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CZAR AND GRAND DUKES.

THE AUTOCRAT OF RUSSIA AND HIS TWO BROTHERS.

A Patriotic Tyrant—The Grand Duke Vladimir and the Bachelor Duke Alexis—Men Whose Names May Shine in Bloody Annals—The Czar at Home.

The eyes of all the world are turned on Russia. The strange, strong, silent man who is absolute dictator over 100,000,000 of people now holds the destinies of Europe for war or peace in his grasp. Not a move will be made on the chessboard of European politics that is not dictated by fear of the tremendous power of the Russian empire. Europe stands trembling on the verge of war, and the one thing that prevents the outbreak of hostilities is doubt as to the ulterior purposes of the Czar of Russia.

Alexander III is intensely patriotic. He regrets to find the influence of the west still so potent on many points in a country which, with its civilization and progress, could well stand alone. He does not see why cultivated Russians should not speak their own language habitually, and insist on its being substituted for French at court.

He takes a lively interest in his navy, and travels in his dominions as much and as freely as the knife and the dynamite of the nihilists will allow him. With the imperial family he starts for Denmark on his new yacht, the Polar Star, constructed by Russian builders with Russian materials. It is a magnificently appointed vessel, measuring 346 feet by 46, and its average speed is 18 knots an hour. It is lighted by electricity; the dining saloon can seat 90 guests; a long passage carpeted in red leads to the chapel, in which is a superb iconostase, or sanctuary for the holy images, without which no good orthodox Christian ever thinks his habitation complete. The czar is a devout but not a bigoted man, and those who have had the privilege of seeing him when he can relax the tension of his official life in Russia with the horrible dread of occult dangers incessantly threatening him and those dear to him, can assert honestly that there is no kinder or more amiable man than Alexander III.

The Grand Dukes Vladimir and Alexis are both brothers of the emperor. Vladimir is the elder of the two. If not quite so tall as his brothers, he is yet a well grown man and has a fine figure, the gentle expression of mouth and eyes common to strong characters, and bodily force, which are essentially the distinctive features of the splendidly framed race of the Romanoffs. With Prince Vladimir great energy is tempered by equally great refinement. He is the most cultured and artistic of the whole family. A soldier who has proved what he could do in his profession, he is still fond of literature, loves music, has a taste for collecting curios, antiquities, and works of art, miniatures and ivories, old fans and engravings, and pursues his researches himself with the gusto of a connoisseur in the dingiest bric-a-brac shops of all the cities he visits. He is president of the Academy of Fine Arts of St. Petersburg; takes an active interest in the intellectual movement of the capital; deserving literary men and artists find in him an intelligent patron and a generous protector, all the more so that there is something in the grand duke's nature secretly akin to theirs. He has the gift of assimilating himself readily to almost every situation in which he may happen to find himself, while remaining ever a perfect grand seigneur.

The second brother of the czar, Alexis, is one of the handsomest men in Russia. He has been compared to the Emperor Nicholas, of whom it was said that he realized the ideal of a demi-god; and some find a likeness in him to Jean de Reake, the fashionable Hungarian tenor. He is great admiral of the Russian fleet. He is unmarried, and will in all likelihood always remain so. This is the more strange that his manner and disposition do not seem to imply eternal celibacy; but probably his resolution to remain single dates from an early love episode that left an indelible impression. The empress, his mother, had two beautiful maids of honor; one, Mile de Hauke, was much admired by the Prince of Hesse, brother of the empress and aide de camp to the czar, who, disregarding the strong displeasure of all his relatives, married the young girl organically. Before the excitement caused by his conduct had subsided the emperor was informed that his son Alexis had fallen madly in love with the other maid of honor. Strong measures were resorted to. The young lady was sent away from court and her lover was ordered off on a vessel round the world. There was nothing left for the sailor but to obey orders, and his romance was thus cut short. It was then that he determined never to marry, and he has kept his word.

Yet the Grand Duke Alexis is neither a hermit nor misanthrope. He seems to enjoy life. He is fond of the society of ladies and of boys vivants.

