

THE PUPPET CZAR.

HAS LITTLE POWER IN THE AFFAIRS OF RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

Is a Mere Plaything in the Hands of the Romanoffs Among Whom the Grand Duke Alexis Reigns Supreme.

A student of Russian affairs, writing a few weeks ago, reports an eastern exchange, gives the following graphic picture of the real power of the much-labeled czar.

"I who know my Russia well and the powers that be in that empire, am amused at the reports of the powers and intentions of the present autocrat of all the Russias which are often published. The simple fact is that no Muscovite emperor ever possessed less actual power than that wielded by his imperial majesty Nicholas II.

"He is a peaceably inclined young monarch and remarkably well intentioned; but he is the sport of the house of Romanoff, and those who are all-powerful in the councils of the empire. He may think and he may dream; he may desire and he may propose, but he cannot perform.

"Correctly speaking, it is the emperor alone who can declare war or who can say 'let it be peace,' but to tell the plain unvarnished truth the present czar is but a puppet worked by stronger hands who hold the strings.

"The son is wholly unlike the father. The Czar Alexander III. was not an exceptionally clever man, but he was a man of great determination and tenacity of purpose. He ruled; none ruled him. His ministers were ever a little afraid of him. He expected them to follow his lead unhesitatingly. Never once was he known to follow the lead of any one of his ministers. He was an honest man and an outspoken one, and his indignation at what he considered Bismarck's duplicity would have ended in a war between Russia and Germany had he not eventually been convinced that the documents upon which he based his conclusions were a forgery.

"The Czar Alexander III. did not like Germany, neither did he like England. He had, however, a favorable inclination toward the United States, and a real sympathy with France. But, above all, he was Russian. He spoke French fluently, German indifferently and English badly; but he was incensed at the prevalence of the French language in high and official society in St. Petersburg. In the latter days of his reign the order went forth that in these circles Russians should speak their own language and this order had to be obeyed.

"While it cannot be said that the present czar has anything of his father's religious enthusiasm, he may be reckoned among the religious monarchs of the age, and he has lately taken to writing hymns.

"But the czarina is a religious enthusiast. Born a Lutheran, she, on her marriage, had to embrace the faith of the Greek church. To-day her majesty is more orthodox than the most orthodox. So pure of mind, so self-sacrificing, so intensely spiritual is she that, in another age, she would have won canonization.

"The czar worships her and her influence over him is tremendous. Of the two she is decidedly the stronger, but her influence over her husband excites the anger and opposition of his family.

"The czarina's instincts are liberal and progressive, and her husband, so great is his belief in her, would endorse her views and policy unhesitatingly were it not for those august relations of his, and that formidable council of nobles. The czarina, all powerful with her husband, proposes, and the czar's mind is disposed.

"Of all the Romanoff relations the most autocratic, and at the same time the most powerful, is Grand Duke Alexis. He is the Muscovite incarnate, beloved by the navy, of which he is the chief, looked up to by the nobles, and worshiped by the common people. His brother, the late czar alone, was strong enough to soften his rough humors and bend his powerful will.

"After that little affair with a countess Alexander III. intimated that absence from Russia for a period would be highly beneficial for Alexis' health. The sojourn abroad was but temporary, and the grand duke returned with an influence and power greater than before. Today they are, I should say, at their height.

JAPS ARE FIGHTERS.

YOUNG MEN OF WARRIOR STOCK IMBUED WITH FINE SPIRIT.

Principles of the Samurai Code of Honor Govern from Childhood Up—Are Early Taught the Arts of War.

Every Japanese, be he noble or plebeian, must now serve his term in the army. Nor are the officers an exclusive caste, for promotion is open to every man who will take the trouble to earn it. But it happens in the Japanese army, as it happens in the English and the German, while every private soldier is free to become an officer, the great bulk of the officers do, as a matter of fact, state the Brooklyn Eagle, come from a restricted section. In England it is the upper and middle class; in Japan it is the samurai—samurai still, whatever the edict and constitutions may say.

