

The Special Correspondent

CHAPTER XXI.

When I awoke I seemed to have had an unpleasant dream. The bandit chief, Ti-Tsang, had prepared a scheme for the seizure of the Chinese treasure; he had attacked the train in the plains of Gobi; the car is assaulted, pillaged, ransacked; the gold and precious stones, to the value of fifteen millions, are torn from the grasp of the Celestials, who yield after a courageous defense. As to the passengers, another two minutes of sleep would have settled their fate—and mine.

But all that disappeared with the vapors of the night. Dreams are not fixed photographs; they fade in the sun, and end by effacing themselves.

In taking my stroll through the train as a good townsman takes his stroll through the town, I am joined by Major Noltitz. After shaking hands, he showed me a Mongol in the second-class car, and said to me, "That is not one of those we picked up at Douchang when we picked up Faruskiar and Ghangir."

"That is so," said I; "I never saw that face in the train before."

Popof, to whom I applied for information, told me that the Mongol had got in at Tcherchen. "When he arrived," he said, "the manager spoke to him for a minute, from which I concluded that he also was one of the staff of the Grand Transasiatic."

I had not noticed Faruskiar during my walk. Had he alighted at one of the small stations between Tcherchen and Tcharkalyk, where we ought to have been about 1 o'clock in the afternoon? No, he and Ghangir were on the gangway in front of our car. They seemed to be in an animated conversation, and only stopped to take a good look toward the northeastern horizon. Had the Mongol brought some news which had made them throw off their usual reserve and gravity? And I abandoned myself to my imagination, foreseeing adventures, attacks of bandits and so on, according to my dream.

I was recalled to reality by the Rev. Nathaniel Morse, who said to me: "It is fixed for to-day; do not forget."

That meant the marriage of Fulk Ephrinnell and Horatia Bluet. Really, I was not thinking of it. It is time for me to go and dress for the occasion. All I can do will be to change my shirt. It is enough that one of the husband's witnesses should be presentable; the other, Caterna, will be sure to be magnificent.

It was at 9 o'clock that this marriage was to take place, announced by the bell of the tender, which was to sound full clang as if it were a chapel bell. With a little imagination we could believe we were in a village. But whether did this bell invite the witnesses and guests? Into the dining car, which had been conveniently arranged for the ceremony, as I had taken good care.

It was no longer a dining car; it was a hall car, if the expression is admissible. The big table had been taken away and replaced by a small table which served as a desk. A few flowers bought at Tcherchen had been arranged in the corners of the car, which was large enough to hold nearly all who wished to be present—and those who could not get inside could look on from the gangways.

A quarter to nine. No one has yet seen the happy couple. Miss Bluet is in one of the toilet cabinets in the first van, where she is probably preparing herself. Fulk Ephrinnell is perhaps struggling with his cravat and giving a last polish to his portable jewelry. I am not anxious. We shall see them as soon as the bell rings.

I have but one regret, and that is that Faruskiar and Ghangir should be too busy to join us. Why do they continue to look over the immense desert? Before their eyes stretches not the cultivated steppe of the Lob-Nor region, but the Gobi, which is barren, desolate and gloomy. It may be asked why these people are keeping such an obstinate lookout.

"If my presentiments do not deceive me," said Major Noltitz, "there is some reason for it."

What does he mean? But the bell of the tender, the tender bell, begins its joyous appeal. Nine o'clock; it is time to go into the dining car.

The passengers move in a procession, the four witnesses first, then the guests from the end of the village. I mean of the train; Chinese, Turkomans, Tartars, men and women, all curious to assist at the ceremony. The four Mongols remain on the last gangway near the treasure, which the Chinese soldiers do not leave for an instant.

We reach the dining car. The clergyman is seated at the little table, on which is the certificate of marriage he has prepared according to the customary form. He looks as though he was accustomed to this sort of thing, which is as much commercial as matrimonial.

Here is Mr. Fulk Ephrinnell, dressed this morning just as he was dressed yesterday, with a pencil behind the lobe of his left ear, for he has just been making out an account for his New York house.

Here is Miss Horatia Bluet, as thin, as dry, as plain as ever, her dust-cloak over her traveling gown, and in place of jewelry a noisy bunch of keys, which hangs from her belt.

