

Russian Rambles eBook

Russian Rambles

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I.

Passports, police, and post-office in Russia.

We imported into Russia, untaxed, undiscovered by the custom-house officials, a goodly stock of misadvice, misinformation, apprehensions, and prejudices, like most foreigners, albeit we were unusually well informed, and confident that we were correctly posted on the grand outlines of Russian life, at least. We were forced to begin very promptly the involuntary process of getting rid of them. Our anxiety began in Berlin. We visited the Russian consul-general there to get our passports *vised*. He said, "You should have got the signature of the American consul. Do that, and return here."

At that moment, the door leading from his office to his drawing-room opened, and his wife made her appearance on the threshold, with the emphatic query, "*When* are you coming?"

"Immediately, my dear," he replied. "Just wait a moment, until I get rid of these Americans."

Then he decided to rid himself of us for good. "I will assume the responsibility for you," he said, affixed his signature on the spot, to spare himself a second visit, and, collecting his fees, bowed us out. I suppose he argued that we should have known the ropes and attended to all details accurately, in order to ward off suspicion, had we been suspicious characters. How could he know that the Americans understood Russian, and that this plain act of "getting rid" of us would weigh on our minds all the way to the Russian frontier?

At Wirballen the police evoked a throb of gratitude from our relieved hearts. No one seemed to suspect that the American government owned a consul in Berlin who could write his name on our huge parchments, which contrasted so strongly with the compact little documents from other lands.

"Which are your passports?" asked the tall gendarme who guarded the door of the restaurant, as we passed out to take our seats in the Russian train.

"The biggest," I replied, without mentioning names, and he handed them over with a grin. No fuss over passports or custom-house, though we had carefully provided cause! This was beginning badly, and we were disappointed at our tame experience.

On our arrival in St. Petersburg, we were not even asked for our passports. Curiosity became restless within us. Was there some sinister motive in this neglect, after the harrowing tales we had heard from a woman lecturer, and read in books which had actually got themselves printed, about gendarmes forcing themselves into people's rooms while they were dressing, demanding their passports, and setting a guard at their

doors; after which, gendarmes in disguises (which they were clever enough to penetrate) followed them all over the country? Why was it thus with them, and not with us? The *why* ripened gradually. We inquired if the passports were not wanted.

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"No; if you intend to remain only a few days, it is not worth while to register them," was the startling reply; and those wretched, unwieldy parchments remained in our possession, even after we had announced that we did not meditate departing for some time. I hesitate to set down the whole truth about the anxiety they cost us for a while. How many innocent officers, in crack regiments (as we discovered when we learned the uniforms), in search of a breakfast or a dinner, did we not take for the police upon our tracks, in search of those concealed documents! Our excitement was ministered to by the Tatar waiters, who, not having knowledge of our nationality, mistook us for English people, and wrecked our nerves by making our tea as strong and black as beer, with a view to large "tea-money" for this delicate attention to our insular tastes.

If no one wanted those documents, what were we to do with them? Wear them as breastplates (folded), or as garments (full size)? No pocket of any sex would tolerate them, and we had been given to understand by veracious (?) travelers that it was as much as our lives were worth to be separated from them for a single moment. At the end of a week we forced the hotel to take charge of them. They were registered, and immediately thrown back on our hands. Then we built lean-tos on our petticoats to hold them, and carried them about until they looked aged and crumpled and almost frayed, like ancestral parchments. We even slept with them under our pillows. At last we also were nearly worn out, and we tossed those Sindbad passports into a drawer, then into a trunk. There they remained for three months; and when they were demanded, we had to undertake a serious search, so completely had their existence and whereabouts been lost to our lightened spirits. In the mean time we had grasped the elementary fact that they would be required only on a change of domicile. By dint of experience we learned various other facts, which I may as well summarize at once.

The legal price of registration is twenty kopeks (about ten cents), the value of the stamp. But hotel and lodging-house keepers never set it down in one's bill at less than double that amount. It often rises to four or five times the legal charge, according to the elegance of the rooms which one occupies, and also according to the daring of the landlord. In one house in Moscow, they even tried to make us pay again on leaving. We refused, and as we already had possession of the passports, which, they pretended, required a second registry, they could do nothing. This abuse of overcharging for passport registration on the part of landlords seems to have been general. It became so serious that the Argus-eyed prefect of St. Petersburg, General Gresser (now deceased), issued an order that no more than the law allowed should be exacted from lodgers. I presume, however, that all persons who could not read Russian, or who did not chance to notice this regulation, continued to contribute to the pockets of landlords, since human nature is very much alike everywhere, in certain professions. I had no occasion to test the point personally, as the law was issued just previous to my departure from the country.

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The passport law seems to be interpreted by each man for himself in other respects, also. In some places, we found that we could stay overnight quite informally; at others, our passports were required. Once we spent an entire month incognito. At Kazan, our balcony commanded a full view of the police department of registry, directly opposite. The landlord sniffed disdainfully at the mention of our passports, and I am sure that we should not have been asked for them at all, had not one of the officials, who chanced to be less wilted by the intense heat than his fellows,—they had been gazing lazily at us, singly and in battalions, in the intervals of their rigorous idleness, for the last four and twenty hours,—suddenly taken a languid interest in us about one hour before our departure. The landlord said he was “simply ridiculous.” On another occasion, a waiter in a hotel recognized the Russians who were with us as neighbors of his former master in the days of serfdom. He suggested that he would arrange not to have our passports called for at all, since they might be kept overtime, and our departure would thus be delayed, and we be incommoded. Only one of our friends had even taken the trouble to bring a “document;” but the whole party spent three days under the protection of this ex-serf. Of course, we bespoke his attendance for ourselves, and remembered that little circumstance in his “tea-money.” This practice of detaining passports arbitrarily, from which the ex-serf was protecting us, prevails in some localities, judging from the uproar about it in the Russian newspapers. It is contrary to the law, and can be resisted by travelers who have time, courage, and determination. It appears to be a device of the landlords at watering places and summer resorts generally, who desire to detain guests. I doubt whether the police have anything to do with it. What we paid the ex-serf for was, practically, protection against his employer.

Our one experience of this device was coupled with a good deal of amusement, and initiated us into some of the laws of the Russian post-office as well. To begin my story intelligibly, I must premise that no Russian could ever pronounce or spell our name correctly unaided. A worse name to put on a Russian official document, with its *H* and its double *o*, never was invented! There is no letter *h* in the Russian alphabet, and it is customary to supply the deficiency with the letter *g*, leaving the utterer to his fate as to which of the two legitimate sounds—the foreign or the native—he is to produce. It affords a test of cultivation parallel to that involved in giving a man a knife and fork with a piece of pie, and observing which he uses. That is the American shibboleth. Lomonosoff, the famous founder of Russian literary language in the last century, wrote a long rhymed strophe, containing a mass of words in which the *g* occurs legitimately and illegitimately, and wound up by wailing out the query, “Who can emerge from the crucial test of pronouncing all these correctly, unimpeached?” That is the Russian shibboleth.

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As a result of this peculiarity, our passports came back from each trip to the police office indorsed with a brand-new version of our name. We figured under Gepgud, Gapgod, Gabgot, and a number of other disguises, all because they persisted in spelling by the eye, and would not accept my perfect phonetic version. The same process applied to the English name Wylie has resulted in the manufacture of Villie. And the pleasant jest of it all was that we never troubled ourselves to sort our passports, because, although there existed not the slightest family resemblance even between my mother and myself, we looked exactly alike in those veracious mirrors. This explained to our dull comprehension how the stories of people using stolen passports could be true. However, the Russians were not to blame for this particular absurdity. It was the fault of the officials in America.

On the occasion to which I refer, we had gone out of St. Petersburg, and had left a written order for the post-office authorities to forward our mail to our new address. The bank officials, who should certainly have known better, had said that this would be sufficient, and had even prepared the form, on their stamped paper, for our signature. Ten days elapsed; no letters came. Then the form was returned, with orders to get our signatures certified to by the chief of police or the police captain of our district! When we recovered from our momentary vexation, we perceived that this was an excellent safeguard. I set out for the house of the chief of police.

His orderly said he was not at home, but would be there at eleven o'clock. I took a little look into the church,—my infallible receipt for employing spare moments profitably, which has taught me many things. At eleven o'clock the chief was still “not at home.” I decided that this was in an “official” sense only, when I caught sight of a woman surveying me cautiously through the crack of the opposite door to the antechamber. I immediately jumped to the conclusion that a woman calling upon a chief of police was regarded as a suspicious character; and rightly, after various shooting incidents in St. Petersburg. My suspicions were confirmed by my memory of the fact that I had been told that the prefect of St. Petersburg was “not at home” in business hours, though his gray lambskin cap—the only one in town—was lying before me at the time. But I also recollected that when I had made use of that cap as a desk, on which to write my request, to the horror of the orderly, and had gone home, the prefect had sent a gendarme to do what I wanted. Accordingly, I told this orderly my business in a loud, clear voice. The crack of the door widened as I proceeded, and at my last word I was invited into the chief’s study by the orderly, who had been signaled to.

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The chief turned out to be a polished and amiable baron, with a German name, who was eager to render any service, but who had never come into collision with that post-office regulation before. I remarked that I regretted not being able to certify to ourselves with our passports, as they had not been returned to us. He declared that the passports were quite unnecessary as a means of identification; my word was sufficient. But he flew into a rage over the detention of the passports. That something decidedly vigorous took place over those papers, and that the landlord of our hotel was to blame, it was easy enough to gather from the meek air and the apologies with which they were handed to us, a couple of hours later. The chief dispatched his orderly on the spot with my post-office petition. During the man's absence, the chief brought in and introduced to me his wife, his children, and his dogs, and showed me over his house and garden. We were on very good terms by the time the orderly returned with the signature of the prefect (who had never seen us) certifying to our signatures, on faith. The baron sealed the petition for me with his biggest coat of arms, and posted it, and the letters came promptly and regularly. Thereafter, for the space of our four months' stay in the place, the baron and I saluted when we met. We even exchanged "shakehands," as foreigners call the operation, and the compliments of the day, in church, when the baron escorted royalty. I think he was a Lutheran, and went to that church when etiquette did not require his presence at the Russian services, where I was always to be found.

As, during those four months, I obtained several very special privileges which required the prefect's signature,—as foreigners were by no means common residents there,—and as I had become so well known by sight to most of the police force of the town that they saluted me when I passed, and their dogs wagged their tails at me and begged for a caress, I imagined that I was properly introduced to the authorities, and that they could lay hands upon me at any moment when the necessity for so doing should become apparent. Nevertheless, one friend, having applied to the police for my address, spent two whole days in finding me, at haphazard. After a residence of three months, other friends appealed in vain to the police; then obtained from the prefect, who had certified to us, the information that no such persons lived in the town, the only foreigners there being two sisters named Genrut! With this lucid clue our friends cleverly found us. Those who understand Russian script will be able to unravel the process by which we were thus disguised and lost. We had been lost before that in St. Petersburg, and we recognized the situation, with variations, at a glance. There is no such thing as a real practical directory in Russian cities. When one's passport is *vised* by the police, the name and information therein set forth are copied on a large sheet of paper, and this document takes its place among many thousand others, on the thick wire files of the Address Office. I went there once. That was enough in every way. It lingers in my mind as the darkest, dirtiest, worst-ventilated, most depressing place I saw in Russia.

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If one wishes to obtain the address of any person, he goes or sends to this Address Office, fills out a blank, for which he pays a couple of kopeks, and, after patient waiting for the over-busy officials to search the big files, he receives a written reply, with which he must content himself. The difficulty, in general, about this system lies here: one must know the exact Christian name, patronymic, and surname of the person wanted, and how to spell them correctly (according to police lights). One must also know the exact occupation of the person, if he be not a noble living on his income, without business or official position. Otherwise, the attempt to find any one is a harder task than finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. A person who had been asked to call upon us, and who afterward became a valued friend, tried three times in vain to find us by this means, and was informed that we did not exist. This was owing to some eccentricity in the official spelling of our name. An application to the American Legation, as a desperate final resort, served the purpose at last. The same thing happened when the telegraph messenger tried to find us, to deliver an important cablegram. Still, in spite of this experience, I always regarded my passport as an important means of protection. In case of accident, one could be traced by it. A traveler's passport once registered at the police office, the landlord or lodging-house keeper is responsible for the life of his guest. If the landlord have any bandit propensities, this serves as a check upon them, since he is bound to produce the person, or to say what has become of him. In the same way, when one is traveling by imperial post carriage, the postilion must deliver his passenger safe and sound at the next post station, or be promptly arrested. The passport serves here as a sort of waybill for the human freight. When a foreigner's passport is registered for the first time, he receives permission to remain six months in the country. At the expiration of that period, on formal application, a fresh permit is issued, which must be paid for, and which covers one year. This takes the form of a special document, attached to the foreign passport with cord and sealing-wax; and attached to it, in turn, is a penalty for cutting the cord or tampering with the official seal. These acts must be done by the proper officials. I thought it might be interesting to attend to securing this special permit myself instead of sending the *dvornik* (the yard porter), whose duties comprise as many odds and ends as those of the prime minister of an empire.

At the office I was questioned concerning my religion and my occupation, which had not been inquired into previously. The question about religion was a mere formality, as they care nothing for one's creed. I stated, in reply to the last question, that I was merely "a traveler."

"Don't say that; it's too expensive," returned the official, in a friendly way.

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"To whom? How?" I asked.

"To you, of course. A traveler, as a person of leisure, pays a huge tax."

"Call me a literary person, then, if you like."

"That's not an occupation!" (Observe the delicate, unconscious sarcasm of this rejoinder! As a matter of fact, the Russian idea of literary men is that they all hold some government or other appointment, on the committee of censorship, for example,—some ratable position. Upon this they can depend for a livelihood, aside from the product of their brains; which is practical, and affords a firm foundation upon which to execute caprices.)

He suggested various things which I was not, and I declined to accept his suggestions. We got it settled at last, though he shook his head over my extravagant obstinacy in paying two dollars, when I might have got off with half the sum and a lie. He imparted a good deal of amusing information as to the manner in which people deliberately evade the passport tax with false statements; for example, governesses, who would scorn to be treated as nurses, get themselves described as *bonnes* to save money. I have no doubt that the authorities amiably assist them by friendly suggestions, as in my own case; only I decline to sail under false colors, by the authority of my own government or any other; so his amiability was wasted so far as I was concerned.

It would seem to the ordinary reader that the police would be able to lay hands on a man, when he was wanted, with tolerable promptness and accuracy, after all the details which the law requires in these "address tickets," as the local passports are called, had been duly furnished. But I remember one case among several which impressed me as instructive and amusing. The newspapers told the tale, which ran somewhat as follows: A wealthy woman of position, residing in one of the best quarters of St. Petersburg, hired a prepossessing young lackey as one of her large staff of domestics. Shortly after his advent, many articles of value began to disappear. Finally, suspicion having turned on this lackey, he also disappeared, and the police undertook to find him. It then became apparent that the fellow had used a false passport and address, and was not to be found where he was inscribed. He caused an exciting chase. This ended in the discovery of a regular robbers' nest, where a large number of false passports were captured, the prepossessing lackey and his friends having abandoned them in their attempt to escape. The papers were also constantly remarking on the use made by peasant men of their passports. The wife is inscribed on the husband's "document," separate passports for wives being, as a rule, difficult of attainment in the lower classes. The peasants are thus able, and often willing, to control their wives' places of residence and movements, and preserve entire liberty of action for themselves, since their consent is required for the separate passport, or for the wives' movements on the common passport. In such cases the passport does become an instrument of oppression, from either the Occidental or the Oriental point of view.

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As for the stories told by travelers of officious meddling by the police on their arrival in Russia, and of their footsteps being dogged, I have recently been favored with some light on that subject. I believe the tales, with reservations, since some perfectly innocent and truthful friends of mine related to me their own similar experience. A man, who seemed to their inexperienced eyes to be a police officer, told them that the authorities thought three weeks, one in Petersburg and two elsewhere, would be amply sufficient for their travels in Russia. They had a high-priced French courier, who pretended to know a little Russian. Perhaps he did know enough for his own purposes. He told them that they were watched constantly, and translated for the officer. But he did not tell them that they already had permission to remain in the country for the customary six months. I made them get out their passports, and showed them the official stamp and signature to that effect. This clever courier afterward stole from them, in Warsaw, a quantity of diamonds which he had helped them to purchase in Moscow, and of whose existence and whereabouts in their trunks no one but himself was aware. This helped me to an explanation. It is invariably the couriers or guides, I find, who tell travelers these alarming tales, and neglect to inform them of their rights. It certainly looks very much as if some confederate of theirs impersonates a police official, and as if they misinterpret. The stories of spies forever in attendance seem to be manufactured for the purpose of extorting handsome gratuities from their victims for their "protection," and for the purpose of frightening the latter out of the country before their own ignorance is discovered. As I never employed the guides, I never had any trouble with the police, either genuine or manufactured. I visited the police stations whenever I could make an excuse; and when I wished to know when and where the Emperor was to be seen, I asked a policeman or a gendarme. He always told me the exact truth unhesitatingly, and pointed out the best position. It was refreshing after the German police, who put one through the Inquisition as to one's self and one's ancestors as soon as one arrives, and who prove themselves lineal descendants of Ananias or Baron Munchausen when a traveler asks for information.

When we wished to leave the country, I again usurped the *dvornik's* duties, and paid another visit to the passport office, to inspect its workings. Our Russian passports were clipped out, and little books were given us, which constituted our permission to leave Russia at any time within the next three months, by any route we pleased, without further ceremony. These booklets contained information relating to the tax imposed on Russians for absenting themselves from their country for various periods, the custom-house regulations which forbid the entry, duty free, of more than one fur cloak, cap, and muff to each person,

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etc., since these books form return passports for Russians, though we surrendered ours at the frontier. As the hotel clerk or porter attends to all passport details, few foreigners see the inside of the office, or hear the catechisms which are conducted there, as I did. It is vulgar, it smacks of commercial life, to go one's self. Apathy and lack of interest can always be relied upon to brand one as aristocratic. In this case, however, as in many others, I considered myself repaid for following Poor Richard's advice: "If you want a thing done, do it yourself; if not, send!"

To sum up the passport question: If his passport is in order, the traveler need never entertain the slightest apprehension for a single moment, despite sensational tales to the contrary, and it will serve as a safeguard. If, for any good reason, his passport cannot be put in order, the traveler will do well to keep out of Russia, or any other country which requires such documents. In truth, although we do not require them in this country, America would be better off if all people who cannot undergo a passport scrutiny, and a German, not a Russian, passport examination, were excluded from it.

I have mentioned the post-office in connection with our passports. Subsequently, I had several entertaining interviews with the police and others on that point. One Sunday afternoon, in Moscow, we went to the police station of our quarter to get our change-of-address petition to the post-office authorities signed. There was nothing of interest about the shabby building or the rooms, on this occasion. The single officer on duty informed us that he was empowered to attend only to cases of drunkenness, breaches of the peace, and the like. We must return on Monday, he declared.

"No," said I. "Why make us waste all that time in beautiful Moscow? Here are our passports to identify us. Will you please to tell the captain, as soon as he arrives tomorrow morning, that we are genuine, and request him to sign this petition and post it?"

The officer courteously declined to look at the passports, said that my word was sufficient, and accepted my commission. Then, rising, drawing himself up, with the heels of his high wrinkled boots in regulation contact, and the scarlet pipings of his baggy green trousers and tight coat bristling with martial etiquette, he made me a profound bow, hand on heart, and said: "Madam, accept the thanks of Russia for the high honor you have done her in learning her difficult language!"

I accepted Russia's thanks with due pomp, and hastened into the street. That small, low-roofed station house seemed to be getting too contracted to contain all of us and etiquette.

Again, upon another occasion, also in Moscow, it struck us that it would be a happy idea and a clever economy of time to get ourselves certified to before our departure, instead of after our arrival in St. Petersburg. Accordingly, we betook ourselves, in a violent

snowstorm, to the police station inside the walls of the old city, as we had changed our hotel, and that was now our quarter.

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A vision of cells; of unconfined prisoners tranquilly executing hasty repairs on their clothing, with twine or something similar, in the anteroom; of a complete police hierarchy, running through all the gradations of pattern in gold and silver embroidery to the plain uniform of the roundsman, gladdened our sight while we waited. A gorgeous silver-laced official finally certified our identity, as usual without other proof than our statement, and, clapping a five-kopek stamp on our paper, bowed us out. I had never seen a stamp on such a document before, and had never been asked to pay anything; but I restrained my natural eagerness to reimburse the government and ask questions, with the idea that it might have been a purely mechanical action on the part of the officer, and in the hope of developments. They came. A couple of hours later, a messenger entered our room at the hotel, without knocking, in Russian lower-class style, and demanded thirty kopeks for the signature. I offered to pay for the stamp on the spot, and supply the remaining twenty-five kopeks when furnished with an adequate reason therefor.

"Is the captain's signature worth so much?" I asked.

"That is very little," was the answer.

"So it is. Is the captain's signature worth so little? Tell me why."

He could not, or would not.

I made him wait while I wrote a petition to the police. The burden of it was: "Why? I was born an American and curious; not too curious, but just curious enough to be interested in the ethnographical and psychological problems of foreign lands. Why the twenty-five kopeks? It is plainly too little or too much. Why?"

The messenger accepted the five kopeks for the stamp, and set out to deliver the document. But he returned after a moment, and said that he would intrust the five kopeks to my safe-keeping until he brought the answer to my document,—which he had had just sufficient time to read, by the way. That was the last I ever heard of him or of it, and I was forced to conclude that some thirsty soul had been in quest of "tea-money" for *vodka*. I am still in debt to the Russian government for five kopeks.

