

THE CENTRE REPORTER

FRED KURTZ, Editor and Proprietor

TERMS—One year, \$1.00, when paid in advance. Those in arrears subject to previous rates.

Advertisements 20 cents per line for 13 lines, and 5 cents for each subsequent insertion.

CENTRE HALL, PA., THURS, JUNE 6.

BANISHED TO SIBERIA FOR LIFE.

Something About Felix Volkofski and His Devoted, Heroic Wife.

To me, perhaps, the most attractive and sympathetic of the Tomsk exiles was the Russian author, Felix Volkofski, who was banished to Siberia for life in 1875 upon the charge of "belonging to a society that intended, at a more or less remote time in the future, to overthrow the existing form of government."

He was about 38 years of age at the time I made his acquaintance, and was a man of cultivated mind, warm heart and high aspirations. He knew English well, was familiar with American history and literature and had, I believe, translated into Russian many of the poems of Longfellow.

He spoke to me with great admiration, I remember, of Longfellow's "Arsenal at Springfield," and recited it to me aloud. He was one of the most winning and lovable men that I have ever met with good fortune to know; but his life had been a terrible tragedy.

His health had been shattered by long imprisonment in the fortress of Petropavlovsk; his hair was prematurely white; and when his face was in repose there seemed to be an expression of profound melancholy in his dark brown eyes.

I became intimately acquainted with him and very warmly attached to him; and when I bade him good-by for the last time on my return from Eastern Siberia in 1880, he put his arms around me and kissed me, and said: "George Ivanovitch, please don't forget us. In bidding you good-by, I feel as if something were going out of my life that would never again come into it."

Since my return to America I have heard from Mr. Volkofski only once. He wrote me a profoundly sad and touching letter, in which he informs me of the death of his wife by suicide. He himself had been thrown out of employment by the suppression of the liberal Tomsk newspaper, The Siberian Gazette, and his wife, whom I remember as a pale, delicate, sad faced woman, 25 or 30 years of age, had tried to help him support their family of young children by giving private lessons and by taking in sewing.

Anxiety and overwork had finally broken down her health; she had become an invalid, and in a morbid state of mind, brought on by unhappiness and disease, she reasoned herself into the belief that she was an incubance, rather than a help, to her husband and her children, and that they would ultimately be better off if she were dead.

A little more than a year ago she put an end to her unhappy life by shooting herself through the head with a pistol. Her husband was devotedly attached to her, and her death, under such circumstances and in such a way, was a terrible blow to him.

He sent me with his letter a small, worn, leather matchbox, which had been given by Prince Pierre Kravotkin to his exiled brother Alexander, which the latter had left to Volkofski, and which Volkofski had in turn presented to his wife a short time before her death.

The czar may when the hair of such men as Felix Volkofski in the silent bombproof casemates of the fortress, and he may send them in gray convict overcoats to Siberia; but a time will come, in the providence of God, when their names will stand higher than his on the roll of history, and when the record of their lives and sufferings will be a source of heroic inspiration to all Russians who love liberty and their country.

Sent to Jail by a Moscow.

For a year or so the proprietors of the Capital Hotel have been aware that money was disappearing in small quantities, which was a source of great annoyance. Finally a trusted employe was discovered in the act of abstracting a small amount of his employers' funds which had been taken in through the office. He was at once accused of having secured a considerable amount, aggregating in the neighborhood of several hundred dollars, and ultimately apprehended for the theft. He confessed to petty larceny, which was all that could be proved against him, and as stoutly maintained his innocence in excess of the amount he had confessed to taking.

Circumstances, however, were against him, and he paid the penalty. The matter was settled satisfactorily, perhaps, and he left the state. A day or two ago the cash drawer was found to be short of a balance in the sum of \$35. A careful review of the entries revealed no remedy, and the proprietors were puzzled to account for the shortage.