The company politely rise as the bride and bridegroom enter. They "mark time," as Caterna says. Then they advance toward the clergyman, who is standing with his hand resting on a Bible, open probably at the place where Isaac, the son of Abraham, espouses Rebecca, the daughter of Rachel.

We might fancy we were in a chapel if we only had a harmonium. And the music is here! It is not a harmonium, it is the next thing to it. An accordion makes itself heard in Caterna's hands. As an ancient mariner he knows how to manipulate this instrument of torture, and here he is swinging out the accordeon from "Norma" with the most accordeon-like expression.

It seems to give great pleasure to the natives of Central Asia. Never have their ears been charmed by the antiquated melody that the pneumatic apparatus was rendering so expressively. But everything must end in this world, even the andante from "Norma," and the Rev. Nathaniel Morse began to favor

the young couple with the speech which had done duty many times before under similar circumstances. "The two souls that blend together—flesh of my flesh—increase and multiply—"

In my opinion he had much better have got to work like a notary: "Before us there has been drawn up a deed of arrangement regarding Messrs. Ephrinnell, Bluet & Co."

My thought remained unfinished. There are shouts from the engine. The brakes are suddenly applied with a scream and a grind. Successive shocks accompany the stoppage of the train. Then, with a violent bump, the cars pull up in a cloud of sand.

Everything is upset in the dining car, men, furniture, bride, bridegroom and witnesses. No one kept his equilibrium. It is an indescribable pell-mell, with cries of terror and prolonged groans. But I hasten to point out that there was nothing serious, for the stoppage was not all at once.

"Quick!" said the major. "Out of the train!"

CHAPTER XXII.

In a moment the passengers, more or less bruised and alarmed, were out on the track. Nothing but complaints and questions uttered in three or four different languages, amid general bewilderment.

Faruskiar, Ghangir and the four Mongols were the first to jump off the cars. They are out on the line, kandjar in one hand, revolver in the other. No doubt an attack has been organized to pillage the train.

The rails have been taken up for about a hundred yards, and the engine, after bumping over the sleepers, has come to a standstill in a sand hill.

"What! The railroad not finished—and they sold me a through ticket from Tiflis to Pekin! And I came by this Transasiatic to save nine days in my trip round the world!" shouted the voice of the irascible baron.

"The baron is mistaken," said Popof, "the railway is completed, and if a hundred yards of rails have been lifted here, it has been with some criminal intention."

"To stop the train!" I exclaim.

"And steal the treasure they are sending to Pekin!" says Caterna.

"There is no doubt of that," says Popof. "Be ready to repulse an attack."

"It is Ki-Tsang and his gang that we have to do with?" I ask.

Ki-Tsang! The name spread among the passengers and caused inexpressible terror.

The major said to me in a low voice, "Why Ki-Tsang? Why not my lord Faruskiar?"

"He—the manager of the Transasiatic?"

"If it is true that the company had to take several of these robber chiefs into its confidence to assure the safety of the trains—"

"I will never believe that, major." "As you please, Monsieur Bombarnac. But assuredly Faruskiar knew that this pretended mortuary van contained millions."

"Come, major, this is no time for joking." No, it was the time for defending, and defending one's self courageously. The Chinese officer has placed his men around the treasure van. They are twenty in number, and the rest of the passengers, not counting the women, amount to thirty.

Popof distributes the weapons, which are carried in case of attack. Major Noltitz, Caterna, Pan Chao, Ephrinnell, driver and stoker, passengers, Asiatic and European, all resolve to fight for the common safety.

On the right of the line, about a hundred yards away, stretches a deep, gloomy thicket, a sort of jungle, in which doubtless are hidden the robbers, awaiting the signal to pounce upon us.

Suddenly there is a burst of shouting, the thicket has given passage to the gang in ambush—some sixty Mongols, nomads of the Gobi. If these rascals beat us, the train will be pillaged, the treasure of the Son of Heaven will be stolen, and, what concerns us more intimately, the passengers will be massacred without mercy.

And Faruskiar, whom Major Noltitz so unjustly suspected? I look at him. His face is no longer the same; his fine features have become pale, his height has increased, there is lightning in his eyes.

The bandits fire a volley, and begin brandishing their arms and shouting. Faruskiar, pistol in one hand, kandjar in the other, has rushed on to them, his eyes gleaming, his lips covered with a light foam. Ghangir is at his side, followed by four Mongols whom he is exciting by word and gesture.