The last time I arrived in Petersburg, I tried a new plan. Instead of making a trip of a couple of miles to get the signature of our police captain, or sending the petition at the languid convenience of the overworked *dvornik*, I went to the general post-office, which was close by, and made a personal request that my mail matter be delivered at my new address. The proper official, whom I found after a search through most of the building, during which I observed their methods, declared that my request was illegal, and ordered me to go for the customary signature. But by this time I had learned that the mere threat to make Russian officials inspect my passport was productive of much the same effect as drawing a pistol on them would have had. It was not in the least

necessary to have the document with me; going through the motions was easier, and quite as good. Every man of them flushed up, and repelled the suggestion as a sort of personal insult; but they invariably came to terms on the spot. Accordingly, I tried it here.

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This particular man, when I pretended to draw my “open sesame” spell from my pocket, instantly dropped his official air, asked me to write my name, with quite a human, friendly manner, and then remarked, with a very every-day laugh, “That is sufficient. I have seen so much of it on your previous petitions that I can swear to it myself much better than the police captain could.”

As an offset to my anecdotes about our being lost through inability to riddle out our name on the part of the police, I must relate an instance where the post-office displayed remarkable powers of divination. One day I received an official notification from the post-office that there was a misdirected parcel for me from Moscow, lying in the proper office,— would I please to call for it? I called. The address on the parcel was “Madame Argot,” I was informed, but I must get myself certified to before I could receive it.

“But how am I to do that? I am not Madame Argot. Are you sure the parcel is for me?”

“Perfectly. It’s your affair to get the certificate.”

I went to the police station, one which I had not visited before, and stated the case.

“Go home and send the *dvornik*, as is proper,” replied the captain loftily.

I argued the matter, after my usual fashion, and at last he affixed his signature to my document, with the encouraging remark: “Well, even with this you won’t get that parcel, because the name is not yours.”

“Trust me for that,” I retorted. “As they are clever enough to know that it is for me, they will be clever enough to give it to me, or I will persuade them that they are.”

Back I went to the post-office. I had never been in that department previously, I may mention. Then I was shown a box, and asked if I expected it, and from whom it came. I asserted utter ignorance; but, as I took it in my hand, I heard a rattling, and it suddenly flashed across my mind that it might be the proofs of some photographs which the Moscow artist had “hurried” through in one month. The amiable post-office “blindman,” who had riddled out the address, was quite willing to give me the parcel without further ado, but I said:—

“Open it, and you will soon see whether it really belongs to me.”

After much protestation he did so, and then we exchanged lavish compliments,—he on the capital likenesses and the skill of the artist; I on the stupidity of the man who could evolve Argot out of my legibly engraved visiting-card, and on the cleverness of the man who could translate that name back into its original form.

The most prominent instance of minute thoughtfulness and care on the part of the post-office officials which came under my notice occurred in the depths of the country. I sent



a letter with a ten-kopek stamp on it to the post town, twelve versts distant. Foreign postage had been raised from seven to ten kopeks, and stamps, in a new design, of the latter denomination (hitherto non-existent) had been in use for about four months. The country postmaster, who had seen nothing but the old issues, carefully removed my stamp and sent it back to me, replacing it with a seven-kopek stamp and a three-kopek stamp. I felt, for a moment, as though I had been both highly complimented and gently rebuked for my remarkable skill in counterfeiting!

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As a parallel case, I may add that there were plenty of intelligent people in New York city and elsewhere who were not aware that the United States still issued three-cent stamps, or who could tell the color of them, until the Columbian set appeared to attract their attention.

II.

THE NEVSKY PROSPEKT.

The Nevsky Prospekt!

From the time when, as children, we first encounter the words, in geographical compilations disguised as books of travel, what visions do they not summon up! Visions of the realm of the Frost King and of his Regent, the White Tzar, as fantastic as any of those narrated of tropic climes by Scheherezade, and with which we are far more familiar than we are with the history of our native land.

When we attain to the reality of our visions, in point of locality at least, we find a definite starting-point ready to our hand, where veracious legend and more veracious history are satisfactorily blended. It is at the eastern extremity of the famous broad avenue,—which is the meaning of Prospekt. Here, on the bank of the Neva, tradition alleges that Alexander, Prince of Novgorod, won his great battle—and, incidentally, his surname of Nevsky and his post of patron saint of Russia—over the united forces of the Swedes and oppressive Knights of the Teutonic Order, in the year 1240.

Nearly five hundred years later, the spot was occupied by Rhitiowa, one of the forty Finnish villages scattered over the present site of St. Petersburg, as designated by the maps of the Swedes, whom Peter the Great—practically Russia's second patron saint—expelled anew when he captured their thriving commercial town, on the shore of the Neva, directly opposite, now known as Malaya Okhta, possessed of extensive foreign trade, and of a church older than the capital, which recently celebrated its two-hundredth anniversary.

It was in 1710 that Peter I. named the place "Victory," in honor of Prince-Saint Alexander Nevsky's conquest, and commanded the erection of a Lavra, or first-class monastery, the seat of a Metropolitan and of a theological seminary. By 1716 the monastery was completed, in wood, as engravings of that day show us, but in a very different form from the complex of stone buildings of the present day. Its principal facade, with extensive, stiffly arranged gardens, faced upon the river,—the only means of communication in that town, planted on a bog, threaded with marshy streams, being by boat. In fact, for a long time horses were so scarce in the infant capital, where reindeer were used in sledges even as late as the end of the last century, that no one was permitted to come to Court, during Peter the Great's reign, otherwise than by water. Necessity and the enforced

cultivation of aquatic habits in his inland subjects, which the enterprising Emperor had so much at heart, combined to counsel this regulation.

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The bones of Prince Alexander were brought to St. Petersburg, from their resting-place in the Vladimir Government, in 1724, Peter the Great occupying his favorite post as pilot and steersman in the saint's state barge, and they now repose in the monastery cathedral, under a canopy, and in a tomb of silver, 3600 pounds in weight, given by Peter's daughter, the devout Empress Elizabeth. In the cemetery surrounding the cathedral, under the fragrant firs and birches, with the blue Neva rippling far below, lie many of the men who have contributed to the advancement of their country in literature, art, and science, during the last two centuries.

Of all the historical memories connected with this monastery none is more curious than that relating to the second funeral of Peter III. He had been buried by his wife, in 1762, with much simplicity, in one of the many churches of the Lavra, which contains the family tombs and monuments not only of members of the imperial family, but of the noble families most illustrious in the eighteenth century. When Paul I. came to the throne, in 1796, his first care was to give his long-deceased father a more fitting burial. The body was exhumed. Surrounded by his court, Pavel Petrovitch took the imperial crown from the altar, placed it on his own head, then laid it reverently on his father's coffin. When Peter III. was transferred immediately afterward, with magnificent ceremonial, to the Winter Palace, there to lie in state by the side of his wife, Katherine II., and to accompany her to his proper resting-place among the sovereigns of Russia, in the cathedral of the Peter-Paul fortress, Count Alexei Grigorevitch Orloff was appointed, with fine irony, to carry the crown before his former master, whom he had betrayed, and in the necessity for whose first funeral he had played the part of Fate. It was with considerable difficulty that he was hunted up, while Emperor and pageant waited, in the obscure corner where he was sobbing and weeping; and with still greater difficulty was he finally persuaded to perform the task assigned to him in the procession.

Outside the vast monastery, which, like most Russian monasteries, resembles a fortress, though, unlike most of them, it has never served as such, the scene is almost rural. Pigeons, those symbols of the Holy Ghost, inviolable in Russia, attack with impunity the grain bags in the acres of storehouses opposite, pick holes, and eat their fill undisturbed.

From this spot to the slight curve in the Prospekt, at the Znamenskaya Square, a distance of about a mile, where the Moscow railway station is situated, and where the train of steam tram-cars is superseded by less terrifying horse-cars, the whole aspect of the avenue is that of a provincial town, in the character of the people and the buildings, even to the favorite crushed strawberry and azure washes, and green iron roofs on the countrified shops. Here and there, not very far away, a log-house may even be espied.

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During the next three quarters of a mile the houses and shops are more city-like, and, being newer than those beyond, are more ornamented as to the stucco of their windows and doors. Here, as elsewhere in this stoneless land, with rare exceptions, the buildings are of brick or rubble, stuccoed and washed, generally in light yellow, with walls three feet or more apart, warmly filled in, and ventilated through the hermetically sealed windows by ample panes in the centre of the sashes, or by apertures in the string-courses between stories, which open into each room. Shops below, apartments above, this is the nearly invariable rule.

It is only when we reach the Anitchkoff Bridge, with its graceful railing of sea-horses, adorned with four colossal bronze groups of horse-tamers, from the hand of the Russian sculptor, Baron Klodt, that the really characteristic part of the Nevsky begins.

It is difficult to believe that fifty years ago this spot was the end of the Petersburg world. But at that epoch the Nevsky was decorated with rows of fine large trees, which have now disappeared to the last twig. The Fontanka River, or canal, over which we stand, offers the best of the many illustrations of the manner in which Peter the Great, with his ardent love of water and Dutch ways, and his worthy successors have turned natural disadvantages into advantages and objects of beauty. The Fontanka was the largest of the numerous marshy rivers in that Arctic bog selected by Peter I. for his new capital, which have been deepened, widened, faced with cut granite walls, and utilized as means of cheap communication between distant parts of the city, and as relief channels for the inundating waves of the Gulf of Finland, which rise, more or less, every year, from August to November, at the behest of the southwest gale. That this last precaution is not superfluous is shown by the iron flood-mark set into the wall of the Anitchkoff Palace, on the southern shore of the Fontanka, as on so many other public buildings in the city, with "1824" appended,—the date of one celebrated and disastrous inundation which attained in some places the height of thirteen feet and seven inches. This particular river derived its name from the fact that it was trained to carry water and feed the fountains in Peter the Great's favorite Summer Garden, of which only one now remains.

At the close of the last century, and even later, persons out of favor at Court, or nobles who had committed misdemeanors, were banished to the southern shores of the Fontanka, as to a foreign land. Among the amusements at the *datchas*,—the wooden country houses,—in the wilder recesses of the vast parks which studded both shores, the chase after wild animals, and from bandits, played a prominent part.

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The stretch which we have traversed on our way from the monastery, and which is punctuated at the corner of the canal and the Prospekt by the pleasing brick and granite palace of the Emperor's brother, Grand Duke Sergiei Alexandrovitch, which formerly belonged to Prince Byeloselsky-Byelozersky, was the suburb belonging to Lieutenant-Colonel Anitchkoff, who built the first bridge, of wood, in 1715. As late as the reign of Alexander I., all persons entering the town were required to inscribe their names in the register kept at the barrier placed at this bridge. Some roguish fellows having conspired to cast ridicule on this custom, by writing absurd names, the guards were instructed to make an example of the next jester whose name should strike them as suspicious. Fate willed that the imperial comptroller, Baltazar Baltazarovitch Kampenhausen, with his Russianized German name, should fall a victim to this order, and he was detained until his fantastic cognomen, so harsh to Slavic ears, could be investigated.

By day or by night, in winter or summer, it is a pure delight to stand on the Anitchkoff Bridge and survey the scene on either hand. If we gaze to the north toward what is one of the oldest parts settled on the rivulet-riddled so-called "mainland," in this Northern Venice, we see the long, plain facade of the Katherine Institute for the education of the daughters of officers, originally built by Peter the Great for his daughter Anna, as the "Italian Palace," but used only for the palace servants, until it was built over and converted to its present purpose. Beyond, we catch a glimpse of the yellow wings of Count Scheremetieff's ancient house and its great iron railing, behind which, in a spacious courtyard, after the Moscow fashion so rare in thrifty Petersburg, the main building lies invisible to us. If we look to the south, we find the long ochre mass of the Anitchkoff Palace, facing on the Nevsky, upon the right shore; on the left, beyond the palace of Sergiei Alexandrovitch, the branch of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, in old Russian style, with highly colored saints and heads of seraphim on the outer walls; and a perspective of light, stuccoed building,—dwellings, markets, churches,—until the eye halts with pleasure on the distant blue dome of the Troitzky cathedral, studded with golden stars. Indeed, it is difficult to discover a vista in St. Petersburg which does not charm us with a glimpse of one or more of these cross-crowned domes, floating, bubble-like, in the pale azure of the sky. Though they are far from being as beautiful in form or coloring as those of Moscow, they satisfy us at the moment.

If it is on a winter night that we take up our stand here, we may catch a distant glimpse of the numerous "skating-gardens," laid out upon the ice cleared on the snowy surface of the canal. The ice-hills will be black with forms flitting swiftly down the shining roads on sledges or skates, illuminated by the electric light; a band will be braying blithely, regardless of the piercing cold, and the skaters will dance on, in their fancy-dress ball or prize races, or otherwise, clad so thinly as to amaze the shivering foreigner as he hugs his furs.

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By day the teamsters stand upon the quay, with rough aprons over their ballet-skirted sheepskin coats, waiting for a job. If we hire one of them, we shall find that they all belong to the ancient Russian Artel, or Labor Union, which prevents competition beyond a certain point. When the price has been fixed, after due and inevitable chaffering, one *lomovoi* grasps his shapeless cap by its worn edge of fur, bites a kopek, and drops it in. Each of the other men contributes a marked copper likewise, and we are invited to draw lots, in full view, to determine which of them shall have the job. The master of the Artel sees to it that there is fair play on both sides. If an unruly member presumes to intervene with a lower bid, with the object of monopolizing the job out of turn, he is promptly squelched, and, though his bid may be allowed to stand, the man whose kopek we have drawn must do the work. The winner chee-ee-eeeps to his little horse, whose shaggy mane has been tangled by the loving hand of the *domovoi* (house-sprite) and hangs to his knees. The patient beast, which, like all Russian horses, is never covered, no matter how severe the weather may be, or how hot he may be from exercise, rouses himself from his real or simulated slumber, and takes up the burden of life again, handicapped by the huge wooden arch, gayly painted in flowers and initials, which joins his shafts, and does stout service despite his sorry aspect.

But the early summer is the season when the Fontanka is to be seen in its most characteristic state. The brilliant blue water sparkles under the hot sun, or adds one more tint to the exquisite hues which make of the sky one vast, gleaming fire-opal on those marvelous “white nights” when darkness never descends to a depth beyond the point where it leaves all objects with natural forms and colors, and only spiritualizes them with the gentle vagueness of a translucent veil. Small steamers, manned by wooden-faced, blond Finns, connect the unfashionable suburban quarters, lying near the canal’s entrance into the Neva on the west, with the fashionable Court quarter on the northern quays at its other entrance into the Neva, seven versts away. They dart about like sea-gulls, picking their path, not unfraught with serious danger, among the obstructions. The obstructions are many: washing-house boats (it is a good old unexploded theory in Petersburg that clothes are clean only when rinsed in running water, even though our eyes and noses inform us, unaided by chart, where the drainage goes); little flotillas of dingy flat-boats, anchored around the “Fish-Gardens,” and containing the latter’s stock in trade, where persons of taste pick their second dinner-course out of the flopping inmates of a temporary scoop-net; huge, unwieldy, wood barks, put together with wooden pegs, and steered with long, clumsy rudders, which the poor peasants have painfully poled —tramp, tramp, tramp, along the sides—through four hundred miles of tortuous waterways from that province of the former haughty republic, “Lord Novgorod the Great,” where Prince Rurik ruled and laid the foundations of the present imperial empire, and whence came Prince-Saint Alexander, to win his surname of Nevsky, as we have seen, at the spot where his monastery stands, a couple of miles, at most, away.

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The boatmen, who have trundled all day long their quaint little barrows over the narrow iron rails into the spacious inner courtyards of the houses on the quay, and have piled up their wood for winter fuel, or loaded it into the carts for less accessible buildings, now sit on the stern of their barks, over their coarse food,—sour black bread, boiled buckwheat groats, and salted cucumbers,—doffing their hats and crossing themselves reverently before and after their simple meal, and chatting until the red glow of sunset in the north flickers up to the zenith in waves of sea-green, lilac, and amber, and descends again in the north, at the pearl pink of dawn. Sleep is a lost art with these men, as with all classes of people, during those nerve-destroying “white nights.” When all the silvery satin of the birch logs has been removed from their capacious holds, these primitive barks will be unpegged, and the cheap “bark-wood,” riddled with holes as by a *mitrailleuse*, will be used for poor structures on the outskirts of the town.

On the upper shore of this river, second only to the Neva in its perennial fascination, and facing on the Prospekt, stands the Anitchkoff Palace, on the site of a former lumber-yard, which was purchased by the Empress Elizabeth, when she commissioned her favorite architect, Rastrelli, to erect for Count Razumovsky a palace in that rococo style which he used in so many palaces and churches during her reign and that of Katherine II.,—the rococo style being, by the way, quite the most unsuited discoverable for Russian churches.

Count Alexei Grigorevitch Razumovsky was the Empress Elizabeth’s husband, the uneducated but handsome son of a plain Kazak from Little Russia, who attracted the attention of Elizaveta Petrovna as his sweet voice rang out in the imperial choir, at mass, in her palace church. When the palace was completed, in 1757, it did not differ materially from its present appearance, as a painting in the Winter Palace shows, except that its colonnade, now inclosed for the Imperial Chancellery and offices, then abutted directly on the Fontanka. It has had a very varied ownership, with some curious features in that connection which remind one of a gigantic game of ball between Katherine II. and Prince Potemkin. Count Razumovsky did not live in it until after the Empress Elizabeth’s death, in 1762. After his own death, his brother sold it to the state, and Katherine II. presented it to Prince Potemkin, who promptly resold it to a wealthy merchant-contractor in the commissariat department of the army, who in turn sold it to Katherine II., who gave it once more to Potemkin. The prince never lived here, but gave sumptuous garden parties in the vast park, which is now in great part built over, and sold it back to the state again in 1794. It was first occupied by royalty in 1809, when the Emperor Alexander I. settled his sister here, with her first husband,—that Prince of Oldenburg whose territory in Germany Napoleon I. so summarily annexed a few years later, thereby converting the Oldenburgs permanently into Russian princes.

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The Grand Duke Heir Nicholas used it from 1819 until he ascended the throne, in 1825, and since that time it has been considered the palace of the heir to the throne. But the present Emperor has continued to occupy it since his accession, preferring its simplicity to the magnificence of the Winter Palace.

The high walls, of that reddish-yellow hue, like the palace itself, which is usually devoted to government buildings in Russia, continue the line of offices along the Prospekt, and surround wooded gardens, where the Emperor and his family coast, skate, and enjoy their winter pleasures, invisible to the eyes of passers-by.

These woods and walls also form the eastern boundary of the Alexandra Square, in whose centre rises Mikeschin and Opekushin's fine colossal bronze statue of Katherine II., crowned, sceptred, in imperial robes, and with the men who made her reign illustrious grouped about her feet. Among these representatives of the army, navy, literature, science, art, there is one woman,—that dashing Princess Elizaveta Romanovna Dashkoff, who helped Katherine to her throne. As Empress, Katherine appointed her to be first president of the newly founded Academy of Sciences, but afterward withdrew her favor, and condemned her to both polite and impolite exile,—because of her services, the princess hints, in her celebrated and very lively "Memoirs."

In the Alexandra Theatre, for Russian and German drama, which rears its new (1828) Corinthian peristyle and its bronze quadriga behind the great Empress, forming the background of the Square, two of the Empress's dramas still hold the stage, on occasion. For this busy and energetic woman not only edited and published a newspaper, the greater part of which she wrote with her own hand, but composed numerous comedies and comic operas, where the moral, though sufficiently obvious all the way through, one would have thought, in the good old style is neatly labeled at the end. These were acted first in the private theatres of the various palaces, by the dames and cavaliers of the Court, after which professional actors presented them to the public in the ordinary theatres.

It is in vain that we scrutinize the chubby-cheeked countenance of the bronze Prince Potemkin, at Katherine II.'s feet, to discover the secret of the charm which made the imperial lady who towers above him force upon him so often the ground upon which they both now stand. He stares stolidly at the Prospekt, ignoring not only the Theatre, but the vast structures containing the Direction of Theatres and Prisons, the Censor's Office, Theatrical School, and other government offices in the background; the new building for shops and apartments, where ancient Russian forms have been adapted to modern street purposes; and even the wonderfully rich Imperial Public Library, begun in 1794, to contain the books brought from Warsaw, with its Corinthian peristyle interspersed with bronze statues of ancient

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sages, on the garden side,—all of which stand upon the scene of his former garden parties, as the name of the avenue beyond the plain end of the Library on the Prospekt—Great Garden Street—reminds us. Not far away is the site of the tunnel dug under the Prospekt by the revolutionists, which, however, was fortunately discovered in time to prevent the destruction of one of the fairest parts of the city, and its most valuable buildings. With the next block we enter upon the liveliest, the most characteristic portion of the Nevsky Prospekt, in that scant fraction over a mile which is left to us above the Anitchkoff Bridge.

Here stands the vast bazaar known as the *Gostinny Dvor*,—"Guests' Court,"—a name which dates from the epoch when a wealthy merchant engaged in foreign trade, and owning his own ships, was distinguished from the lesser sort by the title of "Guest," which we find in the ancient epic songs of Russia. Its frontage of seven hundred feet on the Prospekt, and one thousand and fifty on Great Garden and the next parallel street, prepare us to believe that it may really contain more than five hundred shops in the two stories, the lower surrounded by a vaulted arcade supporting an open gallery, which is invaluable for decorative purposes at Easter and on imperial festival days. Erected in 1735, very much in its present shape, the one common throughout the country, on what had been an impassable morass a short time before, and where the ground still quakes at dawn, it may not contain the largest and best shops in town, and its merchants certainly are not "guests" in the ancient acceptation of the word; but we may claim, nevertheless, that it presents a compendium of most purchasable articles extant, from *samovari*, furs, and military goods, to books, sacred images, and Moscow imitations of Parisian novelties at remarkably low prices, as well as the originals.

