

THE CZAR AND HIS NURSE

HIS GREAT GRIEF MANIFESTED AT HER DEATH.

She Had Been Like a Mother to Him, and He Like a Son to Her—A Pathetic Scene in the Death Chamber—The Czar Walked Through Slush to the Cemetery.

I happened to be in St. Petersburg four years ago when Mrs. Strutton, the Czar's English nurse, died in the Winter Palace, writes a correspondent. It was a gloomy day, with thin, moist snow dropping down from the blotched sky, and every now and then a swirl of biting wind blowing up the frozen Neva.

For weeks I had been searching night and day through Russia for information bearing upon the persecution of the Jews, and my steps had taken me into the very heart of the great empire. But wherever I went the figure of the Czar was always present in my mind as I saw him riding with his cuirassiers—glittering from head to foot—a smiling arrogant giant, striding his ponderous black charger with a graceful ease not to be looked for in a man so massive. That was the only time I had seen the Czar with a military escort—for he usually drives through the streets of his capital unaccompanied, save by an aide-de-camp—but the sight was enough to fix him in my memory as the incarnation of brute force, splendid and terrible.

On the day I speak of a messenger rode to the Anitshkoff Palace, on the Nevski Prospect, to tell the Czar that his nurse was dead; and on his way he had to ride over the very spot where the last Czar was assassinated. Alexander III. is not a sentimental man. He inherited none of his father's sensitive qualities. But the love he had for his nurse surpassed everything else in his nature. "Kitty" he called her. She was his second mother, his guardian spirit. His sluggish heart went out to her and his face always brightened at the sound of her voice.

And she was dead. The Czar hurried through the storm to the Winter Palace and went to the darkened room where the women had laid her body draped for the grave. He threw himself on his knees and wept on her cold bosom. The attendants stole from the room and left him alone with his grief. Then he carried her body tenderly and laid her in her coffin, arranging the flowers about her head, folding her hands on her breast and kissing the white face. For a long time he stayed in the room, watching and praying. When he came out of the hushed chamber there was a look in his face that no one had ever seen there before.

She had always been like a mother to him and he had always been like a son to her. In the old days, when his elder brother was living, Alexander was always her favorite, and the awkward, neglected boy responded to her touch. His brother was heir to the throne, and Alexander received little attention. He was simply trained as a soldier, so that in time he might command the Imperial Guard.

While his favored brother was preparing himself to reign Alexander was learning to love soldiery. Physically he was a giant, taller and stronger than any of his fellows. His dull, heavy mind adapted itself naturally to his environment. He was a born soldier, sullen overbearing, and without fear. Nature had cast him in a heroic mould. He knew how to obey and did not need to be taught how to command. His rough temper and heavy hand inspired fear.

To his nurse he was always Sarsha—the affectionate diminutive of Alexander—and to the day of her death she called him by that pet name. Years after, when he came home from the war with Turkey, a successful general flushed with victory, he sought out Mrs. Strutton first of all, and, throwing his arms around the pale English woman who had mothered his early years, he kissed her and looked down into her beaming face.

"What do you think of me now, Kitty?" he cried. "Are you ashamed of me?"

"You are a brave soldier and a good son of your father, God be praised!" she said. "I am proud of you, Sarsha. You have covered yourself with honor."

The burly soldier lifted his nurse off her feet and gave her a hug that she often spoke about, for Alexander was even then the strongest man in the Russian Empire, and his hug was no joke. Not long ago the Czar rolled up a silver plate with his hands in the presence of the present German Emperor, who had asked him to display his strength.

On that other day, when they brought the news that his father was slain, Alexander went to his nurse and laid his head upon her shoulder like a child.

"Oh, Kitty," he sobbed, "they have killed my father! They have killed my father!"

She put her arms around him and spoke gently to him, and after a while he was comforted. He stroked her head and talked to her about the future, telling her to call him Sarsha and to remember that he was not an emperor to her. Ah! that her influence might have followed and governed him in the years that were to come! How many homes might have remained unlighted! How many hearts unbroken! The course of history might have been changed.

