

# The Special Correspondent

## CHAPTER VIII.

We have two hours to wait at Kizil Arvat. Although the day is closing in, I could not employ my time better than in visiting this little town, which contains more than two thousand inhabitants, Russians, Persians and Turkomans.

At nine o'clock the signal to start was given. The train leaving Kizil Arvat went off in a southwesterly direction toward Ashkhabad, along the Persian frontier.

If I remained awake it was because I was troubled in my mind. I was thinking of my famous packing case, of the man it contained, and this very night I had resolved to enter into communication with him. I thought of the people who had done this sort of thing before. In 1889, 1891 and 1892 an Austrian tailor, Herman Zeitung, had come from Vienna to Paris, from Amsterdam to Brussels, from Antwerp to Christiania, in a box.

But I must wait until Popof had retired to rest. The train would not stop until it reached Gheok Tepe, at one o'clock in the morning. During the run from Kizil Arvat to Gheok Tepe I reckoned that Popof would have a good sleep, and then, or never, I would put my plan into execution.

Half an hour went by, and the noise of a door shutting on the platform of the car told me that our guard had just entered his little box. In spite of my desire to visit the baggage car, I waited patiently, for it was possible that Popof was not yet sound asleep.

I rise, I draw aside the curtain of one of the lamps. I look at my watch. It is a few minutes past eleven. Still two hours to Gheok Tepe. The moment has come. I glide between the seats to the door of the car. I open it gently and shut it after me without waking any one.

Assured of my safety, I cross the gangway and am in front of the baggage van. The door is only fastened with a bar which is hung between two staples. I open it and shut it behind me.

Although the darkness is deep in the van, although there is no side window, I know my position. I know where the case is placed; it is in the left corner as I enter. Carefully feeling with feet and hands, I reach the case.

I leaned over and placed my ear timidly against the other panel. There was no sound of breathing.

The products of the house of Strong, Rubul & Co., of New York, could not be more noiseless in their boxes. A fear seizes upon me—the fear of seeing all my reporter's hopes vanish. Was I deceived on board the Astara?

No! Feeble as it is, I detect a movement inside the case! It becomes more distinct, and I ask if the panel is going to slide, if the prisoner is coming out of his prison to breathe the fresh air?

Suddenly a slight cracking greets my ear. I am not the sport of an illusion; it is the crack of a match being lighted. Almost immediately a few feeble rays pierce the ventilation holes of the case. A minute elapsed. Nothing shows that the panel has been moved, nothing gives me reason to suppose that the unknown is coming out.

Cautiously I wait. Then I have an idea to make something out of this light. The case is lighted within. I put my eye close to one of the holes.

There is a man in the box. His features I can make out clearly. He is from 25 to 26 years of age. He does not shave, and his beard is brown. He is of the true Rumanian type. He is good looking, although his face denotes great energy of character, and he must be energetic to have shut himself up in a box like this for such a long journey.

But what is he doing now? Well, he is seated on the bottom of his case and placidly eating his supper by the light of a little lamp. A box of preserves is on his knee, biscuit is not wanting, and in a little cupboard I notice a rug and overcoat hooked up on the wall.

Evidently No. 11 is quite at home. He is there in his cell like a snail in his shell. His house goes with him; and he saves the thousand francs it would have cost him to journey from Tiflis to Peking, second-class. I know he is committing a fraud, and the law punishes such fraud. He can come out of his box when he likes and take a walk in the van, or even at night venture on the platform.

An idea occurs to me which may not perhaps be as good as it seems. That is to rap lightly on the box so as to enter into communication with my new companion, and learn who he is and whence he comes, for I know whether he goes.

I will tell him that I am a Frenchman, and a Rumanian knows he can always trust a Frenchman. I will offer him my services. He will have nothing to regret from my visits, and nothing to fear from my impudences.

I rap the panel. The light suddenly goes out. The prisoner has suspended his respiration. I must reassure him.

"Open!" I say to him gently in Russian. "Open!"

I cannot finish the sentence; for the train gives a sudden jump and slackens speed. There is a noise outside. I rush out of the van and shut the door behind me.

It was time. I have scarcely reached the platform before Popof's door opens, and, without seeing me, he hurries through the van on to the engine. Almost immediately the train resumes its normal speed, and Popof reappears a minute afterward.