The nooks and spaces of the arcade, especially at the corners and centre, are occupied by booths of cheap wares. The sacred image, indispensable to a Russian shop, is painted on the vaulted ceiling; the shrine lamp flickers in the open air, thus serving many aproned, homespun and sheepskin clad dealers. The throng of promenaders here is always varied and interesting. The practiced eye distinguishes infinite shades of difference in wealth, social standing, and other conditions. The lady in the velvet *shuba*, lined with sable or black fox, her soft velvet cap edged with costly otter, her head wrapped in a fleecy knitted shawl of goat's-down from the steppes of Orenburg, or pointed hood—the *bashlyk*—of woven goat's-down from the Caucasus, has driven hither in her sledge or carriage, and has alighted to gratify the curiosity of her sons. We know at a glance whether the lads belong in the aristocratic Pages' Corps, on Great Garden Street, hard by, in the University, the Law School, the Lyceum, or the Gymnasium, and we can make a shrewd guess at their future professions by their faces as well as by their uniforms. The lady who comes to meet us in sleeved pelisse, wadded with eider-down, and the one in a short jacket have arrived, and must return, on foot; they could not drive far in the open air, so thinly clad.

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At Christmas-tide there is a great augmentation in the queer “Vyazemsky” and other cakes, the peasant laces, sweet Vyborg cracknels, fruit pastils, and other popular goods, on which these petty open-air dealers appear to thrive, both in health and purse. The spacious area between the bazaar and the sidewalk of the Nevsky is filled with Christmas-trees, beautifully unadorned, or ruined with misplaced gaudiness, brought in, in the majority of cases, by Finns from the surrounding country. Again, in the week preceding Palm Sunday, the *Verbnaya Yarmaraka*, or Pussy Willow Fair, takes place here. Nominally, it is held for the purpose of providing the public with twigs of that aesthetic plant (the only one which shows a vestige of life at that season), which are used as palms, from the Emperor’s palace to the poorest church in the land. In reality, it is a most amusing fair for toys and cheap goods suitable for Easter eggs; gay paper roses, wherewith to adorn the Easter cake; and that combination of sour and sweet cream and other forbidden delicacies, the *paskha*, with which the long, severe fast is to be broken, after midnight matins on Easter. Here are plump little red Finland parrots, green and red finches, and other song-birds, which kindly people buy and set free, after a pretty custom. The board and canvas booths, the sites for which are drawn by lot by soldiers’ widows, and sold or used as suits their convenience, are locked at night by dropping the canvas flap, and are never guarded; while the hint that thefts may be committed, or that watching is necessary, is repelled with indignation by the stall-keepers.

There is always a popular toy of the hour. One year it consisted of highly colored, beautifully made bottle-imps, which were loudly cried as *Amerikanskiya zhiteli*,—inhabitants of America. We inquired the reason for their name.

“They are made in the exact image of the Americans,” explained the peasant vendor, offering a pale blue imp, with a long, red tongue and a phenomenal tail, for our admiration.

“We are inhabitants of America. Is the likeness very strong?” we asked.

The crowd tittered softly; the man looked frightened; but finding that no dire fate threatened, he was soon vociferating again, with a roguish grin:—

“*Kupiti, kupi-i-iti! Prevoskhodniya Amerikanskiya zhiteli! Sa-a-miya nastoyashtschiya!*”—Buy, buy, splendid natives of America! the most genuine sort!

Far behind this Gostinny Dvor extends a complex mass of other curious “courts” and markets, all worthy of a visit for the popular types which they afford of the lower classes. Among them all none is more steadily and diversely interesting, at all seasons of the year, than the *Syennaya Ploshtschad*,—the Haymarket,—so called from its use in days long gone by. Here, in the Fish Market, is the great repository for the frozen food which is so necessary in a land where the church exacts a sum total of over

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four months' fasting out of the twelve. Here the fish lie piled like cordwood, or overflow from casks, for economical buyers. Merchants' wives, with heads enveloped in colored kerchiefs, in the olden style, well tucked in at the neck of their *salopi*, or sleeved fur coats, prowl in search of bargains. Here sit the fishermen from the distant Murman coast, from Arkhangel, with weather-beaten but intelligent faces, in their quaint skull-caps of reindeer hide, and baggy, shapeless garments of mysterious skins, presiding over the wares which they have risked their lives to catch in the stormy Arctic seas, during the long days of the brief summer-time; codfish dried and curled into gray unrecognizableness; yellow caviar which resists the teeth like tiny balls of gutta-percha, —not the delicious gray “pearl” caviar of the sturgeon,—and other marine food which is never seen on the rich man's table.

But we must return to the Nevsky Prospekt. Nestling at the foot of the City Hall, at the entrance of the broad street between it and the Gostinny Dvor, on the Nevsky, stands a tiny chapel, which is as thriving as the bazaar, in its own way, and as striking a compendium of some features in Russian architecture and life. Outside hangs a large image of the “Saviour-not-made-with-hands,”—the Russian name for the sacred imprint on St. Veronica's handkerchief,—which is the most popular of all the representations of Christ in *ikoni*. Before it burns the usual “unquenchable lamp,” filled with the obligatory pure olive-oil. Beneath it stands a table bearing a large bowl of consecrated water. On hot summer days the thirsty wayfarer takes a sip, using the ancient Russian *kovsh*, or short-handled ladle, which lies beside it, crosses himself, and drops a small offering on the dish piled with copper coins near by, making change for himself if he has not the exact sum which he wishes to give.

Inside, many *ikoni* decorate the walls. The pale flames of their shrine-lamps are supplemented by masses of candles in the huge standing candlesticks of silver. A black-robed monk from the monastery is engaged, almost without cessation, in intoning prayers of various sorts, before one or another of the images. The little chapel is thronged; there is barely room for respectfully flourished crosses, such as the peasant loves, often only for the more circumscribed sign current among the upper classes, and none at all for the favorite “ground reverences.” The approach to the door is lined with two files of monks and nuns: monks in high *klobuki*, like rimless chimney-pot hats, draped with black woolen veils, which are always becoming; *tchernitzi*, or lay sisters, from distant convents, in similar headgear, in caps flat or pointed like the small end of a watermelon, and with ears protected by black woolen shawls ungracefully pinned. Serviceable man's boots do more than peep out from beneath the short, rusty-black skirts. Each monk and nun holds a small pad of threadbare black velvet, whereon a cross of tarnished gold braid, and a stray copper or two, by way of bait, explain the eleemosynary significance of the bearers' “broad” crosses, dizzy “reverences to the girdle,” and muttered entreaty, of which we catch only: “*Khristi Radi*”—For Christ's sake.

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People of all classes turn in here for a moment of prayer, to “place a candle” to some saint, for the health, in body or soul, of friend or relative: the workman, his tools on his back in a coarse linen kit; the bearded *muzhik* from the country, clad in his sheepskin *tulup*, wool inward, the soiled yellow leather outside set off by a gay sash; ladies, officers, civilians,—the stream never ceases.

The only striking feature about the next building of importance, the *Gradskaya Duma*, or City Hall, is the lofty tower, upon whose balcony, high in air, guards pace incessantly, on the watch for fires. By day they telegraph the locality of disaster to the fire department by means of black balls and white boards, in fixed combinations; by night, with colored lanterns. Each section of the city has a signal-tower of this sort, and the engine-house is close at hand. *Gradskaya Duma* means, literally, city thought, and the profundity of the meditations sometimes indulged in in this building, otherwise not remarkable, may be inferred from the fact discovered a few years ago, that many honored members of the *Duma* (which also signifies the Council of City Fathers), whose names still stood on the roll, were dead, though they continued to vote and exercise their other civic functions with exemplary regularity!

Naturally, in a city which lies on a level with the southern point of Greenland, the most characteristic season to select for our observations of the life is winter.

The Prospekt wakes late. It has been up nearly all night, and there is but little inducement to early rising when the sun itself sets such a fashion as nine o'clock for its appearance on the horizon, like a pewter disk, with a well-defined hard rim, when he makes his appearance at all. If we take the Prospekt at different hours, we may gain a fairly comprehensive view of many Russian ways and people, cosmopolitan as the city is.

At half-past seven in the morning, the horse-cars, which have been resting since ten o'clock in the evening, make a start, running always in groups of three, stopping only at turnouts. The *dvorniki* retire from the entrance to the courtyards, where they have been sleeping all night with one eye open, wrapped in their sheepskin coats. A few shabby *izvostchiks* make their appearance somewhat later, in company with small schoolboys, in their soldierly uniforms, knapsacks of books on back, and convoyed by servants. Earliest of all are the closed carriages of officials, evidently the most lofty in grade, since it was decided, two or three years ago, by one of this class, that his subordinates could not reasonably be expected to arrive at business before ten or eleven o'clock after they had sat up until daylight over their indispensable club *vint*—which is Russian whist.

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Boots (*muzhiki*) in scarlet cotton blouses, and full trousers of black velveteen, tucked into tall wrinkled boots, dart about to bakery and dairy shop, preparing for their masters' morning "tea." Venders of newspapers congregate at certain spots, and charge for their wares in inverse ratio to the experience of their customers; for regular subscribers receive their papers through the post-office, and, if we are in such unseemly haste as to care for the news before the ten o'clock delivery—or the eleven o'clock, if the postman has not found it convenient otherwise—we must buy on the street, though we live but half a block from the newspaper office, which opens at ten. By noon, every one is awake. The restaurants are full of breakfasters, and Dominique's, which chanced to stand on the most crowded stretch of the street, on the sunny north side beloved of promenaders, is dense with officers, cigarette smoke, and characteristic national viands judiciously mingled with those of foreign lands.

Mass is over, and a funeral passes down the Nevsky Prospekt, on its way to the fashionable Alexander Nevsky monastery or Novo-Dyevitché convent cemeteries. The deceased may have been a minister of state, or a great officer of the Court, or a military man who is accompanied by warlike pageant. The choir chants a dirge. The priests, clad in vestments of black velvet and silver, seem to find their long thick hair sufficient protection to their bare heads. The professional mutes, with their silver-trimmed black baldrics and cocked hats, appear to have plucked up the street lanterns by their roots to serve as candles, out of respect to the deceased's greatness, and to illustrate how the city has been cast into darkness by the withdrawal of the light of his countenance. The dead man's orders and decorations are borne in imposing state, on velvet cushions, before the gorgeous funeral car, where the pall, of cloth of gold, which will be made into a priest's vestment once the funeral is over, droops low among artistic wreaths and palms, of natural flowers, or beautifully executed in silver. Behind come the mourners on foot, a few women, many men, a Grand Duke or two among them, it may be; the carriages follow; the devout of the lower classes, catching sight of the train, cross themselves broadly, mutter a prayer, and find time to turn from their own affairs and follow for a little way, out of respect to the stranger corpse. More touching are the funerals which pass up the Prospekt on their way to the unfashionable cemetery across the Neva, on Vasily Ostroff; a tiny pink coffin resting on the knees of the bereaved parents in a sledge, or borne by a couple of bareheaded men, with one or two mourners walking slowly behind.

From noon onward, the scene on the Prospekt increases constantly in vivacity. The sidewalks are crowded, especially on Sundays and holidays, with a dense and varied throng, of so many nationalities and types that it is a valuable lesson in ethnography to sort them, and that a secret uttered is absolutely safe in no tongue,—unless, possibly, it be that of Patagonia. But the universal language of the eye conquers all difficulties, even for the remarkably fair Tatar women, whose national garb includes only the baldest and gauziest apology for the obligatory veil.

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The plain facades of the older buildings on this part of the Prospekt, which are but three or four stories in height,—elevators are rare luxuries in Petersburg, and few buildings exceed five stories,—are adorned, here and there, with gayly-colored pictorial representations of the wares for sale within. But little variety in architecture is furnished by the inconspicuous Armenian, and the uncharacteristic Dutch Reformed and Lutheran churches which break the severe line of this “Tolerance Street,” as it has been called. Most fascinating of all the shops are those of the furriers and goldsmiths, with their surprises and fresh lessons for foreigners; the treasures of Caucasian and Asian art in the Eastern bazaars; the “Colonial wares” establishments, with their delicious game cheeses, and odd *studena* (fishes in jelly), their pineapples at five and ten dollars, their tiny oysters from the Black Sea at twelve and a half cents apiece.

Enthralling as are the shop windows, the crowd on the sidewalk is more enthralling still. There are Kazaks, dragoons, cadets of the military schools, students, so varied, though their gay uniforms are hidden by their coats, that their heads resemble a bed of verbenas in the sun. There are officers of every sort: officers with rough gray overcoats and round lambskin caps; officers in large, flat, peaked caps, and smooth-surfaced voluminous cape-coats, wadded with eider-down and lined with gray silk, which trail on their spurs, and with collars of costly beaver or striped American raccoon, and long sleeves forever dangling unused. A snippet of orange and black ribbon worn in the buttonhole shows us that the wearer belongs to the much-coveted military Order of St. George. There are civilians in black cape-coats of the military pattern, topped off with cold, uncomfortable, but fashionable chimneypot hats, or, more sensibly, with high caps of beaver.

It is curious to observe how many opinions exist as to the weather. The officers leave their ears unprotected; a passing troop of soldiers— fine, large, hardy fellows—wear the strip of black woolen over their ears, but leave their *bashlyks* hanging unused on their backs, with tabs tacked neatly under shoulder-straps and belts, for use on the Balkans or some other really cold spot. Most of the ladies, on foot or in sledges, wear bashlyks or Orenburg shawls, over wadded fur caps, well pulled down to the brows. We may be sure that the pretty woman who trusts to her bonnet only has also neglected to put on the necessary warm galoshes, and that when she reaches home, sympathizing friends will rub her vain little ears, feet, and brow with spirits of wine, to rescue her from the results of her folly. Only officers and soldiers possess the secret of going about in simple leather boots, or protected merely by a pair of stiff, slapping leather galoshes, accommodated to the spurs.

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For some mysterious reason, the picturesque nurses, with their pearl-embroidered, diadem-shaped caps, like the *kokoshniki* of the Empress and Court ladies, their silver-trimmed petticoats and jackets patterned after the ancient Russian “soul-warmers,” and made of pink or blue cashmere, never have any children in their charge in winter. Indeed, if we were to go by the evidence offered by the Nevsky Prospekt, especially in cold weather, we should assert that there are no children in the city, and that the nurses are used as “sheep-dogs” by ladies long past the dangerous bloom of youth and beauty.

The more fashionable people are driving, however, and that portion of the one hundred and fourteen feet of the Prospekt’s width which is devoted to the roadway is, if possible, even more varied and entertaining in its kaleidoscopic features than the sidewalks. It is admirably kept at all seasons. With the exception of the cobblestone roadbed for the tramway in the centre, it is laid with hexagonal wooden blocks, well spiked together and tarred, resting upon tarred beams and planks, and forming a pavement which is both elastic and fairly resistant to the volcanic action of the frost. The snow is maintained at such a level that, while sledging is perfect, the closed carriages which are used for evening entertainments, calls, and shopping are never incommoded. Street sweepers, in red cotton blouses and clean white linen aprons, sweep on calmly in the icy chill. The police, with their *bashlyks* wrapped round their heads in a manner peculiar to themselves, stand always in the middle of the street and regulate the traffic.

We will hire an *izvostchik* and join the throng. The process is simple; it consists in setting ourselves up at auction on the curbstone, among the numerous cabbies waiting for a job, and knocking ourselves down to the lowest bidder. If our Vanka (Johnny, the generic name for cabby) drives too slowly, obviously with the object of loitering away our money, a policeman will give him a hint to whip up, or we may effect the desired result by threatening to speak to the next guardian of the peace. If Vanka attempts to intrude upon the privileges of the private carriages, for whom is reserved the space next the tramway track and the row of high, silvered posts which bear aloft the electric lights, a sharp “*Beregis!*” (Look out for yourself!) will be heard from the first fashionable coachman who is impeded in his swift career, and he will be called to order promptly by the police. Ladies may not, unfortunately, drive in the smartest of the public carriages, but must content themselves with something more modest and more shabby. But Vanka is usually good-natured, patient, and quite unconscious of his shabbiness, at least in the light of a grievance or as affecting his dignity. It was one of these shabby, but democratic and self-possessed fellows who furnished us with a fine illustration of the peasant qualities. We encountered one of the Emperor’s cousins on his way to his regimental barracks; the Grand Duke mistook us for acquaintances, and saluted. Our *izvostchik* returned the greeting.

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“Was that Vasily Dmitrich?” we asked in Russian form.

“Yes, madam.”

“Whom was he saluting?”

“Us,” replied the man, with imperturbable gravity. Very different from our poor fellow, who remembers his duties to the saints and churches, and salutes Kazan Cathedral, as we pass, with cross and bared head, is the fashionable coachman, who sees nothing but his horses. Our man’s cylindrical cap of imitation fur is old, his summer *armyak* of blue cloth fits, as best it may, over his lean form and his sheepskin *tulup*, and is girt with a cheap cotton sash.

The head of the fashionable coachman is crowned with a becoming gold-laced cap, in the shape of the ace of diamonds, well stuffed with down, and made of scarlet, sky-blue, sea-green, or other hue of velvet. His fur-lined *armyak*, reaching to his feet,—through whose silver buttons under the left arm he is bursting, with pads for fashion or with good living,—is secured about his portly waist by a silken girdle glowing with roses and butterflies. His legs are too fat to enter the sledge,—that is to say, if his master truly respects his own dignity, —and his feet are accommodated in iron stirrups outside. He leans well back, with arms outstretched to accord with the racing speed at which he drives. In the tiny sledge—the smaller it is, the more stylish, in inverse ratio to the coachman, who is expected to be as broad as it is —sits a lady hugging her crimson velvet *shuba* lined with curled white Thibetan goat, or feathery black fox fur, close about her ears. An officer holds her firmly with one arm around the waist, a very necessary precaution at all seasons, with the fast driving, where drozhkies and sledges are utterly devoid of back or side rail. The spans of huge Orloff stallions, black or dappled gray, display their full beauty of form in the harnesses of slender straps and silver chains; their beautiful eyes are unconcealed by blinders. They are covered with a coarse-meshed woolen net fastened to the winged dashboard, black, crimson, purple, or blue, which trails in the snow in company with their tails and the heavy tassels of the fur-edged cloth robe. The horses, the wide-spreading reddish beard of the coachman, parted in the middle like a well-worn whisk broom, the hair, eyelashes, and furs of the occupants of the sledge, all are frosted with rime until each filament seems to have been turned into silver wire.

There is an alarm of fire somewhere. A section of the fire department passes, that imposing but amusing procession of hand-engine, three water-barrels, pennons, and fine horses trained in the *haute école*, which does splendid work with apparently inadequate means. An officer in gray lambskin cap flashes by, drawn by a pair of fine trotters. “*Vot on sam!*” mutters our *izvostchik*,—There he is himself! It is General Gresser*, the prefect of the capital, who maintains perfect order, and demonstrates the possibilities of keeping streets always clean in an impossible climate. The pounding of those huge trotters’ hoofs is so absolutely distinctive—as distinctive as the unique gray

cap—that we can recognize it as they pass, cry like the *izvostchik*, “*Vot on sam!*” and fly to the window with the certainty that it will be “he himself.”

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* Since the above was written, this able officer and very efficient prefect has died.

Court carriages with lackeys in crimson and gold, ambassadors' sledges with cock-plumed chasseurs and cockaded coachmen, the latter wearing their chevrons on their backs; rude wooden sledges, whose sides are made of knotted ropes, filled with superfluous snow; grand ducal *troikas* with clinking harnesses studded with metal plaques and flying tassels, the outer horses coquetting, as usual, beside the staid trot of the shaft-horse,—all mingle in the endless procession which flows on up the Nevsky Prospekt through the Bolshaya Morskaya,—Great Sea Street,—and out upon the Neva quays, and back again, to see and be seen, until long after the sun has set on the short days, at six minutes to three. A plain sledge approaches. The officer who occupies it is dressed like an ordinary general, and there are thousands of generals! As he drives quietly along, police and sentries give him the salute of the ordinary general; so do those who recognize him by his face or his Kazak orderly. It is the Emperor out for his afternoon exercise. If we meet him near the gate of the Anitchkoff Palace, we may find him sitting placidly beside us, while our sledge and other sledges in the line are stopped for a moment to allow him to enter.

Here is another sledge, also differing in no respect from the equipages of other people, save that the lackey on the low knife-board behind wears a peculiar livery of dark green, pale blue, and gold (or with white in place of the green at Easter-tide). The lady whose large dark eyes are visible between her sable cap and the superb black fox shawl of her crimson velvet cloak is the Empress. The lady beside her is one of her ladies-in-waiting. Attendants, guards, are absolutely lacking, as in the case of the Emperor.

Here, indeed, is the place to enjoy winter. The dry, feathery snow descends, but no one heeds it. We turn up our coat collars and drive on. Umbrellas are unknown abominations. The permanent marquises, of light iron-work, which are attached to most of the entrances, are serviceable only to those who use closed carriages, and in the rainy autumn.

Just opposite the centre of this thronged promenade, well set back from the street, stands the Cathedral of the Kazan Virgin. Outside, on the quay of the tortuous Katherine Canal, made a navigable water-way under the second Katherine, but lacking, through its narrowness, the picturesque features of the Fontanka, flocks of pigeons are fed daily from the adjoining grain shops. In the curve of the great colonnade, copied, like the exterior of the church itself, from that of St. Peter at Rome, bronze statues, heroic in size, of generals Kutuzoff and Barclay de Tolly, by the Russian sculptor Orlovsky, stand on guard.