Major Noltitz and I throw ourselves into the midst of our assailants. Caterna is in front of us, his mouth open, his white teeth ready to bite, his eyes blinking, his revolver flourishing about. The actor has given place to the old sailor who has reappeared for the occasion.

"These beggars want to board us," said he. "Forward, forward, for the honor of the flag! To port, there, fire! To starboard, there, fire! All together, fire!"

And it was with no property daggers he was armed, nor dummy pistols loaded with inoffensive powder. No! A revolver in each hand, he was bounding along, firing right and left, and everywhere.

Pan Chao also exposed himself bravely, a smile on his lips, gallantly leading on the other Chinese passengers. Popof and the railway men did their duty bravely. Sir Francis Trevelyan, of Trevelyan Hall, took matters very coolly, but Ephrinnell abandoned himself to true Yankee fury, being no less irritated at the interruption to his marriage than as to the danger run by his forty-two packages of artificial teeth.

have had my shoulder grazed by a bullet, a simple scratch I have hardly noticed. The Rev. Nathaniel Morse does not think that his sacred character compels him to cross his arms, and, from the way he works, one would not imagine that it was the first time he has handled firearms. Caterna has his hat shot through. He utters something about thunder and port hole, and then, taking a most deliberate aim, shoots stone dead the ruffian who has taken such a liberty with his best headgear.

For ten minutes or so the battle continues with most alarming alternations. The number of wounded on both sides increases, and the issue is still doubtful. Faruskiar and Ghangir and the Mongols have been driven back toward the precious van, which the Chinese guard have not left for an instant. But two or three of them have been mortally wounded, and their officer has just been killed by a bullet in the head. And my hero does all that the most ardent courage can do for the defense of the treasure of the Son of Heaven.

I am getting uneasy at the prolongation of the combat. It will continue evidently as long as the chief of the band—a tall man with a black beard—urges on his accomplices to the attack on the train. Up till now he has escaped unhurt, and, in spite of all we can do, he is gaining ground. Shall we be obliged to take refuge in the vans, as behind the walls of a fortress, to trench ourselves, to fight until the last has succumbed? And that will not be long, if we cannot stop the retrograde movement which is beginning on our side.

To the reports of the guns there are now added the cries of the women, who in their terror are running about the gangways, although Miss Bluet and Madame Caterna are trying to keep them inside the cars. A few bullets have gone through the panels, and I am wondering if any of them have hit Kinko.

Major Noltitz comes near me and says, "This is not going well."

"No, it is not going well," I reply, "and I am afraid the ammunition will give out. We must settle their commander-in-chief. Come, major—"

But what we are about to do was done by another at that very instant. This other was Faruskiar. Bursting through the ranks of the assailants, he cleared them off the line, in spite of the blows they aimed at him. He is in front of the bandit chief, he raises his arms, he stabs him full in the chest.

Instantly the thieves beat a retreat, without even carrying off their dead and wounded. Some run across the plain, some disappear in the thickets. Why pursue them now that the battle has ended in our favor? And I must say that without the admirable valor of Faruskiar I do not expect any of us would have lived to tell the story.

But the chief of the bandits is not dead, although the blood flows abundantly from his chest. He has fallen with one knee on the ground, one hand up, with the other he is supporting himself. Faruskiar stands over him, towering above him. Suddenly he rises in a last effort, his arm threatens his adversary, he looks at him. A last thrust of the kandjar is driven into his heart. Faruskiar returns, and in Russian, with perfect calmness, remarks:

"Ki-Tsang is dead! So perish all who bear weapons against the Son of Heaven!"

(To be continued.)

A SANTA FE HOTEL.

Las Vegas Man Suggests Unique and Attractive Hostelry.

Apropos of a short article from the Kansas City Star which appeared in the Optic last Saturday, referring to the proposition to mark the old Santa Fe trail, an enterprising citizen suggests to the Optic a project that has attractive features.

The gentleman touched upon the proposition to establish a three-story hotel of native brown stone in Las Vegas, and said: "Why should not the hotel be called the 'Santa Fe Trail,' and the company be incorporated as 'The Santa Fe Trail Hotel Company?'"

