

The Special Correspondent

CHAPTER XXV.

I have not seen Kinko for two days, and the last time was only to exchange a few words with him to relieve his anxiety. To-night I will try and visit him. I have taken care to lay in a few provisions at Sou-Tcheou.

We started at 3 o'clock. We have got a more powerful engine on. Across this undulating country the gradients are occasionally rather steep. Seven hundred kilometers separate us from the important city of Lan Tcheou, where we ought to arrive to-morrow morning, running thirty miles an hour.

At dinner Mr. and Mrs. Ephrussi, sitting side by side, hardly exchanged a word. Their intimacy seems to have decreased since they were married. Perhaps they are absorbed in the calculation of their reciprocal interests.

We have had a bad night. The sky, of purple, sulphury tint, became stormy toward evening, the atmosphere became stifling, the electrical tension excessive. It meant a "highly successful" storm, to quote Caterina. In truth, the train ran through a zone, so to speak, of vivid lightning and rolling thunder, which the echoes of the mountains prolonged indefinitely. I think there must have been several lightning strokes, but the rails acted as conductors, and preserved the cars from injury. It was a fine spectacle, a little alarming, these fires in the sky that the heavy rain could not put out—these continuous discharges from the clouds, in which were mingled the strident whistlings of our locomotive as we passed through the stations of Yanlu, from Tchong, Houan-Sien and Da-Tsing.

By favor of this troubled night, I was able to communicate with Kinko, to take him some provisions and to have a few minutes' conversation with him.

"Is it the day after to-morrow," he asked, "that we arrive at Pekin?"

"Yes, the day after to-morrow, if the train is not delayed."

"Oh, I am not afraid of delays! But when my box is in the railway station at Pekin, I have still to get to the Avenue Cha-Coua."

"What does it matter, will not the fair Zinca Klork come and call for it?"

"No, I advised her not to do so."

"And why?"

"Women are so impressionable. She would want to see the van in which I had come, she would claim the box with such excitement that suspicions would be aroused. In short, she would run the risk of betraying me."

"You are right, Kinko."

"Besides, we shall reach the station in the afternoon, very late in the afternoon, perhaps, and the unloading of the packages will not take place until next morning."

"Probably."

"Well, Monsieur Bombarnac, if I am not taking too great a liberty, may I ask a favor of you?"

"What is it?"

"That you will be present at the departure of the case, so as to avoid any mistake."

"I will be there, Kinko, I will be there. Glass, fragile, I will see that they don't handle it too roughly. And if you like I will accompany the case to Avenue Cha-Coua."

"I hardly like to ask you to do that."

"You are wrong, Kinko. You should not stand on ceremony with a friend, and I am yours, Kinko. Besides, it will be a pleasure to me to make the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Zinca Klork. I will be there when they deliver the box, the precious box. I will help her to get the nails out of it."

"The nails out of it, Monsieur Bombarnac? My panel? Ah, I will jump through my panel."

A terrible clap of thunder interrupted our conversation. I thought the train had been thrown off the line by the commotion of the air. I left the young Roumanian and regained my place within the car.

In the morning—26th of May, 7 a. m.—we arrived at Lan Tcheou. Three hours to stop, three hours only.

"Come, Major Noltitz; come, Pan Chao; come, Caterina; we have not a minute to spare."

But as we are leaving the station we are stopped by the appearance of a tall, fat, gray, solemn personage. It is the governor of the town in a double robe of white and yellow silk, fan in hand, buckled belt, and a mantilla—a black mantilla, which would have looked much better on the shoulders of a man. He is accompanied by a certain number of globular mandarins, and the Celestials salute him by holding out their two fists, which they move up and down as they nod their heads.

"Ah! What is this gentleman going to do? Is it some Chinese formality? A visit to the passengers and their baggage? And Kinko, what about him?"