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Hither the Emperor and Empress come “to salute the Virgin,” on their safe return from a journey. Hither are brought imperial brides in gorgeous state procession—when they are of the Greek faith—on their way to the altar in the Winter Palace. We can never step into this temple without finding some deeply interesting and characteristically Russian event in progress. After we have run the inevitable gauntlet of monks, nuns, and other beggars at the entrance, we may happen upon a baptism, just beyond, the naked, new-born infant sputtering gently after his thrice-repeated dip in the candle-decked font, with the priest’s hand covering his eyes, ears, mouth, and nostrils, and now undergoing the ceremony of anointment or confirmation. Or we may come upon a bridal couple, in front of the solid silver balustrade; or the exquisite liturgy, exquisitely chanted by the fine choir in their vestments of scarlet, blue, and silver, with the seraphic wings upon their shoulders, and intoned, with a finish of art unknown in other lands, by priests robed in rich brocade. Or it may be that a popular sermon by a well-known orator has attracted a throng of listeners among the lofty pillars of gray Finland granite, hung with battle-flags and the keys of conquered towns. What we shall assuredly find is votaries ascending the steps to salute with devotion the benignant brown-faced Byzantine Virgin and Christ-Child, incrusting with superb jewels, or kneeling in “ground reverences,” with brow laid to the marble pavement, before the *ikonostas*, or rood-screen, of solid silver. Our Lady of Kazan has been the most popular of wonder-working Virgins ever since she was brought from Kazan to Moscow, in 1579, and transported to Petersburg, in 1721 (although her present cathedral dates only from 1811), and the scene here on Easter-night is second only to that at St. Isaac’s when the porticoes are thronged by the lower classes waiting to have their flower and candle decked cakes and cream blessed at the close of the Easter matins.

One of the few individual dwelling-houses which linger on the Nevsky Prospekt, and which presents us with a fine specimen of the rococo style which Rastrelli so persistently served up at the close of the eighteenth century, is that of the Counts Stroganoff, at the lower quay of the Moika. The Moika (literally, Washing) River is the last of the semicircular, concentric canals which intersect the Nevsky and its two radiating companion Prospekts, and impart to that portion of the city which is situated on the (comparative) mainland a resemblance to an outspread fan, whose palm-piece is formed by the Admiralty on the Neva quay.

The stately pile, and the pompous air of the big, gold-laced Swiss lounging at the entrance on the Nevsky, remind us that the Stroganoff family has been a power in Russian history since the middle of the sixteenth century.

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It was a mere handful of their Kazaks, led by Yermak Timofeevitch, who conquered Siberia, in 1581, under Ivan the Terrible, while engaged in repelling the incursions of the Tatars and wild Siberian tribes on the fortified towns which the Stroganoffs had been authorized to erect on the vast territory at the western foot of the Ural Mountains, conveyed to them by the ancient Tzars. Later on, when Alexei Mikhailovitch, the father of Peter the Great, established a new code, grading punishments and fines by classes, the highest money tax assessed for insult and injury was fifty rubles; but the Stroganoffs were empowered to exact one hundred rubles.

Opposite the Stroganoff house, on the upper Moika quay, rises the large, reddish-yellow Club of the Nobility, representing still another fashion in architecture, which was very popular during the last century for palaces and grand mansions,—the Corinthian peristyle upon a solid, lofty basement. It is not an old building, but was probably copied from the palace of the Empress Elizabeth, which stood on this spot. Elizaveta Petrovna, though she used this palace a great deal, had a habit of sleeping in a different place each night, the precise spot being never known beforehand. This practice is attributed, by some Russian historians, to her custom of turning night into day. She went to the theatre, for example, at eleven o'clock, and any courtier who failed to attend her was fined fifty rubles. It was here that the populace assembled to hurrah for Elizaveta Petrovna, on December 6, 1741, when she returned with little Ivan VI. in her arms from the Winter Palace, where she had made captive his father and his mother, the regent Anna Leopoldina. It may have been the recollection of the ease with which she had surprised indolent Anna Leopoldina in her bed-chamber which caused her to be so uncertain in her own movements, in view of the fact that there were persons so ill-advised as to wish the restoration of the slothful German regent and her infant son, disastrous as that would have been to the country.

We must do the Russians who occupy the building at the present day the justice to state that they uphold religiously the nocturnal tradition thus established by Elizaveta Petrovna, and even improve upon it. From six o'clock in the evening onward, the long windows of the club, on the *bel etage*, blaze with light. The occasional temporary obscurations produced by the steam from relays of *samovari* do not interfere materially with the neighbors' view of the card-parties and the final exchange of big bundles of bank-bills, which takes place at five o'clock or later the next morning. Even if players and bills were duly shielded from observation, the *mauvais quart d'heure* would be accurately revealed by the sudden rush for the sledges, which have been hanging in a swarm about the door, according to the usual convenient custom of Vanka, wherever lighted windows suggest possible patrons. Poor, hard-worked Vanka slumbers all night on his box, with one eye open, or falls prone in death-like exhaustion over the dashboard upon his sleeping horse, while his cap lies on the snow, and his shaggy head is bared to the bitter blasts.

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Later on, the chief of police lived here, and the adjoining bridge, which had hitherto been known as the Green Bridge, had its name changed to the Police Bridge, which rather puzzling appellation it still bears.

A couple of blocks beyond this corner of the Nevsky, the Moika and the Grand Morskaya, the Nevsky Prospekt ends at the Alexander Garden, backed by the Admiralty and the Neva, after having passed in its course through all grades of society, from the monks at the extreme limit, peasant huts,—or something very like them, on the outskirts,—artistic and literary circles in the Peski quarter (the Sands), well-to-do merchants and nobles, officials and wealthy courtiers, until now we have reached the culminating point, where the Admiralty, Imperial Palace, and War Office complete the national group begun at the church.

When, in 1704, Peter the Great founded his beloved Admiralty, as the first building on the mainland then designed for such purposes as this, and not for residence, it was simply a shipyard, open to the Neva, and inclosed on three sides by low wooden structures, surrounded by stone-faced earthworks, moats, and palisades. Hither Peter was wont to come of a morning, after having routed his ministers out of bed to hold privy council at three and four o'clock, to superintend the work and to lend a hand himself. The first stone buildings were erected in 1726, after his death. In the early years of the present century, Alexander I. rebuilt this stately and graceful edifice, after the plans of the Russian architect Zakharoff, who created the beautiful tower adorned with Russian sculptures, crowned by a golden spire, in the centre of the immense facade, fourteen hundred feet long, which forms a feature inseparable from the vista of the Prospekt for the greater part of its length, to the turn at the Znamenskaya Square. On this spire, at the present day, flags and lanterns warn the inhabitants of low-lying districts in the capital of the rate at which the water is rising during inundations. In case of serious danger, the flags are reinforced by signal guns from the fortress. But in Peter I.'s day, these flags and guns bore exactly the opposite meaning to the unhappy nobles whom the energetic Emperor was trying to train into rough-weather sailors. To their trembling imaginations these signal orders to assemble for a practice sail signified, "Come out and be drowned!" since they were obliged to embark in the crafts too generously given to them by Peter, and cruise about until their leader (who delighted in a storm) saw fit to return. There is a story of one unhappy wight, who was honored by the presence aboard his craft of a very distinguished and very seasick Persian, making his first acquaintance with the pleasures of yachting, and who spent three days without food, tacking between Petersburg and Kronstadt, in the vain endeavor to effect a landing during rough weather.

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When the present Admiralty was built, a broad and shady boulevard was organized on the site of the old glacis and covered way, and later still, when the break in the quay was filled in, and the shipbuilding transferred to the New Admiralty a little farther down the river, the boulevard was enlarged into the New Alexander Garden, one of the finest squares in Europe. It soon became the fashionable promenade, and the centre of popular life as well, by virtue of the merry-makings which took place. Here, during the Carnival of 1836, the temporary cheap theatre of boards was burned, at the cost of one hundred and twenty-six lives and many injured persons, which resulted in these dangerous *balagani* and other holiday amusements being removed to the spacious parade-ground known as the Empress's Meadow.

If we pass round the Admiralty to the Neva, we shall find its frozen surface teeming with life. Sledge roads have been laid out on it, marked with evergreen bushes, over which a *yamtschik* will drive us with his *troika* fleet as the wind, to Kronstadt, twenty miles away. Plank walks, fringed with street lanterns, have been prepared for pedestrians. Broad ice paths have been cleared, whereon the winter ferry-boats ply, —green garden-chairs, holding one or more persons, furnished with warm lap-robies, and propelled by stout *muzhiks* on skates, who will transport us from shore to shore for the absurdly small sum of less than a cent apiece, though a ride with the reindeer (now a strange sight in the capital), at the Laplanders' encampment, costs much more.

It is hard to tear ourselves from the charms of the river, with its fishing, ice-cutting, and many other interesting sights always in progress. But of all the scenes, that which we may witness on Epiphany Day—the “Jordan,” or Blessing of the Waters, in commemoration of Christ's baptism in the Jordan—is the most curious and typically Russian.

After mass, celebrated by the Metropolitan, in the cathedral of the Winter Palace, whose enormous reddish-ochre mass we perceive rising above the frost-jeweled trees of the Alexander Garden, to our right as we stand at the head of the Nevsky Prospekt, the Emperor, his heir, his brothers, uncles, and other great personages emerge in procession upon the quay. Opposite the Jordan door of the palace a scarlet, gold, and blue pavilion, also called the “Jordan,” has been erected over the ice. Thither the procession moves, headed by the Metropolitan and the richly vested clergy, their mitres gleaming with gems, bearing crosses and church banners, and the imperial choir, clad in crimson and gold, chanting as they go. The Empress and her ladies, clad in full Court costume at midday, look on from the palace windows. After brief prayers in the pavilion, all standing with bared heads, the Metropolitan dips the great gold cross in the rushing waters of the Neva, through a hole prepared in the thick, opalescent, green ice, and the guns on the opposite shore thunder out a salute. The pontoon Palace Bridge, the quays on both sides of the river, all the streets and squares for a long distance round about, are densely thronged; and, as the guns announce the consecration, every head is bared, every right hand in the mass, thousands strong, is raised to execute repeated signs of the cross on brow and breast.

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From our post at the head of the Prospekt we behold not the ceremony itself but the framework of a great national picture, the great Palace Square, whereon twenty thousand troops can manoeuvre, and in whose centre rises the greatest monolith of modern times, the shaft of red Finland granite, eighty-four feet in height, crowned with a cross-bearing angel, the monument to Alexander I. There stand the Guards' Corps, and the huge building of the General Staff, containing the Ministries of Finance and of Foreign Affairs, and many things besides, originally erected by Katherine II. to mask the rears of the houses at the end of the Nevsky, and rebuilt under Nicholas I., sweeping in a magnificent semicircle opposite the Winter Palace. Regiments restrain the zeal of the crowd to obtain the few posts of vantage from which the consecration of the waters is visible, and keep open a lane for the carriages of royalty, diplomats, and invited guests. They form part of the pageant, like the Empress's cream-colored carriage and the white horses and scarlet liveries of the Metropolitan. The crowd is devout and silent, as Russian crowds always are, except when they see the Emperor after he has escaped a danger, when they become vociferous with an animation which is far more significant than it is in more noisy lands. The ceremony over, the throngs melt away rapidly and silently; pedestrians, Finnish ice-sledges, traffic in general, resume their rights on the palace sidewalks and the square, and after a state breakfast the Emperor drives quietly home, unguarded, to his Anitchkoff Palace.

If we glance to our left, and slightly to our rear, as we stand thus facing the Neva and the Admiralty, we see the Prefecture and the Ministry of War, the latter once the mansion of a grandee in the last century; and, rising above the latter, we catch a glimpse of the upper gallery, and great gold-plated, un-Russian dome, of St. Isaac's Cathedral, which is visible for twenty miles down the Gulf of Finland. The granite pillars glow in the frosty air with the bloom of a Delaware grape. We forgive St. Isaac for the non-Russian character of the modern ecclesiastical glories of which it is the exponent, as we listen eagerly to the soft, rich, boom-boom-bo-o-om of the great bourdon, embroidered with silver melody by the multitude of smaller bells chiming nearly all day long with a truly orthodox sweetness unknown to the Western world, and which, to-day, are more elaborately beautiful than usual, in honor of the great festival. We appreciate to the full the wailing cry of the prisoner, in the ancient epic songs of the land: "He was cut off from the light of the fair, red sun, from the sound of sweet church-bells."

On the great Palace Square another characteristic sight is to be seen on the nights of Court balls, which follow the Jordan, when the blaze of electric light from the rock-crystal chandeliers, big as haystacks, within the state apartments, is supplemented by the fires in the heater and on the snow outside, round which the waiting coachmen warm themselves, with Rembrandtesque effects of *chiaro-oscuro* second only to the picturesqueness of *dvorniki* in their nondescript caps and shaggy coats, who cluster round blazing fagots in less aristocratic quarters when the thermometer descends below zero.

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When spring comes with the magical suddenness which characterizes Northern lands, the gardens, quays, and the Nevsky Prospekt still preserve their charms for a space, and are thronged far into the night with promenaders, who gaze at the imperial crowns, stars, monograms, and other devices temporarily applied to the street lanterns, and the fairy flames on the low curb-posts (whereat no horse, though unblinded, ever shies), with which man attempts, on the numerous royal festival days of early summer, to rival the illumination of the indescribably beautiful tints of river and sky. But the peasant-*izvostchik* goes off to the country to till his little patch of land, aided by the shaggy little farm-horse, which has been consorting on the Prospekt with thoroughbred trotters all winter, and helping him to eke out his cash income, scanty at the best of times; or he emigrates to a summer resort, scorning our insinuation that he is so unfashionable as to remain in town. The deserted Prospekt is torn up for repairs. The merchants, especially the goldsmiths, complain that it would be true economy for them to close their shops. The annual troops of foreign travelers arrive, view the lovely islands of the Neva delta, catch a glimpse of the summer cities in the vicinity, and dream, ah, vain dream! that they have also really beheld the Nevsky Prospekt, the great avenue of the realm of the Frost King and the White Tzar!*

* From *Scribner's Magazine*, by permission.

III.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE RUSSIAN CENSOR.

In spite of the advantage which I enjoyed in a preliminary knowledge of the Russian language and literature, I was imbued with various false ideas, the origin of which it is not necessary to trace on this occasion. I freed myself from some of them; among others, from my theory as to the working of the censorship in the case of foreign literature. My theory was the one commonly held by Americans, and, as I found to my surprise, by not a few Russians, *viz.*, that books and periodicals which have been wholly or in part condemned by the censor are to be procured only in a mutilated condition, or by surreptitious means, or not at all. That this is not the case I acquired ample proof through my personal experience.

The first thing that an American does on his arrival in St. Petersburg is to scan the foreign newspapers in the hotels eagerly for traces of the censor's blot,—*le masque noir*, "caviare,"—his idea being that at least one half of the page will be thus veiled from sight. But specimens are not always, or even very often, to be procured with ease. In fact, the demand exceeds the supply sometimes, if I may judge from my own observations and from the pressing applications for these curiosities which I received from disappointed seekers. The finest of these black diamonds may generally be found in the inventive news columns of the London dailies and in the flippant paragraphs of "Punch."

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Like the rest of the world, I was on the lookout for the censor's work from the day of my arrival, but it was a long time before my search was rewarded by anything except a caricature of the censor himself in "Kladderadatsch." That it was left unmasked was my first proof that that gentleman, individually and collectively, was not deficient in a sense of humor. The sketch represented a disheveled scribe seated three quarters submerged in a bottle of ink, from the half-open cover of which his quill pen projected like a signal of distress. This was accompanied by an inscription to the effect that as the Russian censor had blacked so many other people, he might now sit in the black for a while himself. Perhaps the censor thought that remarks of that sort came with peculiar grace from martinet-ruled Berlin. About this time I received a copy of the "Century," containing—or rather, not containing—the first article in the prohibited series by Mr. Kennan. I made no remonstrance, but mentioned the fact, as an item of interest, to the sender, who forthwith dispatched the article in an envelope. The envelope being small, the plump package had the appearance of containing a couple of pairs of gloves, or other dutiable merchandise. Probably that was the reason why the authorities cut open one end. Finding that it was merely innocent printed matter, they gave it to me on the very day of its arrival in St. Petersburg, and thirteen days from the date of posting in New York. I know that it was my duty to get excited over this incident, as did a foreigner (that is, a non-Russian) acquaintance of mine, when he received an envelope of similar plump aspect containing a bulky Christmas card, which was delivered decorated with five very frank and huge official seals, after having been opened for contraband goods. I did not feel aggrieved, however, and, being deficient in that Mother Eve quality which attributes vast importance to whatever is forbidden, I suggested that nothing more which was obnoxious to the Russian government should be sent to me.

But when a foreigner offered the magazine to me regularly, un mutilated, I did not refuse it. When a Russian volunteered to furnish me with it, later on, I read it. When I saw summaries of the prohibited articles in the Russian press, I looked them over to see whether they were well done. When I saw another copy of the "Century," with other American magazines, at the house of a second Russian, I did not shut my eyes to the fact, neither did I close my ears when I was told that divers instructors of youth in Petersburg, Moscow, and elsewhere were in regular receipt of it, on the principle which is said to govern good men away from home, *viz.*, that in order to preach effectively against evil one must make personal acquaintance with it. I was also told at the English Bookstore that they had seven or eight copies of the magazine, which had been subscribed for through them, lying at the censor's office awaiting proper action on the part of the subscribers. What that action was I did not ask at the time, in my embarrassment of riches. It will be perceived that when we add the copies received by officials, and those given to the members of the Diplomatic Corps who desired it, there was no real dearth of the "Century" at any time.

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About this time, also, I had occasion to hunt up a package of miscellaneous newspapers, which had lingered as such parcels are apt to linger in all post-offices. In pursuance of my preconceived notions, I jumped to the conclusion that the censor had them, regardless of the contingency that they might have been lost out of Russia. I called to ask for the papers. The official whom I found explained, with native Russian courtesy, that I had come to the wrong place, that office being devoted to foreign matter in book form; but that, in all probability, the papers had become separated from their wrapper in the newspaper department (which was heedless) when they had been opened for examination, and hence it had been impossible to deliver them. Still, they might have been detained for some good reason, and he would endeavor to find some record of them.

While he was gone, my eyes fell upon his account-book, which lay open before me. It constituted a sort of literary book-keeping. The entries showed what books had been received, what had been forbidden, what was to be erased, whose property had been manipulated, and, most interesting of all, which forbidden books had been issued by permission, and to whom. Among these I read the titles of works by Stepniak, and of various works on Nihilism, all of which must certainly have come within the category of utterly proscribed literature, and not of that which is promptly forwarded to its address after a more or less liberal sprinkling of "caviare." As I am not in the habit of reading private records on the sly, even when thus tempted, I informed the official on his return of my action, and asked a question or two.

"Do you really let people have these forbidden books?" "Certainly," was his half-surprised, half-indignant reply. "And what can one have?" "Anything," said he, "only we must, of course, have some knowledge of the person. What would you like?"

I could only express my regret that I felt no craving for any prohibited literature at that moment, but I told him that I would endeavor to cultivate a taste in that direction to oblige him; and I suggested that, as his knowledge of me was confined to the last ten minutes, I did not quite understand how he could pass judgment as to what mental and moral food was suited to my constitution, and as to the use I might make of it. He laughed amiably, and said: "*Nitchevo*,—that's all right; you may have whatever you please." I never had occasion to avail myself of the offer, but I know that Russians who are well posted do so, although I also know that many Russians are not aware of their privileges in this direction. It is customary to require from Russians who receive literature of this sort a promise that they will let no other person see it,—an engagement which is as religiously observed as might be expected, as the authorities are doubtless aware.

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I did not pursue my search for the missing papers. I had allowed so much time to elapse that I perceived the uselessness of further action; they were evidently lost, and it mattered little as to the manner. Shortly afterwards I received the first of my only two specimens of censorial “caviare.” It was on a political cartoon in a New York comic paper. I sent it back to America for identification of the picture, and it was lost between New York and Boston; which reconciled me to the possible carelessness of the Russian post-office in the case of the newspapers just cited.

My next experience was with Count Lyeff N. Tolstoy’s work entitled “Life.” This was not allowed to be printed in book form, although nearly the whole of it subsequently appeared in installments, as “extracts,” in a weekly journal. I received the manuscript as a registered mail packet. The author was anxious that my translation should be submitted in the proof-sheets to a philosophical friend of his in Petersburg, who read English, in order that the latter might see if I had caught the sense of the somewhat abstract and complicated propositions. It became a problem how those proof-sheets were to reach me safely and promptly. The problem was solved by having them directed outright to the censor’s office, whence they were delivered to me; and, as there proved to be nothing to alter, they speedily returned to America as a registered parcel. My own opinion now is that they would not have reached me a whit less safely or promptly had they been addressed straight to me. The bound volumes of my translation were so addressed later on, and I do not think that they were even opened at the office, the law to the contrary notwithstanding. All this time I had been receiving a New York weekly paper with very little delay and no mutilation. But at this juncture an amiable friend subscribed in my name for the “Century,” and I determined to make a personal trial of the workings of the censorship in as strong a case as I could have found had I deliberately desired to invent a test case. I may as well remark here that “the censor” is not the hard-worked, omnivorous reader of mountains of print and manuscript which the words represent to the mind of the ordinary foreigner. The work of auditing literature, so to speak, is subdivided among such a host of men that office hours are brief, much of the foreign reading, at least, is done at home, and the lucky members of the committee keep themselves agreeably posted upon matters in general while enjoying the fruits of office.

The censor’s waiting-room was well patronized on my arrival. An official who was holding a consultation with one of the visitors inquired my business. I stated it briefly, and shortly afterwards he retired into an adjoining room, which formed the beginning of a vista of apartments and officials. While I waited, a couple of men were attended to so near me that I heard their business. It consisted

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in obtaining official permission to print the bills and programmes of a musical and variety entertainment. To this end they had brought not only the list of performers and proposed selections, but also the pictures for advertisement, and the music which was to be given. As the rare traveler who can read Russian is already aware, the programme of every public performance bears the printed authorization of the censor, as a matter of course, quite as much as does a book. It is an easy way of controlling the character of assemblages, the value of which can hardly be disputed even by those prejudiced persons who insist upon seeing in this Russian proceeding something more arbitrary than the ordinary city license which is required for performances elsewhere, or the Lord Chancellor's license which is required in England. In Russia, as elsewhere, an ounce of prevention is worth fully a pound of cure. This, by the way, is the only form in which a foreigner is likely to come in contact with the domestic censure in Russia, unless he should wish to insert an advertisement in a newspaper, or issue printed invitations to a gathering at his house, or send news telegrams. In these cases he may be obliged to submit to delay in the appearance of his advertisement, or requested to go to the elegance and expense of engraved invitations, or to detain his telegram for a day or two. Such things are not unknown in Germany.