As I sat there looking out upon the dreary waste of snow between the shores of the Neva and listening to the story of the Czar and his nurse, I noticed that the people were hurriedly gathering along the edges of the street below, as though a procession were expected. A red Cossack galloped past the house, his crimson mantle streaming out behind him and a silver scabbard dancing at his waist. His dark, Oriental face was alive with excitement, and he shouted an order to a policeman who came running out from the crowd. Policemen began to swarm along the street. Even the tawny Laps abandoned their reindeer and came swiftly with moccasined feet towards the quay. I was just about to rise when the chasseur of the legation—gorgeous in gold lace and plumes—darted into the room and saluted the ambassador.

"Your Excellency," he cried, "the Czar is coming along the quay on foot behind the hearse."

Then turning to me: "Now you can go and see for yourself if the Czar can go among the people or not." In a few minutes I stood in the crowd on the quay and saw the solemn cortege pass slowly before me. First came the Greek priest and the crucifix; after him several black-robed men carrying lighted lamps on poles. Then came the hearse. Behind it strode Alexander III. and his two brothers through the sodden slush, while the crowd made the sign of the cross. A few knelt down in the Eastern fashion and touched the snow with their foreheads. The Czar towered above his brothers, his gray coat buttoned closely about his huge form and his heavy cloak flapping. His head was protected from the falling snow by a turban of gray astrakhan wool and spurs jingled on his great boots. The three mourners walked side by side. They had carried the coffin out of the palace with their own hands. The Czar's face was very pale. His eyes showed that he had been weeping. As he walked after the hearse his gaze was bent upon the ground. Once or twice he seemed to stumble. I stood within ten feet of him and could see that he was profoundly stirred. Behind the Czar walked a group of Mrs. Strutton's personal friends and among them—so some one told me—several ladies of the imperial family. After them came a line of carriages with the grand ducal livery, but they were all empty; their owners were on foot. A few cavaliers closed up the procession. Not a note of pomp disturbed the simple pathos of the scene. The Czar was simply a man walking humbly and reverently after the corpse of the woman who loved him. A single bell tolled somewhere in the distance and the sound came faintly through the white drizzle. My istovostchik knelt in the snow and began to pray. A hoarse, murmur ran from mouth to mouth: "The Emperor!" "It is he!" "Sarsha!" But the Czar looked neither to the right nor the left. The blurred heavens grew darker and the snow sifted over the plumed hearse. As the wind whirled around I could hear the chanting of the priest.

It was a long distance to the cemetery, but the Czar walked every foot of the way. He sat in a pew of the Church of England for the first time and made all the responses. I saw him again just before he entered the cemetery, his great face wet with tears and his head bowed. While they were lowering the coffin into a frozen gap in the ground the gatekeeper of the cemetery spread a piece of carpet—the only article of luxury in his house—at the feet of the Czar, who sank upon his knees and bowed his head in prayer.

WEDDED AT TEN YEARS.

The Little King of Nepal and His Bride of Five Years.

Everywhere in the East, and especially in Hindustan and Nepal, marriages are made at a very early age. Parents contract for the wedding of their children while they are yet but little boys and girls, and neither the boy nor the girl has any voice in the matter. They are simply coupled with all the display that the parents on both sides can afford, and then the poor little things go back to their homes to be nursed and petted and trained until they are old enough to have a home of their own. Thus this little King of Nepal, the eighth royal Ghoorka who had come to the throne, was married when he was ten years old to a baby princess half his age, chosen for him from one of the royal families of northern India. Nor did it ever occur to the prime minister, or the priests, or the astrologers, or the match-makers, that either the bridegroom or the bride had anything whatever to do with the business.