"What is the matter, Popof?"

"We have dined in a dromedary. Poor brute! He might have thrown us off the line."

## CHAPTER VIII.

Before the train reaches Gheok Tepe I am back in the car. Confound this dromedary! If he had not managed to get smashed so clumsily, No. 11 would no longer be unknown to me. He would have opened his panel, we would have talked together in a friendly way, and separated with a friendly shake of the hand. Now he will be full of anxiety, he knows his fraud is discovered, that there is some one who has reason to suspect his intentions, some one who may not hesitate to betray his secret. And then after being taken out of his case

he will be put under guard at the next station, and it will be useless for Made-moisele Zinea Klork to expect him in the capital of the Chinese empire.

It would be better for me to relieve his anxiety this very night. That is impossible, for the train will soon stop at Gheok Tepe, and then at Ashkhabad, which it will leave in the first hour of daylight. I can no longer trust to Popof's going to sleep.

I am absorbed in these reflections when the locomotive stops in Gheok Tepe station at 1 o'clock in the morning. The train starts at 2 o'clock, after having been joined by a few passengers whom Popof tells me are Turkomans.

I envied the sleep of my companions. The dawn was appearing in the east. Here and there were the ruins of an ancient city, a citadel girdled with high ramparts and a succession of long porticoes extending over fifteen hundred yards. Running over a few embankments necessitated by the inequalities of the sandy ground, the train again reaches the horizontal steppe.

We are running at a speed of thirty miles an hour in a southwesterly direction along the Persian frontier. It is only beyond Douchak that the line begins to leave it. We reached that station at 6 o'clock in the morning.

We stop here two hours. I am off to look at Douchak, with Major Noltitz as my cicerone. I was led to question the major regarding the safety of the Grand Transasiatic across the provinces of Central Asia.

In Turkestan, he told me, the safety is well assured. During the years the Transcaspien has been at work there has been no attack to hinder the train service.

"That is another matter," said the major. "The Grand Transasiatic is under Chinese control, and I have not much confidence in that."

"Are there not a lot of scoundrels prowling about Mongolia and Northern China?" I asked. "My sole anxiety is that our journey may not be devoid of incident."

"Really, Mr. Special Correspondent, I admire you. Well, I am afraid you will be disappointed, as I have heard that the company has treated with several chiefs of the robber bands. But there is one of these highwaymen who has retained his independence and liberty of action, a certain Ki-Tsang."

"Who is he?"

"A bold bandit chief, half Chinaman, half Mongol. Having for some time been a terror to Yunan, he was being too closely pursued, and has now moved into the northern provinces. His presence has even been reported in that part of Mongolia served by the Grand Transasiatic."

"Well, he ought to furnish a few paragraphs."

We returned toward the station. The stoppage at Douchak had another half hour to last. As I walked on the quay, I observed something going on which would change the make-up of our train.

Another van had arrived from Teheran by the branch line of Mesched, which puts the Persian capital in communication with the Transcaspien.

This van was bolted and barred, and accompanied by a squad of Persian police, whose orders seemed to be not to lose sight of it.

I don't know what made me think so, but it seemed as though this van had something about it, and as the major had left me, I went and spoke to Popof, who was watching over the proceedings.

"Upop, where is that van going?"

"To Peking."

"And what has it got in it?"

"An exalted personage."

"Well, Popof, when this exalted personage gets out perhaps you will let me know?"

"He will not get out."

"Why not?"

"Because he is dead. It is his body they are taking to Peking, where he will be interred with all the honors due to him."

While I was looking at this van a new passenger came up and examined it with no less curiosity than I did. He was a fine looking man of about 40, wearing gracefully the costume of the richer Mongols, a tall fellow with rather a gloomy look, a military mustache, tawny complexion and eyes that never shut.

"Here is a splendid fellow," I said to myself. "I don't know if he will turn out the hero of the drama. I am in a way of, but anyhow, I will number him twelve in my traveling troupe."

This leading star, I soon learned from Popof, bore the name of Faruskiar. He was accompanied by another Mongol of inferior rank, of about the same age, whose name was Ghangir. As they looked at the van being attached to the tail of the train in front of the luggage van they exchanged a few words. As soon as the arrangements were complete the Persians took their places in the second-class car, which preceded the mortuary van, so as to have the precious corpse always under their surveillance.

