

A Cat's Paw

Or, The Maid of the Mill

CHAPTER XL.

"It's to be war to the knife, is it?" said the Dandy to the nearest lamp-post. "All right, I am agreeable, my lady, and I advise you to look out!" Then he thought of the one suspicion about Mrs. Vandeleur, the one speck that tarnished the petals of the White Rose. If he could make himself master of this secret, unmask the intrigue that he never doubted it involved, and identify the lover for whose sake she ran so great a risk, he would be able to dictate his own terms. After all, you see the Dandy was not the least a gentleman, in the real acceptance of the word, though he was received as such by society; but he had plenty of cunning, a fair share of tact, and many of the less estimable qualities which go to form a shrewd man of the world. "Never make a rush at your adversary, after receiving a severe blow," say the mentors of the prize-ring. "Keep out of distance, shake your head a little, and collect yourself before you go in again."

Dandy Burton, sore and quivering from the punishment he had sustained, acted on this wholesome advice, smoothed his ruffled feathers, and began to think.

He looked at his watch; it was but little after two o'clock. Mrs. Vandeleur must have ordered luncheon at least an hour sooner than usual. He knew the ways of the house and the habits of its mistress. He was aware she would not go shopping so early. There was a great breakfast to-day at the Cowslips, but he had heard her say she should send an excuse. All London would be there, and Mrs. Vandeleur seldom refused anything of Lady Syllabus'. There must be some reason for this unusual seclusion. Perhaps it was her day for the mysterious expedition—the day of all others she had better have kept friends with him. Now was the time to follow and find her out.

Two doors off stood a four-wheeled cab, just dismissed. The driver having only received his proper fare, was crawling sulkily off at a walk. Burton caught him, and jumped in. "Is your horse pretty fresh?" said he, showing a half-crown in his fingers.

"Fresh! Of course he was as fresh as paint. Who ever heard of a cab-horse being tired when the fare looked like a shilling a mile?" "Then drive to the other end of the street," continued the Dandy. "Watch that roughman with the brown horse. He can trot, mind you, and you must put on the steam. Don't lose sight of it for a moment. Follow within twenty yards wherever it goes."

Then he pulled both windows up, and waited—waited—patiently enough, with his eye on the dark-colored brougham.

What is it they do? Mrs. Vandeleur had been ready dressed from top to toe when he entered her house a quarter of an hour ago, yet it was at least another quarter of an hour before she emerged. The brown horse, however, made up for lost time, starting off directly he heard the carriage door bang, at a good twelve miles an hour. Could she be going shopping, after all? The brougham was pulled up at a stupendous establishment for the promotion of feminine extravagance, and its occupant went in looking extremely like a purchaser; but at the door she spoke to her footman, who touched his hat, mounted the box from which he had lately descended, and was driven slowly away.

"Carriage ordered home," thought Burton; "don't wait the servants to talk. Scant improves every yard. There's no bolt-hole to this place, for I've been in it a hundred times. She must come out again the same way. Patience, my boy—we shall be even with her yet."

He had not long to wait. She soon reappeared with an extra veil on and a small paper parcel in her hand. Hailing a passing cab, and sadly soiling her dress against the wheel getting in, she was off again; but he had no fear now of her escaping him. His driver, too, entered thoroughly into the spirit of the chase, well aware that such jobs as these afforded a lucrative day's work. What a wearisome business it was, jingling at the rate of six miles an hour through those interminable streets that lead to the suburbs of London on the Kensington side. The Dandy hated discomfort, and no vehicle but a Wallachian waggon could have been less adapted to commodious transit than that in which he found himself. The seat was high and sloping; the roof jammed a new hat down on his eyebrows; the cushions, of a faded plush, felt damp and slippery; the windows rattled in their frames; the whole interior smelt of mould, old clothes, and wet straw. He would have abandoned the pursuit more than once, but that the spirit of spite, vengeance, and wounded self-love, kept him up.

As he rumbled on, his suspicions and anticipations of a crowning triumph increased more and more. The length of the journey, the distance from her own home—all these precautions argued something of a nature which the world would condemn as very disgraceful if found out. What a bright idea he had been thus to constitute himself a spy on her actions, and attain the power of showing her up! He exulted, this man, in the probable degradation of the woman he had implored an hour ago to be his wife, and there was nobody to kick him—more's the pity.

