

HOW THE CZAR TRAVELS.

He is the Most Uncomfortable Traveller in the World.

Of all terror-haunted people in the world, the Czar of All the Russias has been probably the chief. He went about in daily dread of assassination, and when he travelled extraordinary precautions were taken to insure the safety of his august person.

Unhappily, a terrible reason existed which made unusual precautions a grim necessity. The memory of March 13th, 1881, still lives, when Alexander II., the Czar's immediate predecessor, was killed by a bomb on the Catherine Canal.

A fact not generally known outside Russia is that the Imperial victim might possibly have saved his life on that occasion. There were two missiles thrown. The first wounded a child in the street. Had the Emperor driven on at once, it is thought that he would have escaped. He lingered, however, to see if the child was much injured, and this action of brave humanity gave his relentless assassins just the opportunity they required to hurl a second bomb and destroy him.

Alexander III. once had a narrow escape. It happened shortly after the memorable meeting between himself and the German Kaiser at Peterhoff, in July, 1888. He was travelling on the Kharhoff Railway near to Borki, about forty miles from Sebastopol. The engine left the rails, and the royal train was wrecked. A lackey, who chanced to be lying at a plate to the Czar, as well as a dog lying at his feet, were killed on the spot, besides twenty-one others, and thirty-seven were injured, whilst the Czar himself was unhurt. Of course, the catastrophe was put down to Nihilism, but proved on investigation to be due to travelling over rails laid on rotten sleepers.

Now when the Czar travels over the line it is properly inspected previously, and days before the expected journey, the time being kept a strict secret, soldiers are posted all along the route, each within speaking distance of his neighbour, in order to prevent anyone from approaching the track. Then two trains are prepared, both of which will make the journey, one shortly behind the other. One of these trains conveys the Czar, but which train he is in is not known except to those immediately concerned, and that is only decided upon at the very last moment. The sole chance of destroying a train is by a mine, which must be started a mile or more from the track to avoid detection. That this can be done was demonstrated by the outrage perpetrated by the villain Hartmann, who blew up a train with dynamite on the Moscow Railway on December 1st, 1879. The precautions, however, now adopted render such barbarity almost impracticable, and the use of two trains makes success in any plot of the kind absolutely uncertain. Arrived at his destination on the railway the Czar drives to the place of his visit. Soldiers are stationed every yard of the way. The people turn out in crowds to see him, if possible; but as often as not the route actually taken is some back way, through roads and streets out of which all the people have been attracted by the display of soldiery. Word is then passed that the Czar has arrived. The crowds disperse, disappointed by the ruse, and the military are withdrawn. The whole journey indicates the fear of assault, and a royal progress in Russia is a function practically unknown.

Accident in a Chemical Factory.

At a chemical factory at Mulhouse, in Alsace, an accident recently occurred which would be too gruesome to relate had it not some scientific interest. An explosion of nitro-benzene took place in a building in which a workman was known to have been. A fire ensued, and when it was got under it was found that three feet of boiling liquid was on the floor of the building. When it cooled a search was made for the man's remains, but no trace whatever was found of them. It was then thought that he might, after all, have left the place before the explosion. To put the matter to the test carcasses of animals were put into the liquid, and it was found that they disappeared in about two hours. Twenty-four hours had elapsed between the explosion and the first search.

Stopping A Train For The Toothache.

Flcury, an artisan, was travelling from Corbeil to Paris the other day, and pulled the alarm bell as the train was leaving a wayside station. There was at once a stoppage, and the guard was naturally eager to know from Flcury what was wrong. The man coolly replied that he wanted something to cure a raging tooth. The railway official energetically expostulated, and said he was not going to be made a fool of in that flagrant manner. The alarmist was summoned for his act, but did not appear before the tribunal. He was condemned in default to a fine of 50 francs.

Making Sure.

The "canniness" of the Scottish people, and of the juvenile especially, is aptly illustrated in the following true incident. Two boys of about ten or eleven years of age had quarrelled, and finished by coming to blows. In the tussle one of the combatants got knocked down, and while still on the ground he queried—
"Wad ye hit a fellow when he's doon?"
"Na," gallantly responded the victor.
"Ah, weel," quoth the vanquished yet cautious youngster, "I'll lie here till ye gang awa'."

According to the report of a Royal Commission early marriages are most common in the cotton districts of Lancashire, where mere youths and girls often enter the marriage state without even consulting their parents. Numbers of both sexes get married at the immature age of fifteen.

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AN ECCENTRIC PHYSICIAN.

More Strange Stories of the Late Czar's Doctor.

