The Special Correspondent

CHAPTER XVIII.

The country is fertile and well cultivated, growing wheat, maize, rice, barley and flax, in its eastern districts. Everywhere are great masses of trees, willows, mulberries, poplars. As far as the eye can reach are fields under cultivation, irrigated by numerous canals, also green fields, in which are flocks of sheep, a country half Normandy, half Provence, were it not for the mountains of Pamir on the horizon. But this portion of Kachgaria was terribly ravaged by war when its people were struggling for independ The land flowed with blood, and along by the railroad the ground is dotwith tumuli beneath which are buried the victims of their patriotism. But I did not come to Central Asia to travel as if I were in France. Novelty! Novelty! The unforeseen! The appall-

It was without the shadow of an ac cident, and after a particularly fine run, that we entered Yarkand Station at four o'clock in the afternoon.

A few Chinese passengers alighted at Yarkand, and gave place to others exactly like them-among others a score of -and we started again at 8 o'clock in the evening. During the night we ran the three hundred and fifty kiloters which separate Yarkand from Kothan.

A visit I paid to the front van showed me that the box was still in the same place. A certain snoring proved that Kinko was inside as usual, and sleeping peacefully. I did not care to wake him, and I left him to dream of his adorable Roumanian.

In the morning Popof told me that the train, which was now traveling about as fast as an omnibus, had passed Khargalik, the junction for the Kilian and Tong branches. The night had been cold, for we are still at an altitude of 1,200 meters. Leaving Guma Station, the line runs due east and west, following the thirty-seventh parallel, the same which traverses it in Europe, Seville, Syracuse and Athens.

We sighted only one stream of importance, the Karakash, on which appeared a few drifting rafts, and files of horses and asses at the fords between the pebbly banks. The railroad crosses it about a hundred kilometers from Khotan, where we arrived at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Two hours to stop, and as the town may give me a foretaste of the cities of China, I resolve to take a run through it. As we were about to board the car again, I saw Popof running toward me, shouting:

"Monsieur Bombarnac!" "What is the matter, Popof?" "A telegraph messenger asked me if there was any one belonging to the train. Twentieth Century on the train."

'A telegraph messenger? 'Yes, and on my replying in the affirmative, he gave me this telegram for

for you. Give it me! give it me!" I seize the telegram, which has been waiting for me some days. Is it a reply to my wire sent from Merv, relative to

the mandarin Yen Lou? I open it. I read it, and it falls from my hand. This is what it said: *Claudius Bombarnac, Correspondent

Twentieth Century, Khotan, Chinese Turkestan:

"It is not the corpse of a mandarin that the train is taking to Pekin, but the imperial treasure, value fifteen millions, sent from Persia to China, as announced in the Paris newspapers eight days ago; endeavor to be better informed for the future."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Millions-there are millions in that pretended mortuary van!"

In spite of myself, this imprudent phrase had escaped me in such a way that the secret of the imperial treasure was instantly known to all, to the railway men as well as to the passengers. And so, for the greater security, the Persian government, in agreement with the Chinese government, has allowed it to be believed that we were carrying the corpse of a mandarin, when we were really taking to Pekin a treasure worth fifteen millions of francs.

Now the secret is divulged, and v know that this treasure, composed of gold and precious stones, formerly posited in the hands of the Shah of Per sia, is being sent to its legitimate owner,

the Son of Heaven. That is why my lord Faruskiar, who was aware of it in consequence of his position as general manager of the company, had joined the train at Douchal so as to accompany the treasure to its destination. That is why he and Ghangir -and the three other Mongols-had so carefully watched this precious van, and why they had shown themselves so anxlous when it had been left behind by the breakage of the coupling, and why they were so eager for its recovery.

