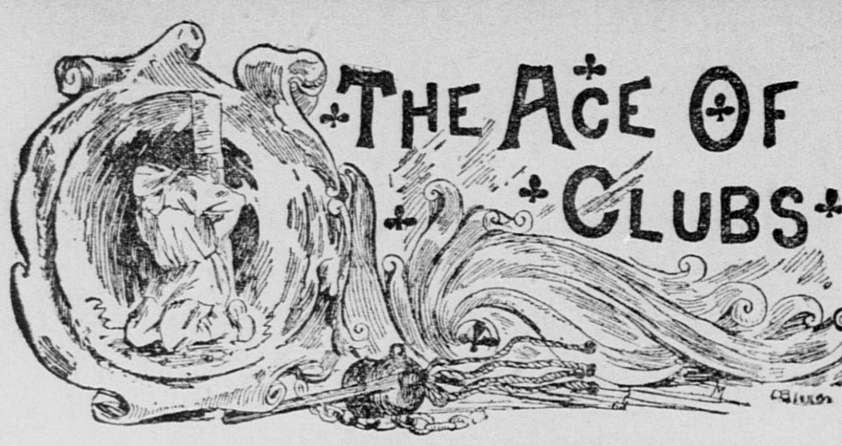

A ROMANCE OF RUSSIA AND SIBERIA,

By Prince Josef Lubomirski, Author of "Safar-Hadji, a Story of Turkistan," etc.

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XXVI—[CONTINUED.]

No sooner had Palkin spoken these words than Schelm fell upon him like a tiger upon his prey.

"Ah!" he cried, "you Satan, you have that receipt?"

"Would I have begun the battle without it?"

Palkin acted upon the information he had obtained during that terrible night at the village. Convinced that he would be able to manage Schelm by simple threats, he had permitted himself a barefaced lie, and the boldness met with unexpected success. Schelm dropped into his chair, almost overwhelmed.

"In spite of your double-refined intrigues, M. Schelm, or rather Von Scholmberg," said Palkin, "you must confess that for once you are helpless. Why did you throw down the gantlet when I am quite willing to proceed to union with you?"

"Traitor! Why did you not hand me that paper with the others?"

"How can you ask? Was I to trust you so much farther than you were willing to trust me? I wanted to keep one weapon for a case of need. You must see that I was wise in acting thus. Calm yourself, therefore, honored M. Revisor. You received me very badly at the very moment when I was about to offer you the means of making Lanin and his wife forever harmless!"

"You do not tell the truth. You have protected them!"

"Vladimir suddenly noticed that some one slipped a letter stealthily into his hand."

"I had to keep them close at hand to produce them whenever you might call for them! But what are they to me, if we can become reconciled? You wanted to avenge yourself on Lanin for an unknown insult, but I assure you that your insult shrinks into nothing when compared with what has happened to me."

Palkin spoke with such passionate fire that Schelm recognized the voice of truth, and the two men shook hands.

"Do you know, Palkin," said Schelm, "we must make an end of it with these people. I no longer hate them, but I sometimes fear them. Now, I am a Senator, a man of importance in the empire, the husband of the rich daughter of a German banker, and with a great future before me. But for this one affair I would be happy. But I still tremble lest something should turn up. This is what makes me ask for the position as revisor—to get rid of them forever. Both Count Lanin and his wife must disappear and leave no trace behind. I shall persecute them and worry them to death. But I need rest; I cannot sleep. If you will honestly assist me I promise to become your ally."

Palkin looked so scornfully at the revisor that he unconsciously cast down his eyes.

"And yet you are already meditating how you may shake me off, when I am no longer a useful tool? But I do not mind that! As long as I am in possession of this weapon of mine, which I would not surrender for hundreds of thousands, you are powerless against me. I shall be your faithful ally, although you know how I rejoice at your good fortune, and that I would rather see you starve. What do you say?"

Schelm replied in a voice which sounded almost sincere:

"Why should we not try, at least? Well, what can you tell me about Lanin?"

"Last week I learned through my spies that my secretary, Nicholas Popoff, whom you knew, I believe—"

"Is he here?" broke in Schelm.

"You need not be afraid of his evidence. He is dead!"

"He is not alive any longer! Is that true?"

"Do you think a man can receive 500 blows with the nagaika and live? I did not get fifty, and I can hardly move."

"You were knouted? You, Colonel?"

Palkin shook at the mere recollection, and his voice became the utterance of savage cruelty.

"Listen, I pray. For some time before I had followed the traces of a vast conspiracy which had many members among the Siberian exiles. I suspected both Lanin and Popoff of being involved. I had my Secretary watched and caught him one day at Lanin's hut. Now, I did not lose sight of him for a moment. One night I had the hut surrounded and found Popoff there. The rebellion was about to explode and certain bands were already moving about the country. Popoff seemed to be one of the leaders. I tried, therefore, to make him confess by torture."

"Well, what happened next?"

"The wretch would not confess! He was dying when a mob entered the hut. One of the men I arrested in that ace of clubs conspiracy was at their head."

Schelm looked as if he were going to faint. He turned deadly pale and asked, with a trembling voice:

"Who was it?"

"I do not know. I only saw them when they were arrested. With the exception of Lanin, I would not recognize any one of them."

"Could you describe the man perhaps?"

"You will find, if you will condescend to listen, that I had a little time to examine his features. All wore hoods, so that they all looked alike, and an exile's hut is not apt to be brilliantly illuminated."

Before Schelm's eyes Miller's threatening form had appeared, and he began to think that his labors in Siberia would hardly be much more pleasant than his work in Petersburg.

"This band of rebels had been drawn to the village by the Countess Lanin and Dr. Haas, her inseparable companion!"

"What! the Countess Lanin?" exclaimed Schelm, jumping up with delight.

"Yes! Not only I, but others also saw her!"

"At last I get some good news!"

At the same time he was at the door and called the Adjutant on duty:

"Request the Governor to come to me at once!" he ordered.

Joyously he rubbed his hands and returned to his seat.

"Go on quickly."

"That band was armed with carbines. My gendarmes were instantly thrown down. I myself fought as long as I could, and cut down a number of these men, but in the end I was overpowered, tied to a post and cruelly knouted."

Schelm's malignity was too strong for his cunning. He could not conceal his delight, and laughed aloud. Palkin bit his lips to keep back his fury, but in his eyes glowed the fire of unquenchable hatred.

"You may laugh, now!" he murmured to himself.

"Now to the point: The Captain of gendarmes of Irkutsk was their accomplice!"

"Not possible! How could the Governor have such people near him?"

"I shall speak of him, also, presently! Enough, this Captain offered to inflict the punishment."

Schelm was terrified.

"Not possible! You don't tell the truth!"

"You will soon find it to be the truth; I received fifty blows while I was writhing at the feet of these wretches. The Countess and the doctor were wise enough to go away when they saw how matters stood; only the maid of the Countess, the betrothed of Popoff, remained behind, weeping and praying over the body. Unexpectedly help came in time to save my life. One of the Cossacks had escaped the rebels and called a detachment of soldiers, who came in the nick of time. At the sight of the uniforms all fled. I was barely able to order the arrest of the Captain and Popoff's betrothed. The inspector and the Cossacks will bear witness that Lanin participated in the affair."

The Governor's aide here entered the apartment.

"The Governor," he said, very much embarrassed, "is momentarily engaged; he sends word, however, that he will be here directly."

Schelm was so furious he did not know what to do.

"Do you know who I am?" he threateningly asked the poor trembling officer.

"Yes, your Excellency."

"The Governor is himself responsible for his own conduct, but you must be ready to carry out every one of my orders."

"Yes, your Excellency."

