

THE NORTH-EAST PASSAGE.

Nordenskjold's Route to be Followed by Russia's Fleet.

[Paris Correspondence of The Courier des Etats Unis.]

A project of unusual boldness, but which it would not be impossible to realize, has been under discussion for some time in naval circles. It is the proposition to send the Russian fleet from the Baltic Sea to the Sea of Japan, not by the usual route through the Suez Canal (which would be a long voyage during which the neutrality laws would make coaling impossible), but around the north coasts of Europe and Asia—the course followed in 1878-79 by Nordenskjold.

The plan is attributed to Admiral Makaroff, who, according to the reports, was in consultation in relation to the matter with the general staff of the navy before his departure from St. Petersburg. It was natural that such an idea should arise in the mind of this distinguished seaman, who in times past published a study of the methods of utilizing the Kara Sea for commercial purposes, during the period when it is free from ice. In this work, he based his calculations upon the performances of the celebrated explorer Nordenskjold.

Let us see what Nordenskjold did. On July 4, 1878, he left Gothenburg, on the Cattegat, on board the steamer Vega, and traversing the North Sea proceeded to Tromsø, where he took in a supply of provisions. There his real expedition commenced. On August 1 he arrived in the Kara Sea, which he crossed in four days. On August 19, the most northern cape of Asia, Cape Cheliuskin, was rounded for the first time. On the 26th, the explorer passed the mouths of the Lena. He continued his voyage toward the northeast, and on September 27 reached Kadjuchin Bay near Bering Strait. By this time the season was well advanced, and the next day it was frozen in. The hibernation lasted 264 days. It was not until July 18, 1879, that the Vega could resume its voyage. From that time onward the expedition encountered no more obstacles. Bering Strait being traversed without difficulty. After touching St. Lawrence Gulf (Asiatic coast) the vessel reached Clarence Point (American coast), visited Bering Island, which it left on August 19, and disembarked its crew at Yokohama on September 2 without losing a man.

It was thus shown that it was possible to use the passage between the North Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Questioned upon this point, Nordenskjold declared: (1) That it ought to be possible to sail along the northern coast of Siberia in a few weeks with a well-built and well-directed steamer; (2) that the Kara Sea route offered no difficulties; (3) that no obstacle was presented by Cape Cheliuskin; (4) that the difficulties of the trip were to be found near the eastern coast of Nova Zembla and in the start to the south of Wrangel Land.

Taking the itinerary of Nordenskjold as their base of calculation, the officers of the navy figure out that the Russian Baltic fleet could go from Libau to Vladivostok, about 8750 miles, in forty days. By starting on June 20 it would arrive on July 30.

The members of the Russian general staff are thinking seriously of this northeast passage. Ice-breakers of the Yermack type will start for the White Sea as soon as the cold season is ended for the purpose of testing whether the expedition will be possible or not. If the northeastern passage cannot be utilized, the Russian fleet will go to the theatre of war by way of Suez.

One thing is certain: the Baltic fleet will start. It will consist of nine battleships, a considerable number of cruisers and torpedo boats, which will counterbalance the Japanese fleet, and will have the advantage over it of not being overworked. All the vessels now at Libau and at Cronstadt have received orders to commence their preparations, and the work is going on night and day.

Troubles of The Good.

Next to a bad reputation, there is nothing that is such a handicap to one's pleasure and happiness in life as a good one. Indeed, it may be questioned whether a good one isn't worse than a bad one, for, while a reputation for being wicked may lead the foolish to regard you as interesting, the reputation for being good foredooms you to be a martyr.

If you desire to live in peace and comfort and avoid wrinkles and nerves, you must never establish a reputation for excellence in any particular line. If you do, you are its bond slave for life. You cannot run away from it or leave it behind. Go where you will, it will follow you, and you can no more rid yourself of it than the hero of Anstey's story could rid himself of the Tinted Venus that made his life a burden. You may think you have lost it or lived it down, but just as you get ready to enjoy yourself, somebody bobs up who remembers your reputation for superior piety and goodness, and you have to doff the cap and bells and assume once more the prickly halo of the saint.

In one of his poems Saxe tells the sad story of a man who had the misfortune to have a reputation as a wit. Wherever he went he was expected to dazzle every company. When he was invited out to dine he

had to pay for his dinner with bon-mots. If he was ever serious, people felt defrauded, and if he was dull and melancholy they regarded him as nothing short of a rank fraud. His friends demanded that he keep them in a state of hilarious merriment, and the price he paid for his reputation as a wit was to be kept forever on the rack trying to invent new jokes.