That is also why a detachment of Chinese soldiers has taken over the van at Kachgar, in relief of the Persians. That is why Pan Chao never heard of Yen Lou, nor of any exalted personage of that name existing in the Celestial Empire! We started to time, and, as may be supposed, our traveling companions could talk of nothing else but the millions which were enough to enrich every

one in the train. "This pretended mortuary van has always been suspicious to me," said Major Noltitz. "And that was why I questioned Pan Chao regarding the dead

mandarin." "I remember," I said; "and I could not quite understand the motive of your question. It is certain now that we have

got a treasure in tow." 'And I add," said the major, "that the Chinese government has done wisely in sending an escort of twenty well armed men. From Kothan to Lan Tcheou the trains will have two thousand kilometers

to traverse through the desert, and the safety of the line is not as great as it be across the Gobi." "All the more so, major, as the re doubtable Ki-Tsang has been reported

in the northern provinces." "Quite so, and a haul of fifteen millions is worth having by a bandit chief."
"But how could the chief be informed treasure being sent?"

That sort of people always know

what it is their interest to know."
"Yes," thought I, "although they do

not read the Twentieth Century." Meanwhile, different opinions were being exchanged on the gangways. Some would rather travel with the millions than carry a corpse along with them, even though it was that of a first-class mandarin. Others considered the carry-ing of the treasure a danger to the pas-sengers. And that was the opinion of Baron Weissschnitzerdorfer, in a furious

attack on Popof.
"You ought to have told us about it, sir-you ought to have told us about it! Those millions are known to be in the train, and they will tempt people to attack us. And an attack, even if repuls ed, will mean delay, and delay I will not submit to. No. sir, I will not!"

"No one will attack us," replied Popof. 'No one will dream of doing it." "And how do you know that-how do

you know that?' "Be calm, pray." "I will not be calm; and if there is a

delay I will hold the company responsi-That is understood: a hundred thou-

sand florins damages to Monsieur le Bar-on Tour de Monde. Let us pass to the other passengers. Ephrinell looked at the matter, of course,

from a very practical point of view. "There can be no doubt that our risks have been greatly increased by this treasure, and in case of accident on account of it the Life Travelers' Society, in which I am insured, will, I expect, refuse to pay, so that the Grand Transasiatic Company will have all the re-sponsibility."

"Of course," said Miss Bluett; "and if they had not found the missing van the company would have been in a serious difficulty with China. Would it not, Fulk?"

"Exactly, Horatia."

Horatia and Fulk-nothing less! The Anglo-American couple were right, the enormous loss would have had to be borne by the Grand Transasiatic, for the company must have known they were carrying a treasure and not a corpse, and thereby they were responsible.

As to the Caternas, the millions roll-

ing behind did not seem to trouble them. The only reflection they inspired was, "Ah! Caroline, what a splendid theater we might build with all that money!" But the best thing was said by the Rev. Nathaniel Morse, who had joined the train at Kachgar. "It is never comfortable to be drag-

ging a powder magazine after one."

Nothing could be truer, and this van, with its imperial treasure, was a pow-der magazine that might blow up our

CHAPTER XX.

The first railway was opened in China about 1877, and ran from Shanghai to Fou-Tcheou. The Grand Transasiatic followed very closely the Russian road proposed in 1874 by Tashkend, Kouldja Kami, Lan Tcheou, Singan, and Shang-hai. This railway did not run through the populous central provinces, which can be compared to vast and humming hives of bees, and extraordinarily prolific bees. As nearly as possible it forms a straight line to Sou-Tcheou before curving off to Lan Tcheou; it reaches cities by the branches it gives out to the south and southeast.

Since we left Kothan, we have covered a hundred and nity kilometers in four hours. It is not a high rate of speed, but we cannot expect on this part of the Transasiatic the same rate of traveling we experienced on the Transcaspian. Either the Chinese engineers are not so fast, or, thanks to their natural indothe engine drivers imagine that from thirty to forty miles an hour is the maximum that can be obtained on the railways of the Celestial Empire.

