

AN ODD GROUP

By GRANT WHEELER

Alan Chandler just before the break out of the revolution in Russia some years ago went to St. Petersburg—now Petrograd—on business. He had studied before going the Russian language under a Russian instructor and could converse fairly well in that tongue. On the train between the border and St. Petersburg he fell in with a young Russian who on hearing that he was an American chatted with him agreeably, expressing much interest in the great American republic.

"Where are you going to stop in St. Petersburg?" asked the young Russian, who gave his name as Peter Alexandrovich.

"I suppose I shall go to a hotel until I can find apartments," Alan replied. "I have rooms in the house of an old lady who is very motherly and is always attentive to her lodgers' wants. I dare say she may have some vacant rooms."

Alan jumped at this chance of getting settled, for he disliked hotels and was glad to avoid them even temporarily. He went to the lodging house and waited in a reception room while Alexandrovich interviewed the landlady. Then he and the landlady rejoined him, and the latter said that there were no rooms vacant at the time, but an occupant was soon to go away. If meanwhile the American would accept a couple of rooms of Alexandrovich's, which he did not need he would be welcome to them.

The landlady, Mme Groutsky, was indeed a motherly woman. Her face was especially benevolent; her hair was white; her features bore the stamp of suffering. It seemed to Chandler when he looked at her that she was giving up one of the Christian martyrs who had lived centuries before. He had only a few hours' acquaintance with Alexandrovich, too short to warrant his trusting the man, but was so drawn to Mme Groutsky that he resolved to accept the offer for the sake of effecting an entrance to the old lady's house.

There was but one other roomer in the house besides the American and Alexandrovich—Stanislaus, a Pole. He was seldom there, but when he was there he and Alexandrovich were seen several times together. Stanislaus was the person who was expected to vacate his rooms. But day after day passed and he showed no sign of doing so.

Meanwhile Alan was taken ill. He was so carefully nursed by Mme Groutsky that when he recovered he would not leave her on any account, although there was something mysterious about Alexandrovich that excited his distrust. Alan could not discover that he had any occupation. He would be absent sometimes for days, and when he returned instead of mentioning his absence or any incident connected with it he never referred to it.

One day when Alan returned from the transaction of certain business he had on hand he found Mme Groutsky talking with a handsomely dressed young lady. The girl looked up at Alan with a pair of eyes which, so long as they were fixed upon him, held him spellbound. What it was in their dark depths to make him feel that for their possessor he would jump off the brink of a cliff he did not know, and yet he saw her only a few moments while passing through a room to the stair case leading to the second floor.

Not a person Chandler met under this roof that impressed him. They were all different, but were all linked together by some mystery. The land lady seemed to be the guiding spirit. At least, Alan could not but notice that they all seemed to look up to her with reverence. Though the gentlest among them, she appeared to be the strongest.

The girl who had fired those wondrous eyes on Chandler never came to the house again. He was minded to ask the landlady who she was, but somehow he felt that there was a barrier between him and the others in the house that he was forbidden to pass.

One day when he was walking on the street a police officer tapped him on the shoulder and directed him to go with him. The policeman took him to a police station, where sat an officer at a desk. Pulling out a drawer, he took therefrom a little leather case and, opening it, began to look from it to Chandler and vice versa. Presently he handed the article to Chandler, asking:

"Is that your passport?"

Chandler, thunderstruck, said he believed that it was.

"You Americans are very incautious," said the officer.

"What do you mean?"

"I will show you if you will come with me."

He led the way to a sleigh standing at the door and motioned Chandler to enter it. Then they were driven out of the city to a road along which in the distance a crowd were seen slowly approaching. When they reached the sleigh Chandler saw that they were prisoners marching to Siberia.

His eyes rested on Stanislaus, then on Alexandrovich, then on Mme Groutsky. Lastly his gaze met that of the girl with the wondrous eyes.

"They have been plotting to assassinate the czar," said Alan's guide.

"Luckily we had evidence that you were not one of them or you would now be with them. What they want of you was your passport."

FIXED IT IN THE DEED.