Finally the cash drawer was removed from his position, the matter was investigated through which rate or miles had gained an entrance into the money drawer. Further search revealed the fact that a new net had been constructed underneath the counter top, which was built of papers taken from the drawer. In addition to this, the net was lined with three \$5 bills and one \$10 bill, which balanced the account with the cash drawer.—Denver Times.

Electro Deposited Copper.

Messrs. Elmors in England, have introduced a process for the production of pure copper tubes, wires, etc., by which very satisfactory results have been obtained. The general method of producing a tube is to immerse a revolving mandrel, nearly surrounded by bars of Chili copper, in a bath of copper sulphate, and send a current of electricity between the bars and the mandrel. The ordinary result would be the deposition of crystalline copper, with little adhesive-ness and strength. The essential feature of the process is a burner pressing lightly on the surface of the copper, traveling on a leading screw from one end of the mandrel to the other, its motion being automatically reversed when it reaches either end. The result is a tube of great density and strength, and without lines of weakness as in ordinary tubes.

When it is desired to make wires, tubes of any desired length and thickness are cut spirally into square wires, and these are afterwards drawn to the required size and shape. The conductivity is greater than that usually obtained in commercial wire, and is even greater than that of the sample determined by Dr. Matthiessen, who used the greatest care in obtaining his specimens of copper. Tests made on annealed and hard drawn wires give respectively 102.4 and 104.4 per cent. of the conductivity obtained by Dr. Matthiessen for pure copper.—Science.

"Shaving done while you wait," is the alluring sign in a Vine street barber shop window.—Philadelphia Times.

THE SQUEERS SCHOOL.

DOTHEBOYS HALL, WHICH CHARLES DICKENS' PEN BROKE UP.

The Old Institution of Torture for Sale. Situated in Bowes, Yorkshire—The Village Is Going to Decay—Conflicting Testimony.

A word of advice here to intending pilgrims: Do not allude to Charles Dickens or to Squeers' school, except in the presence of those whom you know to be above common prejudices and animosities. These subjects may be said, to use an expression more forcible than elegant, to stink in the nostrils of your true Bowes man. He believes that the village owes its decay entirely to the abolition of Yorkshire schools in general and of Dotheboys Hall in particular. He points to the fact that whereas half a century ago Bowes had close upon 2,000 inhabitants, it has now short of 400. He has never read "Nicholas Nickleby," nor would he if a copy could be found in the place. If you question him about the school, he will either tell you flatly that he knows nothing about it, or will evasively refer you to other places infamous from their schools.

Of course, all Bowes folk do not share these prejudices, as we shall afterwards see; but the broad fact remains that Bowes, which was ruined in common with many hundreds of country places standing on our great roads elsewhere by the withdrawal of the stage coaches, must be humored if the visitor hopes to reap any profit from his exploration.

We pass by a grand old inn, once known as the George, now the Unicorn, and with the little Norman church and the grim keep of the old Norman castle on our left, push on to Dotheboys Hall, which is the last house in the village.

A long, cold looking house, one story high, with a few straggling outbuildings behind and a barn and stable adjoining. So we read. The house itself is unaltered, save that it is now decidedly the pleasantest and most cheerful looking dwelling in the village, with its creper embowered windows looking on to a trim and well kept garden. The stable and barn, too, remain; but the outbuildings, in which was comprised the school house proper—the scene of the merciless thrashings, the starvation, the breaking of young hearts, the wrecking of young lives, the revolting misery and the blood stirring barbarity—they have long disappeared.

A woman's face looks out from a lower window, and we are about to turn in at the front gate, but our guide stops us, saying: "Not that way! No admittance there! You would be asked if you wanted to buy the house, and have the door slammed in your face."

So we follow the path and turn in through the barn door. This leads us into a yard, where still stands the identical pump which it may be remembered Mr. Squeers discovered to be frozen the morning after the long coach ride from London.