The turns became shorter, the houses

less imposing. Passing new streets and plots of ground "To Let on Building Lease," they soon reached real standard trees and leafy hedges. Burton's driver was already receiving in his mind the remunerative nature of the job, calculating how high a sum he might venture to charge for "back fare," when the cab he followed stopped with a jerk at a green door, let into a garden wall surrounding a house of which the roof and chimneys could alone be seen from outside.

Burton squeezed himself into a corner of his hiding-place, and watched Mrs. Vandeleur dismiss her cab. There seemed no hesitation about the fare, and she tendered it with an air of decision that denoted she was here not for the first nor second time. The Dandy's exultation was only damped by certain misgivings as to his own position if he ventured further, supposing there was a lover in the case, supposing that lover should be irascible enough to resent a liberty with blots. There was no time, however, for hesitation, and he possessed, at least, that mere physical indifference to wrangle which depends chiefly on digestion. He was out of his cab the instant Mrs. Vandeleur passed through the green door.

Either by accident or design she left it ajar, and he followed so close on her track as to catch a glimpse of her dress while she turned an angle of the shrubbery in which he found himself. It was one of those snug secluded retreats to be rented by scores within an hour's drive of London in any direction, and which convey as perfect an idea of privacy and retirement as the most remote manor-house in Cumberland or Cornwall. The garden was laid out in the shrubbery, with its fragrance of lilacs and syringa, gleaming with Portugal laurels and gilded with drooping taburnums, the intruder caught a glimpse of a long low white building, surrounded by a verandah, defended with creepers, sun-shades, Venetian blinds, and other contrivances of a stifling nature to keep out the heat.

Dandy Burton was going about as a winding path through the densest of this suburban thicket, to emerge on a trim, well-kept lawn, studded with a few stone vases, and overshadowed by a gigantic elm, girdled with a circular wooden seat.

Under the shade of this old tree, a garden-chair had been wheeled, but Mrs. Vandeleur's undulating figure, as she crossed the lawn, hid its occupant from the spy's observation, although for a moment he fancied he could detect the silvery hair of an old man's head reclining against the cushions.

He had no time, however, to speculate. The White Rose, who had ignored him patiently till he was too far advanced for retreat, turned fiercely on him now, and the Dandy never felt so small as while he stood there in the summer sunshine, thoroughly ashamed of himself, quivering like a beaten hound, and shrinking from the insupportable scorn of those merciless eyes.

She spoke low, as people often do when they mean what they say, but her whole figure seemed to dilate and grow taller in its concentration. The disgust and defiance; nor will I take upon me to affirm that, through all Mr. Burton's discomfiture, there did not lurk a faint glimmer of consolation to think he had escaped such a Tartar for a wife.

"I congratulate you," said she. "I make you my compliments on the high chivalrous spirit you have displayed to-day, and your gentlemanlike conduct throughout. Do you think I am an idiot, Mr. Burton? Do you flatter yourself I have not seen through you? I knew you were following me here from the moment I left 'Barege and Tulle's' in the cab; I determined to give you a lesson, and now you have it, sir, in the intrigue I carried on for years. Here is the lover I come to see. Ah! look at him, and thank your stars that he is no longer the Vandeleur you remember in the pride and strength of manhood. (Hush! hush! hush!)" and she laid her hand caressingly on the brows of the feeble drivelling idiot, whose eye was beginning to twitch, and his pulses to stir with the only sensation he had left, that of jealousy at the presence of any one with his wife. Her glance was soft and tender while she soothed her husband, but it gleamed like steel when it turned again on the unhappy Dandy. "Yes," she continued, "you may thank your stars, I say; for, by Heaven! if this was the man of a dozen years ago, he would have kicked you from here back to London, every step of the way! Now go!"

And Dandy Burton went sneaking through the shrubbery and the garden-door, like a detected pickpocket, glad to find the miserable cab that brought him still in waiting, thankful to hide his head in that mouldy refuge, rejoicing to hurry back and lose himself amongst a myriad of fellow-repiles in town.

