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## The Bloomfield Times.

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## MY ADVENTURES IN RUSSIA.

CONTINUED.

I HAD no sooner left the office than two spies took my track, and kept it up, and down, and around, until I returned. I knew their profession, and believing that they would not dare lay hands on me in the daytime, I retaliated on them. I dodged into stores, around corners, entered vehicles, gave them the slip on the quay, and kept them in a perfect sweat to keep my track. I, of course, did not pretend to know that they were dogging me, and several times roundly abused them as pickpockets.

"We are not pickpockets; we are police!" explained one of them after my abuse.

"Police and pickpockets are the same thing!" I replied; "or the latter class are the more honest and the less servile of the two."

I spoke the words in Russian, and just at a corner where several people were standing. Every man ran away as fast as he could, expecting that I would be arrested, but I passed on and the officials made no reply.

That evening we ascertained that a guard had been set to watch Morrow's house. I accidentally discovered that the spy was in the kitchen, where he was cordially welcomed by the servants, and unknown to the consul or his wife, I went down and hustled him out. He took up his position on the doorstep, and I drove him off by sousing him with water from one of the windows. He then crossed the street, and probably kept watch all night.

I was alone at the office next morning when two police officials entered, the same two who had called separately. Both smiled and bowed, as if nothing unpleasant had occurred, and then one of them asked:

"Has the gentleman concluded to leave Cronstadt to-morrow?"

I was going to give him an emphatic reply, but changed my mind and answered:

"Yes, I have concluded to go. If you are around the depot when the early train leaves, you will see me going out."

"We are a thousand times obliged," the man replied, bowing courteously. And they took their leave.

That day, as I took my usual walk, there were no spies around, and the fellow who had been set to watch the house was withdrawn that night. I saw that the officials depended on my word, and felt rather ashamed of my position, but was determined not to leave Cronstadt until I got ready, or until there were signs of greater personal danger.

I had scarcely entered the office in the morning before I was followed by the same two officials, wearing the same smiles and bowing as courteously as before.

"The gentleman did not go as he intended?" said one of them, in a voice of inquiry.

"No, I didn't get off," I replied.

"The reason, pray?"

"Solely on account of the illness of my grandmother. The old lady is very bad off, and I can't tell how soon I may be an orphan. I am mentioned in her will for a considerable sum, and it wouldn't do to leave now."

The men stared at me in blank amazement, and were so childlike as not to detect the sarcasm. After a whisper and a nod, one of them remarked:

"It is very strange; we did not know that your grandmother was in Cronstadt. Where is she?"

The question was asked in such an innocent tone that I fell to laughing, and they suspected the falsehood. I could see that they were very indignant, but I laughed away, and they took their leave without

another word to me. Half an hour after spies were watching the office. The servant who kept the rooms in order had left our service after the first visit of the police, fearful of being implicated, but I could "run" the office in all its departments, and did so.

Had Morrow been able to get out of the house, he would have probably insisted on my taking a different course, or leaving the city at once, as he knew what would be the result if I did not do so. The officials had certainly been very patient with me; but for the position I held, I would have been on the road to Siberia long before. The misfortune was that I overestimated my strength of position. While realizing that I incurred great personal peril, I reasoned something like this:

"If they injure me or imprison me, the consul will consult the minister, and the minister will consult the state department of the United States, and the Russian bear will get a cuffing from Uncle Sam."

The line of reasoning was sound except in one particular; it did not provide against underhanded work on the part of the officials. Morrow was finally flat down with fever, raving crazy most of the time, so that I had full charge of the office. The police officials would have called regularly each morning but for the fact that I locked the door in their faces; then they ceased to annoy me in person, but a small crowd of spies hung on my trail whenever I moved out of the office.

Morrow had been ill two weeks, and I had been in Cronstadt a month, when an American sailor called at the office one day. He was a weather-beaten old chap who wanted a passage home, but as there was no opportunity just then, I had to send him to a boarding-house. He was not able to speak a word of Russian, but he knew the English language and all its oaths, and he soon told me his opinion of the country and its people. We were going along the street as he talked, and even if none of the Russians could have understood his words, they would have known by his looks and gestures that he felt a contempt for the whole race. I tacitly encouraged him, when I should have rebuked him, on account of my position, if nothing more.