From here we enter the kitchen—cautiously and silently, for the servant tells us that if her master discovered us we should assuredly be turned out with ignominy. There is nothing remarkable in the kitchen—a large, low, heavily raftered apartment—nor in the little room leading from it, which was the schoolmaster's study.

But we linger a long while as we gaze at the marks on the wall by the modern cooking range, where stood the coppers wherein were boiled the potatoes which formed a principal part of the "young noblemen's" food, and as we peer through the study window, which the boys were set to clean when they had satisfactorily spelled "w-i-n-d-o-w," and to the garden, whither they were dispatched to hoe and rake on the attainment of the word "hottney," we ask if a great number of "bottle-necks" do not come here bound upon the same errand as ourselves? The reply is that a great many come; but that as they go to the front door they do not get in at all, but have to content themselves with an exterior view of Dotheboys Hall, so that we may deem ourselves lucky to have seen even the little we have.

WHAT THE RESIDENTS SAY. So much for Dotheboys Hall itself. Still more interesting is the information we managed to pick up from various sources concerning Squeers and his school.

All our informants, country clergymen, intelligent residents, "oldest inhabitants," and such natives as did not feel themselves in honor bound to keep their mouths shut, agreed on one point, that the system of iniquitous schools was monstrous and iniquitous to an incredible extent; that frightful cruelties were practiced upon the boys—who were chiefly the illegitimate offspring of London porters—but that the school typified by Charles Dickens was the only one to which he could gain access, and was the best of the lot.

But in other respects the evidence was so conflicting that we must simply give it without pronouncing any opinion on its value or the reverse. For instance, one woman, a native of Bowes, whose sympathies on would naturally imagine to be with the malignant Squeers, told us that she distinctly remembered the boys coming in summer time to her father's field to help get in the hay, goaded to the work of horses by whips armed with whips.

On the other hand, a gentleman whose father, being a schoolmaster, used to go up to the Saracen's Head with and on the same errand as Squeers, declared that the one-eyed schoolmaster was an estimable man, who cared for his pupils properly and was generally respected and liked. He further stated that his father related to him how he happened to be at the Saracen's Head with Squeers after the Dotheboys Hall number of "Nicholas Nickleby" had taken the public by storm; that the crowd literally lynched Squeers; that the commotion had such an effect upon the schoolmaster as to deprive him of reason, and that Mrs. Squeers died of a broken heart.—Temple Bar.

TRICKS AMONG TELEGRAPHERS.

The Tenderfoot Is Usually Put Through a Vigorous Course of Sports.

"Speaking of country town telegraphers," said a veteran operator, "reminds me of a story on myself. I was the 'student' of the railway station in a small New Jersey town when an old timer came down there to work a wire in the division superintendent's office, which was just across the track in another building.

"One day I answered a call on my instrument and got a message from Master Mechanic McMartin, who lived down the track six miles, asking me as a personal favor to take the handcar and go down the road about three miles to the farm of J. Bird, where I would get 500 strawberry plants. He wanted me to bring them to the station and send them down by the evening express. Now McMartin was in especial favor with me. I had two brothers working under him, and I naturally thought he was a great man. So I said I would do it.

"I went home, got a big clothes basket, rolled out the handcar, and with one of the boys that always hang around a country depot started out to find the farm of J. Bird. I had never heard of any such person, but thought I might have overlooked him. So I pumped away up a long grade until I reckoned I had gone at least three miles. Then I hailed a bird in a field and asked him where J. Bird lived. He said there wasn't any such man around there—might live farther west; so I went on a couple of miles until I found another man, and he was at least half a mile away in a plowed field. So I floundered over that stretch of broken ground and asked him where to find the farm of J. Bird. He said he had lived in that county thirty years, and that no such person had ever been in it so far as he knew—there was no such man in that immediate section, anyway.