But the wedding was "perfectly splendid." A picturesque concourse of Asiatic guests, with a sprinkling of European strangers, was gathered in the pavilions and rotundas of the palace; and there was profuse distribution of pretty souvenirs and gifts among them. Every one received something—a nosegay of rare Eastern flowers emblematic of happiness and joy, a miniature phial of attar of roses, a little silver flask of delicate perfume, a dainty scarf or handkerchief sprinkled with rose-water, a curious fan, a fantastic toy of ivory, a lacquer box. And then came the little king—alone of course, for an oriental bride must not be exposed to the public gaze—borne on a silver litter curtained in orange and purple satin, embroidered with gold, and hung with massive bullion fringe. Seated on a great cushion of cloth of gold piled with shawls of Cashmere and Canton, he was borne around the rotunda, a luminous vision of flashing jewels, and a musical murmur of tiny bells, from his plumed helmet to his slippers.

And when he had made his royal salam, or salutation, to the guests and departed, the tamasha began—that is, the grand show and the glorious fun; the nautch maidens, or dancing-girls, the musicians and jugglers, the glass-eaters and sword-swallowers, the Nutt gipsies, who are wonderful gymnasts and acrobats, and the Bhootiyan wrestlers from the mountains.—St. Nicholas.

Curious Properties of Glycerine.

One of the great advantages of glycerine in its chemical employment is the fact that it neither freezes nor evaporates under any ordinary temperature. No perceptible loss by evaporation has been detected at a temperature less than 200 degrees F., but if heated intensely it decomposes with a smell that few persons find themselves able to endure. It burns with a pale flame, similar to that from alcohol, if heated to about 300 degrees, and then ignited. Its non-evaporative qualities make the compound of much use as a vehicle for holding pigments and colors, as in stamping and typewriter ribbons, carbon papers and the like.

If the pure glycerine be exposed for a long time to a freezing temperature, it crystallizes with the appearance of sugar candy, but these crystals being once melted it is almost an impossibility to get them again into the congealed state. If a little water be added to the glycerine no crystallization will take place, though under a sufficient degree of cold the water will separate and form crystals, amid which the glycerine will remain in its natural state of fluidity. If suddenly subjected to intense cold, pure glycerine will form a gummy mass which cannot be entirely hardened or crystallized. Altogether it is quite a peculiar substance.

WILHELM AS DRAGOON.

The German Emperor in a Dashing British Uniform.

On his arrival at Cowes the other day, the German Emperor appeared for the first time in the uniform of the First Royal British Dragoons, of which he was recently



EMPEROR WILHELM OF GERMANY IN ENGLISH UNIFORM.

made honorary colonel. The change from the sombre and dignified Prussian uniform, in which there are few colors but blue and black, to the rather gaudy apparel of a dashing cavalry officer, made quite a new man out of the little Kaiser. The jaunty cap, tipped on one side, sat off his rather piquant face to much advantage. The gayly braided jacket, with its tall collar brilliant with gold lace; the long, straight epaulettes, the band wound round with colored ribbons, representing the many orders or decorations, as is the custom in the British army, all made him quite a different person, and the officers were much amused at the accuracy with which he practised the "goose step."

The young Emperor has almost as many foreign uniforms as his old grandfather possessed. In old Wilhelm's day one whole room in the Berlin palace was devoted to these gaudy trappings, and whenever the Emperor had a foreign guest to entertain, some of these numerous uniforms had to come down and be dusted and got ready, so that two servants were attached to this part of the Imperial wardrobe.

The young Kaiser has half a dozen valets who are constantly attending to his dress. He is very particular about the cut of his clothes, but at home is simple enough in the matter of color and material. Not a great while ago he adopted the long gray riding overcoat which was such an inseparable part of Napoleon I.'s wardrobe. Perhaps he thinks it gives him a Napoleonic air.

THE SAD FATE

That Was Met by the Affectionate Peacock.

Some years ago I paid a visit to a friend who rented a cottage on Hughenden Manor, where the late Earl of Beauchamp reared the celebrated white peacocks, which he ultimately bequeathed to Queen Victoria.