But the day's excitement and the day's anxiety were not yet over for Mrs. Vandeleur. The ruling passion that had destroyed her husband's intellect, already sapped by excess and self-indulgence, thus excited by the intruder's presence, blazed into the first lucid interval he had known since his fatal injury. The poor idiot seemed to awake from some long, deep, dreamless slumber, and reason returned for the space of a few hours, during which he recognized Norah, conversed with her, and called her by name. She had nursed

him, tended him, looked after him for years, yet never before, since his accident, had he even looked as if he knew she was there. But it was the parting gleam of sunset on a rainy evening, the flash of the candle expiring in its socket.

By ten o'clock that night John Vandeleur was lying dead in the secluded retreat, which had been to him a living tomb from the day he was brought into it, crushed, mangled, and insane, after his ghastly leap into the courtyard of the Hotel at Heidelberg.

CHAPTER XL.

It was early spring in London, so early that the east winds had not thoroughly set in, and the mild genial weather gladdened the very vegetables in the areas, and the crossing-sweepers, who had plenty to do after the thaw, in the streets. It was to be an early season too, so people said; and though squares and crescents had not yet put on their tender green dresses that wear so badly through summer dust and smoke, though asparagus had not appeared in the market, and lamb was still thirteen-pence a pound, knockers began to thunder, carriages to roll, cards to pour in, and the business of life seemed about to commence, for young ladies of the upper class, from seventeen to seven-and-twenty, walking out of winter lethargy into the delightful hurry and excitement of the season.

A good many people were already in town. Mrs. Vandeleur had left off her widow's cap and reduced the depth of her crepe borders. Dolly Egremont, after a grand quarrel with Miss Tregunter, who had spent several months in the South of France, and never shown since, was up to his ears in theatrical affairs. His correspondence with the American actress alone, who, always coming, had not yet arrived, would have kept one secretary in full employment; and while he was good-humored and friendly as ever, he looked (for him) harassed and worn with too much to do, something on his mind, and not a single moment to spare.

Dandy Burton was going about as usual, had left cards on the White Rose more than once—nay, had even shaken hands when he met her by accident in the street, though against her will. And Gerard Ainslie, with capital lodgings in Jermyn Street, was ordering carriages, buying backs, giving dinner-parties, and making acquaintances with the greatest rapidity, for he had come into some six or seven thousand a year.

Yes, the wheel had turned at last. His great-uncle was dead, not having thoroughly forgiven him, and indeed, having made several wills, in which all he possessed was left away from his nearest relation. When an elderly gentleman dies, and his executors, or, it is to be supposed, that he takes so decided a step from personal knowledge of her character and long familiarity with her good qualities. He does not always find, however, that she makes him as good a wife as she did a servant, and disappointment under such circumstances at the failure of an article is generally proportioned to the value paid for it.

In the present instance hatred and disgust soon replaced whatever sentiments of affection or esteem had induced the old man to commit such an absurdity; and nobody but his lawyer would have had patience with the childish irritation that caused him day after day to dictate and destroy his will, and to begethery property of his handsome prospective. At last, in a fit of unreasonable anger against his wife, he left everything to his great-nephew, and died the following morning in a fit of apoplexy.

Gerard Ainslie now found himself extricated, if not from penury, at least from very narrow circumstances, and raised to considerable wealth. The change, notwithstanding the full flush and prime of manhood, was like a new life. A very young man coming into possession of a large fortune, hardly appreciates either the advantages he has gained, or the inconveniences from which he has escaped. Later, when the bloom is off the flower, and he has nothing but the gratification of his own vanity, he has probably learned the inevitable lesson of experience, that happiness, never found when sought, is independent of externals, and springs exclusively from within. But for one who has been through the privations and annoyances of poverty while at an age to feel their sting most keenly, to emerge from them at a time of life when hope has not yet sunk below the horizon, when the sap is still rising in the tree, such a transformation of self and surroundings is light after darkness, summer after winter, health after sickness, freedom after captivity, pleasure after pain.