"You will go instantly to the house occupied by the Countess Lanin. Arrest every person whom you may find there, even strangers. The matter is important. Do you hear?"

"But, your—"

Schelm sprang up from the chair.

"Are you still here? Do you wish to be court-martialed?"

The Adjutant went away in great terror.

"The Minister was not mistaken; the whole nest is full of rebellious creatures. The Governor is most to blame. They do not know me yet; I'll crush the vermin. Tell me, Palkin, what sort of a man is he, to send me such an answer?"

"You might compare him to a knight errant. I must have sent twenty denunciations against him to Petersburg or more. It is well known that he protects the exiles and believes all they say. He has overcome a few barbarous hordes of natives and now he thinks he can do what he chooses. I knew that he was a great favorite with the Czar and on that account I feared I could do nothing against him. But your arrival proves that my reports must at last have had their effect."

"Not exactly. The Minister of the Interior asked me, it is true, to be strict and even severe; but, on the other hand, the head of the gendarmes recommended to me to spare the Governor-General of Irkutsk as much as I could, as he was the most loyal man in all Russia. I came here with the intention of being very considerate with him if he should make no opposition, but you see—"

Schelm did not conclude, for at that moment the Governor appeared in the door. He must have heard the last words of the revisor, for he asked:

"Well, and what do you see, Mr. Schelm?"

The General was in full uniform, and his tall, soldierlike appearance, made quite an impression upon people like Schelm, who are haughty only with their inferiors. The revisor bowed and sat down slightly embarrassed. Military discipline required Palkin to remain standing in the Governor's presence, but the latter motioned him with the hand to omit the formality.

"Your wounds have not had time yet to heal, Colonel," he said, ironically. "Keep your seat therefore."

He seemed to evince a hidden control over the two scoundrels like a sovereign, for they looked at each other helplessly. Soon, however, Schelm remembered the supreme power with which he was for the time endowed, and at once his presence of mind and his impudence revived again.

"I see, General," he began, in a harsh tone, "the administration of East Siberia leaves much to wish for."

The Governor bit his lips, and his eye flashed, but he checked himself and asked, quietly:

"How do you ascertain that, Mr. Revisor? Perhaps you will have the kindness to point out any shortcomings."

This apparent resignation seemed to encourage Schelm to think that he had intimidated this great man.

"The nightly surprises and acts of violence against the representatives of the Czar's authorities are quite eloquent enough. A band of exiles dared attempt the life of the Colonel, here, and the Captain, whom you appointed, is also involved."

The General replied with studied courtesy and quiet:

"The events to which you allude are known to me; but I consider them in a different light. That act of violence was provoked by the abuse of which the Colonel was guilty."

"General, such operations—" broke in Palkin. But the Governor did not allow him to finish.

"Have you also been appointed revisor, that you dare interrupt your superior? When I shall cease speaking you may defend yourself."

"If your presence, Mr. Revisor, had not for the time suspended my authority I should have already have ordered an inquiry into the matter, but as I heard of it only at the time when your coming was announced, I postponed action."

Schelm was more and more convinced that the General was giving way, and this idea filled him with arrogant pride. He said curtly:

"What else?"

The General could not suppress an ironical smile, but he continued quietly:

"As to the Captain, of whose criminality I am not informed, as the Colonel keeps him a prisoner in his own house, I beg to observe that I promoted this man, who is unknown to me, at the special request of Colonel Palkin. Hence the responsibility would in the first place seem to rest with himself."

"We shall inquire into that hereafter," said Schelm.

The consciousness of seeing his vanity gratified made him very happy. He thought the Governor had humbled himself before him and was surrendering at discretion. He said, therefore, reproachfully:

"Besides this, General, I have several other complaints to make. The way in which you sent me word through your Adjutant—"

The General interrupted him with the most courteous smile on his lips:

"You seemed to be so much excited when I entered, and I was so much struck by the last words of your conversation, that I forgot to make my excuses. I was just engaged in giving orders about my departure."

"You mean to leave Irkutsk?" asked Schelm.

"I cannot understand."

"And yet the matter is very simple. I surrender the administration of East Siberia to the Civil Governor of Irkutsk and leave to-night for St. Petersburg."

Schelm sprang up.

"Are you making fun of me?"

"That is very far from me."

"Then I forbid you most solemnly to leave this place."

The General could not keep from laughing aloud.

"Your journey seems to have affected you badly, my dear Mr. Schelm. You will forbid me? You will order me? I pray, do you really think you have the right to give orders? Who do you think I am?"

Schelm could not at once recover his presence of mind; he was so used to see his inferiors tremble before him, that a really dignified manner was incomprehensible to him. Angrily he exclaimed:

"The Czar sends me here as revisor."

"In order to inspect East Siberia, and in this no one will interfere with you. But this does not by any means authorize you to interfere with General Count Moski and his personal affairs. If you reflect a moment you will see that you made a serious mistake!"

At these words Schelm's brow clouded over; he felt now dangerous the General with all his high-bred courtesy might be, and yet he saw no escape.

"Do you wish to declare war against me, General?" he asked.

"What can you mean? Do you represent any high power? I am accustomed to fight only independent powers."

"General! this boldness—"

"You insist upon treating me as a subordinate. You must know, then, Mr. Revisor, that you insult me if you peer into my private affairs, and I shall not fail to report this to his Majesty the Emperor, who must surely be ignorant of your being here. During my long service I have been commanded by sovereigns, princes of royal and imperial blood, Generals grown gray in wars, but never by spies!"

The Governor said all this as coolly and calmly as if he had been speaking of very ordinary topics. Schelm was clever enough to see that he was no match for such a man. Besides, the insulting epithet "spies" closed his lips, and he began to realize the limits within which he might use his privileges.

"Very well, General," he said, not without a certain feeling of respect, "the whole affair will be settled before a higher authority; but I hope you will not raise any difficulty against the duties I have to perform in Siberia?"

"How could I conceive such an idea?" replied the General. "I am very well aware of my own duty. You have been appointed revisor of Eastern Siberia. Very well, then! Revise, inquire, spy out all you wish to find! I have no right to interfere with your work. For the time being I have ceased to be Governor-General!"

"The Lanin family, whom you protect—"

"Let me tell you, once for all, that I protect no one, as I do not desire to persecute any one."

Schelm interrupted him, visibly excited, and with a wink to Palkin, he added:

"Not even the enemies of the Czar?"

The Colonel had pulled out a note-book and a pencil. The General noticed it with a smile of contempt.

"Not even the Czar's enemies! I insist upon it that no one shall escape due punishment, but I also do not persecute any one. Count Lanin was caught absent from his assigned hut. I have sentenced him for this to three months' imprisonment. These punishments, decreed by me, continue during my absence, and I insist upon their being faithfully carried out by my subalterns. You are, therefore, not at liberty to increase the Count's punishment, nor to reduce it. If I should not be here at the end of the time, you can then do as you like." Now Palkin cast an unmistakable glance at the revisor and put away again his note-book with the new entries he had made. Schelm replied:

"I have ordered the Countess to be arrested on the spot."

The Governor looked at him in astonishment.

"Arrested? You? Whom?"

"The Countess Lanin—here in Irkutsk—in her own house!"

"As to that, you ought to have informed me of your intentions," replied the General with an ironical smile. "I could have saved you some trouble. The Countess left for Petersburg three days ago."

"She has left? Who gave her leave?"

"I, on the strength of the imperial ukase!"

In spite of his usual self-control Palkin here started up, after having been a silent witness so so far, and cried madly:

"You dared that?"

The Governor measured him with a look of utter contempt, and said:

"You venture to use very bold language. You forget you are only at liberty to make notes!"

"And I shall not fail taking down your words, General," continued Palkin, still beside himself, "but this is too much. I shall at once send my report—"

"Oh! I doubt not."