Real Estate Agent's Kindness to One of His Customers.

J. Cooper Props, formerly a real estate agent in Eaton, Ind., a few years ago had practically concluded a sale of a residence in that town to a farmer who desired to retire, when the customer suddenly discovered that there was no cellar beneath the dwelling. The house suited him perfectly, and his wife also was highly pleased with it, but both of them demanded a cellar before taking it, even though they previously had gone as far as to tell Mr. Props to draw up the deed.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Props. "Of course there's no cellar under there now, but I'll fix it in the deed—write it all out and everything, so there can't be any mistake—so that you have the privilege of excavating for the cellar at any time you please and without interference from any source."

Mr. and Mrs. Farmer said they "guessed" that would be all right, so after their fight to construct their own cellar had been carefully safeguarded in the deed by elaborate phrases they paid over their money and took possession. But to this day, Props says, they look at him in a dazed and puzzled way every time they meet him.—Indianapolis News.

OLD TIME HARVARD LAWS.

When Students Had to Get the President's Permission to Smoke.

Imagine a twentieth century Harvard undergraduate asking the president of the university for permission to smoke or buy a drink. Yet permission was necessary in the eighteenth century, according to the history of Harvard before 1750. One college rule read:

"No scholar shall take tobacco unless permitted by ye president with ye consent of his parents or guardian and on good reason first given by a physician and then in a sober and private manner."

Further, "No scholar shall unnecessarily frequent any tavern or victualing house in Cambridge to eat or drink there without leave from ye president or one of ye tutors."

Another regulation read:

"If any scholar be guilty of drunkenness he shall be fined 5 shillings and make a public confession. No under graduate shall keep by him distilled spirituous liquors, nor shall he use any such drinks as punch or flip."

Saturday evenings all students were required to retire to their chambers at sunset and not unnecessarily leave them. New York World.

The Chief Justice.

"There are very few people who know the proper designation of the man who presides over the supreme court," said the secretary of the senate.

Generally he is referred to as the chief justice of the United States supreme court. In fact, he is the chief justice. That is his official title. Most of our presidents in nominating men for this office have fallen into the error of giving him the long title. When George Washington nominated Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut for this post he described it as chief justice of the supreme court of the United States. Andrew Jackson made the same error in nominating Roger B. Taney. So did Abraham Lincoln when he appointed Salmon P. Chase. Grover Cleveland was the first president to give the correct designation. When he appointed Melville W. Fuller he nominated him to be chief justice and nothing else.—Washington Star.

Size of an Atom.

"Radium emanations," said Prof. Sir William Crookes in a lecture in London, are due to the breaking down of the atom of radium, and electricians are constantly flying off with about two-thirds the speed of light (182,000 miles per second). These electrons are now looked upon as being absolute units of negative electricity. To try to illustrate their size is difficult. Imagine one drop of water magnified to the size of the earth (8,000 miles in diameter). An atom would then be about the size of a walnut or a cricket ball. Now magnify the cricket ball or atom to a cube of about 100 feet each side. The electron would be about the size of this dot—i.e., one one-hundredth of an inch in diameter. The mind cannot conceive such figures.

Pass It Along.

Few of us have been so exceptionally unfortunate as not to find in our own age, some experienced friend who has helped us by previous counsel never to be forgotten. We cannot render it in kind, but perhaps in the fullness of time it may become our noblest duty to aid another as we ourselves have been aided and to transmit to him an invaluable treasure. Philip Gilbert Hamerton.

Fiction and Fact.

"Charlie got his ideas of married life from the comic papers."

"Well?"

"He says after he got married he was agreeably surprised to find that his wife could get a satisfactory hot for \$5.—Louisville Courier Journal.

An Unlucky Ring.

Cynicus—I once knew a fellow who gave a girl an engagement ring of opals. Sillicus—Gracious! Wasn't it unlucky? Cynicus—You bet it was! She married him.—Judge.

Success is sweet; the sweeter if long delayed and attained through manifold struggles and defeats.—A. Bronson Alcott.

Ostend's Tribulations.