The grand dukes are on excellent terms with the emperor. Alexander is, in the finest acceptance of the term, a family man; whenever he can enjoy home life, he does only at Ferdensborg, in Denmark, he is perfectly happy. No one knows, probably no one can guess, what he thinks, what he intends to do, what he will do. The most perspicacious of foreign diplomats at his court can only

conjecture vaguely; he has no certainty. The czar is reticent, silent, self contained; he shows no preference for any one; loves to be with the empress better than with all others; he is seriously affected by any illness or misfortune happening to his children; he discounts extravagance in his courtiers; will not hear of immorality at his court; prizes respectability, expects all those who surround him to conform to his standard, and is intolerant of scandal. Under his reign the Russian court has as clean a record as any in Europe.

India ink is made from fine lamp black compacted and cemented with glue. The finest black is derived from pork fat. The glue is made from buffalo hide.

DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND.

FRESH CHAPTER THAT CAPS THE CLIMAX OF WONDERS.

The Death Valley Explored—Glaring Whites and Dead Blacks—A Chasm 140 Miles Long—A Land as Hot as Tophet.

Like a cap for the Sea of Salt climaxes some the following world's wonder chapter from the San Francisco Chronicle:

"Dr. C. Hart Merriam, chief of the United States Biological Survey, has just arrived from Death Valley. Last night he told the story of his adventures. Said he:

"Death Valley and its towering black walls of barren rock are weird and strangely sublime in their desolation. For miles and miles the curious mountain may be seen outlined against the clear sky. From the top of Telescope Peak one may look down a dizzy black precipice 12,000 feet to the level of the valley as dazzling white as snow. "Stretching from the mountain's foot are the glistening fields of salt. Here and there are running streams of salt and mineral waters. To look of them is to die. The scene is one of violent contrasts, of glaring whites and dead blacks.

"The valley is the most barren and the lowest of a series in eastern California and southwestern Nevada. At a rough estimate it is about 150 feet below the level of the sea. It runs generally north and south, although its worst region turns to the northwest. This portion has been named Mesquite Valley. It is a region far worse than Death Valley proper. The valley may be compared to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. It is rather an immense chasm than a valley. It is about 140 miles long, and at its broadest part is only 18 miles wide. In some parts it is no more than 15 miles in width.

"On either side of the valley, stretching almost its entire length, is a range of mountains absolutely barren of animal and vegetable life. The western range is the Panamint, averaging in height about 3,000 feet. The eastern range is the Funeral, a suggestive and not unfit name. The Funeral Mountains rise fully 7,000 feet above the level of the sea. These mountains are black, with the exception of curious patches of red rock. Away to the north is Mount Magruder. Beyond it the distance rise the heights of the Sierras. Almost at the southern limit of the valley is Mount Ivanpah. Behind it is the 'Devil's Playground,' a region of absolute barrenness.

"Down the valley a hot, suffocating wind blows with terrific velocity. In its course through the stricken region it gathers a black cloud of hot, shifting sand that has blinded many an unwary horse and rider. Under the glistening beds of crystallized salt in places are running streams of salt water. Beneath there is still another bed of salt.

"In other parts of the valley are wastes of hot sand drawn in some places into high mounds by the whirling blasts that sweep down the canyon. There, too, is the most curious earth I have ever seen—self rising earth it has been called. As far as the eye can see it appears in curving outline, up and down, as if puffed by a natural yeast. The unfortunate animal that steps upon the little hills will crash through, for they are not much more than fragile crusts.

"Still stranger is that section of the valley which, for want of a better name, is called salt earth. Innumerable pinacles tapering to points as fine as needles, and over a foot long, rise in close array from the ground. They are as hard as stone and as dangerous as sharpened steel. Beneath and hidden by them are pitfalls, a tumble into which means a broken leg or arm. There, too, are the rich fields of borax, which have lured many a man to death.

"Dreadful as is Death Valley, its northwestern arm, Mesquite Valley, is worse. All of the water on its surface is poison. The wind has thrown the sand into immense mounds, one of which is three miles long and 300 feet high. It was in this valley that the immigrants lost their lives.