Just as these gentlemen had paid their fee, and resigned their documents to the official who had charge of their case, another official issued from the inner room, approached me, requested me to sign my name in a huge ledger, and, that being done, thrust into my hands a bulky manuscript and departed. The manuscript had a taking title, but I did not pause to examine it. Penetrating the inner sanctum, I brought out the official and endeavored to return the packet. He refused to take it, —it was legally mine. This contest lasted for several minutes, until I saw a literary-looking man enter from the anteroom and look rather wildly at us. Evidently this was the owner, and, elevating the manuscript, I inquired if it were his. He hastened to my assistance and proved his rights. But as erasures do not look well in account-books, and as my name already occupied the space allotted to that particular parcel, he was not requested to sign for it, and I believe that I am still legally qualified to read, perform, or publish—whatever it was—that talented production.

A dapper little gentleman, with a dry, authoritative air, then emerged and assumed charge of me. I explained my desire to receive, uncensored, a journal which was prohibited.

"Certainly," said he, without inquiring how I knew the facts. "Just write down your application and sign it."

"I don't know the form," I answered.

He seemed surprised at my ignorance of such an every-day detail, but fetched paper and dictated a petition, which I wrote down and signed. When we reached the point where the name of the publication was to be inserted, he paused to ask: "How many would you like?"

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"How many copies of the 'Century'? Only one," said I.

"No, no; how many periodical publications would you like?"

"How many can I have on this petition?" I retorted in Yankee fashion.

"As many as you please. Do you want four—six—eight? Write in the names legibly."

I gasped, but told him that I was not grasping; I preferred to devote my time to Russian publications while in Russia, and that I would only add the name of the weekly which I was already receiving, merely with the object of expediting its delivery a little. The document was then furnished with the regulation eighty-kopek stamp (worth at that time about thirty-seven cents), and the business was concluded. As I was in summer quarters out of town, and it was not convenient for me to call in person and inquire whether permission had been granted, another stamp was added to insure the answer being sent to me. The license arrived in a few days, and the magazine began to come promptly, unopened. I was not even asked not to show it to other people. I may state here that, while I never circulated any of the numerous prohibited books and manuscripts which came into my possession during my stay in Russia, I never concealed them. I showed the "Century" occasionally to personal friends of the class who could have had it themselves had they taken any permanent interest in the matter; but it is certain that they kept their own counsel and mine in all respects.

Everything proceeded satisfactorily until I went to Moscow to stay for a time. It did not occur to me to inform the censor of my move, and the result was that the first number of the magazine which I received there was as fine a "specimen" as heart could desire. The line on the title-page which referred to the obnoxious article had been scratched out; the body of the article had been cut out; the small concluding portion at the top of a page had been artistically "caviared." Of course, the article ending upon the back of the first page extracted had been spoiled. On this occasion I was angry, not at the mutilation as such, but at the breach of faith. I sat down, while my wrath was still hot, and indited a letter to the head censor in Petersburg. I do not recollect the exact terms of that letter, but I know I told him that he had no right to cut the book after granting me leave to receive it intact, without first sending me word that he had changed his mind, and giving valid reasons therefor; that the course he had adopted was injudicious in the extreme, since it was calculated to arouse curiosity instead of allaying it, and that it would be much better policy to ignore the matter. I concluded by requesting him to restore the missing article, if he had preserved it, and if he had not, to send at once to London (that being nearer than New York) and order me a fresh copy of the magazine at his expense.

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A month elapsed, no answer came; but at the end of the month another mutilated "Century" arrived. This time I waited two or three days in the hope of inventing an epistle which should be more forcible—if such a thing were possible—than my last, and yet calm. The letter was half written when an official envelope made its appearance from Petersburg, containing cut pages and an apologetic explanation to the effect that the Moscow censor, through an oversight, had not been duly instructed in his duty toward me. A single glance showed me that the inclosed sheets belonged to the number just received, not to the preceding number. I drove immediately to the Moscow office and demanded the censor. "You can tell me what you want with him," said the ante-room Cerberus. "Send me the censor," said I. After further repetition, he retired and sent in a man who requested me to state my business. "You are not the censor," I said, after a glance at him. "Send him out, or I will go to him." Then they decided that I was a connoisseur in censors, and the proper official made his appearance, accompanied by an interpreter, on the strength of the foreign name upon my card. Convinced that the latter would not understand English well, like many Russians who can talk the language fluently enough, I declined his services, produced my documents from the Petersburg censor, and demanded restitution of the other confiscated article. I obtained it, being allowed my pick from a neatly labeled package of contraband goods. That scratched, cut, caviared magazine is now in my possession, with the restored sheets and the censor's apology appended. It is my proof to unbelievers that the Russian censor is not so black as he is painted.

As we shook hands with this Moscow official, after a friendly chat, I asked him if he would be a little obtuse arithmetically as to the old and new style of reckoning, and let me have my January "Century" if it arrived before my departure for Petersburg, as my license expired January 1. He smilingly agreed to do so. I also called on the Moscow book censor, to find some books. The courtesy and readiness to oblige me on the part of the officials had been so great, that I felt aggrieved upon this occasion when this censor requested me to return on the regular business day, and declined to overhaul his whole department for me on the spot. I did return on the proper day, and watched operations while due search was being made for my missing property. It reached me a few days later, unopened, the delay having occurred at my banker's, not in the post-office or censor's department.

On my return to Petersburg, my first visit was to the censor's office, where I copied my original petition, signed it, and dismissed the matter from my mind until my February "Century" reached me with one article missing and two articles spoiled. I paid another visit to the office, and was informed that my petition for a renewal of permission had not been granted.

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"Why didn't you send me word earlier?" I asked.

"We were not bound to do so without the extra stamp," replied my dapper official.

"But why has my application been refused?"

"Too many people are seeing that journal; some one must be refused."

"Nonsense," said I. "And if it is really so, *I* am not the proper person to be rejected. It will hurt some of these Russian subscribers more than it will me, because it is only a question of *when* I shall read it, not of whether I shall read it at all. I wonder that so many demoralizing things do not affect the officials. However, that is not the point; pray keep for your own use anything which you regard as deleterious to me. I am obliged to you for your consideration. But you have no right to spoil three or four articles; and by a proper use of scissors and caviare that can easily be avoided. In any case, it will be much better to give me the book unmutilated."

The official and the occupants of the reception-room seemed to find my view very humorous; but he declared that he had no power in the matter.

"Very well," said I, taking a seat. "I will see the censor.

"I am the censor," he replied.

"Oh, no. I happen to be aware that the head censor is expected in a few minutes, and I will wait."

My (apparently) intimate knowledge of the ways of censors again won the day. The chief actually was expected, and I was granted the first audience. I explained matters and repeated my arguments. He sent for the assistant.

"Why was not this application granted?" he asked impressively.

"We don't know, your Excellency," was the meek and not very consistent reply.

"You may go," said his Excellency. Then he turned graciously to me. "You will receive it."

"Uncut?"

"Yes."

"But will they let me have it?"

“Will—they—let—you—have—it—when—I—say—so?” he retorted with tremendous dignity.

Then I knew that I should have no further trouble, and I was right. I received no written permission, but the magazine was never interfered with again. Thus it will be seen that one practically registers periodicals wholesale, at a wonderfully favorable discount.

During the whole of my stay in Russia I received many books unread, apparently even unopened to see whether they belonged on the free list. In one case, at least, volumes which were posted before the official date of publication reached me by the next city delivery after the letter announcing their dispatch. Books which were addressed to me at the Legation, to assure delivery when my exact address was unknown or when my movements were uncertain, were, in every case but one, sent to me direct from the post-office. I have no reason to suppose that I was unusually favored in any way. I used no “influence,” I mentioned no influential names, though I had the right to do so.

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An incident which procured for me the pleasure of an interview with the chief censor for newspapers and so forth will illustrate some of the erroneous ideas entertained by strangers. I desired to send to some friends in Russia a year's subscription each of a certain American magazine, which sometimes justly receives a sprinkling of caviare for its folly, but which is not on the black list, and is fairly well known in Petersburg. After some delay I heard from home that the publishers had consulted the United States postal officials, and had been informed that "*no* periodical literature could be sent to Russia, this being strictly prohibited." I took the letter to the newspaper censor, who found it amusingly and amazingly stupid. He explained that the only thing which is absolutely prohibited is Russian text printed outside of Russia, which would never be delivered. He did not explain the reason, but I knew that he referred to the socialistic, nihilistic, and other proscribed works which are published in Geneva or Leipzig. Daily foreign newspapers can be received regularly only by persons who are duly authorized. Permission cannot be granted to receive occasional packages of miscellaneous contents, the reason for this regulation being very clear. And *all* books must be examined if new, or treated according to the place assigned them on the lists if they have already had a verdict pronounced upon them. I may add, in this connection, that I had the magazines I wished subscribed for under another name, to avoid the indelicacy of contradicting my fellow-countrymen. They were then forwarded direct to the Russian addresses, where they were duly and regularly received. Whether they were mutilated, I do not know. They certainly need not have been, had the recipients taken the trouble to obtain permission as I did, if they were aware of the possibility. It is probable that I could have obtained permission for them, had I not been pressed for time.

I once asked a member of the censorship committee on foreign books on what principle of selection he proceeded. He said that disrespect to the Emperor and the Greek Church was officially prohibited; that he admitted everything which did not err too grossly in that direction, and, in fact, *everything* except French novels of the modern realistic school. He drew the line at these, as pernicious to both men and women. He asked me if I had read a certain new book which was on the proscribed list. I said that I had, and in the course of the discussion which ensued, I rose to fetch the volume in question from the table behind him to verify a passage. (This occurred during a friendly call.) I recollected, however, that that copy had not entered the country by post, and that, consequently, the name of the owner therein inscribed would not be found on the list of authorized readers any more than my own. I am sure, however, that nothing would have happened if he had seen it, and he must have understood my movement. My business dealings were wholly with strangers.

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It seems to be necessary, although it ought not to be so, to remind American readers that Russia is not the only land where the censorship exists, to a greater or less extent. Even in the United States, which is popularly regarded as the land of unlicensed license in a literary sense,—even in the Boston Public Library, which is admitted to be a model of good sense and wide liberality,—all books are not bought or issued indiscriminately to all readers, irrespective of age and so forth. The necessity for making special application may, in some cases, whet curiosity, but it also, undoubtedly, acts as a check upon unhealthy tastes, even when the book may be publicly purchased. I have heard Russians who did not wholly agree with their own censorship assert, nevertheless, that a strict censure was better than the total absence of it, apparently, in America, the utterances of whose press are regarded by foreigners in general as decidedly startling.*

* From *The Nation*

IV.

BARGAINING IN RUSSIA.

In Russia one is expected to bargain and haggle over the price of everything, beginning with hotel accommodations, no matter how obtrusively large may be the type of the sign “*Prix Fixe*” or how strenuous may be the assertions that the bottom price is that first named. If one’s nerves be too weak to play at this game of continental poker, he will probably share our fate, of which we were politely apprised by a word at our departure from a hotel where we had lived for three months—after due bargaining—at their price. “If you come back, you may have the corresponding apartments on the floor below [the *bel etage*] for the same price.” In view of the fact that there was no elevator, it will be perceived that we had been paying from one third to one half too much, which was reassuring as to the prospect for the future, when we should decide to return!

If there be a detestable relic of barbarism, it is this custom of bargaining over every breath one draws in life. It creates a sort of incessant internal seething, which is very wearing to the temper and destructive of pleasure in traveling. One feels that he must chaffer desperately in the dark, or pay the sum demanded and be regarded as a goose fit for further plucking. So he forces himself to chaffer, tries to conceal his abhorrence of the practice and his inexperience, and ends, generally, by being cheated and considered a grass-green idiot into the bargain, which is not soothing to the spirit of the average man. When I mention it in this connection I do not mean to be understood as confining my remarks exclusively to Russia; the opportunities for being shorn to the quick are unsurpassed all over the continent, and “one price” America’s house is too vitreous to permit of her throwing many stones at foreign lands. Only, in America, the custom is now happily so obsolete in the ordinary transactions of daily life that one is astonished when he hears, occasionally, a woman from the country ask a clerk in a city

shop, “Is that the least you’ll take? I’ll give you so much for these goods.” In Russia, the surprise would be on the other side.

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The next time I had occasion to hire quarters in a hotel for a sojourn of any length I resorted to stratagem, by way of giving myself an object lesson. I looked at the rooms, haggled them down, on principle, to what seemed to me really the very lowest notch of price; I was utterly worn out before this was accomplished. I even flattered myself that I had done nearly as well as a native could have done, and was satisfied. But I sternly carried out my experiment. I did not close the bargain. I asked Princess—to try her experienced hand. Result, she secured the best accommodations in the house for less than half the rate at which I had been so proud of obtaining inferior quarters! When we moved in, the landlord was surprised, but he grasped the point of the transaction, and seemed to regard it as a pleasant jest against him, and to respect us the more for having outwitted him. The Princess apologized for having made such bad terms for us, and meant it! I suspect that that was a very fair sample of the comparative terms obtained by natives and outsiders in all bargains.

It is one of those things at which one smiles or fumes, according to the force of the instinct for justice with which he has been blessed—or cursed—by nature. Nothing, unless it be a healthy, athletic conscience, is so wofully destructive of all happiness and comfort in this life as a keen sense of justice!

There are, it is true, persons in Russia who scorn to bargain as much as did the girl of the merchant class in one of Ostrovsky's famous comedies, who was so generous as to blush with shame for the people whom she heard trying to beat down exorbitant prices in the shops, or whom she saw taking their change. The merchant's motto is, "A thing is worth all that can be got for it." Consequently, it never occurs to him that even competition is a reason for being rational. One striking case of this in my own experience was provided by a hardware merchant, in whose shop I sought a spirit lamp. The lamps he showed me were not of the sort I wished, and the price struck me as exorbitant, although I was not informed as to that particular subject. I offered these suggestions to the fat merchant in a mild manner, and added that I would look elsewhere before deciding upon his wares.

"You will find none elsewhere," roared the merchant—previously soft spoken as the proverbial sucking dove—through his bushy beard, in a voice which would have done credit to the proto-deacon of a cathedral. "And not one kopek will I abate of my just price, *yay Bogu!* [God is my witness!] They cost me that sum; I am actually making you a present of them out of my profound respect for you, *sudarynya!* [He had called me Madame before that, but now he lowered my social rank to that of a merchant's wife, out of revenge.] And you will be pleased not to come back if you don't find a lamp to suit your peculiar taste, for I will not sell to you. I won't have people coming here and looking at things and then not buying!"

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It was obviously my turn to retort, but I let the merchant have the last word—temporarily. In ten minutes another shopkeeper offered me lamps of identical quality and pattern at one half his price, and I purchased one, such as I wished, of a different design for a small sum extra. I may have been cheated, but, under the circumstances, I was satisfied.

Will it be believed? Bushybeard was lying in wait for me at the door, ready to receive me, wreathed in smiles which I can describe only by the detestable adjective “affable,” as I took pains to pass his establishment on my way back. Then the spirit of mischief entered into me. I reciprocated his smiles and said: “Ivan Baburin, at shop No. 8, round the corner, has dozens of lamps such as you deal in, for half the price of yours. You might be able to get them even cheaper, if you know how to haggle well. But I’m afraid you don’t, for you seem to have been horribly cheated in your last trade, when you bought your present stock at the price you mentioned. How could any one have the conscience to rob an honest, innocent man like you so dreadfully?”

He looked dazed, and the last time I cast a furtive glance behind me he had not recovered sufficiently to dash after me and overwhelm me with protestations of his uprightness, *yay Bogu!* and other lingual cascades.

From the zest with which I have beheld a shopman and a customer waste half an hour chaffering an article up and down five kopeks (two and a half cents or less), I am convinced that they enjoy the excitement of it, and that time is cheap enough with them to allow them to indulge in this exhilarating practice.

What is the remedy for this state of things? How are foreigners, who pride themselves on never giving more than the value of an article, to protect themselves? There is no remedy, I should say. One must haggle, haggle, haggle, and submit. Guides are useless and worse, as they probably share in the shopkeeper’s profit, and so raise prices. Recommendations of shops from guides or hotels are to be disregarded. Not that they are worthless,—quite the reverse; only their value does not accrue to the stranger, but to the other parties. It may well be, as veteran travelers affirm, that one is compelled to contribute to this mutual benefit association in any case; but there is a sort of satisfaction after all in imagining that one is a free and independent being, and going to destruction in his own way, unguided, while he gets a little amusement out of his own shearing.

Any one who really likes bargaining will get his fill in Russia, every time he sets foot out of doors, if he wishes merely to take a ride. There are days, it is true, when all the cabmen in town seem to have entered into a league and agreed to demand a ruble for a drive of half a dozen blocks; and again, though rarely, they will offer to carry one miles for one fifth of that sum, which is equally unreasonable in

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the other direction. In either case one has his bargaining sport, at one end of the journey or the other. I find among my notes an illustration of this operation, which, however, falls far short of a conversation which I once overheard between a lower-class official and an *izvostchik*, who could not come to terms. It ended in the uniformed official exclaiming: "You ask too much. I'll use my own horses," raising a large foot, and waving it gently at the cabmen.

"Home-made!" (literally, "self-grown") retorted one *izvostchik*. The rival bidders for custom shrieked with laughter at his wit, the official fled, and I tried in vain—wonderful to relate—to get the attention of the group and offer them a fresh opportunity for discussion by trying to hire one of them.

My note-book furnishes the following: "If anybody wants a merry *izvostchik*, with a stylish flourishing red beard, I can supply him. I do not own the man at present, but he has announced his firm intention of accompanying me to America. I asked him how he would get along without knowing the language?

"'I'd serve you forever!' said he.

"'How could I send you on an errand?' said I.

"'I'd serve you forever!' said he.

"That was the answer to every objection on my part. He and a black-haired *izvostchik* have a fight for my custom nearly every time I go out. Fighting for custom—in words—is the regular thing, but the way these men do it convulses with laughter everybody within hearing, which is at least half a block. It is the fashion here to take an interest in chafferings with cabmen and in other street scenes.

"'She's to ride with me!' shouts one. 'Barynya, I drove you to Vasily Island one day, you remember!' 'She's going with me; you get out!' yells the other. 'She drove on the Nevsky with me long before she ever saw you; didn't you, *barynya*? and the Liteinaya,' and so on till he has enumerated more streets than I have ever heard of. 'And we're old, old friends, aren't we, *barynya*? And look at my be-e-aautiful horse!'

"'Your horse looks like a soiled and faded glove,' I retort, 'and I won't have you fight over me. Settle it between yourselves,' and I walk off or take another man, neither proceeding being favorably regarded. If any one will rid me of Redbeard I will sell him for his passage-money to America. I am also open to offers for Blackbeard, as he has announced his intention of lying in wait for me at the door every day, as a cat sits before a mouse's hole." Vanka (the generic name for all *izvostchiki*) gets about four dollars or four dollars and a half a month from his employer, when he does not own his equipage.

In return he is obliged to hand in about a dollar and a quarter a day on ordinary occasions, a dollar and a half on the days preceding great festivals, and two dollars and a half on festival days. If he does not contrive

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to extract the necessary amount from his fares, his employer extracts it from his wages, in the shape of a fine. The men told me this. As there are no fixed rates in the great cities, a bargain must be struck every time, which begins by the man demanding twice or thrice the proper price, and ends in your paying it if you are not familiar with accepted standards and distances, and in selling yourself at open-air auction to the lowest bidder, acting as your own auctioneer, in case you are conversant with matters in general.

Foreigners can also study the bargaining process at its best—or worst—in the purchase of furs. The Neva freezes over, as a rule, about the middle of November, and snow comes to stay, after occasional light flurries in September and October, a little later. Sometimes, however, the river closes as early as the end of September, or as late as within a few days of Christmas. Or the rain, which begins in October, continues at intervals into the month of January. The price of food goes up, frozen provisions for the poorer classes spoil, and more suffering and illness ensue than when the normal Arctic winter prevails. In spite of the cold, one is far more comfortable than in warmer climes. The “stone” houses are built with double walls, three or four feet apart, of brick or rubble covered with mastic. The space between the walls is filled in, and, in the newer buildings, apertures with ventilators near the ceilings take the place of movable panes in the double windows. The space between the windows is filled with a deep layer of sand, in which are set small tubes of salt to keep the glass clear, and a layer of snowy cotton wadding on top makes a warm and appropriate finish. The lower classes like to decorate their wadding with dried grasses, colored paper, and brilliant odds and ends, in a sort of toy-garden arrangement. The cracks of the windows are filled with putty or some other solid composition, over which are pasted broad strips of coarse white linen. The India rubber and other plants which seem so inappropriately placed, in view of the brief and scant winter light, in reality serve two purposes—that of decoration and that of keeping people at a respectful distance from the windows, because the cold and wind pass through the glass in dangerous volume.

Carpets are rare. Inlaid wooden floors, with or without rugs, are the rule. Birch wood is, practically, the exclusive material for heating. Coal from South Russia is too expensive in St. Petersburg; and imported coal is of the lignite order, and far from satisfactory even for use in the open grates, which are often used for beauty and to supplement the stoves.

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In the olden times, the beautifully colored and ornamented tile stoves were built with a “stove bench,” also of tiles, near the floor, on which people could sleep. Nowadays, only peasants sleep on the stove, and they literally sleep on top of the huge, mud-plastered stone oven, close to the ceiling. In dwellings other than peasant huts, what is known as the “German stove” is in use. Each stove is built through the wall to heat two rooms, or a room and corridor. The yard porter brings up ten or twelve birch logs, of moderate girth, peels off a little bark to use as kindling, and in ten minutes there is a roaring fire. The door is left open, and the two draught covers from the flues—which resemble the covers of a range in shape and size—are taken out until the wood is reduced to glowing coals, which no longer emit blue flames. Then the door is closed, the flue plates are replaced, and the stove radiates heat for twenty-four hours, forty-eight hours, or longer, according to the weather and the taste of the persons concerned, —Russian rooms not being kept nearly so hot as American rooms.