The signal is given. The passengers, old and new, hurry to their places. Among the new ones I notice three Mongols of forbidding appearance, who get into the second-class car.

As I put my foot on the platform I hear the young Chinese say something to his companion in French.

And so Pan Chao speaks French. What do I say? Better than French. He speaks Parisian. Most extraordinary! I must have a talk with him.

## CHAPTER IX.

For an hour the train is running through an oasis. We shall soon be in the open desert. It is half past 10. Breakfast will soon be served in the dining car.

Where is Ephriniel? I do not see him at his post by the side of Miss Horatia Bluet, whom I questioned on the subject after saluting her politely.

"Mr. Ephriniel has gone to give an eye to his cases," she replies.

In the rear of the second car Faruskiar and Ghangir have installed themselves. They are alone at this moment and are talking together in a low tone. As I return, I meet Ephriniel, who is coming back to his traveling companion. He shakes his hand, Yankee fashion. I tell him that Miss Horatia Bluet has given me news of him.

"Oh!" says he, "what a woman yonder! what a splendid saleswoman! One of those English—"

"Who are good enough to be Americans," I add.

"Wait a bit!" he replies, with a significant smile.

As I am going out, I notice that the two Chinamen are already in the dining car, and that Dr. Tio-King's little book is on the table.

I do not consider it too much of a liberty for a reporter to pick up this little book, to open it, and to read the title, which is as follows:

"The Temperate and Regular Life; Or, The Art of Living Long in Perfect Health. Translated From the Italian of Louis Cornaro, a Venetian Noble."

And this is the favorite reading of Dr. Tio-King! And that is why his disrespectful pupil occasionally gives him the nickname of Cornaro!

There is no change in the order in which we sit down to breakfast. I find myself close to Major Noltitz, who is looking attentively at Faruskiar and his companion, placed at the extremity of the table. We are asking ourselves who this haughty Mongol could be.

"Ah!" said I, laughing at the thought which crossed my mind, "if that is—"

"Who?" asked the major.

"The chief of the brigands, the famous Ki-Tsang."

"Have your joke, Monsieur Bombarnac, but under your breath, I advise you!"

"You see, major, he would not be an interesting personage, and worth a long interview."

After breakfast I went to smoke my cigar on the platform behind the dining car. Caterina almost immediately joins me. Evidently the estimable comedian has seized the opportunity to enter into conversation with me.

"Sir," said he to me, "are two Frenchmen going all the way from Baku to Peking without making each other's acquaintance?"

"Sir," I replied, when I meet a compatriot I am only too glad to shake hands with him. And so, Monsieur Caterina—"You know my name?"

"As you know mine, I am sure."

"Of course, Monsieur Claudius Bombarnac, correspondent of the Twentieth Century."

"At your service, believe me."

"A thousand thanks, Monsieur Bombarnac, and even ten thousand, as they say in China, wither Madame Caterina and I are bound to you."

"To appear at Shanghai in the French troupe at the residency. I may add, from sundry nautical phrases I have noticed, that you have been to sea."

"I believe you, sir. Formerly cockswain of Admiral de Boissodoy's launch on board the Redoubtable."

At this point Mme. Caterina came up. She was in every way worthy of her husband, sent into the world to reply to him in life as on the stage, one of those genial theater folks born one knows not where or how, but thoroughly genuine and good-natured.

"I beg to introduce you to Caroline Caterina," said the actor, in much the same tone as he would have introduced me to Patti or Sarah Bernhardt.

"Having shaken hands with your husband," said I, "I shall be happy to shake hands with you, Madame Caterina."

"There you are, then," said the actress, "and without ceremony, foot to the front and no prompting."

"As you see, no nonsense about her, and the best of wives—"

"As he is the best of husbands."

"I believe I am, Monsieur Claudius," said the actor, "and why? Because I believe that marriage consists entirely in the precept to which husbands should always conform, and that is, that what the wife likes the husband should eat often."

(To be continued.)