Schelm trembled with subdued fury. He cried:

"I must have her pursued! This is open rebellion! Did you not know I was coming? Colonel Palkin, give at once the necessary orders and send a few gendarmes after her!"

"I doubt whether you will do anything in that way. The Countess has three days' advance and she travels with a passport signed by the Czar. You ought to save unnecessary expenditures. Fortunately we have no telegraphs yet in Siberia."

"Fortunately!" hissed Palkin, drawing forth his note-book.

"Yes, indeed! Fortunately!" repeated the Governor. "Put back your book, my dear gendarme. I am ready to confirm with my signature all I have said so far."

Schelm could not brook delay. He said to Palkin:

"I implore, Colonel, make haste to bring that woman back here! She must be brought back!"

"I told you your measures would be without result," said the Governor. "Besides, I have ordered all post-horses on the route to be reserved for my own use, so that I could first of all overtake her—and then I should certainly accompany her on her journey."

"And thus protect her against being arrested?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, we'll see how that will be looked at in Petersburg," Schelm exclaimed, perfectly beside himself.

"Yes, yes. And now I wish you good-by. My substitute will report to you, Mr. Revisor."

The Governor left them with slow, dignified steps. Palkin and Schelm looked at each other rather anxiously.

"That is our worst enemy," said Palkin at last. "All my denunciations avail nothing so long as he enjoys the Czar's favor. We must make haste to destroy Lanin and to prevent this woman from reaching Petersburg, or we are lost."

Schelm shook his head.

"I do not know why, but I have had bad presentiments and almost fear!"

"That is your way!" laughed Palkin, scornfully. "You always fear. You ought rather to remember that you have three months before you, during which you are almost omnipotent here."

"That is true, to be sure," said the revisor. Then he rang the bell and told the officials immediately to assemble all the civil and military authorities in the city.

Palkin rose to leave the room; the effort cost him excruciating pain.

"In life and in death we'll be loyal to each other, Palkin. Is it not so? I humbly acknowledge I have not acted handsomely, as far as you are concerned."

"In life and in death we'll stand by each other, Schelm. I leave you the husband and you leave me the wife!"

"We'll see!" murmured Schelm to himself.

Almost instantly the same official returned, announcing that all the authorities of Irkutsk had been assembled for an hour, awaiting the summons of his Excellency, Baron Schelm of Schelmenberg.

XXVII.

Highly delighted at this turn of affairs, Palkin returned home. He had succeeded in deceiving Schelm and yet made him his ally. He had feared nothing so much as to find the former chief a bitter enemy. He reflected on their relative position. Schelm was now his only superior, and he held him in subjection by means of the documents that compromised him so grievously. Suddenly Palkin remembered Helen. If she met the revisor and told him all, the most disastrous consequences would follow. She must be put out of the way. One moment he thought of going down into the cellar, where he kept her imprisoned, and of murdering her there. But upon trying the strength of his arms he found that he could not overcome the resistance even of a woman. Should he take a pistol to shoot the girl? But the explosion might be heard. Schelm might send for her—how could he explain her disappearance? After long meditation he came to the conclusion that there was only one way to prevent Schelm and Helen from meeting, and that was to let her escape. This depended on him alone, as he had kept the key, and could easily visit his prisoner without exciting attention. He disliked the idea of releasing a person who had been the cause of so much suffering to him, but Schelm was too dangerous.

Toward evening the gendarmes on duty were very much surprised when they received permission to go home. Palkin quickly got the cellar key and went down to Popoff's betrothed. He found her curled up in a corner like a wild beast. As soon as she saw Popoff's murderer her eyes began to burn with irrepressible hatred, and her generally very gentle features changed in a fearful manner.

"Poor child," said Palkin, with hypocritical compassion. "You must not judge us from appearances. We have many things to do from duty, over which we weep in our hearts. I deeply deplore poor Popoff's death. I reproach myself continually that I gave way to my wrath. I mean to atone for my wrong as far as I can. I therefore give you your freedom, poor child!"

She looked at him scornfully and shook her head. The Colonel wanted to explain to her his good intentions, and, seeing her mistrust, he went to the door, opened it wide and said:

"Go with God, and forgive me!"

She understood perfectly that he meant her to escape—why she could not divine. She feared a trap. But the solitude in the dark, damp cellar had been hard to bear; she felt that she could better defend herself in the open air, and thus she fled, as a bird escapes from its cage. She was no sooner out of reach than Palkin repented his good deed.

"Why don't you say, at least, I thank you?" he asked.

A loud, weird laugh was all that came back to him. She disappeared at a corner of the street. Then, to relieve himself of every possible suspicion, he tore off the staple of the lock, left the door standing open and then went to rest.

Only on the following morning did Helen's escape become generally known. The gendarmes had returned late and found the lock broken. Schelm scolded and blamed everybody. Palkin pulled out his hair, but as Helen could not be found the matter was soon forgotten. Palkin's whole wrath seemed now to be concentrated on the unlucky Captain. The proceedings against him were hurried on, and a fortnight after his arrest he appeared before the court-martial. There was no escape for the poor man. He could of course make many revelations of the Colonel's secret proceedings—his orders to watch Lanin and other irregularities—but all was of no avail. The court came to the conclusion that he had long cherished bloody hatred against his superior, and he was sentenced to receive 4000 blows with the knout—in other words, to death.

When the sentence was read to the unfortunate man he fainted away, and when he recovered afterward it appeared that he had lost his senses. Caroline wished to have one more interview with him, and received the necessary permission. But the Captain knew nothing; he continually asked for mercy. He besought her to intercede for him with the Governor, even with the Countess Lanin, of whose departure he knew nothing. She promised to try, not for his sake, but for her own sake, to avoid being known as the widow of a man who was knouted to death. Finally she went away in great haste without casting a glance at her husband or saying a word of tenderness. She at once went to work to petition everybody, but she met with nothing but deaf ears. The crime was too fearful. When she saw that all was in vain she swore a most horrible oath, full of hatred, against Count Lanin, the exiles all, but especially against Ina and Palkin.

Schelm was now the independent ruler of Eastern Siberia. His first order had been to arrest the Countess. As this could not be done, Lina and two servants who were found in her house were arrested. Thus began the new regime.

All the officials of Irkutsk had been, heart and soul, devoted to the Governor-General, and on that account already looked askant at Schelm. The local commandant, a gray-haired General, brave in the field, but timid in daily life, surrendered at once. Others, however, were not as submissive, nor as patient. Matters, in fact, became daily worse. Almost at the same time with the arrival of the revisor there appeared a well-organized and well-armed band of men who created a regular panic in a few days. The leader of this band had, in the short period of two months, known how to make himself a legendary hero, a second Proteus, who appeared everywhere and ever in a different form. Now people swore that he had been seen at twenty places at the same hour, and now that he was here or there, as he chose. They called him the "Czar of the Exiles." He was without mercy against the Government officials, and especially those who had shown themselves arbitrary or cruel in their treatment of exiles. The band surprised one colony after the other, always murdering the inspectors with great cruelty. The robbers had soon established a regular terrorism in the whole district, especially after they had actually taken a small town, killing all the garrison and securing a regimental safe with large sums of money. No one could travel without a considerable escort. Even the Government messengers and couriers were captured, the official dispatches broken open and examined, and then they were allowed to proceed on their way. These couriers especially told such fearful, grewsome stories that no one could sleep quietly at night. Reports came actually in now that several large tribes of Tunguses had risen in rebellion, re-enforcing these bands. Schelm was utterly helpless; for this was in April, when the general thaw had cut off nearly all communication.