An account of the strange doings of Dr. Zacharin, the late Czar's physician, in connection with the Czar's last moments, has already appeared in PROGRESS. The doctor, the late Czar Alexander's, is one of the most eccentric men in Russia and many funny stories are told of which he is the hero. He has an absolute confidence in himself and believes his diagnosis of any case to be infallible. A Russian country gentleman imagined, probably with some reason, that he had heart trouble, and went to Moscow to be examined by and to consult Zacharin. After the examination he asked what his chances for life were.

"You may live one year," was the professor's verdict.

Almost a year later the patient called on Zacharin again.

"Don't you remember, professor? About a year ago you said I had only twelve months to live. I have gained thirty pounds since, and hope to live many a year to come."

Zacharin's face was a study. "Did I predict it?" he asked.

"Yes, right here, in this office."

"How long is it since you were here?"

"Just eleven months."

"Well, sir, that leaves you still thirty days. You shouldn't have troubled me. Prof. Zacharin never makes a mistake. You'll die within the time."

Next morning the gentleman was found dead in his bed.

Zacharin is a man of wit, and always fertile in expedients. A few years ago he was appointed investigating physician in one of the lunatic asylums in the vicinity of Moscow. While making his rounds he was approached by one convalescent patient who complained of the quality of the food, especially the soup, which, he said, was unfit for gentlemen. Zacharin, followed by the patient, started for the kitchen. As fate would have it, none of the attendants were present. Approaching the huge cauldron in which the soup was boiling, he lifted the lid, took a spoon, tasted the soup and found it excellent. However to humor the patient, he said: "You are right, sir; the soup is very bad. I shall see the steward and tell him to discharge the cook at once."

As he started to leave the kitchen the patient, a giant in stature and strength, bent over the doctor and whispered teasingly in his ear: "You know, doctor, you are such a wise looking fellow that you would make a delicious broth, besides improving its nourishing qualities; don't you think so yourself?" As he spoke he seized him by the shoulders to hurl him into the boiling liquid. (Quick as a flash and with the utmost composure, the doctor exclaimed: "What a capital idea! Why, sir, I couldn't think of anything better." But I fear that my clothes, which, as you know are saturated with medicines, will spoil the flavor of the soup. Just let me go for a second to take them off." To prove his sincerity the professor began to unbutton his coat. The crazy man seemed to recognize that it was a reasonable request, and with a hearty laugh let the doctor go. Two minutes later the soup improver was confined in a cell.

The Last Battle in England.

The Dean of York, preaching at Sewer by, near Bridlington, and enlarging on the blessings of peace, mentioned that no battle had been fought in England for the last 200 years. The statement is accurate enough, if we take England (as perhaps it should strictly be taken) for the country south of the Tweed. The last battle fought in England was Sedgemoor, on July 6th, 1685. But, of course, if we take Scotland into the calculation, there was the battle of Culloden Moor, which was fought on April 6th, 1746. That was not so far distant from our own time, for Sir Walter Scott tells us in his introduction to "Waverley" that he "was acquainted with many of the old warriors of 1745, who were, like most veterans, easily induced to fight their battles over again for the benefit of a willing listener like myself."

A Happy Town.

The little town of Orb, in Spessart, is much to be envied. The population about 2,000 in number, have no municipal or district taxes, with the exception of a dog-tax. Yet, in spite of this fact, at the end of every year there is a large balance in the hands of the municipal authorities. The income of the town is derived from its salt-springs, and its forests of about 7,000 acres. The authorities now propose to lay on water to the town and to light it with electricity, in order to use up the surplus funds; they also offer to any company who will construct a railway to Orb the lands and rails free of charge.

Old Age Pensions in Denmark.

The law of Denmark now gives to every Danish subject, man or woman, the right to a pension at sixty years of age, except in cases of convicted criminals, or those who have fraudulently made over their property to relatives, or those who have brought themselves to disrepute by extravagance, or who have, during the preceding ten years, received relief from the parish, or who have been convicted of mendacity.

Paris' Idea of Double Weddings.

One of the pleasures of being married in Paris is that you have two ceremonies, two wedding dresses, two sets of guests and congratulations all done over again, and, although there is an interval between the two ceremonies, you know that you are not really married until you have gone through both. It is almost like being married twice.

An ice locomotive was some years ago constructed for use in Russia. The front part rests on a sledge, and the driving wheels are studded with spikes.

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CHINESE CARTS AND ROADS.

The Highways of the Empire Would Be a Terror to an Invading Army.