"Professor Merriam's party is working for the Department of Agriculture, which proposes to mark off into zones all the great Western country. The idea is to inform settlers as to what will grow in each zone, and as to what will not grow.

"We have found," said Professor M., "that in certain zones certain flora and fauna flourish. Each zone has its peculiar species which will not flourish in others. These zones are both horizontal and vertical. The party chose the des-

late region of Death Valley for its indoors, for from it and not far distant can be traced the seven zones we have established.

"Death Valley," he continued, "notwithstanding its barren elements, has many phases of life. It has 30 or 40 species of animals and fully as many of vegetable growth.

"Many theories have been advanced to account for the formation of Death Valley. I think it quite probable that it was once the sink of the Mojave River."

He Took a Champagne Bath.

Very frequently a champagne bath has been referred to in illustrating some freak of profligacy. Less than a half a dozen years ago a Louisville man took a genuine champagne bath in Ruffer's Hotel. His name was—and is, for he is living—Crow, and he was a sportsy man. A relative died near Lexington and left him a big lump of property. He bought enough champagne to fill a bath tub at Ruffer's, and plunged into it. On the side he had champagne to drink and a dozen companions to drink it. Two years later he was in his uppers and had a nickel. —Louisville Commercial.

A TERRIBLE INFANT.

I recollect a nurse called Ann, who carried me about the grass; And one fine day a fine young man Came up, and kissed the pretty lass; She did not make the least objection When I can talk I'll tell mamma. And that's my earliest recollection. —Frederick Locker.

Fresh Water Commerce.

Probably there are few people whose attention has not been specially directed to the subject who are aware of the magnitude of the commerce upon the great lakes.

It has been asserted that more tons of freight pass through the Detroit River in a year than the total imports and exports of the United States for the same period.

The commerce of the great lakes is carried upon more than 2,000 vessels, of which more than half are propelled by steam.

About 600 schooners, some of them great four masted craft, ply on the lakes during the five or six months when the straits and ports are not closed by ice. Many more are small schooners, and of these a large number, on the upper lakes, are owned and manned by hardy Norwegian sailors, who have emigrated to this country.

Steam is gradually displacing the wind as the motive power of the lake traffic, and steel is displacing wood as a material. The steam vessels, too, are constantly increasing in size. In 1885 there were but six steel vessels on the great lakes; in 1890 there were 68. At the same time that these changes in the size and material of vessels are taking place, a change is going on in their ownership. There is a smaller proportion of vessels owned by individuals or small partnerships. The traffic of the lakes is rapidly coming under the control of corporations possessing large capital.

The two great items of freight in the vast traffic of the great lakes are ore and grain. Many millions of tons of ore are yearly brought through the Sault Ste. Marie Canal down the lakes. Seventy million bushels of wheat and 4,000,000 bushels of flour go annually by water to Buffalo. The corn tonnage is still larger.

Yet the great lakes are closed to navigation during at least six months of the year, and winters have been known when lakes Superior and Michigan were frozen from shore to shore.

A TALE FROM THE TABLE.

The Story of a Wrecked Life and Its Tragic Ending.

"Some years ago," said the gambler as he lay back talking to a Philadelphia Press man, "I was in California, and while there I frequented a very fashionable place. There came to that place every night a young man. We all liked him, because he seemed rather innocent, and many of us gave him the advice to stay away, but he only smiled and said he would some day.

"One night he came, looking rather pale, for lately he had lost very heavily. He sat down and commenced to play in an excited manner; but game after game he lost. He took out his pocketbook and placed all the contents on the table and lost it. Then I saw him turn pale and take a package from his pocket and stabs that—it belonged to his firm—and he lost it.

"After that he passed in his watch and received the cash, staked that and lost. Two of his rings followed and were lost. We all felt sorry for him and heartily wished he would win. At last all he had left was a thin gold ring, not worth much. He looked at it, and the expression that came over his face is one that I shall never forget.