No man in London was better qualified than Gerard Ainslie to appreciate such an alteration in his fortunes. Brought up with the taste and habits of an English gentleman, he united the love of luxury and refinement with delight in rough athletic exercises peculiar to his class. This combination can hardly be considered economical; and a man who wants to tire three horses in a day, risking neck and limbs over High Leicester-shire, ere he returns to a dinner-party, music, and the society of half-a-dozen charming women at night, should have a purse as deep as his desire for pleasure is inexhaustible, should be placed by Fortune in a position that admits of his wasting time, energy, health, and capital in the pursuit of mere amusement. Gerard, as we know, had been what is called a "good fellow" all his life. A bon camarade at the diggings, a jovial companion at a mess-table or in a club, with men he was sure to be popular, from his frank, pleasant temper, his high spirit, and something womanly at his heart. The ladies had made a favorite of him from boyhood. To their deeper perceptions there had always been something fascinating about his eyes and smile. They liked him none the worse now that his whiskers were grown, and had the reputation of being a travel-

ler, an adventurer, a "man with a history," above all capital parti. So, in a few weeks, he was asked to a great variety of places, saddled with a vast number of engagements, any of which (and this made him none the less popular) he was ready to throw over at a moment's notice, and altogether launched on the world of London with a fair wind and a towing tide.

We all know the story of the princess and her ruffled rose-leaf left through half a score of blankets. Gerard also had a leaf or two that worried him in the bed of roses to which he had lately climbed. In the first place, his play had not yet been acted, although, as may be easily imagined, his accession to wealth had in no way detracted from the merits of a piece which Dolly's friendship had accepted when the author was poor. Still he was eager to behold it on the stage; and in the short period during which necessity compelled him to juggle the pen, he had contracted a jealous anxiety for publicity, an insatiable desire for fame, such as poisons the content of most inexperienced authors, dramatic and otherwise.

"Pope Clement, or the Cardinal's Collapse" had not yet been put in rehearsal. Everything depended on the American actress, and the American actress depended on a New York public and the Soci-estates of the Atlantic. Till she arrived he could not answer the questions showered on him by every acquaintance in the street. "When is your play coming out?"—this was rose-leaf number one.

Rose-leaf number two gave him a good deal more uneasiness. He was in a continual fidget about Mrs. Vandeleur. The notice of her husband's death in the Times did not, indeed, surprise him as much as the rest of the London world, who had chosen to consider her a widow for some years, but it had opened up a range of speculation that all the duties and pleasures of his new position seemed unable to drive out of his head. She had but lately returned to town, he knew not, for in the set amongst whom he now lived it was no longer necessary to tamper with servants for information of her movements. She had been down to Oakover. He wondered whether she visited her father's personage, the road across the marshes, the old haunts that were in his memory still like "holy ground," and whether she thought of him. He could bear, for in the set among whom he now lived, he was conscious of the genial spring weather, he started nervously on foot for his residence, dreading mainly his recognition by Robert Smart, and the contingency of her not being at home.

In spite of his agitation, he could not forbear smiling as he walked about, and remembered that, indeed, had been his passage through the streets of London a few short months ago, when every day's dinner was uncertain, and he could not even afford decent clothes to his back. Now the very crossing-sweepers, who tripped him up, called him "my lord."

Hansom cab-drivers, eyeing him respectfully from their perches, shot glances to take him in. Taper fingers were kissed and pretty heads bowed at him from well-appointed carriages, while dandies, for whom nothing on earth seemed good enough, stopped to clap him familiarly on the shoulder and take him by the hand.

It was pleasant, it was exhilarating; but he had been a gold-digger; he had been a settler; he had served one voyage when at the west, before the mast;—and it did not turn his head the least. Jack, who shared his last quid with him that night in the whaleboat, was perhaps quite as good a fellow as Lord Frederick; Tom, who nursed him through low fever in the swamps, had a pleasanter way with him than Sir Harry; and looked indeed a good deal more like a gentleman. Nay, something happened at Hyde Park Corner that could scarcely have taken place in San Francisco or Ballarat.

Two remarkably well-dressed young men, walking arm-in-arm, stopped short ten paces off, and crossed peacefully at the middlest part, as if to avoid a meeting. He recognized them both. One, indeed, had the grace to blush deeply while he picked his way through the dirt, and his letter Gerard could feel at that moment in his own breast-pocket, requesting the loan of a large sum of money; but the other only laughed, and with reason, for he had borrowed a couple of hundred the week before from the man he served so anxious to avoid, and the joke was probably enhanced by the small probability of his ever being able to pay!

Gerard felt so hurt, the tears almost rose to his eyes. "Hang it!" he muttered. "I can't be such a bad fellow as they take me for; and I thought they were friends—real friends—could depend upon them, and I wonder how many I've got left!"