## FRIENDLY QUAILS.

### How Farmer Glover Fed a Flock Day After Day for Six Weeks.

One cold morning Farmer Glover stood in the rear of the barn, fork in hand, looking out over the fields. Snowstorm had followed snowstorm, until the stone walls were so covered that the farm seemed like a great field, with here and there a small grove to break the monotony. The cattle had been fed and each animal was munching contentedly at its pile of hay in the sunshine, scattering chaff over the snowy barnyard.

Suddenly, from the light woods near the barn, came a startled "Bob-white!" Immediately there was an answering call from the woods across the fields, and then another and another, and soon a flock of about twenty quail alighted cautiously on the ground, two or three rods from where Mr. Glover stood, and began picking up the seeds from the hay which the cattle had strewn over the snow. They scratched about like a flock of hens, and apparently quite as much at home, and chirped away while they worked, after the fashion of tree sparrows in the weeds down by the brook.

Farmer Glover was careful not to frighten his woodland guests, and the next morning he put out wheat for them and threw handfuls of chaff in the hay which the cattle had left. The flock returned again and again, until feeding the quails has become as much a part of the day's routine as looking after the hens and turkeys. One cold morning after they had eaten, the kind-hearted farmer found the whole flock huddled together under the hay, apparently enjoying the warmth. Strange to say, they never come for their food when it snows or rains. When they have breakfasted, unless frightened, they usually walk away to their favorite haunts in the grove across the fields. They never alight on the trees, but occasionally perch on the rail fence. Once or twice, when no one was in sight, they came near the house.

For six weeks the quails enjoyed Farmer Glover's bounty. When spring opens their kind-hearted protector meets them only in the fields and woods; but whenever bob-white's musical call comes over the summer meadows it brings pleasant memories of those winter breakfasts in the snowy barnyard.—St. Nicholas.



## Insects Fatal to Corn.

As millions of dollars are lost annually through insects injurious to corn, a better knowledge of the subject seems almost imperative. It would pay to devote careful study to the habits of corn insects, and to those who wish to do so it is suggested that they write to the State Agricultural College of Illinois at Urbana for a free copy of Bulletin No. 96, which contains a full description of all the insects in question and many valuable suggestions.

In discussing the effects of insects and the general remedies that may be applied, the bulletin says:

"With few exceptions, the effects of injury to corn by insects where they do not amount to a total destruction of the plant may be compared to the effects of simple starvation. Anything which lessens the store of food laid up in the corn kernel for use in germination and early growth, or damages seriously the roots or the leaves, or draws away the sap before it has served its purpose in the plant, practically amounts to the diminution of the available food supply. An impoverished soil, very dry weather, the capping of cells and vessels of the plant by sucking insects, or destruction of any considerable part of its roots have consequences which may be classed as starvation effects."

"In view of these facts, it follows that any management which helps to maintain and strengthen the plant by furnishing it better or more abundant food will lessen or perhaps wholly prevent losses from insect injury, which must otherwise be serious or complete. A strong, rich soil, well cultivated, watered and drained, may grow a good crop notwithstanding an amount of infestation by chinch bugs, root lice, root worms and white grubs which would be fatal on poor land."

"The good corn farmer may thus escape with a profitable yield under insect attacks which will leave his less intelligent or less careful brother in debt after his crop is harvested. This is not merely because the vigorous plant will easily support an amount of injury under which the unthrifty



Light and dark individuals, pupa, moth and egg, with injured ear of corn.

one will suffer or succumb. It is an established fact that many insects themselves will not thrive as well or multiply as rapidly on a vigorous, quickly growing plant as on one in feeble condition.

"More special measures are a proper rotation of crops, such that corn will not be exposed to insects which have bred on the same ground the preceding year, either in other crops or in the corn itself; timely plowing to forestall the breeding of insects by destroying them or their food; timely planting with reference to the period of the greatest abundance or greatest activity of certain species; and the use of barriers against the movement of certain destructive species into the corn from fields adjacent, combined with insecticide measures against hordes of destructive insects, which if left to themselves will work great and immediate harm."

