm
At. Memphis	4:00pm	
Nashville	1:25pm	9:30pm
Chattanooga	9:30pm	3:05am
Atlanta		7:30am

#### NORTH BOUND.

Lv. Atlanta	8:30pm	
Chattanooga	5:00am	1:15am
Nashville	2:15pm	7:00am
Memphis	11:30am	
Jackson	2:32pm	7:55am
Hollow Rock Junct.	5:30pm	10:20am
Paris	6:15pm	11:05am
Union depot	8:25pm	1:15pm
At Paducah	8:30pm	1:30pm

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