"In the very fiber of their being the traditions of Bushido—the code of honor which was the religion of the samurai—remain. Although Bushido, with its fortitude and its punctilio, its odd mixture of the Spartan and the Quixotic, is no longer a recognized system, its spirit remains, and these are the principles that are expected to count so much in meeting a foe supposed to be so much stronger numerically.

Those who are not less than 35 years old were taught their Bushido at their mother's knee, and many of the younger men, coming of the same warrior stock, are imbued with the principles of the code.

The samurai began his training at a very tender age. Young children were sent among strangers with messages to deliver; they were made to rise before the sun, and to walk to their teachers with bare feet in the cold of winter; small boys were taken to see executions, and sent back alone to the place by night to leave a mark on the decapitated head. Sometimes they were made to go without food, and taught that a samurai should not be ashamed to be hungry. Self-control, courage, fortitude, loyalty were the cardinal virtues. Every samurai counted it a plain duty to sacrifice himself for his lord.

The young samurai were taught fencing, archery, jin jitsu (clutching such part of the enemy's body as will make him numb and incapable of resistance), horsemanship, the use of the spear, tactics, calligraphy, ethics, literature and history.

He was not to think of money; ignorance of the value of different coins was a token of good breeding. He was taught to forgive injuries, but he was also taught to hold his honor sacred, and to defend it at all times and at all hazards. To win honor and to avoid shame, the samurai would go to any lengths.

Naturally, the man with a sword and Quixotic notions of honor was not always as gentle as he might be with those who assailed that honor. It is related that a citizen called the attention of a Bushi to a flea jumping on his back. Forthwith the Bushi cut him in two, and afterward explained his reason by a syllogism: "Fleas are parasites which feed on animals; he said a flea was on me; and it is an unparliamentary insult to identify a noble warrior with a flea."

The sword was the soul of the samurai, and the swordsmith worked as if he were performing holy rites. Under certain conditions suicide was the plainest duty, and elaborate ceremonials were laid down for the manner in which it should be done. The women also were taught that death is a better thing than shame.

WILD LIFE OBSERVATION.

Few Persons Can Describe Accurately What They See in the Creatures.

Good observers are probably about as rare as good poets, says John Burroughs, in "On Humanizing the Animals" in Century. Accurate seeing—an eye that takes in the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—how rare indeed it is! So few persons know or can tell exactly what they see, so few persons can draw a right inference from an observed fact; so few persons can keep from reading their own thoughts and preconception into what they see; only a person with the scientific habit of mind can be trusted to report things as they are. Most of us in observing the wild life about us, see more or less of the truth. We see less when our minds are dull, or preoccupied, or blunted by want of interest. This is true of most country people. We see more when we read the lives of the wild creatures about us in the light of our human experience, and impute to the birds and beasts human motives and methods. This is too often true of the eager city man or woman who sallies out into the country to study nature.

The tendency to sentimentalize nature has in our time, largely taken the place of the old tendency to demonize and spiritize it. It is anthropomorphism in another form, less fraught with evil to us, but equally in the way of a clear understanding of the life about us.

Spiked. "Got a sore throat, eh? I know just the thing to take for it." "There is one thing I have decided not to take for it." "What's that?" "Advice."

"Oh, h-m-m looks some like rain, don't it?"—Houston Post.

Umbrellas Never Came Back. "He's very imprudent; spends his money in the most foolish way." "Is that so?" "Yes; why only the other day he spent 50 cents to advertise for an umbrella he had lost."—Philadelphia Ledger.

NOTES ON NEEDLEWORK.

Home-Made Articles of Feminine Finery for the Season Now at Hand.

A pretty home-made article that is in style is a flannel petticoat of fine white flannel with a hair line of blue running through it. The seams are feather-stitched in the blue, and so are the square-cornered tabs at the bottom, which fall loose over a full ruffle of filmy lace.

The heart-shaped corsage sachet of white satin is to wear around the neck beneath the lingerie. The ribbon edge and bow make a pretty finish and it is suspended by a ribbon. Another corsage sachet on this order consists of two pads about two inches square, with a small bow in the center of each. They are fastened to the ends of a strip of baby ribbon. For the Japanese sachet, made of Japanese silk, a bag two and one-half by three inches, and in the top seam fasten a Japanese doll's head. Around its neck a ribbon is tied, stock fashion. The most popular sachet orders at present are sandalwood,orris and the Japanese perfumes.

