

CZAR'S OWN COURIERS.

EVERY ONE ELSE MUST GIVE WAY FOR THEM.

How Three United States Naval Officers Were Enabled to Make a Rapid and Easy Passage Across the Steppes of Siberia.

"We in this country cannot appreciate the autocratic power of the czar of Russia. His word must be obeyed! His name commands respect in his dominion. He is never mentioned but in reverence by the faithful, or in a whisper by those who would oppose him. There is no open denunciation of him. His acts are never criticised, or, if so, no one is aware of it except as it results in a Siberian excursion. His most insignificant desire is never controverted by the officials of his country."

The speaker was one of three lieutenants of the United States navy who a few years ago returned to America from the Japan station overland through Siberia, and thence by regular avenues of travel to New York, the remark being addressed to a reporter of the New York Herald.

"We had unusual facilities for making the journey," continued the officer. "Our government communicated with the Russian minister at Washington, he with his home office, and eventually Baron Struvi, then Russian minister to Japan, was notified."

"Our passports were inspected and countersigned by the baron, who in addition gave us several personal and open letters to be used along the route. As we were leaving the baron's office he called us back. He seemed to deliberate for a moment, and then said: 'Gentlemen, there is one more document that I can give you. You must treat it with respect. Never use it but in case of absolute necessity. If possible don't use it at all. Never present it but as a last resort, and then, if possible, to the highest official of the Russian government that is at hand.'"

"The baron left the room. Presently he returned and handed us a sealed document. As he gave it to us he said: 'I am not at liberty to disclose the nature of this document. You may never use it. So far as I am aware no foreigner has ever possessed the like. You are Americans; our governments have always been friendly; you are granted an unusual privilege; respect my injunctions.'"

"We thanked the baron, promised to follow his instructions and retired. As we proceeded on our trip we often discussed the nature of the document. Sometimes we joked about it. We had no occasion to use it early in our trip, for our passports and letters were everywhere treated with the greatest respect."

"Our journey was about three-quarters finished when one afternoon we arrived at a post station, all of which in Siberia are under military control."

"On calling for a change of horses we were informed that we could secure none that evening; moreover, we were told that it might be several days or a week before we could leave the post."

"We inquired the reason and received an evasive answer. There was a horse disease or something of that sort, they said. We knew it to be false, for the horses were all in good condition. We protested—the conversation was in French—but we could gain no satisfaction. The official smiled in a provoking manner."

"We finally bethought ourselves of our mysterious document, and resolved to present it to the military governor of the post, whose residence had been pointed out to us."

"We called for our luggage and arrayed ourselves in the showy full dress of a United States naval officer—cocked hat, dress coat, gold lace and epaulets and sword. We took our credentials and the mysterious document and filed up to the governor's house. We resolved to try the ordinary means first, so as to learn the full efficacy of the missive we carried. I confess I was curious about the thing."

"The governor treated us with the marked courtesy of a Russian military officer. He, too, conversed in French. He told us it was impossible for us to leave the post, but he gave us no reason for the detention."

"We had arranged before hand a plan of procedure. So we put our heads together and talked and gesticulated in English, of which the Russian was ignorant. Finally, in a dramatic manner, I pulled out the unknown document and handed it to him. He broke the seal and glanced at the contents."

"The poor man turned pale, his legs trembled. He was so agitated he could hardly speak. 'Why did you not present that before?' he said, 'you would have experienced no difficulty then. Now I am liable to severe punishment.'"

"We had seen many strange sights and had passed through many strange adventures on that Siberian trip," continued the speaker, "but the consternation of that Russian, I must confess, frightened me."

"Do you know the nature of this document?" he said to us. He had evidently noticed our wonderment at the document."

"We confessed that we were ignorant. 'Why, gentlemen,' he said, 'that document is your appointment as special couriers to the czar. Armed with such a document the Russian who detains you, who refuses to succor you in time of need or who places any obstacles in your way is liable to the severest punishment—trial before a military tribunal—and death, if found guilty.'"

"The governor then explained the reason for our detention. Some exiled political convicts had just escaped from a neighboring settlement and were ranging over the territory beyond us. The governor feared that travelers might be murdered, and that with passports and different clothing the convicts might escape."

"He accompanied us to the post station, gave a few fierce commands in Russian, ordered out the best horses—his own, I think—and summoned an armed force of Cossacks, under whose escort we proceeded to the next relay station."