Soon after my arrival my friend, who was confined to her couch by a spinal affection, said:

"I expect a gentleman to tea at 6 o'clock; would you please set the door ajar, for he cannot open it himself."

I thought this strange, but made no remark.

The sitting room was approached by a long, narrow passage, and presently—the tea service being laid—we heard the tap, tap of a regular tread approaching the room. Then followed a decided jab at the door, and in swept a magnificent peacock. No wonder, thought I, that in the early ages of chivalry the most solemn oath was taken on the peacock.

Our visitor walked straight to my friend, looking around as if in search of something. She produced some fruit and cake, which he ate out of her hand, and then pecked up some crumbs soaked in milk from a saucer on the floor. I put forth my hand to caress him upon which he raised himself on his toes and uttered a shrill cry, repudiating all my blandishments vigorously.

"In the same manner he came every evening, remaining about half an hour. His affection for his hostess was evident, but I never got beyond his toleration."

Two months afterward my friend left Hughenden. Subsequently she wrote me: "Poor Ralph is dead. That stupid gamekeeper never let him into the cottage nor fed him in the evening, as he promised me to do. I hear from the little maid you remember that the poor bird refused to eat and would lie for hours beneath the window, uttering occasionally a plaintive cry. At night he persisted in roosting in the cedar tree in the cottage lawn. Becoming too weak to fly upward, he lay among the shrubs in the dew, and was one morning found dead."

Sad Story of an Admiral's Son

A despatch from Indianapolis, says: The scion of a proud English family is now an inmate in the Marion County Poorhouse west of this city. This is the story of Albert Bowden, son of a British commodore. In conversation with a reporter Bowden said that he came here a year ago trying to find employment, and, failing in that, he became sick and was taken to the City Hospital. After recovering he got employment for a short time as bookkeeper. All the work he could find to do, being minus both feet as the result of exposure in Columbus, Ohio, was scrubbing out liquor stores. He says he is fifty-three years of age.

"I graduated at Gosport Naval School," he said. "At twenty-one I had a fortune and was manager of a bank in a small town in Western England, and at one time was elected Mayor. I was personally acquainted with Charles Dickens and belonged to a debating society of which he was a member. I have been introduced at Court and have met the Prince of Wales. By an unlucky speculation I lost the bulk of my fortune and have been going down ever since. I went first to France, drifted to America and in New York I got down to peddling jewellery on the streets. What privation started, drink completed, and here I am."

THE HUSBAND AND THE HOME.

The "Bower-Bird Husbands" Spend Their Time in Devising Cheap and Gaudy Decorations.

The London Spectator, in its studies of men, refers to those who go in for home decoration as "bower-bird husbands." As everyone knows the bower-bird decorates its home with tawdry ornaments such as shells, fragments of looking glass, or any other bright objects which may attract its attention and seems to take delight in adding to its store. The same with the bower-bird husband, who spends his time in devising home decorations of the cheap and gaudy pattern.

We all know him. He can make an arm chair out of a barrel and an ottoman out of a cheese box, and he had other resources of invention which he supposes render him extremely useful about the house. For his benefit are written the articles which we find in the boiler plate papers, describing how with a tack hammer and a little ingenuity a fifty dollar effect may be imparted to a five dollar room, and how almost anything from the rejected fruit or fish can be to the superannuated sawhorse can be converted into really attractive bric-a-brac. His artistic taste assisted by a glue pot finds expression in picture frames which are crooked, and his fancy brackets have not the cohesion which one looks for in such articles.