It set him thinking; the behaviour of these young gentlemen puzzled him. He did not see that they were merely acting up to a wholesome rule for the enjoyment of life, which forbids people, under any circumstances, to run the slightest risk of being bored. They felt, doubtless, with some tact, that there would be a certain amount of good about a meeting till the one's loan and the other's letter had been forgotten. So, they simply avoided it. Perhaps they were right; but Gerard had worn a red shirt and carried a pick-axe too lately to see the matter in that light, and he turned down Grosvenor Place, reflecting with some bitterness that there was but one good fellow in the whole of London, and his name was Dolly Egremont.

A block of carriages in Halkin Street, checking the stream of foot-passengers, brought him on to that gentleman's very shoulders. The two naturally hooked arms, and walked forward together.

Gerard's heart was full. He pressed his friend's elbow to his side. "Old fellow," said he, "don't think I've been in't not really ungrateful. I've never half thanked you for the hand you gave me when I was so

CAPTURED 78 GUNS

Graphic Story of the Great Japanese Victory

DETAILS OF THE BATTLE.

Japan paid heavily for her victories at Kinchau, Nanshan, and Taliennan, losing 3,500 men in killed and wounded in the repeated assaults against these positions, but she scored a sweeping and valuable victory over the Russians, capturing seventy guns, clearing the way to Port Arthur, and inflicting terrible losses on the Russians, says a Tokio despatch.

It is doubted if the Russians will stand again north of Port Arthur. They retired from the field beaten, and they failed to rally at Nanshan, where it was anticipated that a second stand would be made. The desperate onslaughts of the Japanese on the heights of Nanshan were telling, for the Russians left 300 dead in the trenches there. A complete search of this field is expected to show a greater number of dead.

Nanshan was occupied on Friday morning by a force of infantry, artillery, and engineers under the command of Gen. Nakamura. The main Japanese force spent Friday night billeted in the villages around Nanshan. The soldiers were greatly fatigued as a result of the constant fighting, but they entered with much spirit upon the new operations.

A force of Russians held Sanchili-ping Station, which is north-west of Dally, but the Japanese drove them out. The Russians abandoned and burned the station, and retired in the direction of Port Arthur. The estimates of the Russians engaged in the defence of Kinchau, Nanshan Hill, and the south shore of Taliennan Bay vary, but it is evident that the Russians drew for men from the forces at Port Arthur and offered all the resistance possible.

It is understood here that Lieut. Gen. Stoessel, commander of the military forces at Port Arthur, was in personal command of the recent operations. As soon as the Japanese troops have retied they will press on to the south.

The assault on Nanshan Hill was one of the fiercest and bloodiest actions in modern warfare. In the earlier rushes of the engagement every man participating was shot down before he reached the first line of Russian trenches.

It was found necessary to stop these infantry charges and renew the artillery fire from the rear before the final and successful assault on the Russian position could be made.

RUSSIAN LINES PIERCED.

The success of this assault was brought about by one detachment of Japanese troops, more intrepid than their comrades, who succeeded in piercing the Russian lines.

A splendid stroke of fortune was the discovery and destruction by the Japanese of the electric wires leading to the mines at the eastern foot of Nanshan Hill. This prevented the Russians from exploding these mines when the Japanese infantry

deep in the hole—I've never had a chance." "Nonsense!" answered Dolly, with an Englishman's insurmountable repugnance to all expression of sentiment. "You would have done just the same for me. But it's all right now, isn't it?"

"Right," replied the other. "I'm in clover, my dear fellow, I positively roll in riches. Look here, I never can repay your kindness and consideration; but with regard to the money, that kept me from starving, you know, by Jove—literally from starving! It's nothing to me now, but it was everything then, and altogether it amounts to a goodish sum, and it must have inconvenienced you with that theatre on your hands, and—in short—"

Gerard was getting confused, and could not put into proper language what he wanted to say. His friend muttered, "I can't be such a bad fellow as they take me for; and I thought they were friends—real friends—could depend upon them, and I wonder how many I've got left!"