It is only a short distance from Cronstadt over to St. Petersburg; the two places are, in fact, one, the former being the military key of the latter. My uncle the minister had of course been informed of Mr. Morrow's illness, and of course an account of my foolish doings had reached him. He wrote me a letter containing not only a sharp reprimand, but he warned me that I incurred great personal danger. I was less high-strung after receiving the letter, and had been warned so much that I began to get a little nervous. When I returned to the office, after piloting the sailor a few blocks, the two police officials followed me in.

"Here is the gentleman's passport," said one, handing out the paper. "He will, of course, cross to St. Petersburg to-night."

"You are aware of Mr. Morrow's illness?" I asked, after considerable reflection.

"We know that Mr. Morrow is ill," they replied together.

"If I should go away the office would be closed," I continued.

They shrugged their shoulders for reply.

"So you see that I cannot go, even if I wanted to. There are Americans here who must be cared for."

"We have orders, you know," put in one.

"To do what?"

He held out the paper again. My hot temper went up like a rocket, and I came near reaching for the legislative weapon, the inkstand. Conquering my first impulse, I got up and gave it to them hot and heavy.

"Orders to drive me out of Cronstadt? I'll be hanged if you can do it! I am here as the representative of a nation which will hash your Russian bear into mince-meat if you lay a hand on me! Just try it on once! That flag up there is the American flag, and you try any game on me and you'll see a hundred such flags floating over this old tower!"

I said something more after getting warmed up, and I think I frightened them a bit, for they got nervous, and they half apologized for carrying the thing so far. The man who had the passport tore it up, and both bowed very low as they retired.

Three days passed in which I was neither annoyed nor did I perpetrate any further foolishness; in fact, I felt ashamed of myself, and made up my mind to be more dignified in future. I probably should have

kept the resolution had I been allowed to do so, but Russian spirit of revenge had been appealed to. The third night Morrow was taken worse in the night, and I dressed and started for the doctor five blocks away. The streets were clear of all human life so far as I could see, but when I had passed along about three blocks a wolf robe was thrown over my head from a doorway, and the next moment I was prostrate, with three or four men holding me down.

My first thought after the robe struck me was that some part of the house had fallen, but as I went down, and felt myself seized by the Russians, I believed that I had been attacked by robbers.

"Help! help! I shouted, kicking and fighting as much as I could.

The men neither ran away nor injured me; they would have done one or the other if robbers. In a moment more the robe was drawn off, I was jerked to my feet, and then a voice which I recognized as Vlitchy's said:

"We arrest you for the government! Any resistance which you can make will be useless; come, now, and the less trouble you give us the better!"

It was something of a relief to know that I was not the victim of robbers, and I was not frightened at the idea of arrest. Remembering my errand as we were about to move off, I asked the spy to send one of the men to call the doctor, and he readily complied with the request.

"You are aware that grave diplomatic difficulties will grow out of this arrest, and perhaps war?" I asked of Vlitchy, as we moved off in the direction of the government prison.

"I hardly think so," he replied.

"But I know it!" I continued, hotly. "The minister will be over here before to-morrow night, and within a week an American man-of-war will be in the harbor, with her guns trained to rake your town high and low!"

"Such may be the case," he quietly replied; "my business is to obey the orders of my superiors; we have an army to settle questions of war."

Not another word was spoken until we reached the prison. The place may have altered since then, but at that date it was a prison composed of two long rooms, guarded by heavy doors, and divided by a wall. The females were locked up on one side, and the men on the other. Murderers, thieves, political offenders, and all other classes were put into the one room together. I did not intend to convey the idea that the long room was clear. Across the further end was erected a lattice-work of iron bars, reaching from floor to ceiling, thus making a room about twelve feet long, and the width of the larger room.

Many of the prisoners in the big room roused up as we entered, and they watched our walk down through the room with much interest. We paused at the lattice-work, a door was unlocked, and I was ordered in.

"I hope the journey will be pleasant," said Vlitchy, removing his cap and making a low bow, as he was on the point of going away.