Whenever we go into a house where he has been we see

UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE

of his presence. The walls are marred by nail holes and broken plaster which come of his failure to find the stud in the partition when he drives a nail, and his puncturing the wall all round until he finds a firm place. There are nails everywhere, from the carpet tack to the tennipenny nail black and cobwebby on the wall, for the bower-bird householder, as we know him upon this side of the ocean, goes about with a mouthful of tacks, and nails of assorted sizes in his different pockets. We can tell when he has tried to whiten the ceiling by the uneven streaks and the hairs from his cheap brush which adhere to the plaster, and we know where he has exercised his ability as a painter by the globules of color on the edgings of panels and casings, for he is liberal in the application of paint and is regardless of its disposition to "run."

It is, however, when he has developed from a mere decorator to be an amateur mechanic that he reaches his most remarkable and interesting stage. With "Every Man His Own Mechanic" as a text book, he feels equal to anything from bricklaying to plumbing. He haunts hardware stores and second-hand shops in quest of

TOOLS OF ALL KINDS,

and he is constantly prowling around with his tool box looking for defects to daily with and perfections to mar. A leak in the water pipe, he runs into the cellar, turns off the water and sets about the mending; once. He heats his soldering iron in the kitchen stove to the detriment of the fire, and when it is hot he pounces upon the pipe and puddles the hole in it till it becomes twice as large, and after upsetting everyone in the household he demurely admits that owing to the intricate character of the break it would be better to send for a plumber. And so through the whole list. He can make anything in the carpentering line, at much expense for material, but somehow he never makes it right, but as he made it it must be cherished as evidence of his skill.

Yes, we all know him, and he is harmless. He enlivens business at the second-hand tool repositories and renders the nail and screw market always active, but the mechanical trades do not suffer from his competition. On the contrary, they often benefit by his efforts in rendering their immediate presence imperative. So let us not think severely of him, but give him credit for meaning well in everything he does and means.

A BIG RUSSIAN DREDGER.

Can Raise Six Hundred Tons of Clay Per Hour.

A power twin-screw hopper dredger, recently constructed for the Russian government, is described in the Railway Review. It has a hopper capacity for 700 tons of dredgings and a bucket-lifting capacity to raise six hundred tons of hard clay per hour. In addition to the usual endless chain of steel buckets for filling its own hopper and barges alongside when required, a powerful centrifugal pump is provided for discharging the dredged material on shore. Powerful mixing appliances are also fitted on board for breaking up the clay and mixing it with water before going into the centrifugal pump, at the rate of about 50 tons per minute. Auxiliary pumps are provided for assisting the clay and sand along the shoots to fill the hopper or the mixer. The buckets are capable of cutting the vessel's own way in banks and shoals to 36 feet depth of water, and can be varied in speed from ten to twenty buckets per minute. The bucket ladder is adapted to recoil when the buckets come in contact with rock or large boulders. Friction appliances are also provided to prevent damage to the machinery. There are two independent propelling engines, each of which drives its own propeller and also the dredging and mud-pumping gear independently. There are also steam starting-gear, and steering-gear, repeating telegraphs, electric lighting, steam-heating apparatus for the cold weather in Russia and comfortable cabins for officers and crew, well lighted and ventilated. A derrick crane is fitted on board for removing large stones, lifting anchors and changing buckets, etc.

Wilkie Collins' bedstead realized ten shillings at a recent London sale, the same figure being paid for a pair of scissors used by Charlotte Bronte.

TONS OF POWER ABOARD

PRECAUTIONS TAKEN IN TRANSPORTING THE EXPLOSIVE.

All Fires on the Lydian Monarch Put Out Before She Took On Her Consignment, and Again Before It Was Unloaded.

The Wilson line steamship Lydian Monarch, Capt. W. S. Morgan, arrived in New York from London on Sunday morning, having on board ten tons of smokeless powder. Ten tons of powder, smokeless or any other kind, is a ticklish thing for a steamship to carry, but the officers of the Lydian Monarch say they have been carrying powder for years and have never had an accident. Great precautions are taken. The steamer is not permitted to take the powder aboard until she has left London, and when New York is reached she must discharge the explosive portion of her cargo before docking. The smokeless powder that came over on the Lydian Monarch was packed in half-pound copper cans, one hundred of which were carried in a wooden case lined with zinc.