"I would suggest a big dining-room of 220 feet linear measurement and have portrayed on its walls the entire Santa Fe trail from Westport on the Missouri River to ancient Santa Fe, with a sketch of the modern scenic route in addition. On the walls of the reception-rooms and dining-room could be hung canvases representing the old prairie schooners, stage coaches, caravans, United States cavalry squads, the roaming buffalo and antelope and deer, the 'noble redman' as he then was, and pictures of Colonel Doniphan, 'Kit' Carson, F. O. Kihlberg, Colonel Branswick, William Kroenig and other heroes of the picturesque way. Memorable scenes along the way could be depicted, and such places as Olathe, Kan., Council Grove, Bent's Fort, the Raton Mountains, Red River Station, Fort Union, Fort Craig, Las Vegas, Pigeon Roost, Santa Fe, all as they were in the brave old days.

"I tell you that the names and scenes and places which made famous the Santa Fe trail should be perpetuated. In what better way could the end be gained than according to the plan I have suggested. And, then, would not the name and fame of such a picturesque hostelry bring thousands of visitors? Would any tourist ever pass through this region without stopping to learn at a glance an important chapter of the history of this nation?"

"I would further suggest that such a hotel have 60 rooms; that 45 of the rooms bear the names of the States of the Union, and be decorated in typical symbolism; that the 5 territories each be given a room, and that the foreign possessions be allowed a place. I propose my suggestions to the people of Los Vegas in the form of a resolution. Let us have the amendments offered promptly and begin work. I might add that such a hotel as I have proposed of native brown stone has been estimated to cost \$80,000."—Las Vegas Optic.

The recent census in Bengal reveals the fact that there are 4,000 baby girls in that province alone who have been married, and of this number 600, all less than a year old, are widows.



Orchid Worth \$5,000.

The *Cypripedium Fairrieanum* is one of the rarest orchids in the world. It was introduced into England some fifty years ago, and at one time was comparatively well known, but subsequently it died out and is now to all intents and purposes a thing of the past. One tiny scrap is still known to exist in England, as well as four equally small pieces in Paris, but as flowering plants all specimens of the orchid have disappeared, alike in the collections of Europe and in the Botanic Gardens of Calcutta, where also they once flowered. For some years a



A \$5,000 ORCHID.

firm of orchid growers in St. Albans, England, has had a standing offer of a reward of £1,000 for a healthy specimen of the orchid, and as the plant originally came from the almost inaccessible wilds of Bhotan, among the lofty Himalayas, these regions have for many years been searched by adventurous spirits anxious to gain the reward. It is now announced that the search has been successful, and the lucky finder, when he lands his plants in England in good condition, will receive the prize of £1,000.

For Hen and Chicks.

While there are several forms of coops for the old hen and her chicks, says the Indianapolis News, the one built on the well-known lines, a full span, is generally considered the most desirable, although there are several ways of improving this old affair. One of the main troubles with the old coop is that it was not always dry, a serious defect when one considers how harmful dampness is to young chicks. This may be prevented as well as preventing the warping of the boards if the two strips placed across the top are lapped, as shown at Fig. C in the illustration.

Then ventilation may be supplied by placing a number of small holes in the peak of the roof at the back and in front, covering a similar place with fine wire netting, doubled as shown in the illustration and at the point B. This wire will keep out vermin as well. The lower part of the coop is so arranged that a small door may be readily opened when it is necessary to let the old hen out, and yet she cannot get it loose herself; the slats are placed far enough apart so that the chicks can go in and out at



CHEAP CHICKEN COOP.

will and they should be placed wide apart so that no change will need to be made as the chicks grow. A little more lumber and brains put in the making of coops for chickens would make the old hen more comfortable and prevent many of the chickens from dying of roup.

Feeding Silage to Cows.

Many cows will like silage the first time they taste it; a few will mince at it for a few feeds, but for a few feeds only. It is best not to feed too heavily to a cow just learning to eat it. I have had cows eat greedily of it the first few feeds and then become turned against it, but a little bit in their trough for a few feeds and they are all right again. For a cow, though, which is used to it, nothing under eighteen or twenty pounds to a feed will gorge her.—Cor. Farmers' Guide.

The Polled Jersey.