One of Schelm's first measures had been to enforce and increase the severity of all laws concerning the exiles. This created great dissatisfaction, and ere long the colonists began to disappear, leaving no trace. Soon rumors came that it was no longer a band, but an admirably officered and perfectly well drilled military force that defied the Government. They had appeared about thirty versts from Irkutsk, and as the colonists generally joined them wherever they showed themselves, their number was estimated at 1000 men. Such a force, quite imposing for Siberia, disturbed Schelm very seriously. Schelm, a coward by nature, actually tried to persuade some colonists, who were still at their places, to inform these rebels that he would not molest them in any way if they would pass over into Manchooria. But he found no ready ears for his offers.

The rebels, so far from thinking of leaving Irkutsk, on the contrary only drew nearer to the city, and the monks of the convent of St. George affirmed that one day the leader of the band, a giant dressed in red, had flown by them at the head of a hundred horsemen and disappeared again in a moment. They maintained that they had seen his features quite distinctly. He was a man in his best years and in the full vigor of manhood. The horsemen had swept by like specters in an instant; one of them, to frighten them, had fired a carbine at a window in the convent, but the leader had reprimanded him in such a voice of thunder that they had heard every word:

"Keep your balls for the slaves of the Czar! Why waste them against the servants of God? These you may despise, but those you are bound to kill and to murder, because they do us harm."

In spite of his daily growing anxiety, in spite of the constant efforts of his cunning mind, Schelm did not cease to increase the cruelty of his treatment of the unfortunate exiles, so that the general discontent grew from day to day. He was specially furious, because his principal victim, Lanin, for whose sake he mainly made the enormous journey, had so far escaped him. The commandant of the prison in which he was enjoyed the Governor's full confidence and deserved it thoroughly. He had been summoned before the latter a few hours before his departure, and was expressly forbidden to interfere in the slightest with the penalties decreed against his prisoners. The Governor had his doubts about Count Lanin's guilt and wanted to secure him against further persecution during his absence. The commandant, knowing this, had solemnly promised him to watch over Lanin's person. Schelm tried various ways to induce him to leave Lanin in his hands. Then he attempted to persuade him to let Lanin escape, feeling sure that in such a case Lanin would soon furnish him with a new cause for arrest, but all in vain. The brave old man was not to be moved. Schelm had one more resource—he could depose the commandant. But he was appointed by the Governor-General and could therefore not be removed during his absence; besides the whole town knew him and honored him, and he had never given the slightest cause for complaint.

Finally, therefore, Schelm felt compelled to resort to his favorite means; he had to employ spies, spies even in prison. Vladimir's greatest pain had been the unavoidable contact with the other prisoners. Save two or three, whose crime was the same as his own, he was surrounded by thieves and murderers. These very naturally hated the man who stood so high above them and who, they knew, loathed their sight. Schelm's spies were instructed to fan this feeling of hatred and to increase it by a variety of vile and utterly false insinuations.

This was an easy task for them, under the circumstances, and soon all of Vladimir's fellow-prisoners had become bitter enemies of his.

But this did not suffice for Schelm. He sent another spy there to gain Vladimir's confidence and lead him gradually to make confessions that could be used to his destruction. Thus two months passed, during which Vladmir was cautious enough to be silent on all subjects that might have caused him trouble.

Schelm's impatience grew every day, and at last he resolved to take a decisive step. Schelm was brooding over his plan, which he felt confident would deliver his victim beyond redemption into his hands, when one day the courier brought letters from Petersburg, and among them one of special importance, which was handed to Schelm in Palkin's presence. It inclosed a letter for Count Lanin. The rule among Siberian exiles requires that every letter addressed to one of the colonists shall be opened and read by the head of the police or the chief of the gendarmes. As soon as Schelm had entered upon his duties at Irkutsk he had specially ordered that all such letters should be first brought to him. For two months no letters had come to Vladimir. Palkin did not know this, and was therefore much surprised when Schelm suddenly exclaimed triumphantly:

"At last a letter from the capital for Count Lanin."

Palkin did not share the joy of his ally; on the contrary, he was in a state of unusual excitement. He had long been sick in consequence of his fearful suffering under the knout, and had for some time been unable to follow the footsteps of his enemies. He did not even know what had become of that all-important receipt which was thought to be in his possession. Jana might possibly have taken it to Petersburg with her and mention it in the letter that had just been received. Now, if Schelm should open the letter and find that the gendarme had told him a falsehood he would make him pay dearly for it. Palkin thought of all this, full of anxiety, while Schelm was joyfully playing with the letter.

"What do you mean to do?" asked Palkin anxiously.

"You think, perhaps, I'll open the letter and read it?" asked Schelm scornfully. "I am not such a fool. The letter comes from his wife and no doubt contains nothing but tender caresses. I do not want to excite his suspicion. The law, to be sure, is on my side, but nowadays the letters are generally handed over to the exiles unopened. Besides, I shall be able to get the letter whenever I may want it. No, no! At last the long hoped for opportunity presents itself and I shall not let it escape me!"

Palkin breathed freely. That danger at least was warded off. Schelm sent for his spy and told Palkin that he would go to the prison himself the same evening.

Here a new danger appeared. If Schelm should ever get possession of the letters he might find out everything. At one glance Palkin saw how matters stood, and as promptly he came to a decision. He must warn Vladimir against Schelm's schemes and advise him to destroy his wife's letter as soon as he had read it. Like Schelm, he also had his spy in the prison, and as soon as he reached the place he sent for this man.

The prisoners were walking about, according to the rules of the prison, in the yard, and Vladimir suddenly noticed that some one slipped a letter stealthily into his hand. He looked up and noticed that Schelm's spy, whom he considered a comrade, made signs to him. Surprised, but unsuspecting, he went aside from the others into a corner, covered his eyes with his hand so as not to betray himself, and could hardly suppress a cry of joy when he recognized Jana's handwriting.

To be continued next Sunday.

PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT.

WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR has employed artists at an expense of something like $10,000 to illustrate one copy of each of his novels. These copies form a private edition de luxe, each one being labeled "My Personal Copy," and occupying a prominent place in his library. Verily, few can even thus indulge in the embellishment of their own literature.

The Queen Dowager of Portugal on one occasion took home from Paris 1000 pairs of shoes. Subsequently she ordered no less than seventy dresses from Worth, to be delivered together, which on their way home were lost at sea. Her Majesty, no way concerned, sent word to supply seventy duplicates, and these reached Lisbon safely.

Master Gussie Easterly is said to be the youngest of this year's crop of boy-preachers. He is five years old and conducts revival exercises, making touching prayers and preaching eloquent sermons. He cannot read, but lately opened the Bible upside down at Proverbs and announced his text, "Suffer little children."

Lloyd George, a new member of the English House of Commons, is the son of a village cobbler. He was educated by his uncle, a self-made man, and at the age of fifteen took to out door preaching, which has made him quite an orator.

Miss Minnie Hauk, the American prima donna, has purchased the Ville Friebschen, near Lucerne, where Richard Wagner lived for several years and where he wrote "Gotterdammerung," the "Meistersinger" and "Siegfried."

The famous French author, Daudet, is in his forty-ninth year. Though not wealthy, he has a modest fortune, and his house is a meeting place for a delightful people. Personally the great novelist is extremely attractive.

A Swiss cobbler named Bernaserni has returned to his native canton the possessor of millions which he made as a dealer in leather and hides in the Argentine Republic, where he spent sixteen years.

A. T. Abernethy, Professor of Modern Languages in Rutherford College, North Carolina, is only 18 years old. He is probably the youngest teacher in the country to bear the title of professor.

The Czar of Russia is said to be clever at tearing a pack of cards to pieces, fifty-two cards at a time. Dixey, the actor, can also do this, but he can't dodge a bomb like the Czar.