It set him thinking; the behaviour of these young gentlemen puzzled him. He did not see that they were merely acting up to a wholesome rule for the enjoyment of life, which forbids people, under any circumstances, to run the slightest risk of being bored. They felt, doubtless, with some tact, that there would be a certain amount of good about a meeting till the one's loan and the other's letter had been forgotten. So, they simply avoided it. Perhaps they were right; but Gerard had worn a red shirt and carried a pick-axe too lately to see the matter in that light, and he turned down Grosvenor Place, reflecting with some bitterness that there was but one good fellow in the whole of London, and his name was Dolly Egremont.

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crossed the ground where they had been placed. It is possible that the fortune of the day hinged upon these mines. If the Russians had been able to explode them at the right time the losses among the Japanese troops would have been tremendous, and it is possible also that the Russians would have been able to hold the hill.

NANSHAN SPLENDIDLY DEFENDED.

Nanshan was splendidly defended. Nearly fifty guns of various sizes were mounted on the various emplacements, and there were also two batteries of quick-firing field pieces. The artillery was sheltered behind loopholed trenches on the terraces of the hill. The infantry manning the field pieces ran with them around the hill, thus using these guns for the protection of the most important points.

The Japanese began the fight by bringing all their field guns into action and concentrating their fire on the emplacements on the hill. By 11 o'clock in the morning the principal Russian batteries had been silenced. The two Russian field batteries then withdrew to Nanshan Hill, and from there continued to fire on the Japanese until nightfall.

After the Russian batteries had been silenced the Japanese artillery opened on the enemy's trenches. The Japanese infantry advancing meanwhile to within rifle range. The Japanese gradually worked to within 100 yards of the Russian lines, where they encountered wire and other entanglements.

EVERY MAN SHOT DOWN.

They succeeded in discovering an opening in these obstacles and getting finally to within 200 yards of the Russian trenches, they rushed for the line. Several successive charges were made, but every officer and man in the attacking parties was shot down twenty or thirty yards from the line.

The charges were then stopped and the Japanese artillery renewed its preparatory fire on the enemy's position. Towards evening a detachment of Japanese carried a section of the Russian trenches, breaking through the enemy's line.

Hundreds of the comrades of these men, inspired by their success, sprang forward, and then the entire Japanese line swept up the hill, driving the Russians from their positions. It was in the desperate infantry charges that the Japanese sustained the bulk of their losses.

FATE OF PORT ARTHUR.

The heavy cost of Japan's victory at Kinchau does not diminish European confidence in the complete success of her arms during the present Summer's campaign. The conviction is now almost universal outside of Russia, that Port Arthur will fall in the course of June. As this will involve the capture or destruction of the remains of the Russian fleet, it is felt that Russia has little to hope for except by a long process of exhaustion of her enemy.

JAPS LOSE BOATS.

Admiral Alexief, in a despatch to St. Petersburg, dated on Thursday, reports as follows:—"Rear-Admirals Witger and Gregorovich report that the enemy had bombarded Hattusee Bay with gunboats. As this was the night they tried to block the roadstead at Port Arthur with mines, and as it appeared from the shore, some steam launches and two torpedo boats were sunk. Eleven mines sown by the Japanese to block the harbor were taken up by the Russians between May 18 and May 21. Boats belonging to the merchant steamer Amur, a dredger, and a steam launch have been brought to Port Arthur from Dalny."

EMI-RESS HOSPITAL TRAIN.

The Empress' hospital train started from St. Petersburg on the long journey to the Far East on Thursday. Among those at the station to witness the departure were Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch, the heir presumptive, and Duke Peter of Oldenburg, the Emperor's brother-in-law. The train is the finest railway hospital ever constructed. It consists of two sections, the first composed of fourteen ambulance cars fitted with every appliance for the comfortable transportation of the ill and wounded. The second section contains two operating cars, supplied with every adjunct of the modern operating room, tiled interiors capable of instant cleansing, disinfectants, stores, instruments, bandages, and adjustable operating tables. These cars are intended to be detached from the train and sent to various points, wherever they will be of the most use, along the line.

The remainder of the train contains a library, chapel, and bath-rooms, including a special electric bath, an "X" ray car with dynamo, and all apparatus, and a kitchen car from which all the patients are fed. There are also cars containing a dispensary, sterilizing and disinfecting apparatus, a water distilling plant and ice-manufacturing machinery.

There went out with the train three doctors, four sisters of mercy, and three assistants. The Empress not only furnished the entire train, but furnishes \$300 mon-

thly to aid in the purchase of delicacies for the sick.