At o'clock in the afternoon we wer at another station, Nia, where General Pevtsoff established a meteorological ob servatory. Here we stopped only twenty minutes. I had time to lay in a few provisions at the bar. For whom they were intended you can imagine. The passengers we picked up were only

Chinese, men and women. There were only a few for the first class and these only went short journeys.

We had not started a quarter of an hour, when Ephrinell, with the serious manner of a merchant intent on some business, came up to me on the gang-

"Monsieur Bombarnac," he said, "] have to ask a favor of you.' "Only too happy, I can assure you." "What is it about?"

"I want you to be a witness. ing to marry Miss Bluett." "Marry her?" "Yes. A treasure of a woman, well ac-quainted with business matters, holding

a splendid commission—"
"My compliments, Mr. Ephrinell! You can count on me.'

"And, probably, on Monsieur Cater "He would like nothing better, and if

there is a wedding breakfast he will sing at your dessert-"As much as he pleases," replied the American.

"Then it is to be-"Here."

'In the train?"

"In the train." "But to be married you require 'An American minister, and we have

the Rev. Nathaniel Morse. "Brave, Mr. Ephrinell! A wedding in a train will be delightful."

It needs not be said that the commer cials were of full age, and free to dispose of themselves to enter into marriage before a clergyman and without any of the fastidious preliminaries re quired in France and other formalistic countries. Is this an advantage or otherwise? The American thinks it is for the best, and, as Cooper says, the best at home is the best everywhere.

It is too late for the ceremony to to place to-day. Ephrinell understood that certain conventionalities must be com plied with. The celebration could take in the morning. The passengers could all be invited, and Faruskair might be prevailed on to honor the affair with

During dinner we talked of nothing

else. After congratulating the happy couple, who replied with true Angle Saxon grace, we all promised to sign the

marriage contract.

"And we will do honor to your signatures," said Ephrinell, in the tone of a

tradesman accepting a bill. The night came, and we retired, to dream of the marriage festivities of the morrow. I took my usual stroll into the Had fied with grievous yell. morrow. I took my usual stroll into the car occupied by the Chinese soldiers, and found the treasure of the Son of Heaven faithfully guarded. Half the detachment were awake and half were asleep.

About 1 o'clock in the morning I visited Kinko, and handed him over my purchase at Nia. He anticipated no fur obstacles; he would reach port safely,

he told me.
I told him about the Ephrinell-Bluett marriage, and how the union was to be celebrated next morning with great

"I am getting quite fat in this box,"

"Ah!" said he, with a sigh. "They are not obliged to wait until they reach Pekin. "Quite so, Kinko: but it seems to me

that a marriage under such conditions is not likely to be lasting. But, after all, that is the couple's lookout." At 3 o'clock in the morning we stopped forty minutes at Tchertchen, almost at the foot of the ramifications of the

miserable, desolate country, treeless and verdureless, which the railway was now crossing on its road to the northeast. Day came; our train ran the four hundred kilometers between Tchertchen and Tcharkalyk while the sun caressed with its rays the immense plain glittering in

Kuen Lun. None of us had seen this

its saline efflorescence (To be continued.)

RUG MADE OF HUMAN SCALPS.

Seventy-seven Lives the Cost of One

Possessed by Iowa Indian.
A rug which took seventy-seven lives in the making is owned by an Iowa Indian living in Stroud, O. T., says the Dallas News. It is 150 years old and consists of seventy-seven scalps torn from the heads of as many human beings. The rug, which is barely five feet square, is of many hues, for the scalps are red, gray, black, white, brown and auburn. They belonged to peaceful people, too, and are said to have been taken by special command of the Great Spirit from the finest specimens of men, women and children belonging to the white, red and negro races.

As soon as the scalps were secured they were sewn together and the rug But the noisy hours had fled and now it was from that time regarded as the remedy for all trouble. When an Indian was taken sick he was laid on this rug and if he did not recover his spirit was assured of a pleasant journey to the happy hunting ground.