The rage for hand-made articles of attire takes some beautiful forms, and the ones here described are such as may be easily imitated by any woman who knows how to use her needle. A very fashionable white crepe waist has its front, stock and cuffs-embroidered with clusters of small, pink roses and forget-me-nots in ribbon embroidery. The bunches of flowers have their leaves and stems done in pale, dull shades of green and golden brown. The bunches of flowers are connected by and interspersed with little bowknots and loops and ends of ribbon. This ribbon effect is produced by outlining the supposed ribbon with a single gold thread and working small black dots, in embroidery silk, about an eighth of an inch apart between the gold lines. The effect is that of a gaily and novel ribbon. It is no wider, and probably not as wide, as baby ribbon.

In the most fashionable line of hand-work come new frocks for early spring, made of a material exactly like crinoline or serim—the kind used in making cross-stitch. One lovely frock has three broad bands of cross-stitch down the front, reaching from the hem up. The center one comes nearly all the way up, and the side bands set rather close to the center one, are much shorter. They are worked in a simple design of cross-stitch in Russian blue and red. Of all the cross-stitching worn by smart women the preference is for Russian cross-stitch in these two colors. In only one shade of each. Collars and cuffs and dress sets are worked in the same color and pattern. The bodice to this skirt is a partly fitted blouse, in shirt waist effect, with three bands of cross-stitching down the front and one around the collar and around each wrist band. Simple as the frock is, the handwork gives it an air of distinction.

AN ACCOMMODATING EDITOR.

Was Willing to Do Just as the Bad Man Wanted Him to in Five Seconds.

"Do I look a dead man?" This question was shot at the editor of the Bad Lands "Lizard" by a man of ferocious aspect, who entered the sanctum in a great hurry, relates London Tit-Bits.

"My friend, I have no time to answer conundrums," replied the editor, mildly. "I want to know if I look like a dead man?" persisted the visitor, in a louder tone. "It ain't no conundrum, either."

"I don't know that I'm bound to answer the questions of every excited individual who happens to come in. If you'll tell me the object of your call, I'll give the subject some consideration."

"Well, sir, your paper announced me dead, and I want to know whether I look like a dead man."

"Why didn't you say so? No, you don't look like a dead man."

"Then your paper lied, didn't it?" "This paper seems to have been misinformed, if you are the man it referred to. I allow no man to say it lied."

"Well, I'm the man it referred to, I reckon. There ain't but one Alkali like these diggins. I'm the terror of the Bad Lands. I'm a varmint from the Wicked Desert, and when I'm mad I can lick the entire press of the United States. You hear me?"

"I've never been accused of deafness." "I could chew you up in one mouthful, see?" "I'm not blind." "If you don't make that paragraph right, I'll jab yer into yer own press, and print an impression of yer paper on yer carcass. Twigg!"

The editor twiggled. "Will yer make that item right?" "I will," replied the editor, rising slowly from his chair, with a seven-shooter in one hand and a bowie knife in the other. "Yes, I'll make the paragraph true. You'll look like a dead man in exactly five seconds. What's your choice, lead or steel?"

MANY INDIAN MOUNDS

VALUABLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA FOUND IN FLORIDA.

Beautiful Pottery, Human Emgias and Crania Lately Exhumed and Placed in Academy of Natural Science.

"Clarence B. Moore has concluded his thorough archaeological survey of the coast line of northwest Florida," says Nature. "Although this district had not previously been investigated, many mounds had been opened by treasure seekers and curiosity hunters and thus valuable data have been lost to the students of American archaeology. This irresponsible exploitation of mounds for spoil has caused great loss to science in America, but the loss in the old world has been infinitely greater and too often this ignorant digging has been carried on under the auspices of learned institutions."