"He passed in the ring, and although it was worth about \$1 the cash advanced \$50. He played, and the boys put up all his money, the firm's money, his watch, and rings against his \$50, and he won. Then, when success came, he laid his head on his arm. We waited five minutes for him to get up, but he did not, and then we lifted his head up and saw that he was dead.

"We found out afterward that the ring which changed his luck was his dead mother's ring. I often tried to think what agonies he must have suffered; what reflections must have passed before his mind."

MEN AND WOMEN.

Miss Asenath Philpott, of Gainesville, Tex., has hair 10 feet 7 inches long. This growth is since 1884, when her head was shaved after brain fever.

A. J. Drexel heads the list of Philadelphia rich men with \$25,000,000. The city has 100 mill naires, whose total holdings foot up over \$499,000,000.

The Empress Carlotta has recovered her reason, but her whole life since the time, 25 years ago, when her husband was shot has been a blank, of which no memory lingers.

President Diaz, of Mexico, has a strain of Indian blood in his veins, as had his predecessors, Juarez and Hidalgo. The Congress of Mexico is largely composed of descendants of the ancient Aztecs.

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's energy of mind can not be better illustrated than by the fact that she began the study of Greek when she was nearly 70 years old. Now, at 73, she has just read the plays of Sophocles in the original.

Sir William Whitney, the Newfoundland premier, whose defiance of British control has made him famous, has long had a reputation for able statesmanship. He is a man of middle life, stout and well preserved, with expansive side whiskers and a military mustache.

Prince Albert Victor, who is now nearly 30, is said to give no indication of succeeding his sportive father, the Prince of Wales, as the leader of fashion and frivolity in England. He has an awkward physique, an aversion to society, and is a lamentable failure as a speaker.

Charles W. Van Vleet, of Rochester, is the owner of the medal presented by Andrew Jackson to the warrior Black Hawk. It is of solid silver, and bears the legend, Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, A. D. 1829. On the reverse side are the words "Peace and Friendship."

Ex-Senator George W. Jones, now living in retirement at an advanced age in Dubuque, Iowa, had the distinction of giving the States of Iowa and Wisconsin their names. He is a neat, precise, and courteous old gentleman, and though now 86 years old shows no sign of mental or physical decay.

The young Chinese emperor has just picked out the second of the seven wives Celestial law allows him. The fact that she has the smallest foot in Pekin, where the cruel custom of pedal dwarfing is supposed to have reached its highest perfection, is mentioned as one of her qualifications for the position she is to fill.

Mr. Spurgeon was once asked to lash the then prevailing folly—the invisible bonnet. This he did in the following words: "I have been requested to rebuke the bonnets of the day." All faces were immediately upturned, and scanning the ladies of the congregation he added: "Really, I see none!"—a more bitter rebuke than any other words could have conveyed.

HOLMES ON LOWELL'S DEATH.

Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem on the death of James Russell Lowell, in the Atlantic for October, contains the following lines:

This singer whom we long have held so dear
Was Nature's darling, shapely, strong, and fair;

Of keenest wit, of judgment crystal clear,
Easy of converse, courteous, debonair,

Fit for the loftiest or the lowliest lot,
Self-poised, imperial, yet of simplest ways;

At home alike in castle or in cot,
True to his aim, let others blame or praise.

Freedom he found an hellroom from his breast;
Sung, letters, statecraft, shared his years in turn;

All went to feed the Nation's altar fires
Whose mourning children wreathe his funeral urn.

He loved New England—people, language, soil
Unweaned by exile from her arid breast,
Farewell awhile, white-handed son of toil,
Go with her brown-armed laborers to thy rest.

Peace to thy slumber in the forest shade!
Poet and patriot, every gift was thine;
Thy name shall live while Summers bloom and fade.

And grateful memory guard thy leafy shrine.

SAFETY IN EXPLOSIVES.

Terrific Energy in Forms That Can Be Handled Without Danger.

Nitroglycerine has served as the basis of most of the modern explosives of high power, but the transition from the unstable liquid that exploded on the slightest provocation to the present solid compounds, that can be subjected to the roughest usage without fear of explosion, has been no less remarkable than advantageous. For example, here is a new English explosive called ammonite, which has recently been subjected to some surprising tests.