This remarkable creation can be seen only once a year.

At the annual wild-onion feast, which comes on April 1, the Iowa Indians make the rug play an important part. The onion is freely used, the Indians saturating themselves from head to foot with the juice. This was their successful way of driving away the evil spirits. A prayer rug belonging to the shah

Though barely two feet square, its ed throughout in precious stones and he had left that window wide open. the effect is dazzling. The ground is be seen as through a cage, are made of emeralds, while the bands which connect the stones are of seed pearl. The floral emblem of Persia is worked out in blue, yellow and pink stones, this design being known as the Mina

cent interest would bring in an income of at least \$250,000 per annum.

A STORY OF TWO PAINTERS.

Did Van Dyck and Hals Really Paint Each Other's Portrait?

There is a story related by Houbraken, which may or may not be true, that Van Dyck, passing through Haarlem, where Hals lived, sent a messenger to seek him out and tell him that a stranger wished to see him. and on Hals putting in an appearance asked him to paint his portrait, adding, however, that he had only two hours to spare for the sitting. Hals finished the portrait in that time, whereupon his sitter, observing that it seemed an easy matter to paint a portrait, requested that he be allowed to try to paint the artist. Hals soon Now, when did you fire those big ones? recognized that his vistor was well skilled in the materials he was using. Great, however, was his surprise when he beheld the performance. He immediately embraced the stranger, at the same time crying: "You are Van Dyck! No one but he could do what you have just now done!"

Assuming the story to be true, how interesting it would be if the two portraits existed, that one might see what Frans Hals, accustomed to the heavier type of the Dutch burghers, made of the delicately defined features of Van Dyck, and how the latter, who always gave an air of aristocratic elegance to his portraits, acquitted himself with the bluff, jovial Hans, who his was as much at home in a tavern as in a studio. For no two men could be more different, both in their points of view and in their methods, though they were alike in this one particular that each was a most facile and ed the tent, for the circus had pitched skillful painter.—St. Nicholas.

About the Size of It. "Say, paw," queried little Johnny Bumpernickle, "what does a paper mean when it says that further comment is unnecessary?"

"It usually means," my son, that the writer doesn't know what else to say," answered the old gentleman.

CASABIANCA'S CELEBRATION.

The boy stood on the burning porch Whence all had made a scoot; A Roman caudie in his hand Was just about to shoot.

A busted bomb upon the floor, Some remnants of a hat, Suspender buttons—three or fo That was where grandpa sat. An isle of safety on the lawn,
Where still the grass was green,
Marked where his sister dear had gone
To rub on vaseline.

Anon the smoke rose from the yard,
And then, through one small rift,
We saw where mother, scorched
scarred,
A smelling bottle sniffed.

And at the gate stood Uncle Bill In fragments of his pants, Demanding in his accents shrill: "Send us an ambulance!"

The boy, as we remarked at first,
A Roman candle held.
He struck a match and lit the fuse;
"This is the last!" he yelled. The Boman candle fissled and flared The balls flew far and wide, His relatives, all badly scared, Once more essayed to hide.

Alas! Ere shelter they could find, The direful deed was done; He whirled the candle all about And pinked them every one.

In pain they limped up to the port They crept from bush and shrub, And each implored in husky tones: "Let me get at that cub!"

There came a burst of thunder sound.
The boy—O, where was he?
By turns he was sent on a round
That led from knee to knee.
—Chicago Record-Heraid.

JACK GRIDLEY'S CELEBRATION

ACK GRIDLEY crawled through a hole in the fence back of his home and cautiously tiptoed toward the house. The sun was higher than Jack had intended it should be when he returned; when he had slipped out of the back door, just before midnight, with two big cannon crackers and his pockets full of smaller ones, and had joined Bill Ainsley; to set the church bell wildly ringing, on the stroke of 12, in joyous time-honored salutation to the glorious Fourth, he had planned to be back in his room and in bed before the sun rose

was broad day.