## Butter Washed in Skim Milk.

Instead of using water for washing butter, an English dairyman, F. J. Lloyd, used separator skim milk which had been twice pasteurized. Salted and unsalted samples prepared in this manner contained, respectively, 11.35 and 11.14 per cent of water, the former containing only one-fifth as many bacteria. Mr. Lloyd considers that the results are sufficiently interesting to warrant his calling the attention of buttermakers who have a poor water supply to this simple method of overcoming the difficulty, and states that the experiments are being repeated at the British Dairy Institute.—Massachusetts Ploughman.

## Less Maple Made, But More Sold.

Maple trees now furnish but a small per cent of the commercial maple syrup and sugar. While the demand for both these commodities has constantly increased, the output from maple trees has decreased during the last twenty years. The trade has been supplied only by radically adulterating the pure goods, or by manufacturing a product entirely from foreign materials. It is conservatively estimated that seven-eighths of what is

sold as maple syrup and sugar is a spurious article. Most of the fabrications are entirely harmless, but they are not the real thing. Those fortunate enough to have eaten the genuine article will always demand it, and conditions should be such that they may get it, if they are willing to pay the price.—American Cultivator.

## A New Variety of Potato.

The claims made for the Early Northern potato are beauty and uniformity in form, size and great productiveness, and in the tests made during the last two years in all sections of the country the claims seem to have been borne out. The quality is unusually good for an early sort, the tubers thus far have been free from scab and have matured nearer of a size than any other sort we have tested. In the matter of productiveness the new sort is first-class. The writer had ten pounds of seed for testing purposes, and on an average potato ground had a yield of 325 pounds,



EARLY NORTHERN POTATO.

and all salable in size. From our tests we consider the variety one that has come to stay and one which will especially appeal to market gardeners. The illustration, much reduced, shows the form of the tubers.—Indianapolis News.

## Commercial Fertilizers.

There is probably more quibbling over fertilizer prices than anything else that a farmer buys. Unquestionably the cheapest way of buying fertilizers is to buy the several materials and do the mixing on the barn floor, but assuming this is not done, then one should make it a point to see that they buy the fertilizer which will give them the greatest amount of the plant food they want in the smallest bulk, which means, of course, at the lowest price. For example, if a ton of the fertilizer, according to the analysis, contains 6 per cent of potash or any other plant food may be figured on the same basis, this means 120 pounds of potash to the ton.

If another fertilizer contains 12 per cent, or 240 pounds to the ton, the latter is cheaper than the first by exactly the number of cents it costs less than double the first. Reducing it to pounds, if one costs 5 cents a pound and the other 9, the last is the cheapest, if you get it at the rate a pound for the bulk. If you want potash, and pay \$20 for a ton of fertilizer containing 120 pounds of potash, it is cheaper to pay \$38 for a ton of fertilizer containing 240 pounds of potash.

The same plan of figuring works through all the fertilizer bought, so that it is easy to see that a fertilizer cheap in price is not always cheap when results are figured out. The mere matter of bulk has nothing to do with the case. It might as well be sawdust if it does not contain the elements you want and at fair prices.

## Stock Beets Compared.

The yields of thirty-three of the principal German, English and French varieties of fodder beets are reported by a German experimenter, and the experiments briefly described. The cylindrical shaped varieties yielded the largest quantities of leaves, the smallest quantities of leaves, and stood lowest in sugar content, while the varieties approximating the shape of the sugar beet gave the lowest yield of beets, a very high yield of leaves, and ranked first in sugar content. The tankard varieties stood close to the cylindrical-shaped roots in yield and composition, and the globe varieties produced very large yields of leaves and a medium quantity of beets, with a sugar content ranging from satisfactory to high. The color of the beet showed no connection with its richness in sugar.—New England Homestead.

## Culling the Flock.

The usual custom with good sheep farmers is to go carefully over their flocks each year, and reject and send to the butcher all the aged ewes, yearling ewes, ewe lambs and rams that are not of the desired quality, or have not proven valuable as breeders. This culling process should be carefully carried out.

## Poultry Pickings.

Never give sulphur to poultry on a rainy day.

Put chicks on a cracked wheat diet when three weeks old.

Disinfect the poultry house and runs with a 5 per cent solution of carbolic acid, and repeat this disinfection at least once a week in case of roup.

Keep the poultry houses clean, have ample ventilation, but freedom from drafts of air, and arrange the house so that the sun will shine into it a portion of the day.