Anna C. Brackett, who seems to know, says that the side-saddle was introduced in England by Anna of Bohemia, who was deformed and who married Richard II.

Steve Brodie, the bridge jumper, is famous again. He has been beating his wife to get his name into the papers and himself into the divorce courts.

Mrs. Catharine Sharp of Philadelphia is reliably vouched for as being 112 years old and of well-preserved faculties.

THE HOME OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT.

The Scene of Some of the Most Delightful Social Affairs.

Where One Is Always Sure to Have a Pleasant Time—Mrs. Morton's Winning Ways. Tact of the Senate's Presiding Officer.

ONE evening during the winter a group of foreigners, members of the diplomatic corps in Washington, happened together, as is quite the custom, over their coffee and cigars after dinner at the Metropolitan Club. They were talking of the various social affairs of the week. They were conversing in French, which is the common tongue for all, whether Russian, Spanish, German or Italian. A reception at the house of Vice-President Morton had taken place the evening before, which included the diplomatic corps among the invited guests, and the names of the host and hostess came up in the course of the conversation.

"Ah! there is the place where one is always sure to have pleasure," said one.

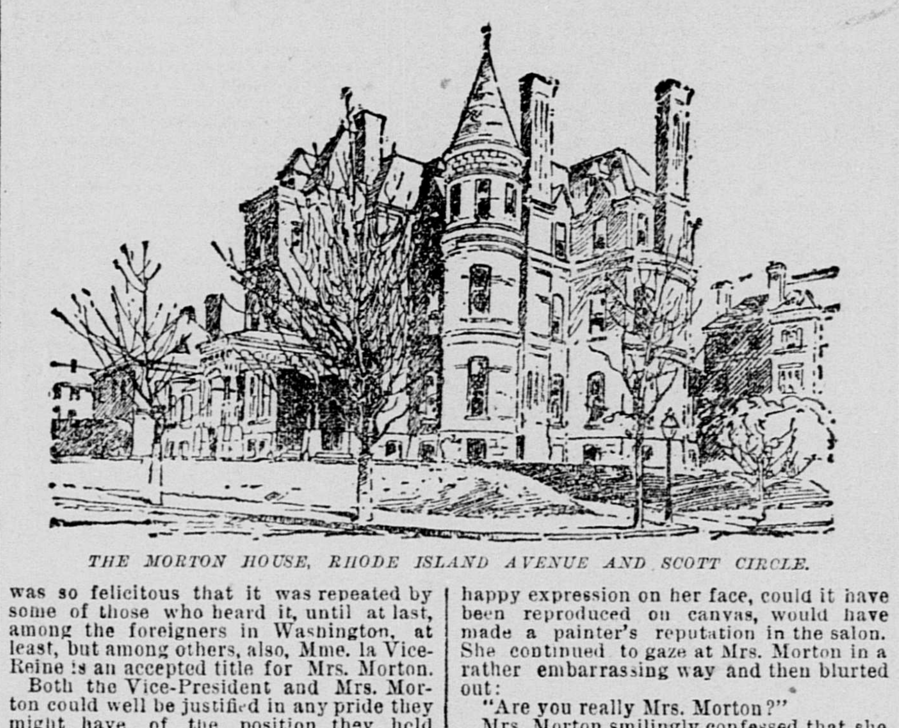
"Ou cela?" asked another who had not heard; "where is that?"

"Chez le Vice-President."

"Oh! bien, oui. Et voila une vraie 'grande dame,' Mme. la Vice-Presidentesse," he added, laughing pleasantly at the title he had manufactured for Mrs. Morton.

"Dites plutot, Mme. la Vice-Reine!" rejoined the first speaker, and the others gallantly applauded the happy expression, and declared that it eminently fitted the queenly woman to whom it was applied.

It was only a pleasant compliment from one of her many guests, but it illustrates very aptly the place in the feelings of all in Washington which Mrs. Morton has created for herself by her pleasant ways and by the infinite tact she has in making strangers feel welcome. The remark of the foreigner



THE MORTON HOUSE, RHODE ISLAND AVENUE AND SCOTT CIRCLE.

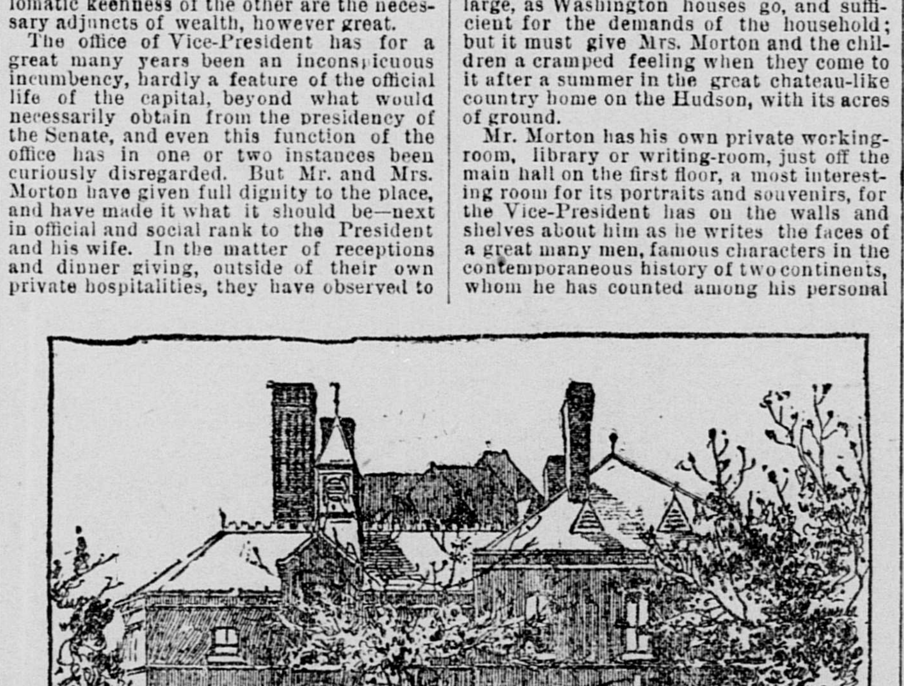
was so felicitous that it was repeated by some of those who heard it, until at last, among the foreigners in Washington, at least, but among others, also, Mme. la Vice-Reine is an accepted title for Mrs. Morton.

Both the Vice-President and Mrs. Morton could well be justified in any pride they might have of the position they held before the people. It seems a very superfluous thing to make mention of this at all. It was what should be expected from any people of refinement and wealth. More than that, Mr. and Mrs. Morton have had

A POSITION OF THEIR OWN

In Washington, as in New York and other cities, for many years. They have had brilliant winters here before, when their temporary home was as noted for its hospitality as the present semi-official home. It was very generally known beforehand when Mr. Morton was elected that their advent would be a marked source of added pleasure in the life of the capital. But at the same time their present position is different in many respects from that they formerly occupied as private residents of the city, and its official character imposed many duties and obligations, or rather they resumed these duties in view of the position, which have proved their social power even more than did their former distinguished position. It can be said without a suspicion of invidious comparison that they have recreated the dignity of their official position here in like manner as they gave a new meaning to the title of American Minister to France some few years ago. If it has been their good fortune to have the wealth with which to do both it has also been a good fortune for the country and for all with whom they came in contact. But neither the gracious manner and rare savoir faire of one nor the quiet dignity and diplomatic keenness of the other are the necessary adjuncts of wealth, however great.