If Japan really intends to push on to Peking, it is fortunate for her that there is a fairly good road from Mokden to the capital. It would be almost impossible for an army to march along many of the highways in the Chinese empire. In no other country, pretending to be civilized, are the means of land transportation so wretched. There is a much-travelled thoroughfare in the province of Shantung which is so narrow in one part that traffic is permitted to go only in one direction at a time. A guard is stationed at the either end, and in the forenoon traffic is admitted at one end of the route and in the afternoon at the other.

The typical north China cart has rude wooden wheels and heavy frame. The farmers are on their way to market, and just at this point all the draught animals happen to be oxen, though it is probable that there is an occasional mule in the procession. But oxen are in a great majority for draught purposes in north China.

These poor beasts have a hard time of it, whether the sun shines or not. In fine weather the dust is deep and of a penetrating quality that is most unpleasant both for man and beast. After a hard rain the mud is deep and sticky, and not a few roads are simply impassable at such times.

The Chinese theory is that all the roads belong to the Emperor, and anything is to be done to them it is his business to order the work performed and pay for it. As the Emperor does not improve his privileges in this respect, the highways remain just as they happen to be. There are roads in the loose soil, the source of China's boundless fertility, where the dust, ground up by the cart wheels has been blown away, and the road bed has gradually sunken, until to-day the oxen and carts cannot be seen by those who stand a little distance off on one side or the other. Poor and cumbersome as the carts are they are considerably better than most of the roads over which they are hauled.

How Microbes Multiply.

The only line of pseudo scientists, the superstitions, self-styled "scholars" of the early part of this and the latter part of the eighteenth century, believed that filth would breed microbes, but, as the absurd idea of "spontaneous generation" has since been exploded, it will not be discussed in this "note," which is solely intended to explain the manner in which microbes multiply. There are several species of these minute creatures and they have various ways of reproducing their species, but the most common is what the investigators term "reproduction by fissure." With a strong microscope a microbe is watched for a short time a "construction" appearing on each side in the centre of the body is seen. This soon shows itself in the shape of a line across, and then all of a sudden, the microbe separates in the middle and behold there are two in place of one! Each of these rapidly increase in size until they are as large as the original, when the miracle of the side spots and transverse appear and in place of two microbes there are four. By this wonderful plan of reproduction one increases to two, two to four, four to eight, eight to sixteen, until within the space of five hours there are 2,000,000 wiggling individuals from a single specimen!

Where He Learnt to Shoot.

One of the latest anecdotes of the new French president relates to a rather amusing experience of the war of '70. M. Casimir-Perier was in command of a company of Mobiles at the action of Bagnoux, in which he recognized a young peasant who came from a village adjoining his estate distinguishing himself by his coolness and excellent shooting. Accordingly he accosted him.

"Well done, my lad! You shall have a medal for this. But tell me—where did you learn to shoot so straight?"

The young private was greatly taken aback, but at last managed to stammer out—
"Well, captain, if the truth must be told, it was at the hares on your estate!"
The captain was as good as his word. He forgot the hares, but remembered the Prussians.

An Essay on Hens.

On the subject of hens a boy writes: "Hens are curious animals. They don't have no nose, nor no teeth, nor no ears. They swallow their whistles whole and chew it up in their crops inside of 'em. The outside of a hen is generally put into pillars and inter feather dusters. The inside of a hen is sometimes filled with marbles and shirt buttons and such. A hen is very much smaller than a good many other animals, but they'll dig up more cabbage plants than anything that ain't a hen. Hens are very useful to lay eggs for plum puddings. Skinny Bates eat so much plum pudding once that it sent him inter the colliery. Hens has got wings and can fly when they get scart. I cut Uncle William's hen's head off with a hatchet, and it scart her to death. Hens sometimes make very fine spring chickens."

Merit Its Own Reward.

Merit, like virtue, has its own reward. At Lyttelton, in New Zealand, the other day, a schoolmaster set out before two hundred boys the names of six famous men—Livingstone, Stonewall Jackson, Gladstone, Howard, the philanthropist; Searle, the champion sculler, and John L. Sullivan, the pugilist. The boys were asked then to vote as to which was the greatest man of the lot, and out of the 200 votes Sullivan got nearly 140, most of the balance being cast for Searle.

One Sure Method.

There is a story of a medical student before a board of examiners to whom the question was put again and again of how he would produce perspiration in a patient. He proposed all sorts of things, to which one inopportune examiner always replied: "Well, and it that would not do?"

At last the poor young man, driven to his wits' end, exclaimed, "I would send him before this board to be examined, and I warrant that would make him perspire."