A rooster crowed on a neighboring farm, and from the henhouse back of him the old Buff Cochin answered long and clear. Buff was Miss Aun's alarm clock, and beads of anxiety stood out on Jack's face as he cautiously but hurriedly lifted the latch of the back door. Why didn't it open? He had left it un locked when he stole out in the night and now-he gave a reckless, desperate tug, but the door yielded not one whit. Could be have carelessly left the book so that it fell back in place with the jar of closing? He must have. Jack glanced uneasily towards Miss Ann's bedroom, then slipped off his shoes, climbe to the low shed at the back, ran swiftly and noiselessly across the roof, and of Persia is another valuable mat. reaching up to the window sill of his room pulled himself up, and with a sigh design is most elaborate. It is work- of relief dropped inside. Thank heaven,

He was none too soon, for even as h formed of rose diamonds and in the slipped his jacket off preparatory to center is a large bird, whose neck is jumping into bed, Miss Ann's thin, made of amethysts and its body of cracked voice rang up the narrow stairmade of amethysts and its body of way: "Jack, you can get up now!" rubles. The vines, which form a net"Yes'm," was the meek reply. Waiting such length of time as would naturally elapse during the process of dressing, Jack filled his pockets with the remain der of his crackers and presented himself in the kitchen. Jack Gridley was motherless, and his father, a commercial traveler, had found a home for the boy with Miss Ann Hobart.

"Good morning," said Miss Ann, as It is difficult to determine even the Jack entered the kitchen. "Good morn approximate value of this small rug, ing," he replied as he hurried toward but it has been estimated that if it the woodshed for an armful of wood. were sold the proceeds placed at 5 per Breakfast was ready when he returned, and there had been no opportunity to fire a cracker.

"John," said Miss Ann, helping him to a second dish of oatmeal, "if I were you I would save those two largest crackers for this evening, to close the day with." "Yes'm," said Jack.

'Now, suppose," continued Miss Ann, "that you give them to me for safe k ing; I am afraid the temptation to fire them will be too great otherwise." Jack grew red in the face, and hastily gulped down a glass of milk. "Can't, they're busted," he said.

"You mean they are broken. But y haven't told me how you broke them continued Miss Ann, sweetly. "I-I-I fired 'em!" Jack blurted the truth out manfully. "John Gridley! what do you All the sweetness was gone mean?" from Miss Ann now. "You haven't fired cracker since you rose this morning. Tell me the truth instantly!"

"Lest night," said Jack, feebly. "At hat time last night?" "I don't know what time last night?" jes' what time," was the weak reply. John Gridley, you look me in the face and tell me what time you left this house." The jig was up and Jack knew "Well, if you must know, it was few minutes of 12," he said.

"Hand me those crackers, every one you've got. Now, John Gridley, don't you stir foot outside of the yard this day. Now go out to the weodpile and saw until I tell you to stop.'

Poor Jack! He wouldn't give Miss Ann the satisfaction of knowing how bad he felt, but when his stint of was finished, he fled to the barn and up in a dark corner of the hawmow he had his cry out with only the sympathetic whinny of old Nell in the stall below, for comfort. All the morning he had heard the pop, pop, pop of crackers, and later the circus band, as the procession paraded the streets; he had even caught just a glimpse of the parade as it enternot far from Miss Ann's house. This was the first circus in Easthampton for years, and Jack had set his heart on going. Miss Ann strongly disapproved of circuses, but Jack had written to his father and obtained consent, providing he was a good boy, and now-Jack wept afresh. Most of all he wanted to see the elephant (it was a small circus and had but one of the huge pachyderms). dered out, he refused to move without About 3 o'clock Miss Ann relented to Jack. "Pick him up, Mike," ordered the