By far the greater portion of Mr. Moore's finds consists of the pottery which has been added to the noble collection that this enthusiastic archaeologist has given to the museum of the Academy of Natural Science at Philadelphia. Indeed, there are in the various museums of the United States enormous collections of pre-Columbian and more recent pottery, comparatively little of which has been studied or published. It is to be hoped that ere long one of our American colleagues will give us a monograph on American ceramics as a whole; a work on this subject is much needed at the present day and it could not fail to be of very great interest.

"There is so much variety in the vessels so numerous and so beautifully figured by Mr. Moore that it is difficult to give an idea of the pottery of the district investigated. Many vessels are composed of several cups or receptacles, most are of irregular form and are often provided with animal heads, a few are perforated, and some are in the form of human figures; a unique vessel has the form of an inverted truncated pyramid, on one side of which a human figure peering over the edge is modeled in relief. The majority of the vessels are decorated in various ways, usually either by incised lines or by devices or patterns in low relief, many of which look as if they had been produced with a stamp; one simple cylindrical vessel is ornamented with an incised design representing two human hands, but most of the designs and patterns have no obvious significance.

"A good many human crania have been found, and these exhibit great antero-posterior flattening, while in some a concave depression gives evidence of early construction by a band. Capt. Bernard Romans, who was familiar with this part of Florida, writing in the latter part of the eighteenth century, tells us that in his time the Choctaws bound bags of sand to the heads of male children; but skulls of females exhibit the same artificial deformation. The region investigated by Mr. Moore shows in an interesting manner the influence of other districts. The pottery of northwest Florida is, on the whole, much superior to that of the peninsula, and the author is inclined to believe that the best ware found its way into the latter region through barter, and the comparative rarity of the imported ware may account for the infrequent occurrence of earthenware vessels in the burial mounds of the coast of the peninsula."

"In the first part of his report Mr. Moore noted a mortuary custom prevailing in peninsular Florida, which consisted of knocking a hole in the base of a vessel, presumably to 'kill' the pot, that its soul might accompany that of the dead man. The flimsy and 'freak' pottery sometimes found in the peninsula, and numerous in the northwest, was made expressly for interment with the dead, and in the base of each vessel a hole had been made previous to the baking of the clay. A new feature in 'freak' ware was encountered about St. Andrew's bay; these vessels were life-forms, usually, but differed from other life-forms of the same district in that they were inferior to them as to ware and workmanship, and that they had various perforations, made previous to baking. In the body of the vessel as well as the customary one in the base.

"Mr. Moore also obtained evidence which suggests that the flesh was removed from the bones of the corpse and burnt; the mass of carbonaceous matter was always found on the eastern side of the mounds. Urn burial was largely in vogue in Alabama and Georgia; it extended into Florida, but practically is not met with further east than St. Andrew's. Inhumation was almost universally practiced in Florida; true cremation has not been met with in this peninsula, but it was occasionally practiced on the mainland, or northwestern portion. These observations confirm the statement of Cabeza de Vaca, who spent some years among the aborigines of the northwest Florida coast; he says that persons there in general were buried, but that doctors were cremated."

A Chinese Auction. To a stranger a Chinese auction is a most curious spectacle. The auctioneer leans over a slightly elevated counter and exhibits his wares. He says nothing, neither does the bidder, who merely steps forward to the auctioneer and runs his fingers up his sleeve, making pressures on the salesman's arm, thus indicating how much he will pay for the article. Then another and another repeat the action, until the one signifying the highest price receives the article without a word being exchanged on either side. Only the auctioneer and the successful bidder know the price offered and accepted.

KILLING HOUSEHOLD TASKS.

Energy Spent by Farmers' Wives That Might Be Saved by Proper Provisions.

Although the United States is pre-eminently the paradise of labor saving devices for women, Rev. E. P. Pressey, of Massachusetts, is of the opinion that not nearly enough has been done in the way of easing domestic conditions for them. As an illustration of what can and should be done, says the New York Tribune, he hopes to establish a model farmhouse with labor saving devices for the prevention of what he terms "moth-ericide."