"Journey? What journey?" I asked.

He went off without replying, and as soon as the great door had closed, several of the prisoners began shouting, "Poor fellow! poor fellow!"

Looking around the little room, I saw two Russians cowering in a corner, and they were sobbing like heart-broken women. There was another in the straw, and yet another in the furthest corner. I thought this last one had an Englishy look, and going over, I awoke him from a sound sleep.

"Port a little!" he growled, as he rubbed his eyes; and I soon discovered that it was the sailor who had called at the office—Joe Graham. He leaped up when he found it was I, and after recovering from his astonishment, he told me how he had been captured. It was easy enough to take him, as he was half drunk, but the hour in prison had thoroughly sobered him.

"It's a bad lee shore we're on, matey," he remarked, as we sat down on the filthy straw. "As near as I can make out, we're shipped for Siberia!"

I was incredulous until I went over and spoke to one of the Russians. The fellow was in a sort of stupor, and I had to shake him roughly before he showed any consciousness of my presence. He then seized me around the legs, and sobbed out:

"O my God! If you cannot help me, I am lost!"

"Have they sentenced you to be hung or shot?" I inquired, feeling my legs.

"Worse than that—I shall be sent to Siberia!" he groaned.

"Perhaps not; you have not been tried yet."

"They put in here only such people as are to go to that horrible country," he sobbed. "Trial and sentence will be a mere form!"

The prisoners in the larger room substantiated his statements, but before we had much conversation a soldier was sent in to drive them away from the lattice work. Otherwise, I might have been spared weeks of suffering, as I should have told them who I was, and requested that they get word to Mrs. Morrow, who would have notified my uncle, the minister, of my arrest. Some of the prisoners were in there for no greater offence than drunkenness and disorderly conduct, and were, of course, soon to be restored to liberty.

It was anything but pleasant news, and had I credited it as fully as the sailor did, I should not have had a wink of sleep. It seemed improbable that they would condemn me without a fair show, and hardly probable that they would dare punish me at all, knowing that they would breed a diplomatic war. Hugging these delusive ideas, I fell asleep two hours before daylight, and was bitten, stung, and annoyed by fleas, until I felt like one who had run naked through a growth of nettles. In order that I may not forget it, I will take occasion to say here that even the frigid temperature of a Russian winter does not interfere with the lively habits of Russian fleas. Nature may have brought them forth prepared to gambol merrily with the thermometer marking thirty degrees, or they may have bred from the very snow; whichever theory you accept, you can support my assertion that Russian prisons, and hovels, and cabins, are flea-shingled and flea-floored, and that getting used to flea-fighting is as much of a business on the part of a foreign resident, as getting used to eating Russian food.

Daylight was the signal for the Russians in with us to commence weeping and howling. They were worse than children, and they somehow got the idea that Joe and I could save them if we would. It was with much difficulty that I made them understand that we were all on the same platform, so far as accusation was concerned. One of the men had said something unfavorable to the character of a government official, and the other two were accused of conspiracy. They assured me that the charge was made by a business rival, and was without a word of truth. I encouraged them to believe that the judge would unravel the plot, and restore them to liberty, and they finally ceased their wails.

Breakfast was brought in about half-past eight. Joe fairly raved when he saw how they were going to feed us. There was a piece of black sticky bread, and a slice of dried meat which was half mould.

"I don't want any!" growled Joe, as he flung the bread at the head of the man in the little door. "Bring me a cup of coffee, three fried eggs, a piece of steak, a loaf of white bread, and a bottle of cognac, and be quick about it, or you'll get into trouble!"

I threw my bread down in disgust, and the soldier said that if we had money we could send through him and secure a good breakfast. Vlitchy and his rascals had not taken away my money, and I sent out a dollar, and we had a fine meal. The Russians refused to eat a mouthful; when pressed, they began howling and lamenting in a way to make one nervous.

"When shall we go to court?" I asked the soldier.

"At eleven o'clock," he answered.

"Can you send me a lawyer before that hour?"