The first siege of Ostend, the beautiful Belgian city, ended on Sept. 22, 1604, when the city was surrendered to the Spaniards, who had invested the city for over three years. The honorable capitulation followed one of the most heroic defenses in the history of warfare. On the death of Charles II. of Spain the French seized Ostend, but in 1705, after Marlborough defeated the French at Ramillies, it was taken by the allies. In 1745 it was retaken by the French. But restored three years later. In 1795 the French garrisoned the town for the Empress Maria Theresa. In 1792 Ostend again fell to the French, who evacuated it in 1793, regained it in 1794 and defeated the English there in 1798. The city was under the flag of Netherlands from 1814 to 1830, when Belgium regained its independence. Modern Ostend is known as La Reine des Plages (the Queen of Beaches), and for many years it has been the greatest seaside playground of Europe, a favorite resort for the people of all nations.—Exchange.

By Threes.

Three paths that lead but to the grave—alcohol, bumsopah and osteopathy.

Three motions that rush us, push us and delight us—locomotion, promotion and motion pictures.

Three creams that cool us, fool us and rule us—ice cream, face cream and cream of society.

Three sights that are great—fore-sight, hindsight and out of sight.

Three ships that are more or less uncertain—friendship, courtship and alarsh.

Three days that are universally remembered—birthday, holiday and holiday.

Three hearts that beat anything in the world—big heart, warm heart and sweetheart.

Three times that we go by and stop by—slow time, fast time and time to quit.—Judge's Library.

As a Fishing.

It is no contradiction to say that no man is a true fisherman until he can angle all day without catching any fish. So many serious persons still think to catch fish is the prime object of fishing that a most earnest effort should be made to set them right. They who pity the angler coming home dog tired at the end of the day with his empty creel are the ones to be pitied. They do not understand the meaning of life nor of fishing, which is a simple and simple life.

It is never best to put a main purpose too much to the front. If love is the best of life it is foolish to wear one's heart on one's sleeve. When one has a great object in life and begins to know it and feel it growing within him then he should nurse and guard it—and go fishing. Country Side Magazine and Suburban Life.

Machine Guns.

In the British army the machine gun is the Maxim, the French use the Hotchkiss or Puteaux Austrians employ the Schwarzlose and Germans the Maxim. In all cases machine guns are attached to the infantry forces, usually in the proportion of two guns per battalion, or 1,000 men.

These guns fire rifle cartridges at immense speed by mechanical means, and usually the kick, or recoil, of the gun is used for the purpose of reloading. It is interesting to note that in a test forty two British first class shots engaged against a machine gun each firing of the same target for one minute the gun discharged 23 rounds and made sixty nine hits. The forty two marks men discharged 408 rounds and made sixty two hits.—Pearson's Weekly.

An African Night.

There is nothing as black as an African night, and I think that it is because the earth being a deep red, of fers no reflection to the faint straight stars as we get in other lands. Instead it swallows up what slight glow there may be and gives to the darkness a dense, velvet quality not to be found anywhere else. Overhead the stars glare more brilliantly than in northern latitudes, but they seem to cast no light, and the night is palpable, suffocating, appalling and filled with a nameless horror which is quite indescribable.—'African Highways'.

Getting a Start.

"How do you want your eggs?"

"Soft boiled."

"Yes, but I'll boil 'em about five minutes."

"Five minutes?"

"Yes, these is cold storage eggs and it's liable to take em a couple of minutes to thaw."—Washington Star.

Poe's Reading.

It was a peculiarity of Poe that when he was most melancholy he read the most lugubrious books and, being a sort of Mark Tapley, he was happiest when he was most miserable. But Poe a rule would not be a good one for the average man to adopt.

Psychological Moment.

"Ps. what is meant by the psychological moment?"

"When I give your mother a check, my son that is the psychological moment for me to tell her I won't be home until late."—Birmingham Age Herald.

Be Careful.

Blobs.—That fellow Skinnum is always boasting about his pull. Slobbs.—Well, don't let him apply it to your leg.—Philadelphia Record.