Mr. Pressey considers that the farmhouse kitchen has not improved in convenience for 50 years, and that the fact that some things are done as they must have been done at the first advent of the race, at a loss of from 50 to 500 per cent. of energy in fruitless and uninteresting drudgery, is largely accountable for the number of country women in the insane asylums.

"It is easy to draw mechanical examples of waste of mother," says Mr. Pressey, writing to the Woman's Journal of his project, "and, strange to say, almost as easy to point out the mechanical corrections of it. For example, how many farmhouse kitchens have a pump on one side, or even in the yard, and a cooking stove in a recess corner, and how often mother either lifts her pots and kettles over the intervening space and back, or, worse, transfers water by the two quart or even quart dipperful. Five hundred per cent. waste of mechanical energy, to say the least, when running water and a faucet handily placed, with a slight hose attachment, are always attainable in time on the poorest farm.

"Take another even less excusable example of even greater and more noticeable waste and more palpable drudgery—the dishwashing and dishwiping. In a large family literally hours of the day are consumed in a back-breaking process that legitimately should take only a few minutes at the most, say, by a family of 15. There are devices, very simple and inexpensive, for not merely cleaning dishes, but even sterilizing them, so thorough and efficient are they.

"In the average kitchen, but for the presence of a cook stove and things getting ready to eat, the room might as well be a shed or a parlor, for all its being built for dispatch of business. Partings and waste are brought in to necessitate constant sweeping, and other litter, and especially wood, is toted across to a misplaced woodbox with an ill devised approach through the kitchen, and almost generally even thrown by careless boys against a plaster-walled and papered wall as the box overflows; whereas, no wood should enter the kitchen except through a trap from the woodshed into a closed box.

"Too frequently cupboards are misplaced, ill planned and remote. Only rarely are tools and utensils arranged about the table or workbench for the swift convenience of the hand, but are hung on nails and hooks with the main idea of getting them out of the way of other things, or stupidity of stupidity: when washed, heaped together on a clean shelf in the back of the pantry, to select her roof as 50 times 20 feet away by the sink, stove or kitchenable. Again and again things that belong on one shelves at the stove or sink are put behind awkward swinging doors.

"Practically nothing has been put in the farmhouse of the simple device of stone weight elevators, and mother's back breaks in the lugging of boxes and pails and baskets up and down, from cellar to garret."

MENDING FIRE BRICKS.

Durable Cement That Will Hold for Years May Be Made at Home.

There are few things more unsatisfactory than modern fire linings. The fire bricks are easily cracked and sometimes last only a few months, when they ought to last for years. It is a great mistake to allow the fire bricks to get into bad condition. There is an iron plate back of the fire bricks in every stove, and this is easily burned through, and it costs a large sum to replace it; therefore, cracks in the fire bed of the stove should be mended at once and badly broken bricks should be replaced.

A durable cement for cracked fire bricks can be made at home, and will hold the cracked bricks together for several years. Mix equal quantities of powdered soapstone, which may be purchased from any druggist, and common salt together, and add enough water to make a paste. The mixture hardens very rapidly after it is put on, and as the soapstone is fireproof it makes a lasting cement. Pumice stone is sometimes substituted for the soapstone, but does not last as well. In case of an emergency, equal parts of salt and finely sifted ashes mixed to a stiff paste will make a suitable temporary cement, and will last until something more durable can be obtained.

Orange Jam. When oranges are plentiful a supply of inexpensive jam may be made. The slightly bitter taste caused by using the peel is usually liked and has the merit of being medicinal. Take one dozen oranges and six lemons and wash them thoroughly. Slice very thin, removing the seeds. Let them stand in one gallon water 36 hours, then boil gently two hours. Add ten pounds pure granulated sugar and cook one hour longer. Fill empty jelly glasses or pint jars.—Orange Judd Farmer.

Test of Experience. Do not accept a thing as a truth because it sounds plausible; test all things by your own experience or by what you have observed of the experience of others. In other words, learn to think.—Woman's Home Companion.

FINDING COUNTERFEITERS.

Branch of Government Secret Service That Was the Beginning of the Present System.