The man looked at me in great surprise, and did not reply until I put the question again. He then made an evasive answer, and went away. When eleven o'clock came the five of us were escorted through the room, and up a pair of stairs, into a courtroom. The judge was on his seat, and Vlitchy, the two police officials, and three or four spies, sat near him. We five were seated on a bench, and while I was looking around for the audience, one of the Russian prisoners was ordered to stand up.

"Prisoner, you are charged with having conspired against the government," said the judge, in a slow solemn voice.

"I am not guilty—I am innocent!" growled the prisoner, trembling like one having a severe shake of ague.

"No honest citizen comes here charged with such an offence," continued the judge.

"I have heard the evidence, carefully

weighed it, and I find you guilty! Your sentence is Siberia!"

The prisoner did not sink down, but he fell down, and was allowed to remain where he fell until he regained strength enough to crawl up on the seat.

"If that's the way the bloody old heathen jibes his booms, we may as well take in canvas at once!" growled Joe; while I was dumbfounded. There had been no accuser, evidence, witnesses, lawyers or audience, but the whole matter had rested with the sullen-faced official behind the desk. The other two prisoners were ordered up, and disposed of in the same way, and then it came my turn.

"Prisoner, stand up!" ordered the judge.

"I shall not do it! I replied. "I have been arrested without process, and I do not recognize the theory that I am a prisoner. If I am to be tried, I want to know the charge, who makes it, and I want the privileges of an accused party."

"That's so!" roared Joe, leaping up; "you just touch a hair of his head, and you'll feel the talons of the bird of freedom scraping at your baldhead pretty quick! Just go ahead with this tomfoolery business if you dare!"

The judge had a few hairs on his head, and they stood up straight, while his face was like a coal. He fidgeted around, spoke to Vlitchy, and then asked:

"Will you leave the country?"

"Not by the hornspon!" howled Joe. "I'd see your old town under water to the mastheads before I'd let you drive me out!"

"And you?" asked the judge, pointing to me.

"I want the minister here before I answer," was my reply.

I knew afterwards that we would both have been set at liberty if making the promise, but as we would not make it, and as they did not purpose to give us a public trial, the judge consulted the spies, and then sent us below. As we reached the jail, we turned to the left, and entered a room fitted up something like a blacksmith's shop. A big chain was suspended to hooks on each side of the room, and ten persons, in pairs, had already been fastened to it.

"Boarded by pirates!" growled Joe, as he saw that we were to be chained. "Now, matey, let's give 'em a few Yankee knocks!"

There were five of the jail officials in the room, and a sharp fight ensued. Joe got hold of a two pound hammer with a long handle, and I secured an iron bar, and they had more than they wanted to do to even dodge the blows. Had there been no more, we could have walked out; but after a few minutes a guard of soldiers came in with muskets, and then the game was up.

"When you can't beat against a gale you can always run before it," remarked Joe, as we took position alongside the chain.

There was a terrible hullaboo in the prison; in five minutes there was a whole company of soldiers present, and the twenty or thirty officials had armed themselves as if expecting an insurrection. But we had no further movement to make. I stood on the left side of the chain, and a band of iron was clasped around my arm above the elbow, the ends slipped past each other, and a rod passed through the sides in a hole cut for it, then through a link of the chain, and was then hammered down. The job was done in a bungling manner, but was nevertheless stout and strong as could be desired. Joe was served in the same manner, and then two more prisoners completed the chain, making fourteen in all, four of whom were women. Joe's tongue was not still for a moment; he gave everybody a piece of his mind, and when the blacksmith cuffed his ears, he retaliated with a kick which doubled the man in a half circle.

It was noon before we got ready to move. Joe was singing as we moved out into the street, I was watching to catch sight of the face of a European, and the other twelve were howling and lamenting. There was considerable hope yet; if they marched us through the streets of Cronstadt and St. Petersburg, the chances of my being seen and identified were good. But the Russians had perhaps talked over the matter; at any rate, we were headed for the quay by the most direct route, and on arriving there were hustled on board a small steamer.

"You see their game, don't you?" whispered Joe; "they didn't dare take us through the streets, but will run us up the lake, and start us for Siberia from some of the towns on the northeast side." Concluded next week.