The office of Vice-President has for a great many years been an inconspicuous incumbency, hardly a feature of the official life of the capital, beyond what would necessarily obtain from the presidency of the Senate, and even this function of the office has in one or two instances been curiously disregarded. But Mr. and Mrs. Morton have given full dignity to the place, and have made it what it should be—next in official and social rank to the President and his wife. In the matter of receptions and dinner giving, outside of their own private hospitalities, they have observed to



THE MORTON STABLES.

the full every obligation as strictly as it is observed at the White House—a very welcome innovation which has contributed pleasure to the social life of the capital to a marked degree.

THE FIRST FORMAL DINNER

Of the season at the White House was given to the Vice-President and Mrs. Morton. In return, shortly after, the first dinner, followed by a reception, which the Vice-President and Mrs. Morton gave, the first gathering of any sort in their new home, was given to President and Mrs. Harrison. Then followed throughout the season, in proper succession of precedence, formal dinners to the Cabinet, the Justices of the Supreme Court, and then to the Senators, as the limits of a private house would permit. There was added to these affairs a social feature which could not be included in the similar dinners at the White House. Some hundred or more invitations were sent out at the time of each dinner to unofficial people in the social world, asking them to come after 9 to meet the guests of the evening. In this way some of the most delightful affairs of the year have been the Vice-President's after-dinner card receptions.

In addition to these formal affairs Mrs. Morton's afternoons at home, of as purely private a nature as would be the home receptions of the wife of any member of the Cabinet or Senator, became at once, as if by common consent, almost as officially public as the Saturday afternoons at the White House. Mrs. Morton received on Wednesdays, which is the regular day for the wives of the members of the Cabinet. On every one of these days during the winter, in addition to her own personal friends, the callers upon Mrs. Morton have included scores of strangers, visitors from all parts of the country in Washington, who wished to "pay their respects" to her in quite as Democratic a manner as is the custom of this free and equal country in regard to the wife of the President.

THE HOME

Is so arranged that there are three drawing-rooms and the great new dining-room en suite, running from one end quite through to the other end of the house. When the connecting wide doors are all thrown open a remarkably spacious apartment for receptions is afforded, unusual in any private house of the size. It is Mrs. Morton's custom to receive standing, near the door of the first drawing-room. The Vice-President is always with her at the receptions, receiving by her side part of the time and also meeting the visitors throughout the three rooms. Mrs. Morton does not leave her place during the afternoon. Visitors enter the front door, cross the open hall to the first drawing-room on the right, leave their cards on the great salver, and are announced by the liveried servant as they enter the drawing-room. Mrs. Morton never misses the name of an approaching visitor, no matter how busily engaged she may be in conversation with those already presented, and in this way she makes utter strangers feel the pleasure of personal welcome at the very threshold. She has a very honest, cordial grasp of the hand for each one, a passing word for those whom she knows, and a pleasant greeting of some kind for those whom she has never seen before, and then all alike are free to go about the rooms, meeting friends or admiring the artistic treasures of the house, or to find a bountifully spread table and servants to offer them attention in the great dining-room.

An incident which occurred at one of these Wednesday afternoons will illustrate the nature of some of the calls made. It was quite at the end of the afternoon, the majority of the visitors had gone away and the head butler was already thinking of closing the doors of the dining-room in order to make ready for the family dinner. It was so late that no visitors had come in for some little time and the few present were saying good-by and passing out. Suddenly the servant announced Mrs. —— and Miss —— from Ohio. Mrs. Morton, who had been resting a bit after the long afternoon with the few familiar friends who were left, arose to greet the newcomers. A very motherly looking country-woman, or at least a woman evidently from some small, out-of-the-way place, dressed in old-fashioned black, with spectacles and a reticule, came in, followed by a younger woman of uncertain age and equally simple attire. They were both very much confused, perhaps by the to them unusual ceremony of their introduction, perhaps by the unaccustomed richness of their surroundings; probably both. The younger woman stood awkwardly behind at the threshold of the room. The other advanced falteringly,

GAZED AT MRS. MORTON

And opened her mouth, but the words failed to come out.

One can easily be gallant enough to feel that it was admiration of the beautiful woman before her which kept back whatever she may have been about to say. Mrs. Morton saw her confusion, and with infinite tact stepped toward her, holding out her hand, and greeted her by name. A sigh of relief escaped the woman's lips, and the happy expression on her face, could it have been reproduced on canvas, would have made a painter's reputation in the salon. She continued to gaze at Mrs. Morton in a rather embarrassing way and then blurted out:

"Are you really Mrs. Morton?"

Mrs. Morton smilingly confessed that she was.

"Well, I and my daugher here (a nod and a smile from Mrs. Morton to the daughter) come from ——, O., to see my boy, who is in the Pension Department. We've seen a good many sights, and have been to the President's, but before I went home, I told my daughter I have heard so much about you that I wanted to see you."

A little pause followed this frank confession, for the number of things one can say at such a time are limited. Before Mrs. Morton could say anything further, the woman added: "And you are really beautiful, Mrs. Morton, very beautiful."

It was a very honest compliment—to which there was no response, however. Mrs. Morton only smiled and acknowledged it with a slight bow of the head, and then asked them to be welcome in the other rooms, where they would find refreshments.

The house which Mr. and Mrs. Morton occupy is one that was built by Mr. Graham Bell several years ago, although it has been greatly enlarged and entirely reconstructed inside by the present owners. It fronts upon Scott circle, although the porte cochere and entrance is upon Rhode Island avenue. The house and stable together occupy the whole triangular plot of land formed by the intersection of N street, Fifteenth street and Rhode Island avenue. In this way it is one of the few entirely detached residences in the city. It is quite large, as Washington houses go, and sufficient for the demands of the household; but it must give Mrs. Morton and the children a cramped feeling when they come to it after a summer in the great chateau-like country home on the Hudson, with its acres of ground.

Mr. Morton has his own private working-room, library or writing-room, just off the main hall on the first floor, a most interesting room for its portraits and souvenirs, for the Vice-President has on the walls and shelves about him as he writes the faces of a great many men, famous characters in the contemporaneous history of two continents, whom he has counted among his personal friends, and other events of national interest in which he has been an actor. In this room Mr. Morton spends the greater part of each morning with his secretary, attending to his private correspondence and affairs. He is an early riser always, no matter what may be the late-hour requirements of the previous evening, and he has much of his duty already accomplished at a time when other busy men are beginning theirs. About 11 o'clock in the morning he

DRIVES TO THE SENATE,

Where he is held until 4, 5 or 6, as the case may be, attending to the public duties of his office. In these public duties the Vice-President has gained for himself the same measure of esteem and admiration as that which belongs to himself and his wife outside. There has not been a presiding officer over the higher body of Congress in years who has won the same mingled popularity and respect. As President of the Senate he is keen, quick thinking and quick acting. He has a rare knowledge of men and a rare knowledge of business methods, a business-like promptness in putting things through—except speeches, over which he has no control—and with it all a quiet dignity and gentleness of manner which give a pleasure to his occupancy of the chair.

In all the many stories of his life which have been told the strong claims he has upon New England for a home have not been fully given. It is known that he was born in Shoreham, Vt., and that his father was an Orthodox minister. But, as a closing word, it will interest New England readers to know that, although the Vice-President himself was born in Vermont, the family were, and had been for over two centuries, residents of Plymouth County, and belonged to the Puritans of the Puritans. The originator of the family in this country was a Pilgrim, who came over in the second ship, the Anne, two years after the Mayflower. One of the first Mortons of this family was the long-time Secretary of Plymouth colony, Nathaniel Morton, whose personal record of the events of those troublous times is the chief source for Pilgrim history.

The first family was large, and after a few years some of the brothers moved along the shore to Duxbury, which, with Miles Standish and others, they helped to establish. Among the descendants of these, one branch went "away down in Maine," where the name is still found, while another went inland into Plymouth County, and took up lands in the town of Middleboro. Mr. Morton's father himself lived here at one time. He afterward lived and preached in Winchenden before going to Shoreham.—Marlborough in Boston Herald.