The secret service bureau of the treasury department is not an old concern. It has not been in operation many years, compared to the existence of other bureaus, but it grows in importance each year. There are now a large number of investigators, by some called detectives, in the field, but the exact number is not known and will not be made public, says the Washington Star.

Counterfeiting money is an old offense. It was done before the United States became a government, but does not seem to have become so widespread until the United States began making its own paper money during the civil war. Prior to that time the offenses had been dealt with by states and municipalities, with such help as the general government cared to give. The increase in the crime, however, caused recognition by congress in 1862, when \$10,000,000 was appropriated for its suppression, to be expended under the direction of the secretary of the treasury. The sum was paid out in rewards to private detectives, municipal officers and others instrumental in bringing to trial and punishment those engaged in making bogus money. With the turning out of greenbacks by the government an increase in the appropriation and a more organized fight against counterfeiting were necessary. In 1864 congress appropriated \$10,000,000 and placed upon the collector of the treasury the responsibility and supervision of keeping down counterfeiting. This really inaugurated a methodical system of hunting and punishing counterfeiters. The collector of the treasury gathered about him a corps of men experienced in criminal investigations and set them to work. The plan worked so well that when John Sherman was secretary of the treasury he gave his approval to the organization of a separate bureau for suppressing the output of spurious currency. Under foreign governments the handling of counterfeiters is in the control of a centralized police organization, which looks after all kinds of criminal offenses against the general government. The one bureau has surveillance over criminals of every class. The tendency is in that direction in this government. The secret service bureau is now being used by a number of departments of the government.

The operations of the secret service are confined by law to the suppression of counterfeiting and the investigation of back pay and bounty cases. This is all the law permits the officials of the service to work on, but every day they are at work on other matters. That the law may not be openly violated the secret service operators assigned to do other work are practically taken off the secret service rolls and the department employing them is required to pay their salaries and expenses. Nearly all the departments now recognize the efficiency of the service and call upon the bureau at any time for a man. The department of justice has used a number of the operators in the last few years. In the course of time this will become so general that this government will probably build up a great criminal bureau, one that will supply officers for investigation of any crime. The post office department now has its own system of inspectors, who investigate violations of postal laws, and the effectiveness of this plan of putting specialists against specialists is rewarded as a good one. This could be continued, though if all the criminal organizations of the government were centralized.

HOW HE WON THE PRIZE.

Easy for a Man Who Was a Bugler in a Brass Band for Seven Years.

While the proprietor of a lung tester was expiating upon the benefits to be derived from the free use of his instrument, a cadaverous individual stepped out of the crowd and remarked to him: "Miser, do you think it would do me good to blow into that?"

"Yes, sir, certainly. It would expand your chest, give elasticity to your lungs, and lengthen your life. Why, you'd soon be able to blow 500 pounds, and win a prize."

"Does a fellow get a prize when he blows that many pounds?"

"Yes, sir; half a sovereign. Wouldn't you like to make a trial?" with a knowing wink to the crowd.

"I don't care if I do," said Greens, coming closer and throwing down a coin. Then, taking the mouthpiece in his hand, he made ready. He opened his mouth until the hole in his face looked like a dry dock for ocean steamers, and began to take in wind. The inflation was like that of a big balloon, but not so distended. The fellow's chest began to groan and distend until it resembled a porter pikeon more than a man.

At length he put the mouthpiece to his lips and blew with such force that his eyes came out and stood on his cheek bones to see what was the matter—but that indicator's top went up like a flash, and its needle spun round until it stood still at 500 pounds. The crowd cheered, and the keeper of the thing paid over ten shillings with a mutter of astonishment. But Greens pocketed the money coolly, and, turning to the spectators, said:

"Look here, gents, that ain't nothing to do at all for a man who has been a bugler in a brass band for seven years, like me."

Unusual Opportunity. Mr. Goodley—Mrs. Chatters is better, I hear. I'm glad you called on her today.

Mrs. Goodley—So am I. I was ushered into her room just as the doctor put the thermometer under her tongue, and so for five full minutes I talked away at her and she couldn't say a word.—Philadelphia Press.