Polled Jerseys are simply Jerseys without horns. They have the same characteristics and practically the same blood as the horned Jerseys. The desirable feature about them is that they are hornless, writes W. H. Forbes, of Ohio, in American Agriculturist.

A majority of those exhibited by us at the Ohio and New York State fairs last season were by a Polled Jersey sire, but out of horned A J C O cows. A large majority of the calves from

such a cross are without horns. When the calf does have horns the result of the second cross is almost sure to be a Polled animal. The American Polled Jersey Cattle Company has provided a supplementary herd book for registering these animals, if females, as foundation stock, the produce of which is eligible to record in the American Polled Jersey herd book.

Keep a Sheep Dog.

Every farmer who has a flock of fifty or more sheep ought to keep a good shepherd dog. He is worth a big price in the first place, and will earn his cost every year in saving sheep and lambs and in doing the work of a man. Their intelligence is almost human and they will take sole care of a flock of sheep, spending every day and night with them if allowed to do so. It is better, however, to put the sheep in an enclosure at night, and relieve the dog from the care of watching them. In the morning he may be sent out with them, and he will herd them on any field of land or keep them within any bounds indicated.

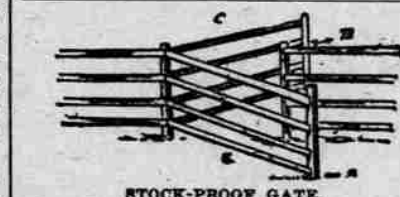
The fidelity of the shepherd dog is remarkable. In Colorado one night last winter a herder brought his flocks and hurried to his cabin to cook himself some supper, for he was more than usually hungry. But he missed the dog, which usually followed him to the cabin of an evening to have her supper. The herder thought it rather strange, but made no search for the dog that night. But when he went down to the corral the next morning he found the gate open and the faithful dog standing guard over the flocks. The herder in his haste the night before had forgotten to close the gate, and the dog, more faithful than her master, had remained at her post all night, though suffering from hunger and thirst.

On another occasion this same dog was left to watch a flock of sheep near the herder's cabin while the herder got his supper. After he had eaten his supper he went out to where the sheep were and told the dog to put the sheep in the corral. This she refused to do, and, although she had no supper, she started off over the prairie as fast as she could go. The herder put the sheep in the corral and went to bed. About midnight he was awakened by the loud barking of a dog down by the corral. He got up, dressed himself and went down to the corral, and there found the dog with a band of fifty sheep which had strayed off the previous day without the herder's knowledge; but the poor dog knew it, and also knew that they ought to be corralled, and she did it.

A well-bred shepherd dog—the Scotch collie, if bred from working stock, is the best—will cost from \$25 to \$50, but they are worth it any time.

Stock-Proof Open Gate.

The drawing will give you an idea how much time and worry can be saved if you have cattle or horses in the pasture and through which many walkers pass daily. It takes only one



STOCK-PROOF GATE.

extra panel of fence. Simply place a panel (C) one and one-half feet past first post in panel D and panel E the same distance, but letting C be on one side, while E is on the other, and at the same time leave room enough through which one person may pass with ease. As panel D fits in between C and E, it becomes impossible for a horse or cow to pass. A shows the entrance and B the outlet. The main reasons why I say it is better than a gate are as follows: 1. It is always open to people and is shut to horses and cows. 2. If you had a gate in its place it would so often be left open by careless, indifferent, thoughtless people. 3. It is much easier to make or keep in good shape than a gate. Some may say that there is no need of either, but if you did not have some handy opening through which walkers could easily pass they would climb over your fence and then you would soon have two or three planks off, and probably broken.—Farm Journal.

Poultry Pickings.

It is not always the fat hen that becomes broody.

The scratching hen gives her chicks much exercise.

Nowhere do souls sour quicker than in an ice box church.

Pullets hatched now will come in for late summer layers.

Give the whole wheat to the hen and soft feed to the chicks.

Drive the young under shelter during sudden showers of rain.

Try a camphor ball for lice. Place one in each nest as you set the hen.

Whole corn, grit and fresh water are the best fare for the sitting hen.

The fact that the hen is laying is no sign that she wants to leave her young.

Keep food constantly before the sitting hen so she can help herself at will.

Thirteen eggs in early spring and fifteen during late spring and summer are large enough sittings.