"I went back to the handcar in a quandary. I would have gone farther west, though I was already between eight and nine miles from town, and my hands from pumping the handcar were blistered fearfully, if it hadn't been for the old farmer's positive statement that no such man lived anywhere around. Finally I concluded that there had been some mistake and started back. It was mighty hard work and my hands were awful sore, but I pumped away, and at last I rolled up to the depot. There was a great crowd of young fellows there, and when I picked up the big clothes basket and stepped on to the platform everybody gave me a great laugh. Then the old time operator put his head out of the window and sung out: "'Got them strawberry plants?'"

"It didn't take me more than a second to realize the whole messy trick. The operator, from the other building had switched on his ground wire, called me up and sent me the message and signed it McMartin. On the strength of that I had gone out on a hunt for a jaybird and come back with two dozen blisters. While I was gone he had circulated the story and the gang had gathered. I didn't hear the last of that sell for months, and I was so suspicious afterward that I wouldn't answer my own call half the time. That's what I call a low-down trick; but I've hoaxed young operators just as badly since. It teaches 'em the business.'—New York Star.

"Data Out"

Two characteristics mark the Russian people: an intense reverence for the czar, and an idolizing adoration for the mere picture of any royal or sacred personage. While visiting Kief, Mr. Morrison, an English lawyer, entered a telegraph office.

As he passed through the door, he gave the usual continental salute by raising his hat; but he had advanced only a few steps within the room, when a loud shout bade him take off his hat. The Englishman went up to the shouting official, and apologized for his unintentional rudeness. "It is not for me, sir," replied the clerk. "It is for the emperor," and he pointed over his shoulder to an unflattering colored picture of his majesty Alexander III.

The most sacred entrance to the Kremlin, at Moscow, is the Redeemer gate, so called because there is hung in it a picture of the Saviour—a picture of great sanctity. Even the emperor has to uncover his head as he passes through this gate. The passage under the gate is a long one, but even in a terrific snow storm every one uncovers his head.

The traveler is told that when Napoleon refused to take his hat off, while passing before the sacred picture, a sudden gust of wind took it off for him.—Youth's Companion.

The Gum to Chew.

It is a good plan for those who wish to improve their throats to chew pure spruce gum, pine gum or that of the compass wood of the western prairies, for the exercise of the jaws develops the throat, and the resinous qualities of the gum strengthen digestion. I don't mean to recommend the habit of chewing gum, as practiced by its devotees, but there never was an unsightly habit which had so much to be said for it. Rank dyspeptics, with the coating eaten off their stomachs, as the doctors say, find relief in their cravings by chewing pure spruce gum, and all agree that the lungs are better for it. The compound of paraffine and sweet stuff sold for gum has nothing to recommend it.—St. Louis Republic.

Why Didn't They Pull Them Off?

Two youngsters who found the business of selling papers and shining shoes a trifle dull the other night, agreed to polish each other's shoes. But each was evidently distrustful of the other's honesty. Neither wanted to begin the shining operation. At last it was settled by the flip of a penny that Joe should commence on Billy's shoes. When Joe had made Billy's right shoe like look upon looking glass, he threw down the brushes and said: "I ain't goin' to shine the other shoe till you've shined one or mine.—I'm onto yer game, Billy." Billy's protests were in vain. He had to shine Joe's right shoe before the latter would polish Billy's left.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

A RACE FOR THE BRUSH.

GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF A FOX HUNT IN GEORGIA.

"Old Kate" Scouts Reynard and the Chase Begins—Over Fences and Plowed Fields. One Boy on the Old Gray Mule. Another Rides a Steer.

"The brush! the brush!" It was the termination of the most exciting fox chase ever witnessed in Houston.

Just before daylight a party of eleven, all mounted on fleet horses, met at the home of Mr. J. E. Andrews. The fox hounds in the neighborhood had been collected the previous night. There were thirty-four of the finest dogs to be found anywhere.

A faint ray of light could be seen to the east when the party, led by the three veteran hunters of the county, Messrs. J. E. Andrews, John Rountree and Stonewall Howe, started off to the north. The horn was tooted thrice, and the dogs ran in front through the woods. For three miles the ride progressed without a sound from the dogs.