In this soft, delightful, and healthy heat, heavy underclothing is a misery. Very few Russians wear anything but linen, and foreigners who have been used to wear flannels generally are forced to abandon them in Russia. Hence the necessity for wrapping up warmly when one goes out.

Whatever the caprices of the weather, during the winter, according to the almanac, furs are required, especially by foreigners, from the middle of October or earlier until May. People who come from Southern climes, with the memory of the warm sun still lingering in their veins, endure their first Russian winter better than the winters which follow, provided their rashness, especially during the treacherous spring or autumn, does not kill them off promptly. Therefore, the wise foreigner who arrives in autumn sallies forth at once in quest of furs. He will get plenty of bargaining and experience thrown in.

First of all, he finds that he must reconstruct his ideas about furs. If he be an American, his first discovery is that his favorite sealskin is out of the race entirely. No Russian would pay the price which is given for sealskin in return for such a “cold fur,” nor would he wear it on the outside for display, while it would be too tender to use as a lining. Sealskin is good only for a short jacket between seasons for walking, and if one sets out on foot in that garb she must return on foot; she would be running a serious risk if she took a carriage or sledge. All furs are used for linings; in short, by thus reversing nature’s arrangement, one obtains the natural effect, and wears the fur next his skin, as the original owner of the pelt did. Squirrel is a “cold,” cheap fur, used by laundresses and the like, while mink, also reckoned as a “cold” fur, though more expensive, is used by men only, as is the pretty mottled skin obtained by piecing together sable paws. The

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cheapest of the “downy” furs, which are the proper sort for the climate, is the brown goat, that constantly reminds its owner of the economy practiced, by its weight and characteristic strong smell, though it has the merit of being very warm. Next come the various grades of red fox fur,—those abundantly furnished with hair,—where the red is pale and small in area, and the gray patches are large and dark, being the best. The *kuni*, which was the unit of currency in olden days, and was used by royalty, is the next in value, and is costly if dark, and with a tough, light-weight skin, which is an essential item of consideration for the necessary large cloaks. Sables, rich and dark, are worn, like the *kuni*, by any one who can afford them,—court dames, cavaliers, archbishops, and merchants, or their wives and daughters,—while the climax of beauty and luxury is attained in the black fox fur, soft and delicate as feathers, warm as a July day. The silky, curly white Tibetan goat, and the thick, straight white fur of the *psetz*, make beautiful evening wraps for women, under velvets of delicate hues, and are used by day also, though they are attended by the inconvenience of requiring frequent cleaning. Cloth or velvet is the proper covering for all furs, and the colors worn for driving are often gay or light. A layer of wadding between the fur and the covering adds warmth, and makes the circular mantle called a *rotonda* set properly. These sleeveless circular cloaks are not fit for anything but driving, however, although they are lapped across the breast and held firmly in place by the crossed arms,—a weary task, since they fall open at every breeze when the wearer is on foot,—but they possess the advantage over a cloak with sleeves that they can be held high around the ears and head at will. The most inveterate “shopper” would be satisfied with the amount of running about and bargaining which can be got out of buying a fur cloak and a cap!

The national cap has a soft velvet crown, surrounded by a broad band of sable or otter, is always in fashion, and lasts forever. People who like variety buy each year a new cap, made of black Persian lambskin, which resembles in shape that worn by the Kazaks, though the shape is modified every year by the thrifty shopkeepers.

The possibilities for self delusion, and delusion from the other quarter, as to price and quality of these fur articles, is simply enormous. I remember the amusing tags fastened to every cloak in the shop of a certain fashionable furrier in Moscow, where “asking price” and “selling price” were plainly indicated. By dint of inquiry I found that “paying price” was considerably below “selling price.” Moscow is the place, by the way, to see the coats intended for “really cold weather” journeys, made of bear skin and of reindeer skin, impervious to cold, lined with downy Siberian rat or other skins, which one does not see in Petersburg shops.

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The furs and the Russians' sensible manner of dressing in general, which I have described, have much to do with their comfort and freedom from colds. No Russian enters a room, theatre, or public hall at any season of the year with his cloak and overshoes, and no well-trained servant would allow an ignorant foreigner to trifle with his health by so doing. Even the foreign churches are provided with cloak-rooms and attendants. And the Russian churches? On grand occasions, when space is railed off for officials or favored guests, cloak-racks and attendants are provided near the door for the privileged ones, who must display their uniforms and gowns as a matter of state etiquette. The women find the light shawl—which they wear under their fur to preserve the gown from hairs, to shield the chest, and for precisely such emergencies—sufficient protection. On ordinary occasions, people who do not keep a lackey to hold their cloaks just inside the entrance have an opportunity to practice Russian endurance, and unless the crowd is very dense, the large and lofty space renders it quite possible, though the churches are heated, to retain the fur cloak; but it is not healthy, and not always comfortable. It would not be possible to provide cloak-rooms and attendants for the thousands upon thousands who attend church service on Sundays and holidays. With the foreign churches, whose attendance is limited comparatively, it is a different matter.

One difficulty about foreigners visiting Russia in winter is, that those who come for a short visit are rarely willing to go to the expense of the requisite furs. In general, they are so reckless of their health as to inspire horror in any one who is acquainted with the treacherous climate. I remember a couple of Americans, who resisted all remonstrances because they were on their way to a warmer clime, and went about when the thermometer was twenty-five to thirty degrees below zero Reaumur, in light, unwadded mantles, reaching only to the waist line, and with loose sleeves. A Russian remarked of them: "They might have shown some respect for the climate, and have put on flannel compresses, or a mustard plaster at least!" Naturally, an illness was the result. If such people would try to bargain for the very handsome and stylish coffins which they would consider in keeping with their dignity, they would come to the conclusion that furs would prove cheaper and less troublesome. But furs or coffins, necessities or luxuries, everything must be bargained for in Holy Russia, and with the American affection for the national game of poker, that should not constitute an objection to the country. Only non-card-players will mind such a trifle as bluff.*

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V.

EXPERIENCES.

So much has been said about the habits of the late Emperor Alexander III. in his capital, that a brief statement of them will not be out of place, especially as I had one or two

experiences, in addition to the ordinary opportunities afforded by a long visit and knowledge of the language and manners of the people.

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When the Emperor was in St. Petersburg, he drove about freely every day like a private person. He was never escorted or attended by guards. In place of a lackey a Kazak orderly sat beside the coachman. The orderlies of no other military men wore the Kazak uniform. Any one acquainted with this fact, or with the Emperor's face, could recognize him as he passed. There was no other sign; even the soldiers, policemen, and gendarmes gave him the same salute which they gave to every general. At Peterhoff, in summer, he often drove, equally unescorted, to listen to the music in the palace park, which was open to all the public.

On occasions of state or ceremony, such as a royal wedding or the arrival of the Shah of Persia, troops lined the route of the procession, as part of the show, and to keep the quiet but vigorously surging masses of spectators in order; just as the police keep order on St. Patrick's Day in New York, or as the militia kept order and made part of the show during the land naval parade at the Columbian festivities in New York. On such occasions the practice as to allowing spectators on balconies, windows, and roofs varied. For example, during the Emperor's recent funeral procession in Moscow, roofs, balconies, open windows, and every point of vantage were occupied by spectators. In St. Petersburg, the public was forbidden to occupy roofs, balconies, lamp-posts, or railings, and it was ordered that all windows should be shut, though, as usual, no restriction was placed on benches, stools, and other aids to a view. A few days later, when the Emperor Nicholas II. drove from his wedding in the Winter Palace to the Anitchkoff Palace, roofs, balconies, and open windows were crowded with spectators. I saw the Emperor Alexander III. from an open balcony, and behind closed windows.

On the regular festivals and festivities, such as St. George's Day, New Year's Day, the Epiphany (the "Jordan," or Blessing of the Neva), the state balls, Easter, and so forth, every one knew where to look for the Emperor, and at what hour. The official notifications in the morning papers, informing members of the Court at what hour and place to present themselves, furnished a good guide to the Emperor's movements for any one who did not already know. On such days the approaches to the Winter Palace were kept open for the guests as they arrived; the crowd was always enormous, especially at the "Jordan." But as soon as royalties and guests had arrived, and, on the "Jordan" day, as soon as the Neva had been blessed, ordinary traffic was resumed on sidewalks of the Winter Palace (those of the Anitchkoff Palace, where the Emperor lived, were never cut off from public use), on streets, and Palace Square. Royalties and guests departed quietly at their pleasure.

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I was driving down the Nevsky Prospekt on the afternoon of New Year's Day, 1889, when, just at the gate of the Anitchkoff Palace, a policeman raised his hand, and my sledge and the whole line behind me halted. I looked round to see the reason, and beheld the Emperor and Empress sitting beside me in the semi-state cream-colored carriage, painted with a big coat of arms, its black hood studded with golden doubleheaded eagles, which the present Emperor used on his wedding day. A coachman, postilion, and footman constituted the sole "guard," while the late prefect, General Gresser, in an open calash a quarter of a mile behind, constituted the "armed escort." They were on the roadway next to the horse-car track, which is reserved for private equipages, and had to cross the lines of public sledges next to the sidewalk. On other occasions, such as launches of ironclad war vessels, the expected presence of the Emperor and Empress was announced in the newspapers. It was easy enough to calculate the route and the hour, if one wished to see them. I frequently made such calculations, in town and country, and, stranger though I was, I never made a mistake. When cabinet ministers or high functionaries of the Court died, the Emperor and Empress attended one of the services before the funeral, and the funeral. Thousands of people calculated the hour, and the best spot to see them with absolute accuracy. At one such funeral, just after rumors of a fresh "plot" had been rife, I saw the great crowd surge up with a cheer towards the Emperor's carriage, though the Russians are very quiet in public. The police who were guarding the route of the procession stood still and smiled approvingly.

But sometimes the streets through which the Emperor Alexander III. was to pass were temporarily forbidden to the public; such as the annual mass and parade of the regiments of the Guards in their great riding-schools, and a few more. I know just how that device worked, because I put it to the proof twice, with amusing results.

The first time it was in this wise: There exists in St. Petersburg a Ladies' Artistic Circle, which meets once a week all winter, to draw from models. Social standing as well as artistic talent is requisite in members of this society, to which two or three Grand Duchesses have belonged, or do belong. The product of their weekly work, added to gifts from each member, is exhibited, sold, and raffled for each spring, the proceeds being devoted to helping needy artists by purchasing for them canvas, paints, and so forth, to clothing and educating their children, or aiding them in a dozen different ways, such as paying house-rent, doctor's bills, pensions, and so forth, to the amount of a great many thousand dollars every year. When I was in Petersburg, the exhibitions took place in the ballroom and drawing-room of one grand ducal palace, while the home and weekly meetings were in the palace of the Grand Duchess Ekaterina Mikhailovna, now dead. An amiable poet, Yakoff Petrovitch, invited me to attend one of these meetings, —a number of men being honorary members, though the women manage everything themselves,—but illness prevented my accompanying him on the evening appointed for our visit. He told me, therefore, to keep my invitation card. Three months elapsed before circumstances permitted me to use it.

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One evening, on my way from an informal call of farewell on a friend who was about to set out for the Crimea, I ordered my *izvostchik* to drive me to the Michael Palace. We were still at some distance from the palace when a policeman spoke to the *izvostchik*, who drove on instead of turning that corner, as he had been on the point of doing.

"Why don't you go on up that street?" I asked.

"Impossible! Probably the *Hosudar* [Emperor] is coming," answered cabby.

"Whither is he going?"

"We don't know," replied cabby, in true Russian style.

"But I mean to go to that palace, all the same," said I.

"Of course," said cabby tranquilly, turning up the next parallel street, which brought us out on the square close to the palace.

As we drove into the courtyard I was surprised to see that it was filled with carriages, that the plumed chasseurs of ambassadors and footmen in court liveries were flitting to and fro, and that the great flight of steps leading to the grand entrance was dotted thickly with officers and gendarmes, exactly as though an imperial birthday *Te Deum* at St. Isaac's Cathedral were in progress, and twenty or twenty-five thousand people must be kept in order.

"Well!" I said to myself, "this appears to be a very elegant sort of sketch-club, with evening dress and all the society appurtenances. What did Yakoff Petrovitch mean by telling me that a plain street gown was the proper thing to wear? This enforced 'simplification' is rather trying to the feminine nerves; but I will not beat a retreat!"

I paid and dismissed my *izvostchik*,—a poor, shabby fellow, such as Fate invariably allotted to me,—walked in, gave my furs and galoshes to the handsome, big head Swiss in imperial scarlet and gold livery, and started past the throng of servants, to the grand staircase, which ascended invitingly at the other side of the vast hall. Unfortunately, that instinct with whose possession women are sometimes reproached prompted me to turn back, just as I had reached the first step, and question the Swiss.

"In what room shall I find the Ladies' Artistic Circle?"

"It does not meet to-night, madame," he answered. "Her Imperial Highness has guests."

"But I thought the Circle met every Wednesday night from November to May."

"It does, usually, madame; to-night is an exception. You will find the ladies here next week."



“Then please to give me my *shuba* and galoshes, and call a sledge.”

The Swiss gave the order for a sledge to one of the palace servants standing by, and put on my galoshes and cloak. But the big square was deserted, the ubiquitous *izvostchik* was absent, for once, it appeared, and after waiting a few minutes at the grand entrance, I repeated my request to an officer of gendarmes. He touched his cap, said: “*Slushaiu’s*” (I obey, madame), and set in action a series of shouts of “*Izvostchik! izvo-o-o-o-stchik!*” It ended in the dispatch of a messenger to a neighboring street, and—at last—the appearance of a sledge, visibly shabby of course, even in the dark,—my luck had not deserted me.

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I could have walked home, as it was very close at hand, in much less time than it took to get the sledge, be placed therein, and buttoned fast under the robe by the gendarme officer: but my heart had quailed a little, I confess, when it looked for a while as if I should be compelled to do it and pass that array of carriages and lackeys afoot. I was glad enough to be able to spend double fare on the man (because I had not bargained in advance), in the support of my little dignity and false pride.

As I drove out of one gate, a kind of quiet tumult arose at the other. On comparing notes, two days later, as to the hour, with a friend who had been at the palace that night (by invitation, not in my way), I found that the Emperor and Empress had driven up to attend these Lenten *Tableaux Vivants*, in which several members of the imperial family figured, just as I had got out of the way.

This was one of the very few occasions when I found any street reserved temporarily for the Emperor, who usually drives like a private citizen. I have never been able to understand, however, what good such reservation does, if undertaken as a protective measure (as hasty travelers are fond of asserting), when a person can head off the Emperor, reach the goal by a parallel street, and then walk into a small, select imperial party unknown, uninvited, unhindered, as I evidently could have done and almost did, woolen gown, bonnet, and all, barred solely by my own question to the Swiss at the last moment.

That the full significance of my semi-adventure may be comprehended, with all its irregularity, let me explain that my manner of arrival was as unsuitable—as suspicious, if you like—as it well could be. I had no business to drive up to a palace, in a common sledge hired on the street, on such an occasion. I had no business to be riding alone in an open sledge at night. Officers from the regiments of the Guards may, from economy, use such public open sledges (there are no covered sledges in town) to attend a reception at the Winter Palace, or a funeral mass at a church where the Emperor and Empress are present. I have seen that done. But they are careful to alight at a distance and approach the august edifice on their own noble, uniformed legs. But a woman—without a uniform to consecrate her daring—!

However, closed carriages do not stand at random on the street in St. Petersburg, any more than they do elsewhere, and cannot often be had either quickly or easily, besides being expensive.

Nevertheless, neither then nor at any other time did I ever encounter the slightest disrespect from police, gendarmes, servants (those severe and often impertinent judges of one's attire and equipage), nor from their masters,—not even on this critical occasion when I so patently, flagrantly transgressed all the proprieties, yet was not interfered with by word or glance, but was permitted to discover my error for myself, or plunge headlong, unwarned, into the Duchess's party, regardless of my unsuitable costume.

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On the following Wednesday, I drove to the palace again in the same style of equipage, and the same gown, which proved to be perfectly proper, as Mr. Y. P. had told me, and was greeted with a courteous and amiable smile by the head Swiss, who had the air of taking me under his special protection, as he conducted me in person, not by deputy, to the quarters of the Circle.

I had another illustrative experience with closed streets. In February come the two grand reviews of the Guards, stationed in Petersburg, Peterhoff, and Tzarskoe Selo, on the Palace Place. They are fine spectacles, but only for those who have access to a window overlooking the scene, as all the streets leading to the Place are blockaded by the gendarmerie, to obviate the disturbance of traffic. On one of these occasions, I inadvertently selected the route which the Emperor was to use. I was stopped by mounted gendarmes. I told them that it was too far to walk, with my heavy furs and shoes, and they allowed me to proceed. A block further on, officers of higher grade in the gendarmerie rode up to me and again declared that it was impossible for me to go on; but they yielded, as did still higher officers, at two or three advanced posts. I believe that it was not intended that I should walk along that street either; I certainly had it all to myself. I know now how royalty feels when carefully coddled, and prefer to have my fellow-creatures about me. I alighted, at last, with the polite assistance of a gendarme officer, at the very spot where the Emperor afterward alighted from his sledge and mounted his horse. At that time I was living in an extremely fashionable quarter of the city, where every one was supposed to keep his own carriage. The result was that the *izvostchiki* never expected custom from any one except the servants of the wealthy, and none but the shabbiest sledges in town ever waited there for engagements. Accordingly, my turnout was very shabby, and the gendarmes could not have been impressed with respect by it. On the other hand, had I used the best style of public equipage, the *likatchi*, the kind which consists of an elegant little sledge, a fine horse, and a spruce, well-fed, well-dressed driver, it is probable that they would not have let me pass at all. Ladies are not permitted, by etiquette, to patronize these *likatchi*, alone, and no man will take his wife or a woman whom he respects to drive in one. Had I foreseen that there would be any occasion for inspiring respect by my equipage, I would have gone to the trouble and expense of hiring a closed carriage, a thing which I did as rarely as possible, because nothing could be seen through the frozen window, because they seemed much colder than the open sledges, and had no advantage except style, and that of protecting one from the wind, which I did not mind.

VI.

A RUSSIAN SUMMER RESORT.

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The spring was late and cold. I wore my fur-lined cloak (*shuba*) and wrapped up my ears, by Russian advice as well as by inclination, until late in May. But we were told that the summer heat would catch us suddenly, and that St. Petersburg would become malodorous and unhealthy. It was necessary, owing to circumstances, to find a healthy residence for the summer, which should not be too far removed from the capital. With a few exceptions, all the environs of St. Petersburg are damp. Unless one goes as far as Gatschina, or into the part of Finland adjacent to the city, Tzarskoe Selo presents the only dry locality. In the Finnish summer colonies, one must, perforce, keep house, for lack of hotels. In Tzarskoe, as in Peterhoff, villa life is the only variety recognized by polite society; but there we had—or seemed to have—the choice between that and hotels. We decided in favor of Tzarskoe, as it is called in familiar conversation. As one approaches the imperial village, it rises like a green oasis from the plain. It is hedged in, like a true Russian village, but with trees and bushes well trained instead of with a wattled fence.

During the reign of Alexander II., this inland village was the favorite Court resort; not Peterhoff, on the Gulf of Finland, as at present. It is situated sixteen miles from St. Petersburg, on the line of the first railway built in Russia, which to this day extends only a couple of miles beyond,—for lack of the necessity of farther extension, it is just to add. It stands on land which is not perceptibly higher than St. Petersburg, and it took a great deal of demonstration before an Empress of the last century could be made to believe that it was, in reality, on a level with the top of the lofty Admiralty spire, and that she must continue her tiresome trips to and fro in her coach, in the impossibility of constructing a canal which would enable her to sail in comfort. Tzarskoe Selo, “Imperial Village:” well as the name fits the place, it is thought to have been corrupted from *saari*, the Finnish word for “farm,” as a farm occupied the site when Peter the Great pitched upon it for one of his numerous summer resorts. He first enlarged the farmhouse, then built one of his simple wooden palaces, and a greenhouse for Katherine I. Eventually he erected a small part of the present Old Palace. It was at the dedication of the church here, celebrated in floods of liquor (after a fashion not unfamiliar in the annals of New England in earlier days), that Peter I. contracted the illness which, aggravated by a similar drinking-bout elsewhere immediately afterward, and a cold caused by a wetting while he was engaged in rescuing some people from drowning, carried him to his grave very promptly. His successors enlarged and beautified the place, which first became famous during the reign of Katherine II. At the present day, its broad macadamized streets are lighted by electricity; its *Gostinny Dvor* (bazaar) is like that of a provincial city; many of its sidewalks, after the same provincial pattern, have made people prefer the middle of the street for their promenades. Naturally, only the lower classes were expected to walk when the Court resided there.

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Before making acquaintance with the famous palaces and parks, we undertook to settle ourselves for the time being, at least. It appeared that “furnished” villas are so called in Tzarskoe, as elsewhere, because they require to be almost completely furnished by the occupant on a foundation of bare bones of furniture, consisting of a few bedsteads and tables. This was not convenient for travelers; neither did we wish to commit ourselves for the whole season to the cares of housekeeping, lest a change of air should be ordered suddenly; so we determined to try to live in another way.

Boarding-houses are as scarce here as in St. Petersburg, the whole town boasting but one,—advertised as a wonderful rarity,—which was very badly situated. There were plenty of *traktiri*, or low-class eating-houses, some of which had “numbers for arrivers”—that is to say, rooms for guests—added to their gaudy signs. These were not to be thought of. But we had been told of an establishment which rejoiced in the proud title of *gostinnitza*, “hotel,” in city fashion. It looked fairly good, and there we took up our abode, after due and inevitable chaffering. This hotel was kept, over shops, on the first and part of the second floor of a building which had originally been destined for apartments. Its only recommendation was that it was situated near a very desirable gate into the Imperial Park.