2,000,000 TROOPS.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the Echo de Paris says that Russia's preparations for effectually ending the war include the mobilization of 2,000,000 troops in European Russia. The mobilization will be carried out progressively. The correspondent quotes "an influential person" as declaring that Russia will involve the whole world in war rather than submit to intervention by other powers to make peace.

An important agreement, says the despatch, has been reached by Russia and Germany. The negotiations between them with regard to the Customs tariffs have been virtually concluded. It is stated that Russia has made concessions that will satisfy the agrarians, while Germany promises to support Russia at the end of the war, with a view of preventing the assembling of another Berlin Congress.

GLOOM IN RUSSIA.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the London Standard dwells at length upon the stagnation of financial, commercial and industrial life. The concluding item of the black account is an official statistical report of last year's harvest, which in 39 provinces, inhabited by 65,000,000 people, is described as middling, or below middling, while in the remaining 33 provinces the best description is above middling. Nowhere is it good.

The writer writes up by saying that it is only in St. Petersburg among the practically irresponsible bureaucracy, which rules Russia, that attempts are still made to maintain optimistic views of the progress and the end of the war, but the progress of the war is a matter of public knowledge now-a-days, and that it is not too much to say that the bureaucracy is now only a pretence before the enlightened public opinion of the empire, and the evidence has been dead against that from the outset.

RUSSIAN ARTILLERY.

That the Russian artillery in Manchuria is admitted by correspondents at the front to be inadequate against the Japanese, who exceed therein both as regards efficiency and numbers, comes as a disconcerting surprise. Of the 250 guns at Gen. Kourapatkin's disposal fewer than half are of later make than 1899.

BLAME JAPS AND NATURE.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the London Express says that the officials energetically deny that any mines were laid outside territorial waters. If any are afloat beyond these waters they are Japanese, or were admitted by accident. Russian naval officers, they add, would never think of sowing mines at sea, as they are well aware that they would thereby risk their own vessels and render Russia liable for the payment of indemnities for accidents to neutral vessels. Moreover, despite their success in destroying the Japanese battleship Hattusee, the officials at Port Arthur would be glad if there were no Russian mines at the entrance of the harbor, for the recent inactivity of their own ships has been largely due to their not knowing accurately the positions of the mines, owing to their shifting in the rough sea. If any power protests, Russia is confident of her ability to refute the charge of wilful malign intent. The foreign criticism, indeed, has created surprise and indignation, especially in view of the fact that Russia has been the chief sufferer from accidental explosions. It is still believed that the Russian battleship Petropavlovsk was destroyed by one of these explosions.

DALNY DOCKS INTACT.

The attempt made about a fortnight ago to destroy the docks and piers at Dalny was not successful, and after the receipt of the news of the loss of the Japanese battleship Hattusee, Lieut. Gen. Stoessel, commander of the military forces at Port Arthur, ordered that the docks and piers be not destroyed.

The German steamer Cheloo was fired on by a Japanese cruiser in Pechili Gulf to-day. She misunderstood the signals of the cruiser, mistaking the Swedish steamer Karin also was fired on during last night while off Liaotshn Promontory, but it is not known whence this fire came.

RUSSIANS BURN SHRINES.

A telegram has been received at Seoul from Gensan, saying that the Russians, after the engagement with Korean troops at Iam-Iam on May 19th, burned the shrines at the royal mausoleum, which were erected there by the founder of the present Korean dynasty in the year 1364, and which were regarded by the Koreans as sacred. This apparent wanton destruction of tombs in a land imbued with the spirit of ancestor worship has caused excited denunciations of the Russians on the part of Seoul officials.

Han-Hung is on the coast of Corea, and about 50 miles north of Gensan.

Mrs. Oldidge is much worried about her daughter. The other night she kissed her, and the young lady murmured in her sleep: "Oh, Charlie, you've shaved off your moustache!"

Mrs. Asem—"I'm surprised to find you looking for another servant. I thought you engaged one yesterday." Mrs. Hiram Olsen—"Oh! She's a lady's maid. She merely waits on me. I'm looking for another one to wait on her."

"Do you regard money as the supreme test of success?" asked the man with the artistic temperament. "No," answered the practical person; "but the absence of it is a pretty sure sign of failure."