Nothing alarming, after all. It is only about the treasure of the Son of Heaven. The governor and his suite have stopped before the precious van, bolted and sealed, and are looking at it with that respectful admiration which is experienced, even in China, before a box containing many millions.

I ask Popof what is meant by the governor's presence, has it anything to do with us?

"Not at all," says Popof; "the order has come from Pekin to telegraph the arrival of the treasure. The governor has done so, and he is awaiting a reply as to whether he is to send it on to Pekin, or keep it provisionally at Lan Tcheou."

If the imperial treasure was a matter of indifference to us it did not seem to be so to Faruskar. But whether this

van started or did not, whether it was attached to our train or left behind, what could it matter to him? Nevertheless, he and Ghangir seemed to be much put about regarding it, although they tried to hide their anxiety, while the Mongols, talking together in a low tone, gave the governor anything but friendly glances.

Meanwhile, the governor had just heard of the attack on the train, and of the part that our hero had taken in defense of the treasure, with what courage he had fought, and how he had delivered the country from the terrible Ki-Tsang. And then in laudatory terms, which Pan Chao translated to us, he thanked Faruskar, complimented him, and gave him to understand that the Son of Heaven would reward him for his services.

The manager of the Grand Transasiatic listened with that tranquil air that distinguished him, not without impatience, as I could clearly see. Perhaps he felt himself superior to praises as well as recompenses, no matter how great a height they might come. In that I recognized all the Mongol pride.

It is ten minutes to 10 when we return to the station, absolutely tired out; for the walk has been a rough one, and almost suffocating, for the heat is very great.

My first care is to look after the van with the millions. It is there, as usual, behind the train, under the Chinese guard.

The message expected by the governor has arrived—the order to forward on the van to Pekin, where the treasure is to be handed over to the finance minister.

Where is Faruskar? I do not see him. Has he given us the slip? No. There he is on one of the platforms, and the Mongols are back in the car.

Ephrussi has been off to do a round of calls—with his samples, no doubt—and Mrs. Ephrussi has also been out on business, for a deal in hair, probably. Here they come, and, without seeming to notice each other, they take their seats.

The other passengers are only Celestials. Some are going to Pekin; some have taken their tickets for intermediate stations like Si-Ngan, Ho-Nan, Lou-Ngan, Tai-Yonan. There are a hundred passengers in the train. All my numbers are on board. There is not one missing. Thirteen, always thirteen!

CHAPTER XXVI.

On leaving Lan Tcheou, the railway crosses a well-cultivated country, watered by numerous streams, and hilly under numerous frequent curves. There is a good deal of engineering work; mostly bridges, viaducts on wooden trestles of somewhat doubtful solidity, and the traveler is not particularly comfortable when he finds them bending under the weight of the train. It is true, we are in the Celestial Empire, and a few thousand victims of a railway accident is hardly anything among a population of four hundred millions.

"Besides," said Pan Chao, "the Son of Heaven never travels by railway."

At 6 o'clock in the evening we are at King-Tcheou, after skirting for some time the capricious meanderings of the Great Wall. Of this immense artificial frontier between Mongolia and China there remain only the blocks of granite and red quartzite which served as its base, its terrace of bricks with the parapets of unequal heights, a few old cannons eaten into with rust, and hidden under a thick veil of lichens, and then the square towers with their ruined battlements. The interminable wall rises, falls, bends, bends back again, and is lost sight of in the undulations of the ground.

All night was spent in running three hundred kilometers. A fog lasted all day, and this hindered the progress of the train. These Chinese engine drivers are really very skillful and attentive and intelligent. Luckily, the fog rose early in the evening. Now it is night—and a very dark night, too.

The idea occurs to me to walk to the rear of the train, and I stop for an instant on the gangway in front of the treasure van.

The passengers, with the exception of the Chinese guard, are all sleeping their last sleep—their last be it understood, on the Grand Transasiatic.

Returning to the front of the train, I approach Popof's box, and find him sound asleep. I then open the door of the van, shut it behind me, and signal my presence to Kinko. The panel is lowered, the little lamp is lighted.