Tested in a mortar a charge of 79.5 grains sent a 20 pound projectile a distance of 320 feet, as compared with 285 feet for dynamite and 133 feet for gunpowder. A weight of 59 pounds dropped from a height of five feet upon a cartridge of ammonite failed to cause an explosion, and the same result followed the ignition of a canister of gunpowder in the midst of a lot of ammonite cartridges. When a cartridge of the new explosive was thrown in a blazing fire it merely burned slowly with a black smoke.

Apparently the only means by which ammonite could be exploded was the use of small detonators of fulminate of mer-

DIVERSIFICATION OF CROPS.

THE HOPE OF NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS.

North Carolina.

The farmers of North Carolina should at once turn their attention to the diversification of farm products. The continual practice of ONE CROP farming is leading our agricultural communities every year nearer the merciless hammer of the auctioneer. Its a rare occurrence that all crops fail or fall short the same year. The farmer who conforms his lands and labor to the cultivation of one staple, no matter how systematic and economical his farm government, must eventually awaken to find his land depleted and his farm lessened in value as a consequence.

In North Carolina to day there are but two staples grown for export. Cotton and Tobacco. These constitute the source of revenue for the agricultural communities of the State. With cotton and tobacco the State must pay for the vast amount of food and clothing imported into her midst. Tobacco is a source of greater income to the State from the fact that a large portion of the crop raised here, and much imported here in crude form is manufactured within her borders, thus giving her people the increased dividend accruing from this manipulation. The manufacture of cotton is on the increase but not proportionately with tobacco. The cultivators of these staples not only fail to produce the food stuffs for those engaged in the manipulation but in very many instances their own farms are importers of such articles, instead of exporters. How many towns or cities in North Carolina are supported off the direct proceeds of the agricultural districts surrounding them? There is not one town in the State of one thousand inhabitants but what buys the greater portion of its bread—and that is the manufacture of grain raised outside its borders—North Carolina cured meat is almost an unknown article on the town markets. What must be the revenue of the State to other communities for this one article? There is no reason why we should buy one pound of meat or one sack of flour, and yet even the farm hand in many sections of the State knows the taste of none other than western pork from new year to new year. Why is this the case? Can't our farmers produce food? Yes, as readily and as cheaply as any, it is the outcome of habit an accepted custom—cotton or tobacco. The result has been worn out farms, heavily mortgaged homes and badly fed families. Let the farmers change and at least cultivate a sufficient portion of his farm in grain to feed his family and stock and raise his meat. The cotton or tobacco would then be a surplus and when in case of a failure in that crop he would not be forced to increase his mortgage to feed his family. The surplus from fair crops thus diversified would soon enable the farmer to pay off all encumbrances, and provide better accommodations and luxuries for his home.

Let the change come, and from the old one crop system let it be as radical and as full of diversity as practicable. The outlook for the grain market for the next two seasons is brighter than in many years. The demand is equally even to the increased supply at much dearer value than heretofore. No farmer in North Carolina can afford to raise cotton or tobacco solely and rely on that crop to buy his bread and meat. The demand for food has out grown in comparison the demand for cotton and tobacco. The civilized communities of the world to-day look to America to supply the shortage in food that may occur in any district. Few other countries can furnish much beyond their own consumption and thus the American must pay what the European is willing to give for American products.

Let every farmer in the State awaken to the necessity of food production. In this lies the most practical solution of the perplexing problem.

THE SOUTHERN PEOPLE.

PURE ENGLISH OR SCOTCH IRISH STOCK.

N. Y. Ledger.

There are two cogent reasons why all Americans should view with sympathy the striking outcome of the efforts of the South at self-regeneration. One is the ethnological character of the white inhabitants of the Southern States. The other is the unparalleled difficulty of the social problem imposed on the emancipation of the blacks.

Nowhere else within the bounds of the Union are the white people so homogeneous and so distinctively American as they are in the States which were formerly slave holding.