"I suppose that as soon as we were out of sight the governor knouted a few prisoners," continued the lieutenant, "just to enable him," he added, "to recover his equanimity from the fright the document gave him."

"We had no occasion to test the efficacy of the document a second time, said the lieutenant. The information that we were couriers on a special mission to the czar preceded us. The deference shown us was absolutely distasteful to our republican minds. Still the whole adventure served the purpose of an illustration of the autocratic power of the czar, which we otherwise might never have realized."

MENNONITES OF RUSSIA.

The Hardships of a Christian Sect Under the Czar's Government.

The mennonites of Russia, as well as the Hebrews, are complaining of the severities of the czar's government, and, but for the obstacles to their emigration, the whole body of them would probably come to this country. They are a christian sect over three centuries old, and hold a baptismal doctrine not recognized by the orthodox Greek church, into which the government has tried to drive them.

The Russian mennonites, who number only about 60,000, took up their habitation in southern Russia, near the Sea of Azov, about a century ago, explains the New York Sun, having then left Russia on account of the hardships to which they were subjected. They are a peaceful, intelligent, virtuous and industrious people and they have enjoyed rare prosperity in that region.

The main trouble of the government with them grows out of their religious principle of non-resistance and their refusal to render military service. For a long period of time they were exempt from service by the decrees of the czars, but this privilege was withdrawn twenty years ago. They then obtained permission to leave Russia within a specified time.

In 1873 they began to take advantage of it, and several thousand of them found refuge in this country. The first colonies went as farmers to Kansas and Minnesota, where they purchased land and got along finely. The czar, seeing their determination, modified his decree of conscription, and gave orders that, in time of war, they should be required only to render service in the military hospitals. The granting of this privilege and the expiration of the period during which they were allowed to emigrate stopped the mennonite movement to America. The whole body of them was desirous of leaving Russia, as they left Prussia a century ago.

Now again they are suffering hardships through the operation of the conscription law and through the czar's determination to bring them into the orthodox fold. If permission could be obtained by them to leave Russia they would follow those of their brethren who came here eighteen years ago.

NO USE FOR JOKERS.

They Are Not Wanted in Any Profession or Occupation.

"Do you really think it injures a man to be known as a joker?"

"It would bring him to failure in this line of business," said the wholesale importer to a New York Sun man.

"It would ruin him in our profession," said the heavy lawyer.

"It would keep him out of our establishment," said the head of a shipping firm.

"It would prevent him from getting any church," said the preacher.

"It would destroy all faith in his practical ability," said the dry goods merchant.

"It would not secure his appointment by the board of education as a teacher," said the pedagogue.

"It would never do in our line," said the manager of a machine shop.

"We could not give him any responsible position," said the banker.

"We would not trust him here," said the chief engineer.

"It would not cause him to be trusted by big operators," said a Wall street broker.

"It would destroy his practice among patients," said the doctor.

"We would be suspicious of his contracts," said the contractor.

"He would not be likely to get promoted," said the policeman.

Not if he was a real genuine, original fresh joker," said the joke editor of a local weekly.

"He could not wear my uniform," said the naval commander on his quarter deck.

"It would ruin him for our service," said the undertaker.

"So everybody is against us," groaned the joker, after hearing these opinions, "and yet I can get up a dime joke that would make some of them sick."

Drunk in the Second Degree.

John Tierney pleaded guilty to the theft of an overcoat and a suit of clothes from William Kidd. The victim testified that he met the prisoner on West Callowhill street one night, and was persuaded to go to a lodging house, where, when he awoke, he had nothing to wear.

"Were you drunk?" asked Mr. Finletter.

"No, sir, I was intoxicated," suggested Judge Arnold.—Philadelphia Times.

THE HEARTHSTONE.

A Department for Home and Fireside, Edited by Mrs. S. C. O. Upton. "The corner stone of the republic is the hearthstone."

A Heart-stirring Address.

I wish every reader of this department of THE ALLIANCE would read the whole of Miss Willard's recent address before the National Council of Women. It speaks to the very soul of womanhood and her epitome of what women are doing in the world makes everyone feel like making up and getting into the procession of progress. We have culled part of an analysis of this speech from the Woman's Tribune and present it to our readers.

INDUSTRIAL POSITION.

Just thirty years ago General Spinner proposed the admission of women to employment in the United States Treasury. He, with the other two men who favored the measure (Salmon P. Chase and Attorney General Edward Bates) were denominated "grandmother," and were otherwise insulted and threatened. For my part I would have women treated as an individual, and not belonging to a tribe. I would have her portion under the sun assigned to her in severalty, and would teach her as rapidly as possible to become a citizen of the world on equal terms with every other citizen.