It is ten minutes to 1. In twelve minutes we shall pass the junction with the Nankin branch. This branch is only completed for five or six kilometers and leads to the viaduct over the Tjon Valley. This viaduct is a great work, and the engineers have as yet only got in the piers, which rise for a hundred feet above the ground.

As I know we are to halt at Fuen-Choo, I shake hands with Kinko, and rise to take my leave. At this moment I seem to hear some one on the platform in the rear of the van.

"Look out, Kinko!" I say, in a whisper.

The lamp is instantly extinguished, and we remain quite still. I am not mistaken. Some one is opening the door of the van.

"Your panel," I whisper.

The panel is raised, the car is shut, and I am alone in the dark. Evidently it must be Popof who has come in. What will he think to find me here? The first time I came to visit the young Roumanian I hid among the packages. Well, I will hide a second time. If I get be-

hind Ephrussi's boxes it is not likely that Popof will see me, even by the light of his lantern.

I do so, and I watch. It is not Popof, for he would have brought his lantern. I try to recognize the people who have just entered. It is difficult. They have glided between the packages, and after opening the further door, they have gone out and shut it behind them.

They are some of the passengers, evidently; but why here—at this hour? I must know. I have a presentiment that something is in the wind. I approach the front door of the van, and in spite of the rumbling of the train I hear them distinctly enough.

Thousands and ten thousand demons! I am not mistaken! It is the voice of my lord Faruskar. He is talking with Ghangir in Russian. It is indeed Faruskar. The four Mongols have accompanied him. But what are they doing there? For what motive are they on the platform, which is just behind the tender? And what are they saying?

Of these questions and answers exchanged between my lord Faruskar and his companions, I do not lose a word.

"When shall we be at the junction?"

"In a few minutes."

"Are you sure that Kardek is at the points?"

"Yes; that has been arranged."

"What has been arranged? And who is this Kardek they are talking about?"

The conversation continues.

"We must wait until we get the signal," says Faruskar.

"Is that a green light?" asks Ghangir.

"Yes. It will show that the switch is over."

I do not know if I am in my right senses. The switch over. What switch? A half minute elapses. Ought I not to tell Popof? Yes, I ought. I was turning to go out of the van, when an exclamation kept me back.

"The signal—there is the signal!" says Ghangir.

"And now the train is on the Nankin branch!" replies Faruskar.

The Nankin branch. But then we are lost. At five kilometers from here is the Tjon viaduct, in course of construction, and the train is being precipitated toward an abyss.

Evidently Major Noltitz was not mistaken regarding my lord Faruskar. I understand the scheme of the scoundrel. The manager of the Grand Transasiatic is a scoundrel of the deepest dye. He has entered the service of the company to await his opportunity for some extensive haul. The opportunity has come with the millions of the Son of Heaven! Yes. The whole abominable scheme is clear enough to me. Faruskar has defected the imperial treasure against Ki-Tsang to keep it from the chief of the bandits, who had stopped the train, whose attack would have interfered with his criminal projects. That is why he had fought so bravely. That is why he had risked his life and behaved like a hero.

But somehow we ought to prevent this rascal from accomplishing his work. We ought to save the train, which is running full speed toward the unfinished viaduct; we ought to save the passengers from a frightful catastrophe. As to the treasure Faruskar and his accomplices are after I care no more than for yesterday's news. But the passengers—and myself—that is another affair altogether.

(To be continued.)

20,000 Frogs Sacrificed.

Twenty thousand frogs a year are used for dissection and experimental purposes in the University of Pennsylvania medical laboratories, says the Philadelphia North American.

Both medical and dental classes view the experiments.

Frogs exist in a peculiar manner. Their spinal cord constitutes the basis of their intelligence and after their brain is destroyed they will live for an indefinite period. Several years ago the brain of one was taken out. Today the frog is alive and well and jumping about its cage.