Well, What She Buys is Hers.

Alice—Does Mand's new gown fit her figure? Marie—It fits what she wants people to think is her figure.—Boston Transcript.

An Attempt At Conversion

By EUNICE BLAKE

"Jim," said Ned, "what do you suppose has happened in our family?"

"What?"

"Sally has joined the suffragette movement. She's full of it, as all new converts are of the cause they are converted to. She's bound to march in a big procession they're preparing for. And, worst of all, it's making her a man hater."

"Edith has gone the same way. I've lectured and scolded to no purpose. She says that women have been subjugated long enough, and it's time for them to achieve their independence."

"I wonder, Jim, if you could have any more effect on Sally than I. I think she rather admires you. Maybe if you show her a little attention and bring in your antipathy to the suffragette movement you might draw her away from it."

"And you might try for the same result with Edith. But, for my part, I wouldn't come down on her dad at first. I'd out-Herod Herod till I got some control over her, and then I'd put the screws on."

"Right you are! If you agree we'll start in at once. Will your sister be at home this evening?"

"I reckon so."

A few weeks later these two young men met on the street where a parade of suffragists was forming. Each man carried a banner on which was inscribed "Votes for Women."

"Hello, Jim!"

"Hello, Ned!"

"What you doing with that thing?"

"The same as you're doing with yours, I suppose."

"No playing suffragist in order to work my way into the good graces of your sister?"

"And I'm doing the same to ingratiate myself with your sister."

There was silence for a few minutes, each eyeing the other somewhat contemptuously.

"Seems to me," said Jim, "that you look ridiculous holding up a banner like that."

"How do you think you look your self?"

"I couldn't say it to any one except you, but I'm on the eve of an arrangement with your sister, and it's arranged between us that if I'll march just this once with a suffragette parade she'll have me. She says it's a matter of pride with her before sheering off from the cause to show the sisters that she doesn't do it to please any man, her fancy being in favor of votes for women."

"That's funny. I have the same arrangement with Edith."

"You have?"

"Of course I have. Do you want me to keep saying it all day?"

"Well, it'll be jinged."

At that moment came an order to fall in, and each one of these young men shamefacedly took position in the ranks, and beside each was the girl he was converting. But the procession had no sooner moved than each girl dropped behind the man with whom she had made the agreement aforesaid, and taking a stuffed club from a neighbor in the ranks, went through a pantomime of striking the banner carrier before her, only the club was not permitted to reach his back. The consequence was that the spectators were enjoying a performance of which the principals were ignorant. Finally a blow fell unintentionally on Ned's shoulder. He turned and saw the ranks in the rear laughing at him. Throwing down his banner, he left the procession in high dudgeon.

The lines moved on, and pretty soon along came Jim, whom Ned's sister was treating in the same way Ned had been treated.

"Come out of that, Jim. You're making a guy of yourself. Look behind you."

Jim turned and saw a dozen or more women showing their pearly teeth—except those that were golden—and he too, threw down his banner and joined his friend. The two elbowed their way through the crowds of spectators, not speaking till they reached one of those side streets whereon are located peaceful homes.

"It's my opinion," said Ned, "that we've been done."

"I think you're right."

"I could have told you that any such contract as that when made with my sister Sally would be a snare."

"And I could have told you that any man who would make such a contract with my sister Edith was a natural born fool."

"Here's the club. Suppose we drop in for rest and refreshment."

"Suppose we do."

Later Ned received a phone message from Sally that Edith would be with her in the evening and he was asked to bring Jim around. When they found the two girls together they were informed that they had both confided their plan of conversion to others and there had been a leak. The girls laughed heartily, but the boys couldn't see the joke.

There was a coolness between Ned and Edith and Jim and Sally which, considering the position the girls had placed the young men in, beds fair to be interminable, but a treaty of peace was finally concluded, the girls agreeing never to do so again. The making up proved very pleasant, and the boys found that the girls being suffragists was no reason why they would not be true to a tale of love.

HIS BLUFF WAS CALLED.

He Got What He Didn't Expect and Paid a Nice Price For It.

