THE QUEEN'S ORDERS

Rutherford was a Scotchman, and came from the Highlands originally, owing to his ancestors of Jacobite. You may note now around the most typical, and also that his ancestor became the company of Dundee.

"Oh," said a wise one morning, arriving the chamber of the Mr. Rutherford, who gave the dog to the captain, "my cup home is surrounded in guards and an director of the police is responding to an [illegible]."

"What does he want?" cried the butler.

"I know nothing, sir," replied the valet, "but it appears to be an affair of importance."

"Show him in."

The valet bowed and withdrew in a few moments, announcing Mr. Bellingham, whom the butler at a glance perceived to be the leader of formidable rebels. He bowed.

"Sir, you must forgive how we deeply I am grieved at having troubled to call upon a man of so high rank, in consequence of a matter of some gravity of the case, though it has probably been presented to a great crime."

"By a great crime!" cried the butler. "Who has committed the crime?"

"You, sir, stand to you the punishment attached."

"Sir, I am a respectable citizen of the land, and I cannot see how that one yesterday night could be attributed to to depute with my disposing my object of complaint to my witness of disorder."

"Your being a respectable Russian is what makes your situation so critical. If you had committed a British subject, you might now have claimed the protection of the English minister and then, perhaps, you escaped from a Russian command. Alas! I am changed all circumstances."

"Will you inform me what it is?"

"My dear sir, I shall never have courage to tell you."

"Have I lost the favor of her majesty?"

"Oh, that is worse than that!"

"Impossible! Does she wish to explate smuggling back to England?"

"Exploited to your own country, and that punishment would be to worse."

"Good heavens, you frighten me! Explain!"

"Siberia, sir, is a delightful country that has been colonized. You might return from there."

"Am I condemned to a prison?"

"A prison you might escape from."

"The knout?"

"The knout is painful, but the knout does not destroy life."

"My —?" cried Rutherford. "Am I to die?"

"And what a death!"

"What! Is it not enough to kill me without trial? Has none been offered?"

"Alas, yes!"

"Well, speak, sir. I am a man and have some courage. Speak!"

"My dear sir, if the condemned had not been given to expect, I never would have believed it. You are to be hanged alive."

The poor butler uttered a piece of agony.

"What you tell me is horrible. You must have lost your senses."

"No; I have not, though I certainly shall lose it during the operation."

"But is it possible that you, who have a hundred times called yourself my friend, could receive such an order without attempting to make her majesty comprehend its horrors?"

"I did what I could. I brought her majesty to relinquish the people, or at least to change some one else with the execution of it, till she your society had interfered to be in that time which you must have heard and that admits of no reply."

"And then?"

"Then," said the director of police, "I sent in search of a skilled executioner, who stuffs birds for the Academy of Sciences, because, since the thing must be done, I wished it to be performed in the best possible manner."

"And did the wretch consent to do it?"

"He refused me to his colleague, who skins and prepares monkeys, on account of the great resemblance between the human and the monkey."

"Well?"

"He is waiting."

"Waiting! Is it to be done this hour?"

"Her majesty's orders admit of no delay."

"But you will give me time to write a note to the empress?"

"I fear that I cannot."

"It is a last favor. Grant it, I entreat you."

"Very well, write."

The director of police called a footman of the guard, to whom he intimated Rutherford's letter and ordered him to return immediately with the answer. The man was then affixed and he brought back an order to answer the butler with the pencil.

A certain rise at the door Rutherford moved it with the footman, to be able and to five minutes more found himself in the Hermitage and in the presence of the empress, who received him with a burst of laughter.

Unable to understand the cause of her mirth, he threw himself at her feet.

"Mercy, madam," he said, "or at least tell me the crime of which I have confess such a horrible punishment."

"My dear Rutherford," said the queen, "you have nothing in the world to do with all this."

"Is that who, then, does it concern?"

"The man that you gave me and who had procured."

"Madam, I cannot believe that you would know and send to him, the executioner's office in Siberia, or stripped off."

"Come to bedtime. I suppose to be spared to the knout, and to be sent to Siberia. I just long a long without further explanation."

"Madam," replied the footman, "you are [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]