Frequently holes are made in the back of a frog's head and the brains loosened with a burnt match stick.

Much useful and valuable knowledge has been obtained from these experiments.

As the Pennsylvania law forbids the hunting of bullfrogs, except during certain months of the year, the frogcatcher has to make a careful distinction between frogs and bullfrogs.

The frog is much smaller and of a different color.

If the supply runs short in the vicinity of Philadelphia, Chicago and other places in the West supply the deficiency.

A careful watch is kept on the pond in the botanical gardens. The bullfrogs there are more than two feet long.

Diplomacy.

"Madam," said the tramp, as a middle-aged woman came to the door in answer to his knock, "would you give a poor old man a bite to eat?"

"Why," she replied, "you are certainly able to earn a living. You don't look very old."

"Looks are often deceitful, lady," answered the hungry hobo. "Why, I'm old enough to be your grandfather."

And a moment later he had his feet under the kitchen table, and nothing she had in the pantry was too good for him.

Grand Collection.

Sharpe—Come out to our china closet. I want to show you a collection of souvenirs.

Wheaton—Why, every piece of china is broken and numbered!

Sharpe—Yes, they are souvenirs of our different cooks.



Summer Care of Bees.

No matter how abundantly you have provided for your bees in clover and buckwheat fields, if at this time of the year the weather is unfavorable and the bees cannot go out honey gathering you must provide them with full combs for fear of their starving.

The colonies need more supply than will keep them alive, they should have twenty or thirty pounds of honey at hand all the time. If the nights are cool the secretions of nectar will be correspondingly small and the bees will get but small loads.

When honey is scarce in the hives the bees stint themselves and brood rearing is checked just when it should be at its best and healthiest condition. If you have any doubt as to the hives being sufficiently rationed you can solve your doubt by lifting each hive and its weight will determine its condition. If you find many that are too light weight, use your smoker, take out one or two empty combs and replace them with full ones, breaking small holes in them so that the bees may get at the honey readily. Then you can leave the bees in peace until they are able to bustle for themselves unless it should be too long a wait, when you will have to repeat the process. If you have no honey feed sugar syrup. Be careful to retain all the heat in the hives.

What We Eat.

An important constituent of our food is nitrogen, an invisible gas; foods containing protein are called nitrogenous. Carbohydrates build fat and produce heat and energy; protein does all that and builds the red meat or muscle in addition. We get oil in the butter used on bread. From these three great food groups we make our feeding stuffs. We get carbohydrates from potatoes, sugar beets, corn. Corn alone lacks nitrogen and will not make sufficient muscle. Wheat, barley and rye are all rich starches, good to fatten, but not the best for muscle making. We get protein in flax, in the outside of the wheat grain, in clover and alfalfa, in bran, middlings and oil meal. These foods are rich in protein. Wheat bran, linseed oil, cotton seed meal and any legume.

Doesn't Pay to Coddle Alfalfa.

If an alfalfa field is in bad condition it is usually best to plow up and re-seed. It scarcely ever pays, at least where irrigation is practiced, to coddle a poor stand of alfalfa. Many growers recommend disking every spring, even when the stand is good, and some have even found it a paying practice to disk after each cutting. Such disking will often prevent the encroachment of weeds. In the Eastern States alfalfa fields sometimes suffer a check in their growth, tend to turn yellow and otherwise show a sickly condition. Oftentimes this condition is accompanied by an attack of alfalfa rust or spot disease. The best remedy for such a condition is to mow the field. The vigorous growth thus induced may overcome the diseased condition.

Comparison of Yield.

In 1904 Russia produced 205,460,400 bushels of winter wheat and 459,208,200 bushels of spring wheat, making a total wheat production for that year of 664,668,600 bushels, an increase of some 43,000,000 bushels over the preceding year. This still falls several million bushels below the highest United States crop. Last year Russia produced 1,005,280,714 bushels of rye, 1,120,729,235 bushels of oats, 345,174,000 bushels of barley and 25,986,857 bushels of corn. The United States produced 27,241,575 bushels of rye, 894,595,552 bushels of oats, 130,748,958 bushels of barley and 2,467,480,934 bushels of corn.