A young woman of smart wit and striking beauty presided at one of the stalls at a Paris charity bazaar. Among the small crowd which pressed round the fair vendor was a young man of much assurance, who gazed upon the girl with freedom and affected to admire the various fancy articles exposed for sale, but bought nothing.

"What will you please to buy?" asked mademoiselle, with an exquisite smile.

"Oh," replied the young dandy, with a languishing look, "what I most wish to buy is unhappily not for sale."

"Tell me what you wish," she responded.

"Oh, no; I dare not declare my wishes."

"Nevertheless let me know what you wish to buy," persisted the fair saleswoman.

"Well, then, since you demand it, I should like a ringlet of your glossy black hair."

She manifested no embarrassment at the bold request, but with a pair of scissors immediately clipped off one of her beautiful locks and handed it to the astonished youth, remarking that the price was only 500 francs.

Her audacious admirer was thunderstruck by the demand, but dared not demur, as by this time a group had collected and were listening to the conversation. So he took the hair, paid over the money and left the hall.

ESKIMOS AS TRADERS.

Value Counts as Nothing if They See Anything They Want.

Among the Eskimos of the Bering sea region there is no fixed value for whalebone, furs or anything they may have to trade. If one of them has anything of value he will keep it until some white man appears with something that appeals to his eye. And the money value of what may take him does not make any difference to him. If he has a trinket that may be worth a dollar and some one offers to give him for it something that is worth a thousand dollars, bit of which he has no need, he will refuse to trade. But he will give anything he possesses for what he really wants.

An Eskimo of St. Lawrence island, in Bering sea, made a catch one season of a big bowhead whale. The head of baleen was worth between \$10,000 and \$15,000. He knew the approximate value of the head, but he held on to it with no apparent desire to trade. One day a trader appeared with a small gasoline launch, valued at perhaps \$200 or \$300. The sight of that so took the native that he straightway traded his head of bone for it.

Far out in the strait one day he ran out of gasoline. He abandoned the launch for the canoe he was towing and paddled back to the island. But he did not regret his trade. He was satisfied and ready to try for another whale.—Youth's Companion.

Winning a Violin.

The way M. Ysaie, the great violinist, became the owner of a Guarnerius violin dated 1742 was thus quaintly told by himself.

"The Guarnerius was bought in Paris by a pupil of mine, a charming young woman I envied her the violin, and fate gave it to me. I teach this pupil and by and by I meet her sister, a most lovely young woman with whom I fall in love straightway and marry. Soon I go to my sister-in-law, who was my pupil and say to her:

"It is time you stop fooling with a violin. You will never learn how to play it. I take the liberty of a big brother, but she do not like it for long time. At last she succumb to my experience and wisdom, and she stops playing. Then I say grandiloquently: 'I will take the Guarnerius, 1742.' I take it, and that is how the violin came into the possession of Ysaie."

Crowd.

Crowd stands even before Warsaw in the minds of Polish patriots. Not only was it once the capital of free Poland, with a cathedral equivalent to Westminster Abbey wherein sleep the generations of Polish kings and heroes, but it possesses the most striking patriotic memorial in the world. This is the Kosciuskoberg, a mound 800 feet high, erected to the memory of Kosciusko, and formed of earth from every battlefield of Poland in the construction of that memorial Polish nobles, statesmen and peasants toiled side by side.—London Spectator.

Enjoyment.

A certain rich woman, having run her eye over the latest report of the bureau of statistics touching food-stuffs, grew very blithe all at once.

"Why shouldn't I enjoy life when so few can really afford it?" she exclaimed glowingly.—Puck.

Lawmaking.

I seldom make a law for me. It is usually you I am forcing to do something or preventing from doing something else. And when I do make a law for me I feel very free in violating it if occasion seems to require.—Life.

A Brave Patient.

Dentist (to assistant)—I think I heard a patient in the waiting room. Assistant—Yes, but I can't bring him in. He's turned the key on the inside.—Meggendorfer Blatter.

If you don't do your best it's foolish to try to convince people that you could have done better.—Detroit Free Press.