In a similar, if a very minor way, every one of us who has a reputation for anything has to pay for it. The beauty must take much more care of her appearance than the homely woman. She must dress with more elaborateness and taste than the women who have no reputation for good looks to maintain. People expect it of her, and they are quick to notice the least falling off in beauty and the first sign of approaching age in her, whereas the plain woman can go through all the gradations from youth to middle life without anybody being the wiser. It is one of the ineffable consolations for never having been a beauty that no one can ever tell you how you have faded.

A funny phase of this subject is that after once you acquire a reputation for doing a thing you never get any virtue in doing it. People seem to think that you have a morbid fondness for work and self-sacrifice, and that you enjoy it, and they actually give themselves credit for affording you an opportunity of gratifying your peculiar taste. I once knew a maiden lady of moderate fortune and refined taste who was suddenly afflicted with the burden of six orphan nieces and nephews. The income that had been sufficient to supply her with the comforts and luxuries of life was, of course, a very pittance when divided amongst seven. There were no more pretty frocks for her, no more jaunts abroad, but she bravely took up her burden, denying herself everything possible in order that the children might be educated and given a start in life, and not one of them manifested the slightest appreciation of all she ever did for them, but they would go into fits of gratitude when another aunt who lived in a distant city would send one of the girls one of her old party frocks or a pair of gloves. "Oh! Aunt Anna wouldn't be happy unless she is sacrificing herself," they would say airily, and that was all the martyr ever got for her reputation for goodness.

Just the same things happen all through life. If you have a reputation for being kind to the sick, you may go and sit up with a person all night and nurse her until you are ready to drop, or you may stand over the stove making broths and jellies until you are burnt to a cinder, and everybody takes it as a matter of course; but let some woman who never sacrifices herself for anybody or anything come by, and leave a card with "kind enquiries" penciled on it, and the invalid will talk of it for a month. "So kind of her!" "How thoughtful!" But grateful to you? Not a bit of it. She thinks you have been having the time of your life, and that sick nursing is the favorite form of diversion; for you see you have that sort of a reputation.

Who hasn't had experience of this sort? Who hasn't had some guest they didn't want come and stay months with them without manifesting the slightest appreciation of the hospitality shown them, and then see them go into ecstasies of delight because some other friend or relative—on whom they had precisely the same claim—invited them to lunch? Who hasn't paid for the fuel for some poor family during an entire winter without getting one word of thanks, and then heard them overload somebody else with gratitude because of a present of a measly chicken? Of course we ought not to care for these things, but we do. We don't want anybody to go before us sounding our praises on a brazen trumpet, but we do like to feel that our sacrifices are appreciated.

After all, it comes back to the same point—the necessity of living up to your blue china. If you once get a reputation for doing things exceptionally well, you have got to keep on striving to live up to the standard you have set, and the only safe and comfortable way is not to establish any precedent. There is no fame, but great peace and happiness, in mediocrity.—Dorothy Dix in San Francisco "Bulletin."

A Helpful Spirit.

Mrs. Sanderson put on her glasses and looked amiably through them at her guest. "Know where you could get any ripe wild strawberries?" she said, in her pleasant tones. "Why, of course I do. It's curious how often people come to ask about things, and how often I'm able to help them out. You can get some wild strawberries up on James Wilder's hill. He told me the other day they were just about ripe, and that if I hadn't a patch of my own he'd offer me some."

"I like to be helpful to my neighbors," said Mrs. Sanderson, without a glance at her guest, who seemed to be trying to make up her mind to say something, "and now I'm killing two birds with one stone, for if you pick some of those strawberries Tommy Wilder won't be half as likely to overeat and make himself sick."

"Yesterday I had two chances. One was when Miss Manser came over to see if I could lend her an ironing-board, and I was able to

WOODSTOCK, N. B., APRIL 27, 1904.



Miss Alice M. Smith, of Minneapolis, Minn., tells how woman's monthly suffering may be permanently relieved by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

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tell her that Mr. Brown had bought a couple of a travelling man, and would dispose of them reasonably. I told her I should have bought one if I hadn't owned two. She started right off for the store. She said hers had met with an accident, but I knew how easy 't would be for her to get the borrowing habit, and I knew she wouldn't want to if she realized it."