The best friend is not the one who gives us most cold cash, but the one who imparts most warm cheer.

Covered runs are a protection from hawks, cats or dogs. They should be moved to fresh plots of grass each week.

Whitewash the interior of your coops and sprinkle carbolic lime on the floor. This disinfection drives away lice.



If Bontanist Burbank wishes to confer a real boon on humanity he should set to work to improve the strawberry at the bottom of the box.—Chicago News.

It is costing Uncle Sam a big round of ducats for rural free delivery. In return, he is entitled to the very best highways local effort can give him.—Burlington Hawkeye.

It would be interesting if the men of the nation could go into executive session and find out how many of them secretly agree with Mr. Cleveland in his criticism of women's clubs.—Washington Post.

Mexico is extending a hearty welcome to Mormons and Dowlettes, and the United States will give them an enthusiastic sendoff if they will only migrate there en masse.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Wisconsin has driven out the cigarette, and now proposes to tax the bachelor. There is nothing left for the bachelor but to come to Oregon, where he can smoke himself to death.—Portland Oregonian.

The Osage Indians might, if they possessed the enterprise, successfully buck the Standard Oil Company. They have the money, the oil, the gas, the railway facilities and the markets.—Oklahoma Times-Journal.

The sale of Captain Kidd's house in New York the other day attracted no attention. When it comes to genuine piracy there are thousands of New Yorkers who have him beaten to death.—Wilmington Journal.

Once on a time a man stopped taking a very good newspaper because the paper printed something he didn't like. The paper survived, but in the course of time the man went the way of all flesh and was forgotten.—Augusta Chronicle.

Missouri has a new game law that will prevent the ladies from trimming their hats with the plumage of birds. The legislators who voted for this measure may as well save useless expense and decline re-election.—Pittsburg Gazette.

Igorrotes are again advertising exhibitions by a reported dog feast in Oregon. At all events it can be said for the gutless and shirtless savages that their style of life makes them independent of the dressed-beef combination.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

A Chicago woman shot and killed her husband to keep him at home. And yet, unless she took the precaution to provide herself with a cold-storage plant, her plans may slightly interfere with the rules of the Chicago Health Department.—Augusta Chronicle.

Heretofore "Elijah III" Dowie has been able to satisfy his followers by giving them a "revelation" whenever they became importunate. But now some of the heaviest investors among them are calling for a statement of accounts instead of a revelation.—Savannah News.

Mr. Hoch announces that he will die like a Christian, a statement which suggests the reflection that if Mr. Hoch had lived like a Christian he could still have died like one, though the date of his demise might have been postponed considerably.—Chicago Chronicle.

August W. Machen, already in prison, has been sentenced to an additional term under another indictment. Doubtless he deserves all he is getting—but is he to shoulder the punishment for the whole crew of scoundrels concerned in the postoffice department frauds?—Buffalo Courier.

Rev. Anna Shaw declares that women will never get the ballot until they adopt the slogan, "No ballots, no babies!" It is the fool suffragists of this type that have delayed the granting of woman suffrage so long. What do you think of the Rev. Anna and her slogan, anyway?—Topeka Herald.

It is reported that there is a widespread and growing desire among the young men of this country to rush away to Panama for the purpose of helping to dig the canal. We regard it as our duty to publicly announce that the walking on the way back from Panama is very poor in some places.—Pine Bluff (Ark.) Press-Eagle.

Fitzhugh Lee had the haughty bearing of the Old Dominion aristocrats, but under that exterior of conscious pride beat the heart of one of God's noblemen. When the war broke out he cast his fortunes with his native State. When it was over, he gulped down the bitterness and humiliation like a true soldier and swore allegiance to the flag of our common country. Now he has gone to his eternal rest, with this the judgment of his fellowmen that there throbbed within the bosom of Fitzhugh Lee the heart of a patriot and a true man.—Nebraska State Journal.

Grover Cleveland pronounces the women's clubs to be the enemies of civilization, the destroyers of domestic tranquility and the foe of orderly government. Evidently Mr. Cleveland has mislaid his copy of Cushing's Manual.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Several neurological authorities have contended that mental troubles are due principally to "wine, women and worry." It is strange, though, that hazardous speculation never hurts the mind of reckless trustees of money till they are caught.—St. Louis Republic.