WITH PARISIAN COMMUNISTS.

Alphonse Daudet Vividly Pictures the Battle of Pere-Lachaise.

The Brave Old Chief and His Terrible Fate. Bombardment of Paris From the Cemetery—Orgie of the Artillerymen.

Written for THE SUNDAY CALL.

THE watchman burst out laughingly as he was spoken to in the Cemetery Pere-Lachaise: "A battle here? But there never was a battle. It was an invention of the newspapers. This is exactly what did take place: On the evening of the 22d, which was Sunday, thirty Communist artillerymen arrived with a battery of seven-pounders and a new-fangled mitrailleuse. They took position on the high ground of the cemetery, and, as I have that section under my charge, it was I who received them. Their mitrailleuse was at that corner of the alley, near my watch-box; their cannon a little lower down, upon that terrace. On their arrival they obliged me to open several chapels for them. I thought they would break everything, steal everything in them; but their chief restored order, and, placing himself in their midst, made this short speech: 'The first scoundrel who touches anything shall be shot! Dismiss!' He was a white-headed old fellow with Crimean and Italian medals, and had an air that was not at all indulgent. His men obeyed him, and I will do them the justice to say that they took nothing from the tombs, not even the Duc de Morny's crucifix, which alone is worth nearly 2000 francs.

"They were, nevertheless, a most villainous lot, those Communist artillerymen—cannoneers of the moment, who cared for nothing but their pay. How they carried on in the cemetery! They threw themselves down pell-mell in the vaults, in Morny's, in Favronne's—that beautiful Favronne tomb in which the Emperor's nurse is buried. They put their wine to cool in the Champeaux vault, which contains a fountain. And all night they drank—they guzzled. Oh! I tell you our dead heard some queer talk.

THE BOMBARDMENT.

"All the same, despite their awkwardness, those bandits did much damage to Paris—their position was such a good one. From time to time an order reached them:

"'Fire upon the Louvre—fire upon the Palais Royal!'

"Then the old chief pointed the pieces, and the petroleum bombs flew toward the city. What was taking place below none of us exactly knew. We heard the reports of musketry coming nearer little by little, but that did not disturb the Communists. With the cross-fire of Chaumont, of Montmartre, of Pere-Lachaise, it did not seem possible to them that the Versailles people could advance. What undeceived them was the first bomb which the marines sent us on arriving at the rising ground of Montmartre—so little had they expected it.

"I was in the midst of them, leaning against Morny's tomb, about to smoke my pipe. On hearing the bomb coming I had barely time to throw myself upon the ground. At first our cannoneers thought it an error in aiming, or some colleague who had become intoxicated. But it was no such thing. In five minutes Montmartre burst out again, and another joker reached us, as well aimed as the first. Instantly my gay birds quitted their cannon and mitrailleuse and ran off as fast as their legs could carry them. The cemetery was not big enough for them. They cried out:

"'We are betrayed! we are betrayed!'

"The old chief, left alone under the hail of bombs, rushed about like a brave devil in the midst of his battery and wept with rage to see that his cannoneers had abandoned it.

A MEMORABLE PAY NIGHT.

"However, later in the evening some of them returned to him—at the pay hour. See, Monsieur, look at my watch-box. It still bears the names of those who came to be paid that night. The old chief called them out and wrote them down:

"'Sidaine—present; Choudeyras—present; Billet, Vollori—'

"As you see, only four or five came back; but they had women with them. Ah! I shall never forget that pay-night. Below, Paris was in flames—the Hotel de Ville, the arsenal, the store-houses. In Pere-Lachaise we could see as plainly as in broad day. The Communists strove again to man their guns, but they were not sufficiently numerous, and, besides, they were afraid of Montmartre. Then they entered a tomb and fell to drinking and singing. The old chief was seated between those two tall stone figures which are at the door of the Favronne vault. He gazed at Paris burning with a terrible air. One might say that he thought it would be his last night.

"From that moment I cannot say with certainty what happened. I went to my house, that little hut you see down there, half-hidden among the branches. I was greatly fatigued. I threw myself upon my bed with my clothes on, keeping my lamp lighted, as on a stormy night. Suddenly somebody knocked roughly at the door. My wife ran to open it, all in a tremble. We thought we should again see the Communists. The marines were there—a commander, ensigns, a surgeon. They said to me:

"'Get up and make us some coffee.'

A DEADLY SEARCH.

"I arose, I made their coffee. I heard in the cemetery a murmur, a confused movement, as if all the dead had awakened for the last judgment. The officers drank very quickly, standing the while, then they led me out with them. The cemetery was full of soldiers, of marines. They put me at the head of a squad and we began to search Pere-Lachaise tomb by tomb. From time to time the soldiers, seeing the leaves move, fired down an alley, upon a bust, into a grating. Here and there they discovered some unfortunate wretch hidden away in a corner of a chapel. His business was soon settled. This is what had happened to my artillerymen. I found them all lying in a pile before my watch-box, with the medal-covered old chief on top. It was not a pleasant sight at the cold dawn of day.

"But what made the deepest impression on me was a long file of National Guards led at that moment from the prison of La Roquette, where they had passed the night. They ascended the main alley slowly, like a funeral procession. We heard not a word, not a complaint—those unfortunates were so worn out, so overcome. There were some among them who slept as they marched, and the thought that they were on their way to death did not waken them. They were taken to the extremity of the cemetery and the firing began. They numbered a hundred and forty-seven. You can imagine that they were disposed of in short order. This is what is called the battle of Pere-Lachaise."

Here the watchman, perceiving his chief, quitted me hastily, and I remained alone, gazing at the names of the last pay-list written upon his watch-box by the light of burning Paris. I called up that night of May, disturbed by bombs, red with blood and with flames, this great deserted cemetery illuminated like a city in festivity, the cannon abandoned in the midst of the cross-paths, all around the open vaults, the orgie in the tombs, and, near by, in this confusion of domes, of columns, of stone images which the gambols of the flames vivified, the bust of Balzac, with its high forehead and large eyes, looking on.

ALPHONSE DAUDET.

A PUNCHEON.

The Latest Fad Which Promises to Be Fashionable.

DID you ever attend a puncheon? It is a new fad, which promises to become fashionable. It is of East Indian origin, like the tiffin, which is also an entertainment new to New Yorkers. As a lucheon is to eat lunch, so a puncheon is to drink punch. One advantage of a puncheon over a luncheon is that ladies boarding, living in hotels or small apartments can entertain many more than at a luncheon, and with much less trouble. As few dishes as possible are used, and everything is served a la fourchette.

As a puncheon is a very informal affair, the hostess simply sends her visiting card, with the word "puncheon" in the corner. From twelve to sixteen is the most desirable number of guests, and 2 o'clock the chosen hour. The guests assemble, the shades are drawn down, lamps, candles and fairy lights abound. Tiny tables are set about the room. The Japanese teapoys are much used for this purpose, or small tables with ordinary pine tops. A snowy white napkin covers each table, and on each are four plates, on which lies an orange, or rather an orange skin, for the pulp has been removed, and the oranges do duty as cups in which the punch is served. This does away with the use of glasses. The orange skins are cut in two, and one of the portions, which forms a lid or cover for the other, has a yellow ribbon run through the top, through which are thrust three straws.

After a half-hour's conversation or a little music, the hostess draws the tables in front of her guests, one table being assigned to every four guests. She then serves the punch in the orange skins herself. It is poured from a long glass tankard, with a bouquet of mint floating in the mouth of the tankard.