"It's a fox, sure." Suddenly the leading horseman reined up. The almost distinct yelp of a dog could be heard in the far distance. The dogs around the horsemen stopped and listened.

"It's old Kate!" cried Andrews, "and it's a fox, sure. She never lies."

The words had hardly been uttered before the remainder of the pack started off towards the sound at a full run. The horsemen followed, and as the dogs had not jumped the fox, but were only trailing, soon caught up. For twenty minutes progress was slow, as much of the ground had been burned off and it was difficult for the dogs to trail. However, in a short time the track was scented, and, with old Kate in the lead, the dogs started through an open field like the wind and every dog yelping at each stride.

The fox had been jumped. The music of the dogs was grand, wild, exciting.

Through the great open fields, immediately behind the dogs, eleven horsemen ran at a breakneck speed. There was a big ditch in the center, but over it they went like the wind. Both men and horses were excited to the highest pitch. Rountree, on a sleek black mare, was in the lead, and the others ran in a bunch close behind.

The dogs seemed to increase their speed. The horses were going at a wild gallop, but the riders were not satisfied, and urged their flying animals on with the spur.

Suddenly a fence was seen in the distance. The dogs were scrambling over it. "Hadin' we better rein up!" cried one of the rear horsemen.

"Not a bit of it," yelled Andrews, who was now running neck and neck with Rountree.

"Come on!" he cried, and his fleet footed gray and the sleek black of Rountree bounded the seven rail fence as though it was not a foot high. The remainder of the party had drawn rein a little and were somewhat behind, but upon seeing the case with which the leaders cleared the hurdle each put spurs to his horse and away they went. Seven of the horses cleared it without a scratch, but two struck the top rail, fell and threw their riders into the freshly plowed ground, which probably saved their necks. But neither horses nor riders were hurt, and although delayed they were mounted again in an instant and renewed the chase with more intense excitement.

THE GRAY WOLF.

The horses had run hard, but the fox and dogs were too fleet for them. They were away off in the distance and their yelps were not distinctly heard. The horseman drew rein and rode slowly through a clump of woods to a knoll which they mounted.

Suddenly the yelps of the dogs became more distinct.

"They have turned," shouted Howe. "Yes, and they are coming this way," cried Andrews.

"Keep quiet, boys, and we'll see him." The sun was up and the dogs could be seen coming towards the party.

Suddenly the fox, a big gray, with tail erect and tongue hanging far out, passed the foot of the knoll. He was blown, but still running like the wind.

Two hundred yards behind were the dogs. A big red hound was in the lead, while at his side was old Kate, the striker. Behind them the pack came, forming almost a solid triangle, extending fully twenty yards in the rear of the leaders. But they were running like lightning and gaining on the fox at every jump. It was an open field for two miles, and into this, right behind the dogs, the horsemen rushed. Both men and horses were wild with excitement. Every one wanted the brush, and all were running for it. Spurs were pressed against the sides of the already flying horses, and the riders leaned forward and yelled to their racers. The eleven horses were running in a bunch, while far behind could be seen two boys, one on a gray mule and the other riding a steer—both without saddles. The field seemed covered with small ditches, but the animals jumped them without apparently noticing the ground.

We were within fifty yards of the dogs and the fox was not ten ahead of the lead dog. But on they went. Suddenly the fox seemed to lag and in an instant thirty-four dogs were piled up on top of him and tearing him to pieces.

The horsemen were then a hundred yards behind, and that hundred yards was run for the brush. It was a wild race and eleven horses were thrown on their haunches almost in line right at the dogs, but the rider of the fleet gray was there a nick ahead. He seemed to go right over the head of his horse into the lightning pack of dogs, and in an instant had the body of the fox raised above his head in triumph.—Powersville (Ga.) Cor. Atlanta Constitution.

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