These Fruits Not Used Enough.

There is small reason to doubt that the proper development of tree crops would greatly enrich and cheapen the food supply of the American people and their domestic animals. The chief trouble seems to be that we have not thought about it. Most of the crops of value of Europe have been introduced into this country, such as the olive, fig, date, the acorn and cork oak, the walnut, pistache and almond. Our native trees, such as the pecan, shagbark, mulberry, honey locust, mesquite and persimmon, offer great promise if properly selected, propagated, improved by plant breeding and tested by experiment. All this requires scientific work. Now that we have spent a quarter of a century developing the equipment for the promotion of agricultural science the time has probably come when attention can be turned in part from the herb of the field to the more productive tree that has long made the oriental garden so productive.—J. Russell Smith in Atlantic.

Old English Army Orders.

A quaint army order was issued in England in 1743, which said, "No officer or man to wear a white feather, lest they be taken for the French!"

In those days, too, they apparently found it necessary to issue instructions regarding enlistments that would certainly be out of place today, such as the following in 1743, "Soldiers and colliers never make good soldiers, being accustomed to a more drunken way of life than what a private sentinel's pay can admit of." Another such war office mandate, directed to recruiting sergeants in 1781 said, "You must enlist no strollers, vagabonds, tinkers, chimney sweeps or sailors."

Much humor—probably similarly unconscious—marked the more general army orders of those stern old times.—London Answers.

Superstitions of Siam.

In Siam all babies receive the same name at birth. This name is Dang, which means red, and it is the only designation vouchsafed the newcomer for some months. For several years they wear no clothing except perhaps a string of beads or bracelets or anklets as ornament. At a child's birth a cord that has been blessed by the priests is tied round the outside of the house and three balls of rice are thrown in "lucky directions" by three old women, who are always present at such a time and whose business it is to solicit for the little one the patronage and protection of guardian angels. The cord and the scattering about the premises of a certain kind of native fruit are supposed to be efficacious in preventing the entrance of evil spirits.

No Winner.

Sublime satisfaction in one's own powers must be a very delightful condition, but a celebrated English musician, Dr. Arno, who flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century, for once very wittily turned the tables on some singers of this type. He was asked to decide on the respective powers of two vocalists whose talents existed entirely in their own imaginations. After hearing them Dr. Arno said to one, "You are the worst singer I ever heard in my life."

Then exclaimed the other, "I win!"

"No," answered the first judge; "you can't sing at all."—Argonaut.

What She Didn't Say.

The young man should have gone home an hour before, but he was still lingering and making conversation. The girl was desperate.

"Oh, I say, Miss Frances," he said, "would you rather say something and mean nothing than say nothing and mean something?" We were discussing this at dinner and left it undecided.

And the girl never said a word.—Lippincott's.

Would Like to See It.

"I done heard it read in do paper," said Uncle Rasperberry, "dat some o' dese here flyin' machine gemen says a man kin do anything a bird kin."

"That's what they say," said Aunt Chloe.

"Well, when any o' 'em sees a man sit fas' asleep, holdin' on to a tree branch wif his feet, I sho' wishes dey'd call me to have a look."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Imagination.

"You don't care much for the dialect author?"

"No," admitted Mr. Rafferty. "But you must admit that he has imagination."

"He has. He goes right ahead imagining that an Irishman says 'Ol' instead of 'I' and 'phwat' instead of 'what.'"—Washington Star.

Her Belief.

"Do you," he asked, "believe in early marriage?"

"Well," she replied, "I used to, but I am willing to say that at present I believe 'better late than never' may be applied to marriage as well as to some other things."—Brooklyn Citizen.

In the Market.

Agent—Have you become converted to life insurance yet? Prospective Risk—No, but I've got four companies bidding for me.—Philadelphia Ledger.

A Polygamist.

"What's a polygamist, pop?"

"Very often he's a fellow who has more money than he knows what to do with."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

'Tis well for one to do once every thing one can do in order to have the merit of knowing oneself more intimately.—Goethe.