Adulteration of Farm Products.

During April the Massachusetts State Board of Health tested 305 articles for evidence of adulteration. Of these, ninety-eight were found adulterated or varying from the legal standard. Thirty-three convictions were secured during the month for selling adulterated foods. The number included three cases of milk adulteration, four of maple syrup or sugar and three of cider. The total fines imposed amounted to \$900.

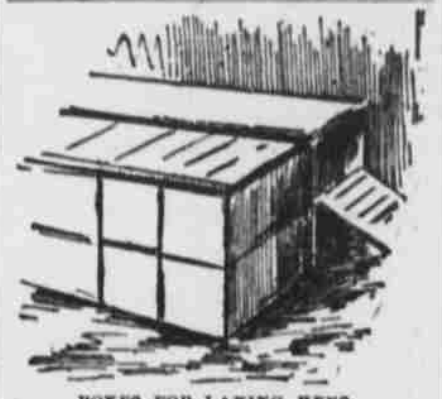
Calves in Groups.

It is highly desirable to have calves come in groups where a large number of cattle are being kept and the calves are to be raised for beef. It is only in this way that uniformity in size, weight and finish can be obtained for the carcasses of cattle that are to be sent to market. If there are but few calves it is better to have only two groups of calves, one in the spring and one in the fall. It will be easier to care for them if they are in groups of about the same size than if they come at all months in the year.

Orange Boxes for Nests.

In nearly every town orange boxes may be bought at moderate prices. They make the very best nest boxes, especially if they are arranged in the following manner: As every one knows, the orange box is partitioned through the center, thus making plenty of room for two nests in each box. Take a number of boxes and stand them on end, and fasten them securely together with strips of wood. Then from old boxes or other sources obtain sufficient lumber to make an alleyway marked by a board over the top.

Place a little walk so that the hens may readily go to the second tier of nests. In the rear of each box or nest,



BOXES FOR LAYING HENS.

near the top, make a hole just large enough to get one's hand in, so that the eggs may be removed in this way and the nest material changed when necessary. With this arrangement each hen has a nice dark place to lay, and is not disturbed by anything. The illustration shows the idea clearly.—Indianapolis News.

Getting Good Breeds.

If you wish to start in poultry raising or to begin with a new variety, and wish to invest as much as the cost of a good breeding pen made by a reliable and skillful poultry raiser, that is the best way to begin. Otherwise purchase eggs, as many settings as you wish to invest in, and each from a different breed, but always from a reliable one. From each of these settings you should raise both roosters and pullets. Mark them all carefully and plainly, so that you cannot mistake them, and next spring you will be in a position to mate up two or three breeding pens of your own.

A Lice Killer.

A self-working lice killer that is very effective for hogs is shown in the cut. Drive a stout stake into the ground near where the hogs sleep.



RUBBING IT IN.

Wind with an old rope, nailing it well, and saturate the rope twice a week with a mixture of equal parts of lard and kerosene. The hogs will do the rest if there are any lice on them.—D. V. S., in Farm and Home.

Agricultural Building at Portland.

The agricultural building at the Lewis and Clark Exposition, Portland, Ore., is the largest and one of the handsomest structures on the ground. It is 460x210 feet in dimensions, and is situated on the east side of Columbia court, the main plaza of the exposition. The structure cost \$74,950.

Nurse Crops.

A great deal has been said against nurse crops, but in some parts of the Western States nurse crops are quite necessary for the sowing of clover. Where clover is sown with spring wheat the stubble of the wheat when cut helps to hold the snow over the plants during winter and keeps them from freezing out. It is the experience of farmers in a good many places that nurse crops protect the clover during summer, especially in regions where the heat is intense.