This homogeneity and intense Americanism was shared by New England fifty years ago but since the swarming migration of New Englanders to the West and the ocean, the population of the vacated places by French Canadians there is a large and growing admixture of alien and unassimilated elements in the New England population. South of the Potomac, on the other hand, the ethnological condition remains substantially what

they were at the beginning of the century.

If we except a few descendants of French Protestants in South Carolina and Catholics in Louisiana, all of the white people of the South are purely English lineage, or else are off shoots of that Scotch-Irish stock to which we owe Patrick Henry, John O. Calhoun, Andrew Jackson and, let us add, Henry W. Grady. It should be remembered the English and Scotch-Irish emigrants, from whom the Southern whites are descended, reached this country almost a man before the revolutionary war, a very small flood of emigration having since that period been directed south of Mason and Dixon's line. The result is that if we would see the so-called native American, the typical American, the man who best represents the conjoint effect of English or Scotch-Irish hereditary aptitudes of trans-Atlantic environment, we are now certain to find him in the South. Whatever triumphs there are, in the evolution of natural resources or in the social problems, are achieved by the Southern whites have a peculiar interest and importance for genuine Americans all over this broad country.

It is too often overlooked that, in the black man problem with which the Southern whites have to deal there are elements of difficulty unparalleled in history. When the slaves were set free in Jamaica and the smaller possessions of Great Britain in the West Indies, the sum of \$100,000,000 was voted by Parliament to compensate the planters for the loss of their capital, which in reliance on existing laws, had been invested in negro labor. If the holding of human beings in servitude was a sin, it was argued, that it was a sin in which the British government had been for centuries an accomplice, and it was deemed unjust to make a single generation of slave owners pay the whole penalty for the accumulated wrongs of ages.

Again, when many millions of Russian serfs were liberated by Alexander II., they were not cast adrift upon the world to prey upon society, but were provided with lands, which were purchased from their former masters with funds advanced by the State. By this equitable arrangement the ex-masters were shielded from impoverishment and the ex-slaves from destitution. A tremendous social revolution was thus accomplished with scarcely any friction.

No such attempts to lighten the hardship of a social cataclysm were made in the United States. Neither were the masters partially indemnified as they were in Jamaica, nor were the slaves equipped with the means of earning a livelihood. At one stroke the masters were deprived of the labor with which alone they could turn their lands to account, while the slaves received only the liberty to starve.

We do not hesitate to say that if the emancipation problem had been presented on these terms in Russia, its solution would have been impossible. No other race but the Anglo Saxon, as it has been tempered, and toughened on this side of the Atlantic, could deal with a problem of such stupendous difficulty. That the southern whites have grappled with it soberly, yet fearlessly with the full appreciation of its magnitude, yet with an unswerving resolve to solve it, is a fact that reflects singular credit on the American character, and of which all of us may well be proud.

THE PRESIDENT PAID THUS.

The Salt bury Watchman has found out that the President is paid thus: "The President's salary is paid to him in monthly installments of \$1,166 67. The warrant is brought to the White House by a special messenger from the Treasury Department, and after the president has endorsed it, as he would an ordinary draft, his private secretary deposits it at the Columbia Bank. When the president is out of town the draft is mailed to him."

HORTICULTURE.

Wilmington Star.

Within the past quarter of a century horticulture, as an established industry has assumed large proportions in this country. According to a Census bulletin just issued there are 4,510 nurseries devoted to raising trees and shrubbery. They are valued at \$41,978,833, and contain an aggregate of 172,896 acres of land with an invested capital of \$32,425,000. They employ 45,557 men, 2,279 women, 14,200 animals and \$990,606 worth of implements. There are in the southern States 674 Florida landings with 137, Texas following with 97, Arkansas with 68, Tennessee and Virginia with 64 each, the other Southern States with smaller numbers, North Carolina being credited with 32, containing 950 acres, valued at \$111,200. North Carolina ought to make better showing than this, as she was the pioneer nursery State of the South when the industry was established in Guilford county, over half a century ago by Joshua Lindsey, of honored memory.

The peddlers of Boston have a union.

The United States Navy has a paper boat.

The Obsolete do not permit their women to be photographed.