Our experience there was sufficient to slake all curiosity as to Russian summer resort hotels, or country hotels in provincial towns, since that was its character; though it had, besides, some hindrances which were peculiar, I hope, to itself. The usual clean, large dining-room, with the polished floor, table decorated with plants, and lace curtains, was irresistibly attractive, especially to wedding parties of shopkeepers, who danced twelve hours at a stretch, and to breakfast parties after funerals, whose guests made rather more uproar on afternoons than did those of the wedding balls in the evening, as they sang the customary doleful chants, and then warmed up to the occasion with bottled consolation. The establishment being shorthanded for waiters, these entertainments interfered seriously with our meals, which we took in private; and we were often forced to go hungry until long after the hour, because there was so much to eat in the house!

Our first experience of the place was characteristic. The waiter, who was also “boots,” chambermaid, and clerk, on occasion, distributed two sheets, two pillows, one blanket, and one “cold” (cotton) coverlet between the two beds, and considered that ample, as no doubt it was according to some lights and according to the almanac, though the weather resembled November just then, and I saw snow a few days later. Having succeeded in getting this rectified, after some discussion, I asked for towels.

“There is one,” answered Mikhei (Micah), with his most fascinating smile.

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The towel was very small, and was intended to serve for two persons! Eventually it did not; and we earned the name of being altogether too fastidious. The washstand had a tank of water attached to the top, which we pumped into the basin with a foot-treadle, after we became skillful, holding our hands under the stream the while. The basin had no stopper. "Running water is cleaner to wash in," was the serious explanation. Some other barbarian who had used that washstand before us must also have differed from that commonly accepted Russian opinion: when we plugged up the hole with a cork, and it disappeared, and we fished it out of the still clogged pipe, we found that six others had preceded it. It took a champagne cork and a cord to conquer the orifice.

Among our vulgar experiences at this place were—fleas. I remonstrated with Mikhei, our typical waiter from the government of Yaroslavl, which furnishes restaurant *garçons* in hordes as a regular industry. Mikhei replied airily:—

"*Nitchevo!* It is nothing! You will soon learn to like them so much that you cannot do without them."

I take the liberty of doubting whether even Russians ever reach that last state of mind, in a lifetime of endurance. Two rooms beyond us, in the same corridor, lodged a tall, thin, gray-haired Russian merchant, who was nearly a typical Yankee in appearance. Every morning, at four o'clock, when the fleas were at their worst and roused us regularly (the "close season" for mortals, in Russia, is between five and six A. M.), we heard this man emerge from his room, and shake, separately and violently, the four pieces of his bedclothing into the corridor; not out of the window, as he should have done. So much for the modern native taste. It is recorded that the beauties of the last century, in St. Petersburg, always wore on their bosoms silver "flea-catchers" attached to a ribbon. These traps consisted of small tubes pierced with a great number of tiny holes, closed at the bottom, open at the top, and each containing a slender shaft smeared with honey or some other sticky substance. So much for the ancient native taste.

Again, we had a disagreement with Mikhei on the subject of the roast beef. More than once it was brought in having a peculiar blackish-crimson hue and stringy grain, with a sweetish flavor, and an odor which was singular but not tainted, and which required imperatively that either we or it should vacate the room instantly. Mikhei stuck firmly to his assertion that it was a prime cut from a first-class ox. We discovered the truth later on, in Moscow, when we entered a Tatar horse-butcher's shop—ornamented with the picture of a horse, as the law requires—out of curiosity, to inquire prices. We recognized the smell and other characteristics of our Tzarskoe Selo "roast ox" at a glance and a sniff, and remained only long enough to learn that the best cuts cost two and a half cents a pound. Afterward

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we went a block about to avoid passing that shop. The explanation of the affair was simple enough. In our hotel there was a *traktir*, run by our landlord, tucked away in a rear corner of the ground floor, and opening on what Thackeray would have called a “tight but elegant” little garden, for summer use. It was thronged from morning till night with Tatar old-clothes men and soldiers from the garrison, for whom it was the rendezvous. The horse beef had been provided for the Tatars, who considered it a special dainty, and had been palmed off upon us because it was cheap.

I may dismiss the subject of the genial Mikhei here, with the remark that we met him the following summer at the Samson Inn, in Peterhoff, where he served our breakfast with an affectionate solicitude which somewhat alarmed us for his sobriety. He was very much injured in appearance by long hair thrown back in artistic fashion, and a livid gash which scored one side of his face down to his still unbrushed teeth, and nearly to his unwashed shirt, narrowly missing one eye, and suggested possibilities of fight in him which, luckily for our peace of mind, we had not suspected the previous season.

Our chambermaid at first, at the Tzarskoe hostelry, was a lad fourteen years of age, who dusted in the most wonderfully conscientious way without being asked, like a veteran trained housekeeper. We supposed that male chambermaids were the fashion, judging from the offices which we had seen our St. Petersburg hotel “boots” perform, and we said nothing. A Russian friend who came to call on us, however, was shocked, and, without our knowledge, gave the landlord a lecture on the subject, the first intimation of which was conveyed to us by the appearance of a maid who had been engaged “expressly for the service of our high nobilities;” price, five rubles a month (two dollars and a half; she chanced to live in the attic lodgings), which they did not pay her, and which we gladly gave her. Her conversation alone was worth three times the money. Our “boots” in St. Petersburg got but four rubles a month, out of which he was obliged to clothe himself, and furnish the brushes, wax, and blacking for the boots; and he had not had a single day’s holiday in four years, when we made his acquaintance. I won his eternal devotion by “placing a candle” vicariously to the Saviour for him on Christmas Day, and added one for myself, to harmonize with the brotherly spirit of the season.

Andrei, the boy, never wholly recovered from the grief and resentment caused by being thus supplanted, and the imputation cast upon his powers of caring for us. He got even with us on at least two occasions, for the offense of which we were innocent. Once he told a fashionable visitor of ours that we dined daily in the *traktir*, with the Tatar clothes peddlers and the soldiers of the garrison, with the deliberate intention of shocking her. I suppose it soothed his feelings for having to serve our food in our own room. Again, being ordered to “place the *samovar*” he withdrew to his chamber, the former kitchen of the apartment, and went to sleep on the cold range, which was his bed, where he was discovered after we had starved patiently for an hour and a half.

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Andrei's supplanter was named Katiusha, but her angular charms corresponded so precisely with those of the character in "The Mikado" that we referred to her habitually as Katisha. She had been a serf, a member of the serf aristocracy, which consisted of the house servants, and had served always as maid or nurse. She was now struggling on as a seamstress. Her sewing was wonderfully bad, and she found great difficulty in bringing up her two children, who demanded fashionable "European" clothing, and in eking out the starvation wages of her husband, a superannuated restaurant waiter, also a former serf, and belonging, like herself, to the class which received personal liberty, but no land, at the emancipation. Her view of the emancipation was not entirely favorable. In fact, all the ex-serfs with whom I talked retained a soft spot in their hearts for the comforts and irresponsibility of the good old days of serfdom.

Katiusha could neither read nor write, but her naturally acute powers of observation, unconsciously trained by constant contact with her former owners, were of very creditable quality. She possessed a genuine talent for expressing herself neatly. For example, in describing a concert to which she had been taken, she praised the soprano singer's voice with much discrimination, winding up with, "It was—how shall I say it?—round—as round—as round as—a cartwheel!"

Her great delight consisted in being sent by me to purchase eggs and fruit at the market, or in accompanying me to carry them home, when I went myself to enjoy the scene and her methods. In her I was able to study Russian bargaining tactics in their finest flower. She would haggle for half an hour over a quarter of a cent on very small purchases, and then would carry whatever she bought into one of the neighboring shops to be reweighed. To my surprise, the good-natured venders seemed never to take offense at this significant act; and she never discovered any dishonesty. When wearied out by this sort of thing, I took charge of the proceedings, that I might escape from her agonized groans and grimaces at my extravagance. After choking down her emotion in gulps all the way home, she would at last clasp her hands, and moan in a wheedling voice:—

"Please, *barynya*,* how much did you pay that robber?"

* Mistress.

"Two kopeks* apiece for the eggs. They are fine, large, and fresh, as you see. Twenty kopeks a pound for the strawberries, also of the first quality."

* About one cent.

Then would follow a scene which never varied, even if my indiscretion had been confined to raspberries at five cents a pound, or currants at a cent less. She would wring her hands, long and fleshless as fan handles, and, her great green eyes

phosphorescent with distress above her hollow cheeks and projecting bones, she would cry:—

“Oh, *barynya*, they have cheated you, cheated you shamefully! You must let me protect you.”

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“Come, don’t you think it is worth a few kopeks to be called ‘a pearl,’ ‘a diamond,’ ‘an emerald’?”

“Is *that* all they called you?” she inquired, with a disdainful sniff.

“No; they said that I was ‘a real general-ess.’ They knew their business, you see. And they said ‘*madame*’ instead of ‘*sudarynya*.’* Was there any other title which they could have bestowed on me for the money?”

*_Sudarynya_ is the genuine Russian word for “madam,” but, like *spasibo*, “thank you,” it is used only by the lower classes. Many merchants who know no French except *madame* use it as a delicate compliment to the patron’s social position.

She confessed, with a pitying sigh, that there was not, but returned to her plaint over the sinfully wasted kopeks. Once I offered her some “tea-money” in the shape of a basket of raspberries, which she wished to preserve and drink in her tea, with the privilege of purchasing them herself. As an experiment to determine whether bargaining is the outcome of thrift and economy alone, or a distinct pleasure in itself, it was a success. I followed her from vender to vender, and waited with exemplary patience while she scrutinized their wares and beat down prices with feverish eagerness, despite the fact that she was not to pay the bill. I put an end to the matter when she tried to persuade a pretty peasant girl, who had walked eight miles, to accept less than four cents a pound for superb berries. I think it really spoiled my gift to her that I insisted on making the girl happy with five cents a pound. After that I was not surprised to find Russian merchants catering to the taste of their customers by refusing to adopt the one-price system.

It was vulgar to go to market, of course. Even the great mastiff who acted as yard dog at the bazaar made me aware of that fact. He always greeted me politely, like a host, when he met me in the court at market hours. But nothing could induce him even to look at me when he met me outside. I tried to explain to him that my motives were scientific, not economical, and I introduced Katiusha to him as the family bargainer and scapegoat for his scorn. He declined to relent. After that I understood that there was nothing for it but to shoulder the responsibility myself, and I never attempted to palliate my unpardonable conduct in the eyes of the servants of my friends whom I occasionally encountered there.

The market was held in the inner courtyard of the *Gostinny Dvor*, near the chapel, which always occupies a conspicuous position in such places. While the shops under the arcade, facing on the street, sold everything, from “gallantry wares” (dry goods and small wares) to nails, the inner booths were all devoted to edibles. On the rubble pavement of the court squatted peasants from the villages for many versts round about, both Russian and Finnish, hedged in by their wares, vegetables, flowers, fruit, and live poultry. The Russians exhibited no beautiful costumes; their proximity to the capital had

done away with all that. At first I was inexperienced, and went unprovided with receptacles for my marketing. The market women looked up in surprise.

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“What, have you no kerchief?” they asked, as though I were a peasant or petty merchant’s wife, and could remove the typical piece of gayly colored cloth from my head or neck. When I objected to transporting eggs and berries in my only resource, my handkerchief, they reluctantly produced scraps of dirty newspaper, or of ledgers scrawled over with queer accounts. I soon grew wise, and hoarded up the splint strawberry baskets provided by the male venders, which are put to multifarious uses in Russia.

After being asked for a kerchief in the markets, and a sheet when I went to get my fur cloak from its summer storage at a fashionable city shop, and after making divers notes on journeys, I was obliged to conclude that the ancient merchant fashion in Russia had been to seize the nearest fabric at hand,—the sheet from the bed, the cloth from the table,—and use it as a traveling trunk.

The Finns at the market were not to be mistaken for Russians. Their features were wooden; their expression was far less intelligent than that of the Russians. The women were addicted to wonderful patterns in aprons and silver ornaments, and wore, under a white head kerchief, a stiff glazed white circlet which seemed to wear away their blond hair. These women arrived regularly every morning, before five o’clock, at the shops of the baker and the grocer opposite our windows. The shops opened at that hour, after having kept open until eleven o’clock at night, or later. After refreshing themselves with a roll and a bunch of young onions, of which the green tops appeared to be the most relished, the women made their town toilet by lowering the very much reefed skirt of their single garment, drawing on footless stockings, and donning shoes. At ten o’clock, or even earlier, they came back to fill the sacks of coarse white linen, borne over their shoulders, with necessities for their households, purchased with the proceeds of their sales, and to reverse their toilet operations, preparatory to the long tramp homeward. I sometimes caught them buying articles which seemed extravagant luxuries, all things considered, such as raisins. One of their specialties was the sale of lilies of the valley, which grow wild in the Russian forests. Their peculiar little trot-trot, and the indescribable semi-tones and quarter-tones in which they cried, “*Land-dy-y-y-shee!*” were unmistakably Finnish at any distance.

The scene at the market was always entertaining. Tzarskoe is surrounded by market gardens, where vegetables and fruits are raised in highly manured and excessively hilled-up beds. It sends tons of its products to the capital as well as to the local market. Everything was cheap and delicious. Eggs were dear when they reached a cent and a half apiece. Strawberries, huge and luscious, were dear at ten cents a pound, since in warm seasons they cost but five. Another berry, sister to the strawberry, but differing from it utterly in taste, was the *klubnika*, of which there were two varieties, the white and the bluish-red, both delicious in their peculiar flavor, but less decorative in size and aspect than the strawberry.

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The native cherries, small and sour, make excellent preserves, with a spicy flavor, which are much liked by Russians in their tea. The only objection to this use of them is that both tea and cherries are spoiled. Raspberries, plums, gooseberries, and currants were plentiful and cheap. A vegetable delicacy of high order, according to Katiusha, who introduced it to my notice, was a sort of radish with an extremely fine, hard grain, and biting qualities much developed, which attains enormous size, and is eaten in thin slices, salted and buttered. I presented the solitary specimen which I bought, a ninepin in proportions, to the grateful Katiusha. It was beyond my appreciation.

Pears do not thrive so far north, but in good years apples of fine sorts are raised, to a certain extent, in the vicinity of St. Petersburg. Really good specimens, however, come from Poland, the lower Volga, Little Russia, and other distant points, which renders them always rather dear. We saw few in our village that were worth buying, as the season was phenomenally cold, and a month or three weeks late, so that we got our strawberries in August, and our linden blossoms in September. Apples, plums, grapes, and honey are not eaten—in theory—until after they have been blessed at the feast of the Transfiguration, on August 18 (N. S.),—a very good scheme for giving them time to ripen fully for health. Before that day, however, hucksters bearing trays of honey on their heads are eagerly welcomed, and the peasant's special dainty— fresh cucumbers thickly coated with honey—is indulged in unblessed. Honey is not so plentiful that one can afford to fling away a premature chance!

When the mushroom season came in, the market assumed an aspect of half-subdued brilliancy with the many sombre and high-colored varieties of that fungus. The poorer people indulge in numerous kinds which the rich do not eat, and they furnish precious sustenance during fasts, when so many viands are forbidden by the Russian Church and by poverty. One of the really odd sights, during the fast of Saints Peter and Paul (the first half of July), was that of people walking along the streets with bunches of pea-vines, from which they were plucking the peas, and eating them, pods and all, quite raw. It seemed a very summary and wasteful way of gathering them. This fashion of eating vegetables raw was imported, along with the liturgy, from the hot lands where the Eastern Church first flourished, and where raw food was suitable. These traditions, and probably also the economy of fuel, cause it to be still persisted in, in a climate to which it is wholly unsuited. Near Tzarskoe I found one variety of pea growing to the altitude of nearly seven feet, and producing pods seven inches long and three wide. The stalks of the double poppies in the same garden were six and seven feet high, and the flowers were the size of peonies, while the pods of the single poppies were nine inches in circumference.

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One of the great festivals of the Russian Church is Whitsunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter; but it is called Trinity Sunday, and the next day is "the Day of Spirits," or Pentecost. On this Pentecost Day a curious sight was formerly to be seen in St. Petersburg. Mothers belonging to the merchant class arrayed their marriageable daughters in their best attire; hung about their necks not only all the jewels which formed a part of their dowries, but also, it is said, the silver ladles, forks, and spoons; and took them to the Summer Garden, to be inspected and proposed for by the young men.

But the place where this spectacle can be seen in the most charming way is Tzarskoe Selo. We were favored with superb weather on both the festal days. On Sunday morning every one went to church, as usual. The small church behind the Lyceum, where Pushkin was educated, with its un-Russian spire, ranks as a Court church; that in the Old Palace across the way being opened only on special occasions, now that the Court is not in residence. Outside, the choir sat under the golden rain of acacia blossoms and the hedge of fragrant lilacs until the last moment, the sunshine throwing into relief their gold-laced black cloth vestments and crimson belts. They were singers from one of the regiments stationed in town, and crimson was the regimental color. The church is accessible to all classes, and it was crowded. As at Easter, every one was clad in white or light colors, even those who were in mourning having donned the bluish-gray which serves them for festive garb. In place of the Easter candle, each held a bouquet of flowers. In the corners of the church stood young birch-trees, with their satin bark and feathery foliage, and boughs of the same decked the walls. There is a law now which forbids this annual destruction of young trees at Pentecost, but the practice continues, and the tradition is that one must shed as many tears for his sins as there are dewdrops on the birch bough which he carries, if he has no flowers. Peasant women in clean cotton gowns elbowed members of the Court in silks; fat merchants, with well-greased, odorous hair and boots, in hot, long-skirted blue cloth coats, stood side by side with shabby invalid soldiers or smartly uniformed officers. Tiny peasant children seated themselves on the floor when their little legs refused further service, and imitated diligently all the low reverences and signs of the cross made by their parents. Those of larger growth stood with the preternatural repose and dignity of the adult Russian peasant, and followed the liturgy independently. One little girl of seven, self-possessed and serenely unconscious, slipped through the crowd to the large image of the Virgin near the altar, grasped the breast-high guard-rail, and kissed the holy picture in the middle of her agile vault. When some members of the imperial family arrived, the crowd pressed together still more closely, to make a narrow passage to the small space reserved for them opposite the choir. After the ever beautiful liturgy, finely expressed special prayers were offered, during which the priest also carried flowers.

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Another church service on the following day—a day when public offices are closed and business ceases—completed the religious duties of the festival. In the afternoon, the whole town began to flock to the Imperial Park surrounding the Old Palace,—people of the upper circles included,—the latter from motives of curiosity, of course. Three bands of the Guards furnished the music. On the great terrace, shaded by oak-trees hardly beyond the bronze-pink stage of their leafage, played the hussars. Near the breakfast gallery, with its bronze statues of Hercules and Flora, which the common people call “Adam and Eve” (the Ariadne on Naxos, in a neighboring grotto, is popularly believed to be “a girl of seven years, who was bitten by a snake while roaming the Russian primeval forest, and died”), were the cuirassiers. The *stryelki* (sharpshooters) were stationed near the lake, the central point for meetings and promenades during the lovely “white nights;” where boats of every sort, from a sail-boat or a Chinese sampan to an Astrakhan fishing-boat or a snowshoe skiff, are furnished gratis all summer, with a sailor of the Guard to row them, if desired. Round and round and round, unweariedly, paced the girls. They were bareheaded and in slippered feet, as usual, but had abandoned the favorite ulster, which too often accompanies extremities thus unclad, to display their gayest gowns. The young men gazed with intense interest. Here and there a young fellow in “European clothes” was to be seen conversing with the more conservative young merchants, who retained the wrinkled boots confining full trousers, the shirt worn outside the trousers, the cloth vest, and the blue cloth long coat of traditional cut.

It was like a scene from the theatre. Across the lake, dotted with boating parties, stretched lawns planted with trees chosen for their variety of foliage, from the silver willow to the darkest evergreens, while the banks were diversified with a boat-house, a terraced grotto, a Turkish kiosk with a bath, bridges, and so on. Of the immense palace which stood so near at hand the graceful breakfast gallery alone was visible, while high above the waving crests of the trees the five cupolas of the palace church, in the shape of imperial crowns, seemed to float in the clear blue sky like golden bubbles. The lawns within the acacia-hedged compartments were dazzling with campanulas, harebells, rose campions, and crimson and yellow columbine, or gleamed with the pale turquoise of forget-me-nots. We had only to enter the adjoining park surrounding the Alexander Palace, built for Alexander I. by his grandmother, Katherine II., to find the Field of the Cloth of Gold realized by acres of tall double Siberian buttercups, as large and as fragrant as yellow roses.

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Soldiers of the garrison strolled about quietly, as usual. The pet of the hussars was in great form, and his escort of admiring comrades was larger than ever. They thrust upon him half of their tidbits and sunflower seeds,—what masses of sunflower seeds and handbill cigarettes were consumed that day, not to mention squash seeds, by the more opulent!—and waited eagerly for his dimpled smile as their reward. When the bands were weary, the regimental singers ranged themselves in a circle, and struck up songs of love, of battle, and of mirth, amid the applause and laughter of the crowd. Now and then a soldier would step into the middle of the circle and dance. The slight, agile, square-capped *stryelki* spun round until their full-plaited black tunics stood out from their tightly belted waists like the skirts of ballet dancers. The slender, graceful hussars, with their yellow-laced scarlet jackets and tight blue trousers, flitted to and fro like gay birds. The best performer of all was a cuirassier, a big blond fellow, with ruddy cheeks and dazzling teeth. Planting his peakless white cloth cap with its yellow band firmly on his head, he stepped forward, grasping in each hand a serried pyramid of brass bells, which chimed merrily as he squatted, leaped, and executed eccentric steps with his feet, while his arms beat time and his fine voice rolled out the solo of a rollicking ballad, to which the rest of the company furnished the chorus as well as their laughter and delighted applause of his efforts permitted. His tightly fitting dark green trousers, tall boots, and jacket of white cloth trimmed with yellow set off his muscular form to great advantage. A comrade stood by, shaking the *buntchuk*, an ornamental combination of brass half-moons, gay horsetails, and bells, —the Turkish staff of command, which is carried as a special privilege by several Russian cavalry regiments. There is nothing that a company of Russians likes better than a spirited performance of their national dances, whether it be high-class Russians at a Russian opera in the Imperial Theatre, or the masses on informal occasions like the present. This soldier, who danced with joy in every fibre, was quite willing to oblige them indefinitely, and seemed to be made of steel springs. He stopped with great reluctance, and that only when his company was ordered peremptorily to march off to barracks at the appointed hour.