The punch is made of the juice from the pulp of the oranges, the juice of lemons, a little chartreuse, cold tea and Jamaica rum, and it is delicious. The maid follows the hostess with two dishes of sandwiches, some made of Roquefort cheese, some of pate de fois gras. A cup of iced consomme, if it be a warm day, or hot, if it be a cold day, is also handed each guest. Later comes orange ice, served also in orange skins, or sometimes in lemon skins. Fancy cakes are served with it.

These puncheons are very enjoyable. They serve to introduce congenial people and are but little trouble to give. Gentlemen may be allowed to drop in, but they are expected to assist the hostess in serving her guests rather than to consider themselves guests. The tiffin is similar, except that tea instead of punch is served.

A SCARLET DINNER.

Pretty Effects by a Combination of Shades of Red.

IT is a great mistake to attempt too much in serving a dinner. Those banquets that give the most pleasure are not the ones with long waits between dishes, and with so much variety that the palate becomes satiated before the meal is half through. The true epicure prefers his half a dozen oysters, or his bit of melon; then a dish of hot, strong, highly seasoned soup; then two or three entrees of entirely different characteristics; a rare but not raw roast; a dainty salad, and a dessert of one dish. Sometimes a baked fish may take the place of the roast. Many do not serve a roast at all if they have a fish served. They follow that by two or three entrees and consider it sufficient.

A dinner comprising more than eight covers is an awkward affair. For pure enjoyment nothing can exceed the pleasure to be derived from inviting your well-selected eight people often enough so that they will become thoroughly at home with one another. If you have one friend who is a good and interminable talker be sure and have him on hand at every dinner. It will relieve you of a wonderful burden of responsibility. If you are fortunate enough to have a highly polished square mahogany table I can think of no better motif for the decorations and service than the richly varying scarlets and sharp outlines of carnation pinks. There is a Royal Worcester ware, known as "old ivory," that comes in plain shapes, satin-surfaced and with a tiny thread of gold outlining the edge. It has a most elegant and aristocratic effect. True the plates are $20 a dozen, the soup-tureen is $18 and the covered dishes range from $8.50 upward; but if one collects piecemeal he will in time have as rich a service as it is possible to have, one that neither time nor fashion can relegate to the past.

At each of the two corners diagonally opposite to each other place a tall narrow-necked twisted flagon of Royal Worcester or any creamy porcelain. In these put a dozen scarlet pinks, cut with long stems, plenty of spiky bluish leaves and soft gray buds. Then take a long piece of Chinese crepe of the shade known as "Sultan," it is a red that is most common in pinks, neither scarlet nor crimson, but partaking of both. Lay this in loose serpentine folds across the table from flagon to flagon. Take a whole piece of No. 12 satin ribbon known as 124, gather into loose bunches eight bouquets of pinks, four in the shade of the crepe and four in the shade of the ribbon. Tie these at intervals of two yards along the ribbon, without cutting it, however; then lay the bunches irregularly along the serpentines of the crepe, massing the ribbon between with careless grace.

Do not use fairy lamps for a dinner of this kind. They do not give enough light to do any real good. Two tall piano lamps in two corners of the room, a bank of fifty scarlet candles on the buffet, another bank of at least fifty on the mantel-shelf, if you have one. These will give you light enough if your dining-room is not large. If, however, the room is large, then more lamps must be brought into requisition, or gas-jets employed with soft pink shades made of surah silk laid over common white globes.

On the buffet a Royal Worcester punch-bowl may be filled to heaping with the two tones of red carnations used on the table, and a similar grouping placed on the mantel-shelf. The beautiful effects of these flowers is greatly enhanced by the liberal use of the long, spiky leaves and grayish-blue buds.

The soup should be a bluish-green St. Germaine or puree of sorrel.

The salad for such a dinner should be made of lobster, served with mayonnaise dressing and garnished with the scarlet claws of the lobster.

The fish should be salmon, served with a sauce tartare or a la Hollandaise.

Croquettes or rissoles, cranberry jelly, chickens or squabs fricasseed with a white sauce and garnished with a few deep-tinted pinks; brains with tomato sauce, broiled mushrooms with white sauce; macaroni au gratin, stuffed olives, white asparagus, summer squash, stewed celery, green corn—any of these dishes are available.

A lady who has dined at many great tables made the remark recently that at one Cincinnati table at which she was a guest fourteen knives and forks were spread at each cover on the polished mahogany, to avoid the confusion of frequent change. How ridiculous to be greeted with such a spread when one sinks into his chair and begins to hunt for his soup-spoon! Quiet servants will never be disagreeably noisy; and I think almost every one will admit that the fewer implements there are on the table the better is the general effect. Even the menu card is dispensed with nowadays, and only the name card and boutonniere are left.

At a recent dinner given at a house noted for its lavish and exquisite entertainments, carnation pinks were employed, but they were so mingled with yellowish green oats and ribbon grasses that half their charm was lost. If people would only learn to use one kind of flower at a time it would be a great stride in the right direction.

If carnations are not available any of the following flowers may be used with the appropriate crepes and ribbons:

Pomegranates with crepe and ribbon in two shades of scarlet, cardinal bouvardias, scarlet cactus or cardinal azaleas. Red is such a trying color that it is better to avoid using it at all, unless one can get at the scarlets and yellowish reds.

Jacqueminots and all bluish reds produce a most unpleasant decorative effect in the gaslight. EMELIE TRACY Y. SWETT.

SOMETHING TO LAUGH AT.

SMITH (in a tender mood)—Do you believe, Miss de Vere, that "love laughs at locksmiths?"

Miss de Vere (in a frigid mood)—I think if Love were here to-night he would laugh at Smith's locks.—From Light.

* * *

Merritt—Do you drink a cocktail before dinner now?

Younghusband—No. Since I've been married my wife keeps me waiting so long for my dinner that there's no necessity to whet my appetite.

* * *

A brooklet and a pretty maid o'er mossy stones went tripping,
And then the pretty maid said, "I'm awful 'fraid of slipping."
The saucy brooklet laughed aloud as it ran o'er a bowlder,
And whispered, "She'd surely slipped if he'd been here to hold her."
—W. A. Ketchum, in the Century.

* * *

Bacon—A man never steals anything but he lives to regret it.

Egbert—You're wrong there, my boy. Didn't you ever steal a kiss from your girl in your younger days?

"Yes, old man, I did. But didn't I marry the girl?"—Yonkers Statesman.

* * *

A Strong Probability.—Teacher—And Adam and Eve could not go back to the garden because an angel; holding a flaming sword was at the gate.

Billy Snodgrass—Why didn't they jump the fence? If I'd been there—

Tom Fuller—What 're you talking about? 'Sposin' 't was barb wire?—Puck.

* * *

A Female Doctor in a Hurry.—Excited messenger—Mrs. Sawbones, come quick! A man has fallen from the roof of his house and is bleeding to death.

"All right. I'll be there as soon as I've got on my new dress and have done up my hair. Let me see; hadn't I better wear my dark-blue dress, or that light violet-colored one? The blue dress is more becoming to my complexion, but the other is so stylish."—Texas Siftings.

ST. JACOBS OIL
CURES PERMANENTLY
SPRAINS and STRAINS.
Athletes Praise it Highly.
656 Minna St., San Francisco, Cal., May 8, 1887.
Some time ago, while a member of the Olympic Athletic Club, I sprained my knee severely and suffered agony, but was speedily and completely cured by St. Jacobs Oil. JOHN GARBUTT.
Jumped from Engine.
609 S. 17th St., Omaha, Neb., Sept. 22, 1888.
I jumped from an engine in collision, and strained my ankle very badly. I used canes for weeks. St. Jacobs Oil completely cured me. G. ROEDER.
AT DRUGGISTS AND DEALERS.
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