The Boston Globe, analyzing the recent statistics of the Massachusetts Labor Bureau, says:

The figures simply show that in the employments in which the very lowest wages are paid women constitute 70 per cent of the workers, while in the employments where as high as \$20 a week are paid, they constitute hardly over three per cent. In addition to all this is the humiliating fact that in the same occupations, standing side by side with men, the females are paid less wages for the same work. Why do legislators sit passively under such discrimination of sex in the matter of work and wages? Simply because they know that women carry no votes, and that mere sentiment can neither seat nor unseat a politician.

Those who do not want "reform radicalism" preached in this meeting house, these days remind me of the dear prohibition pastor who was taken to task by his deacons after morning service with the words: "Didn't you know that we got you here to preach the gospel?" "Oh yes," was the reply, "and a nice, sweet pretty pill you'd like me to make of it, but I propose to teach every-day religion as I understand it." And then exported after a fashion that my be paraphrased thus:

"Out from the hearthstone the children fair, Pass from the breath of a mother's prayer; Shall a father's vote on the crowded street Consent to the snare for their thoughtless feet?"

The whole rationale of women's place in finance is set forth in the remark of a Knight of Labor, who said about an undesirable locality: "It's not a fit place for a woman," and the reply of a comrade, "Then it's time for women to go down there and make it fit."

The many-sided woman question has invaded all realms, even to those where crowns are worn. In all the line of English history only two epochs have reached a gracious name, and they are the two when the great queens have reigned, the "Elizabethan" and the "Victorian."

DRESS REFORM.

But until woman comes to her kingdom physically she will never come at all. Created to be well, and strong, and beautiful, she long ago "sacrificed" her constitution and has ever since been living on her by-laws. She is a creature born to the beauty and freedom of Diana; but she is swathed by her skirts, splintered by her stays, bandaged by her tight waist, and pinioned by her sleeves. It is the duty of leaders to point the sisters along the brightly-opening way of dress reform.

SCIENTIFIC MOTHERHOOD.

We are going to have ere long a scientific motherhood. The best work of the mother will be intelligently done on the basis of hereditary, pre-natal influence and devout obedience to laws of health. Mrs. Frances Fisher Wood is a Vassar graduate and a successful mother, and she points to her healthy, happy twenty-two-month-old baby with pride as a specimen of scientific babyhood. This college-bred woman has proved, to her own satisfaction at least, that there is such a thing as scientific motherhood.

THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

The Columbian Exposition should witness the convening of a world's congress of women. They should set forth the methods of the King's Daughters, the College Settlements, the Working Girls' Clubs, the Department of Mercy, the Women's Christian Temperance Unions. I have wished that in a sort of Valhalla of great women we might group portraits, statues and personal souvenirs of the best and brightest who have lived. Beside Joan of Arc should stand Queen Isabella. But for our own American eyes there will be a group in marble where around the saintly face of our gl' ried Lucretia Mott shall be gathered those faithful allies, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony; and those loyal co-workers, Mary A. Livermore, Julia Ward Howe, and Lucy Stone. [Prolonged applause.]

CLOSING SENTENCES.

I turn with grateful gladness to the life that now is and give to you, in parting, those grand words of Harriet Martineau's great brother James, who, focusing his mind upon the problem of the passing hour said:

"If nothing can be more sure than this; that if we cannot sanctify our present lot, we could sanctify no other. Our heaven and our Almighty Father are here or nowhere. The obstructions of that lot are given for us to leave away by the concurrent touch of a holy spirit and the labor of a strenuous will, its gloom is for us to lift with some celestial light; its mysteries are for our worship, its sorrows for our trust, its perils for our courage, its temptations for our faith. Soldiers of the cross, it is not for us, but for our Leader and our Lord, to choose the field; it is ours, taking the station which he assigns, to make it the field of truth and honor, though it be the field of death."

Yes, verily, and of every true heart that beats in this Council of Women it shall be said, when we are gone, as glorious Wordsworth said of glorious Toussaint L'Ouverture—

"Thee hast left behind Powers that will win with thee; air earth and skies; There's not a breathing of the common wind That will forget thee; thou hast great allies; Thy friends are exultations, agonies, And joy, and man's unconquerable mind."

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