"Great Washington!" He said: "If we had these toys in our time how we could have affrighted and beaten the British!" the extent-of allowing him to have his keeper, so, gently, the elephant placed crackers, and in the noise of these he tried to drown out the noise of the circus started for the circus tents once more

band that floated out from the big dingy Jack the envy of all the boys in

pulled in. The free end of the fuse was

ses of the barn, rushed in, where he

stood trumpeting and trembling with

fright. A few minutes later Jack heard

the keeper close the doors and say to

the crowd coming up, that he would shut

the elephant in for awhile until he had

calmed down. Then the keeper told how

someone, he didn't know who, had thrown a cracker in front of the big

beast just as the latter was drinking,

Meantime Jack was in an unhappy

predicament and retreated to a far cor-

ner of the mow, the cold chills chasing

each other down his back as he heard

the heavy breathing of the elephant be-low. Gradually the elephant grew quiet-

er and Jack's courage began to come back. He could hear old Nell whinnying

with fright and stamping uneasily in he

and he wanted to see what was going on

dim light he could see the back of the

elephant not two feet below him. The

animal was quiet now. Presently he noticed the long trunk feeling along the

edge of the mow and examining the new

quarters, so he beat a retreat once more

The new hay was not yet in, and the

small amount of old hay left was at the

back of the mow. A rustling on the

edge of it caught his attention and he

made out the elephant's trunk stretch-

reach. Cautiously he held out a wisp

It was taken and the trunk disappeared.

A minute later it was back again. So

Jack continued to feed the elephant,

and growing bolder, crawled to the edge

again, having a bundle of hay in his

hands. This time the elephant saw him

and before he could retreat the big

trunk had caught him and deftly, but

gently, lifted him down. The hay he

still held, and timidly offering it, it was

A few minutes later the keeper opens

big charge and a small boy on the best of terms, and when the elephant was or-

the doors, to find to his astonishm

ing for the hay, which

promptly accepted.

below. Cautiously, inch by inch,

crept to the edge of the mow. In

Curiosity got the better of him

and the runaway had resulted.

stall.

in midair.

MAN OF '76 REAPPEARS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

canvas so near and yet so far. Suddenvillage, and Miss Ann realizing her helply it flashed into his head that he might essness in the situation. send up crackers on his kite. Why not? The show management settled for the He had read of a camera being sent up broken fences, but Miss Ann still retains to take photographs, and if a camera her prejudice against circusses. As for could go, crackers could. Jack set to Jack, to this day no one knows who work at once to put his idea into execudropped the cracker in front of Mike. tion. A long fuse was made and attach-Jack looks back to that Fourth, when ed to the crackers. Near the crackers a the circus came to him, because he could string was tied to the fuse, and this in not go to it, as the greatest celebration he ever had .- Orange Judd Farmer. turn was tled to a bit of wire on the kite string near the kite, which had been

BALLAST.



Old Glory's Birthday.

Hark! the boys are coming! A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat! The drummers are bravely drumming, While over their heads, go where they may,
Will ever Old Glory go.

A-rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat!
A-rat-a-tat-tat-tat!
And over their heads, go where they may,
Will ever Old Glory go.

Listen! the drums are nearing,
A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat!
And wilder the boys are cheering,
A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat!
So fill your pockets with crackers,
Bring out a horn and a gun,
And join in the shouting chorus;
Add to the neise and the fun!
A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat!
Come, join in the shouting chorus,
Add to the noise and fun.

'Tis the same, sweet, old, old story,

A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat!
Of the birthday of Old Glory,

A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat!
And a hundred years in passing,
Since the fathers fought and bled,
Have made more preclous the starry warn
That tyranny is dead.

A-rat-a-tat-tat-a-tat-tat!
Have made more preclous the starry sign
That tyrany is dead.

Bobby's Nightmare.



Pleases All. The Fourth once more is bringing joy To the firecracker maker;
It tickles the heart of the little boy,
The doctor and undertaker.
—New York Sun.