There was a slight sound in the caller's throat, but Mrs. Sanderson hurried on:

"And the second chance was when that little Porter girl came here with the subscription list for Abner Tompkins, that got hurt in the mill. I asked her about his bruises, and when she'd finished I said, 'I can give you something better than money for him, Susy. I'll give you the address of the man in Nashua that makes the wonderful liniment that healed Brother Sam's bruises and cuts after his accident.'"

"I did give it to her. She's a curious, silent kind of a girl, but I guess she was grateful, for I am sure there were tears in her eyes when she said good-bye. I don't think folks are fit to live in this world if they can't forget themselves and do for others now and then."

Solid Scholarship.

At a political meeting an excited Irishman had risen to yell his satisfaction. "Sit down!" called the men behind him, twitching his coat tails. "Don't you know you're opaque?" "And that I'm not!" cried the other. "I'm O'Brien."

V. C. tells a story of Professor Huxley, which suggests that he may have heard of the Irishman. The professor had made a demonstration, and asked a student:

"Did you follow me?" "Yes sir," he replied, "except at one point when you were between me and the blackboard."

"Well," said the professor, "I always try to be clear, but I can't make myself transparent."



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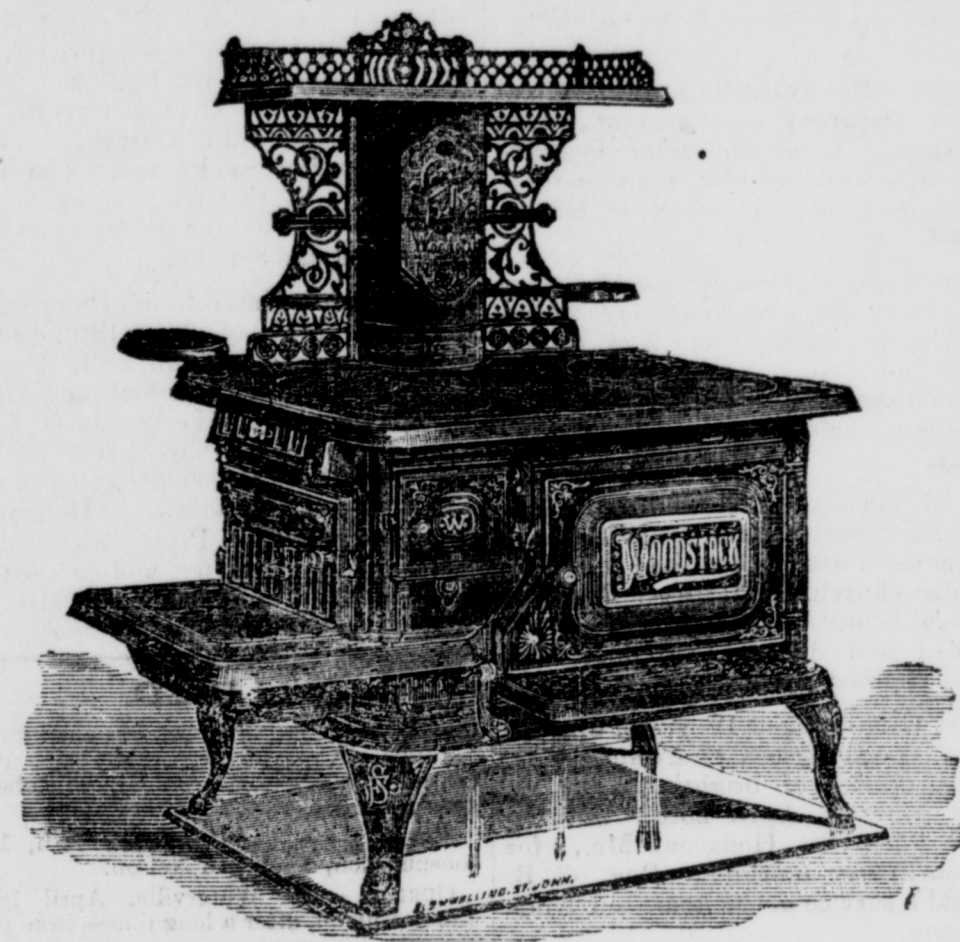
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