Cut clover is an indispensable article of diet. All kinds of vegetables fill a place in the hen's dieting, but they can hardly be said to be a substitute for cut clover.

If some birds have been to a show, or if new birds have been purchased for the flock, quarantine them at a distance from the home flock for thirty days before they are allowed to go together.



Just when peace had been restored in Colorado, Breathitt County, Kentucky, has to loom up to disturb the national serenity.—Chicago News.

Professor Woodhead, of Cambridge, says alcohol is a paralyzing agent. This statement can be confirmed. It has "paralyzed" millions.—New York Herald.

It will be like some fool Congressman to object to reimbursing General Porter for the money he has spent hunting for Paul Jones' body.—Syracuse Herald.

"Women are far less graceful than men," says Dr. Arnold, of New Haven. It takes a man chock full of dry scientific data to say such a thing at that.—Kansas City Journal.

Henry James' dislike for President Roosevelt's literary style is perhaps a mild emotion compared with the President's feeling about the style of Mr. James.—Chicago News.

It is stated that John W. Gates has earned not less than half a million in July wheat, and yet some people wonder why their loaf of bread is so small.—Philadelphia Record.

It is believed that there is a proper and necessary limit to the patience of the United States, even as regards the petty-blowing President of Venezuela.—Syracuse Post-Standard.

Belasco is making the Theatrical Trust comprehend the state of public thought. At the conclusion of the case there may be an opportunity to revive "A Hole in the Ground."—St. Louis Republic.

It is only a question of time when more of Dr. Dowle's disciples will prefer a plain financial statement to any additional inspired revelations from the founder of Zion Illinois.—Butte Inter Mountain.

One of the first things the Japanese conquerors did in Manchuria was to apply vigorous sanitary measures, a thing which in itself marks the Japanese nation as among the highly civilized peoples.—Seattle Times.

Mr. Baer says there is no sentiment in the coal business. When one considers the number of persons who froze to death last winter in the big cities for lack of means to buy dear fuel, one can well believe that.—Rochester Herald.

While there is an instinctive feeling of repulsion at securing evidence against the Beef Trust by means of detectives or spies, the fault lies with the packers themselves, who conspire in secret against the laws.—Kansas City Times.

The president of the Canal Commission, with a \$30,000 salary, is also president of a railroad, and says he will not give up that position. If he can fill both places satisfactorily he must be an extraordinary man.—Montgomery Advertiser.

It is pointed out that an alliance of Japan, Great Britain and the United States could rule the world. Perhaps it could, but it would first have to get the consent of Joseph Chamberlain and the United States Senate.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Just how well our financial institutions are safeguarded is shown by the statement that the theft of \$1,500,000 from the First National Bank of Milwaukee by Frank G. Bigelow was discovered by the merest accident.—New York Telegram.

Those Kansas City get-rich-quick operators who closed up their shop and left a "Good-by, suckers" sign on the door must have had great confidence in their good start and sprinting abilities, in addition to their naivete.—Indianapolis News.

The czar thinks it would injure the prestige of the Russian arms if he made peace; but we can assure him that everybody outside of Russia knows what has happened to the Russian arms in Manchuria.—Memphis Commercial Appeal.

The legal battle between the Marconi and De Forrest wireless telegraph interests is said to have resulted in a victory for both sides. This astonishing outcome ought to give Russia fresh hope that she may, after all, be welcomed into peace with honor.—Milwaukee Wisconsin.

Simultaneously with the impending indictments of the Beef Trust magnates they raise the price of meat without any other excuse than an apparent desire to make the public pay the cost of their defense on a criminal trial. The increase of meat prices just at this juncture seems to be adding insult to injury.—Paterson Call.

No one can blame Japan for shying a little when other nations offer their "friendly offices." Japan's memory is long enough to recall that it is due to the friendly offices of certain powers that she had to expend the millions of money and thousands of lives that it cost to take Port Arthur the second time.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

A Philadelphia trolley car crashed into a bakery wagon and sent a load of pies through the air. What with germs in the drinking water and pies in the air, Philadelphia must be an unhealthy place, indeed.—Buffalo Express.

A Colorado clergyman says the world has but two more years to exist. He is probably going on the theory that the world cannot stand another Colorado election, which is scheduled two years hence.—Washington Post.