The Lydian Monarch took on an assorted cargo at London and steamed to a point off Gravesend, where lighters having on board the cases of powder were in waiting. Before she was allowed to get near the smaller craft all her fires were put out. Even the galley stove was extinguished, and every match on board was stowed safely away, far from the spot where the powder was to be placed. Then the lighters came alongside, and the work of getting the powder on board was begun. Just before things were ready for the powder the seamen on the steamer, who are indulged until the last moment, were required to lay aside their pipes, so that when the first case of powder was lifted over the rail there was not so much as a spark anywhere on the steamer. Despite the weight of the cases they were taken on board by the men. A hoisting machine would require an engine, and an engine a fire, all of which would have been in violation of the law.

When the Lydian Monarch left London she was laden to her capacity, except on the starboard side of the lower deck aft. In this part of the steamer a sort of wooden cage, not unlike a huge chicken coop, had been built for the reception of the powder. It was made of heavy boards, nailed together with copper nails, and was just beside the main hatchway. The cases of powder were handled carefully from man to man until they reached this store room, where they were packed for the voyage by First Officer William Sanders and Second Officer Hugh Dibb. As soon as the last case was packed away and the entrance to the magazine had been bolted with heavy strips of wood, the main and every other hatchway were battened down so that it would be impossible for any one to get near the powder. Not once during the trip were any of the hatches opened, and severe punishment would have been inflicted upon any man caught lighting a match or smoking near the spot where the powder had been stored. All of these precautions were kept up during the trip and on Sunday, when the Lydian Monarch dropped anchor in Gravesend Bay, the powder was in exactly the same condition as when it was placed on board at Gravesend, England.

Early yesterday morning preparations were made to remove the powder from the steamer to lighters. Before a hatch was opened every fire on board was put out. The lighters then came alongside, and as delicately as they would have handled cases of fine china the seamen of the Lydian Monarch removed the hatches, opened up the magazine, and began passing out the powder. About fifteen men stood in line, two feet apart, and passed the cases along until they reached the lighters, where they were laid in piles upon the docks. After all the powder had been removed the Lydian Monarch got up steam again and proceeded to her dock in Brooklyn, where she discharged the rest of her cargo.

To a reporter Second Officer Dibb said: "Of course, its necessary to use every precaution when you have so much powder on board ship, and while to a landsman it may seem that we are running great risk we are in reality in no danger, for I can imagine no way in which the powder could be exploded unless the ship caught fire. The men as well as the officers appreciate the fact that the utmost care must be exercised. It would be absolutely impossible for a man to reach the powder, as there are hundreds of other cases packed all around it, and the hatches are battened down and watched night and day."

Fire Easily Obtained.

The average civilized man would be hard put to it if he were compelled to start a fire without matches, tinder-box or burning-glass. But Lieutenant Von Hohnel describes an African chief as not only accomplishing this feat, but doing it with quickness and ease. The traveller had asked him to show his skill.

It was really wonderful, in view of the moisture-laden atmosphere, with what rapidity he did as I had requested.

The materials employed were such as we saw wherever we went—two simple bits of wood, one flat, about six inches long and not quite an inch wide, with a row of grooves on one side; the other about twelve inches long, and of the thickness and shape of a lead-pencil.

The longer piece, fixed in one of the grooves of the shorter piece, was held tightly between the palms of the hands, and whirled round and round. In a very few seconds the wood dust which was produced by the friction, and which fell through the grooves, began to smoke. This dust was carefully nursed into a blaze, which was fed with fine grass and bits of cotton stuff.

The whole thing is done so quickly that our men, even the lazy Wassung, always employed this method, on short halts, for lighting their pipes.

An Offset.

Young Miss—"I don't want any man to ask me all of a sudden to marry him."
Old Miss—"Neither do I; still, I'd try to offset by accepting him as suddenly."