How many weddings resulted from that day's dress parade I know not. But I presume the traditional "match-makers" did their duty, if the young men were sufficiently impressed by the girls' outfits to commission these professional proposers to lay their hearts and hands at the feet of the parents on the following day. They certainly could not have been hopelessly bewitched by any beauty which was on show. The presence of the soldiers, the singing, music, and dancing, framed in that exquisite park, combined to create a scene the impression of which is far beyond comparison with that of the same parade in the Summer Garden at St. Petersburg.

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This grand terrace of the Old Palace is a favorite resort for mothers and children, especially when the different bands of the Guards' regiments stationed in the town furnish music. But not far away, in the less stately, more natural park surrounding the Alexander Palace, the property of the Crown Prince, lies the real paradise of the children of all classes. There is the playground, provided with gymnastic apparatus, laid out at the foot of a picturesque tower, one of the line of signal towers, now mostly demolished, which, before the introduction of the telegraph, flashed news from Warsaw to St. Petersburg in the then phenomenally short space of twenty-four hours. The children's favorite amusement is the "net." Sailors of the guard set up a full-rigged ship's mast, surrounded, about two feet from the ground, by a wide sweep of close-meshed rope netting well tarred. Boys and girls of ambition climb the rigging, swing, and drop into the net. The little ones never weary of dancing about on its yielding surface. A stalwart, gentle giant of a sailor watches over the safety of the merrymakers, and warns, teaches, or helps them, if they wish it.

Their nurses, with pendent bosoms and fat shoulders peeping through the transparent muslin of their chemises, make a bouquet of colors, with their gay *sarafani*, their many-hued cashmere caps attached to pearl-embroidered, coronet-shaped *kokoshniki*, and terminating in ribbons which descend to their heels, and are outshone in color only by the motley assemblage of beads on their throats.

Here, round the gymnastic apparatus and the net, one is able for the first time to believe solidly in the existence of Russian children. In town, in the winter, one has doubted it, despite occasional coveys of boys in military greatcoats, book-knapsacks of sealskin strapped to their shoulders to keep their backs straight, and officer-like caps. The summer garb of the lads from the gymnasias and other institutes consists of thin, dark woolen material or of coarse gray linen, made in the blouse or Russian shirt form, which portraits of Count Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoy, the author, have rendered familiar to foreigners. It must not be argued from this fact that Count Tolstoy set the fashion; far from it. It is the ordinary and sensible garment in common use, which he has adopted from others, not they from him. It can be seen on older students any day, even in winter, in the reading-room of the Imperial Public Library in St. Petersburg, on the imperial choir in the Winter Palace as undress uniform for week-day services, and elsewhere.

Some indulgent mothers make silk blouses for their sons, and embroider them with cross-stitch patterns in colored floss, as was the fashion a number of years ago, when a patriotic outburst of sentiment was expressed by the adoption of the "national costume," for house wear, by adults of both sexes. From this period dates also, no doubt, that style of "peasant dress" which can be seen occasionally, in unfashionable summer resorts, on girls not of the highest class by any means, and which the city shops furnish in abundance as genuine to misguided foreigners. Every one is familiar with these fantastic combinations of colored lace insertion with bands of blue cotton worked in high

colors, and fashioned into blouses and aprons such as no peasant maid ever wore or beheld.

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What strikes one very forcibly about Russian children, when one sees them at play in the parks, is their quiet, self-possessed manners and their lack of boisterousness. If they were inclined to scream, to fling themselves about wildly and be rude, they would assuredly be checked promptly and effectually, since the rights of grown people to peace, respect, and the pursuit of happiness are still recognized in that land. But, from my observation of the same qualities in untutored peasant children, I am inclined to think that Russian children are born more agreeable than Western children; yet they seem to be as cheerful and lively as is necessary, and in no way restricted. Whistling, howling, stamping, and kindred muscular exercises begin just over the Western frontier, and increase in violence as one proceeds westward, until Japan is reached, or possibly the Sandwich Islands, by which time, I am told, one enters the Orient and the realm of peace once more.

What noise we heard in Tzarskoe came from quite another quarter. As we were strolling in the park one afternoon, we heard sounds of uproarious mirth proceeding from the little island in the private imperial garden, where the Duchess of Edinburgh, in her girlhood, had a pretty Russian cottage, cow-stalls, and so forth, with flower and potato beds. She and her brothers were in the habit of planting their pussy willows, received on Palm Sunday, on the bank of the stream, and these, duly labeled, have now grown into a hedge of trees. The screen is not perfect, however, and glimpses of the playground are open to the public across the narrow stream. On this summer afternoon, there was a party of royalties on the island, swinging on the Giant Steps. The Giant Steps, I must explain, consist of a tall, stout mast firmly planted in the earth, bound with iron at the top, and upholding a thick iron ring to which are attached heavy cables which touch the ground. The game consists of a number of persons seizing hold of these cables, running round the mast until sufficient impetus is acquired, and then swinging through the air in a circle. The Tzarevitch* who had driven over from the great camp at Krasnoe Selo, and whom I had seen in the church of the Old Palace that morning at a special mass, with the angelic imperial choir and the priests from the Winter Palace sent down from Petersburg for the occasion, was now sailing through the air high up toward the apex of the mast. One of his imperial aunts, clad in a fleecy white gown, occupied a similar position on another cable. It was plain that they could not have done their own running to gain impetus, and that the gardeners must have towed them by the ends of the ropes. The other grand dukes and duchesses were managing their own cables in the usual manner. The party included the king and queen of Greece and other royal spectators. What interested me most was to hear them all shrieking and conversing in Russian, with only occasional lapses into French, instead of the reverse.

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* The present Emperor, Nicholas II.

But everything is not royal in the vicinity of these summer parks and palaces. For example, just outside of Tzarskoe Selo, on the Petersburg highway, lies a Russian village called Kuzmino, whose inhabitants are as genuine, unmodified peasants as if they lived a hundred miles from any provincial town. Here in the north, where timber is plentiful, cottages are raised from the ground by a half-story, without windows, which serves as a storeroom for carts, sledges, and farming implements. The entrance is through a door beside the large courtyard gate, which rears its heavy frame on the street line, adjoining the house, in Russian fashion. A rough staircase leads to the dwelling-rooms over the shed storeroom. Three tiny windows on the street front, with solid wooden shutters, are the ordinary allowance for light. In Kuzmino, many of the windows had delicate, clean white curtains, and all were filled with blooming plants. A single window, for symmetry, and a carved balcony fill in the sharp gable end of such houses, but open into nothing, and the window is not even glazed. Carved horses' heads, rude but recognizable, tuft the peak, and lacelike wood carving droops from the eaves. The roofs also are of wood.

This was the style of the cottages in Kuzmino. The name of the owner was inscribed on the corner of each house; and there appeared to be but two surnames, at most three, in the whole village. One new but unfinished house seemed to have been built from the ridgepole downward, instead of in the usual order. There were no doorways or stairs or apertures for communication between the stories, which were two in number. It was an architectural riddle.

As a stroll to the village had consumed an unexpected amount of time, we found ourselves, at the breakfast hour, miles away from our hotel. We instituted a search for milk, and were directed at random, it seemed, until a withered little old peasant, who was evidently given to tippling, enlisted himself as our guide. He took us to the house of a woman who carried milk and cream to town twice a week, and introduced us with a comical flourish.

The family consisted of an old woman, as dried and colorless as a Russian codfish from Arkhangel, but very clean and active; her son, a big, fresh-colored fellow, with a mop of dark brown curls, well set off by his scarlet cotton blouse; his wife, a slender, red-cheeked brunette, with delicate, pretty features; and their baby girl. They treated us like friends come to make a call; refused to accept money for their cream; begged us to allow them to prepare the *samovar*, as a favor to them, and send for white rolls, as they were sure we could not eat their sour black bread; and expressed deep regret that their berries were all gone, as the season was past. They showed us over their house in the prettiest, simplest way, and introduced us to the dark storeroom where their spare clothing

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and stores of food for the winter, such as salted cucumbers in casks, and other property, were packed away; to a narrow slip of a room on the front, where the meals for the family were prepared with remarkably few pots and no pans; to the living-room, with its whitewashed stone-and-mud oven in one corner, for both cooking and heating, a bench running round the walls on three sides, and a clean pine table in the corner of honor, where hung the holy images. They had a fine collection of these images, which were a sign of prosperity as well as of devotion. The existence of another tiny room also bore witness to easy circumstances. In this room they slept; and the baby, who was taking her noonday nap, was exhibited to us by the proud papa. Her cradle consisted of a splint market basket suspended from the ceiling by a stout wire spring, like the spring of a bird-cage, and rocked gently. The baby gazed at us with bright, bird-like eyes and smiled quietly when she woke, as though she had inherited her parents' gentle ways. We believed them when they said that she never cried; we had already discovered that this was the rule with Russian children of all classes.

They were much interested to learn from what country we came. I was prepared to find them unacquainted with the situation of America, after having been asked by an old soldier in the park, "In what district of Russia is America?" and after having been told by an *izvostchik* that the late Empress had come from my country, since "Germany" meant for him all the world which was not Russia, just as the adjective "German" signifies anything foreign and not wholly approved.

"Is America near Berlin?" asked our peasant hosts.

"Farther than that," I replied.

They laughed, and gave up the riddle after a few more equally wild guesses.

"It is on the other side of the world," I said.

"Then you must be nearer God than we are!" they exclaimed, with a sort of reverence for people who came from the suburbs of heaven.

"Surely," I said, "you do not think that the earth is flat, and that we live on the upper side, and you on the lower?"

But that was precisely what they did think, in their modesty, and, as it seemed a hopeless task to demonstrate to them the sphericity of the globe, I left them in that flattering delusion.

I asked the old woman to explain her holy pictures to me, as I always enjoyed the quaint expressions and elucidations of the peasants, and inquired whether she thought the *ikona* of the Virgin was the Virgin herself. I had heard it asserted very often by over-

wise foreigners that this was the idea entertained by all Russians, without regard to class, and especially by the peasants.

“No,” she replied, “but it shows the Virgin Mother to me, just as your picture would show you to me when you were on the other side of the world, and remind me of you. Only—how shall I say it?—there is more power in a wonder-working *ikona* like this.”

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She handed me one which depicted the Virgin completely surrounded by a halo of starlike points shaded in red and yellow flames. It is called “the Virgin-of-the-Bush-that-burned-but-was-not-consumed,” evidently a reminiscence of Moses. She attached particular value to it because of the aid rendered on the occasion which had demonstrated its “wonder-working” (miraculous) powers. It appeared that a dangerous fire had broken out in the neighborhood, and was rapidly consuming the close-set wooden village, as such fires generally do without remedy. As the fire had been started by the lightning, on St. Ilya’s Day (St. Elijah’s), no earthly power could quench it but the milk from a jet-black cow, which no one chanced to have on hand. Seeing the flames approach, my old woman, Domna Nikolaevna T., seized the holy image, ran out, and held it facing the conflagration, uttering the proper prayer the while. Immediately a strong wind arose and drove the flames off in a safe direction, and the village was rescued. She had a thanksgiving service celebrated in the church, and placed I know not how many candles to the Virgin’s honor, as did the other villagers. Thus they had learned that there was divine power in this *ikona*, although it was not, strictly speaking, “wonder-working,” since it had not been officially recognized as such by the ecclesiastical authorities.

These people seemed happy and contented with their lot. Not one of them could read or write much, the old woman not at all. They cultivated berries for market as well as carried on the milk business; and when we rose to go, they entreated us to come out on their plot of land and see whether some could not be found. To their grief, only a few small cherries were to be discovered,—it was September,—and these they forced upon us. As we had hurt their feelings by leaving money on the table to pay for the cream, we accepted the cherries by way of compromise. The old woman chatted freely in her garden. She had been a serf, and, in her opinion, things were not much changed for the better, except in one respect. All the people in this village had been crown serfs, it seemed. The lot of the crown serfs was easier in every way than that of the ordinary private serfs, so that the emancipation only put a definite name to the practical freedom which they already enjoyed, and added a few minor privileges, with the ownership of a somewhat larger allotment of land than the serfs of the nobility received. I knew this: she was hardly capable of giving me so complete a summary of their condition. But—it was the usual *but*, I found—they had to work much harder now than before, in order to live. The only real improvement which she could think of, on the inspiration of the moment, was, that a certain irascible crown official, who had had charge of them in the olden days, and whose name she mentioned, who had been in the habit of distributing beatings with a lavish hand whenever the serfs displeased him or obeyed reluctantly, had been obliged to restrain his temper after the emancipation.

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"Nowadays, there is no one to order us about like that, or to thrash us," she remarked.

We found our fuddled old peasant guide hanging about for "tea-money," when we bade farewell to my friend Domna, who, with her family, offered us her hand at parting. He was not too thoroughly soaked with "tea" already not to be able to draw the inference that our long stay with the milkwoman indicated pleasure, and he intimated that the introduction fee ought to be in proportion to our enjoyment. We responded so cheerfully to this demand that he immediately discovered the existence of a dozen historical monuments and points of interest in the tiny village, all invented on the spot; and when we dismissed him peremptorily, he took great care to impress his name and the position of his hut on our memories, for future use.

We had already seen the only object of any interest, the large church far away down the mile-long street. We had found a festival mass in progress, as it happened to be one of the noted holidays of the year. As we stood a little to one side, listening to the sweet but unsophisticated chanting of the village lads, who had had no training beyond that given in the village school, a woman approached us with a tiny coffin tucked under one arm. Trestles were brought; she set it down on them, beside us. It was very plain in form, made of the commonest wood, and stained a bright yellow with a kind of thin wash, instead of the vivid pink which seems to be the favorite hue for children's coffins in town. The baby's father removed the lid, which comprised exactly half the depth, the mother smoothed out the draperies, and they took their stand near by. Several strips of the coarsest pink tarlatan were draped across the little waxen brow and along the edges of the coffin. On these lay such poor flowers as the lateness of the season and the poverty of the parents could afford,—small, half-withered or frost-bitten dahlias, poppies, and one stray corn-flower. The parents looked gently resigned, patient, sorrowful, but tearless, as is the Russian manner. After the liturgy and special prayers for the day, the funeral service was begun; but we went out into the graveyard surrounding the church, and ran the gauntlet of the beggars at the door,—beggars in the midst of poverty, to whom the poor gave their mites with gentle sympathy.

Russian graveyards are not, as a rule, like the sunny, cheerful homes of the dead to which we are accustomed. This one was especially melancholy, with its narrow, tortuous paths, uncared-for plots, and crosses of unpainted wood blackened by the weather. The most elaborate monuments did not rise above tin crosses painted to simulate birch boughs. It was strictly a peasant cemetery, utterly lacking in graves of the higher classes, or even of the well to do.

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On its outskirts, where the flat, treeless plain began again, we found a peasant sexton engaged in digging a grave. His conversation was depressing, not because he dwelt unduly upon death and kindred subjects, but because his views of life were so pessimistic. Why, for example, did it enter his brain to warn me that the Finnish women of the neighboring villages,—all the country round about is the old Finnish Ingermannland,—in company with the women of his own village, were in the habit of buying stale eggs at the Tzarskoe Selo shops to mix with their fresh eggs, which they sold in the market, the same with intent to deceive? A stale egg explains itself as promptly and as thoroughly as anything I am acquainted with, not excepting Limburger cheese, and Katiusha and I had had no severe experiences with the women whom he thus unflatteringly described. He seemed a thoroughly disillusioned man, and we left him at last, with an involuntary burden of misanthropic ideas, though he addressed me persistently as *galubtchik*,—"dear little dove," literally translated.

If I were to undertake to chronicle the inner life of Tzarskoe, the characteristics of the inhabitants from whom I received favors and kind deeds without number, information, and whatever else they could think of to bestow or I could ask, I should never have done. But there is much that is instructive in all ranks of life to be gathered from a prolonged sojourn in this "Imperial Village," where world-famed palaces have their echoes aroused at seven in the morning by a gentle shepherd like the shepherd of the remotest provincial hamlets, a strapping peasant in a scarlet cotton blouse and blue homespun linen trousers tucked into tall wrinkled boots, and armed with a fish-horn, which he toots at the intersection of the macadamized streets to assemble the village cattle; where the strawberry peddler, recognizable by the red cloth spread over the tray borne upon his head, and the herring vender, and rival ice-cream dealers deafen one with their cries, in true city fashion; where the fire department alarms one by setting fire to the baker's chimneys opposite, and then playing upon them, by way of cleaning them; where Tatars, soldiers, goats, cows, pet herons, rude peasant carts, policemen, and inhabitants share the middle of the road with the liveried equipages of royalty and courtiers; where the crows and pigeons assert rights equal to those of man, except that they go to roost at eight o'clock on the nightless "white nights;" and where one never knows whether one will encounter the Emperor of all the Russias or a barefooted Finn when one turns a corner.

VII.

A STROLL IN MOSCOW WITH COUNT TOLSTOY.

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"Have you ever visited a church of the Old Believers?" Count Tolstoy asked me one evening. We were sitting round the supper-table at Count Tolstoy's house in Moscow. I was just experimenting on some pickled mushrooms from Yasnaya Polyana,—the daintiest little mushrooms which I encountered in that mushroom-eating land. The mushrooms and question furnished a diversion which was needed. The baby and younger children were in bed. The elders of the family, some relatives, and ourselves had been engaged in a lively discussion; or, rather, I had been discussing matters with the count, while the others joined in from time to time. It began with the Moscow beggars.

"I understand them now, and what you wrote of them," I said. "I have neither the purse of Fortunatus nor a heart of flint. If I refuse their prayers, I feel wicked; if I give them five kopeks, I feel mean. It seems too little to help them to anything but *vodka*; and if I give ten kopeks, they hold it out at arm's length, look at it and me suspiciously; and then I feel so provoked that I give not a copper to any one for days. It seems to do no good."

"No," said Count Tolstoy with a troubled look; "it does no good. Giving money to any one who asks is not doing good; it is a mere civility. If a beggar asks me for five kopeks, or five rubles, or five hundred rubles, I must give it to him as a politeness, nothing more, provided I have it about me. It probably always goes for *vodka*."

"But what is one to do? I have sometimes thought that I would buy my man some bread and see that he ate it when he specifies what the money is for. But, by a singular coincidence, they never ask for bread-money within eye-shot of a bakery. I suppose that it would be better for me to take the trouble to hunt one up and give the bread."

"No; for you only buy the bread. It costs you no personal labor."

"But suppose I had made the bread?—I can make capital bread, only I cannot make it here where I have no conveniences; so I give the money instead."

"If you had made the bread, still you would not have raised the grain, —plowed, sowed, reaped, threshed, and ground it. It would not be your labor."

"If that is the case, then I have just done a very evil thing. I have made some caps for the Siberian exiles in the Forwarding Prison. It would have been better to let their shaved heads freeze."

"Why? You gave your labor, your time. In that time you could probably have done something that would have pleased you better."

"Certainly. But if one is to dig up the roots of one's deeds and motives, mine might be put thus: The caps were manufactured from remnants of wool which were of no use to me and only encumbered my trunk. I refused to go and deliver them myself. They were

put with a lot of other caps made from scraps on equally vicious principles. And, moreover, I neither plowed the land, sowed the grass, fed the sheep, sheared him, cleansed and spun the wool, and so on; neither did I manufacture the needle for the work.”

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The count retreated to his former argument,—that one's personal labor is the only righteous thing which can be given to one's fellow-man; and that the labor must be given unquestioningly when asked for.

"But it cannot always be right to work unquestioningly. There are always plenty of people who are glad to get their work done for them. That is human nature."

"We have nothing to do with that," he answered. "If a man asks me to build his house or plow his field, I am bound to do it, just as I am bound to give the beggar whatever he asks for, if I have it. It is no business of mine *why* he asks me to do it."

"But suppose the man is lazy, or wants to get his work done while he is idling, enjoying himself, or earning money elsewhere for *vodka* or what not? I do not object to helping the weak, or those who do not attempt to shirk. One must use discrimination."

But Count Tolstoy persisted that the reason for the request was no business of the man anxious to do his duty by aiding his fellow-men, although his sensible wife came to my assistance by saying that she always looked into the matter before giving help, on the grounds which I had stated. So I attacked from another quarter.

"Ought not every person to do as much as possible for himself, and not call upon others unless compelled to do so?"

"Certainly."

"Very good. I am strong, well, perfectly capable of waiting on myself. But I detest putting on my heavy Russian galoshes, and my big cloak; and I never do either when I can possibly avoid it. I have no right to ask you to put on my galoshes, supposing that there were no lackey at hand. But suppose I were to ask it?"

"I would do it with pleasure," replied the count, his earnest face relaxing into a smile. "I will mend your boots, also, if you wish."

I thanked him, with regret that my boots were whole, and pursued my point. "But you *ought to refuse*. It would be your duty to teach me my duty of waiting on myself. You would have no right to encourage me in my evil ways."

We argued the matter on these lines. He started from the conviction that one should follow the example of Christ, who healed and helped all without questioning their motives or deserts; I taking the ground that, while Christ "knew the heart of man," man could not know the heart of his brother-man,—at least not always on first sight, though afterward he could make a tolerably shrewd guess as to whether he was being used as a cat's-paw for the encouragement of the shiftless. But he stuck firmly to his "resist not evil" doctrine; while I maintained that the very doctrine admitted that it was "evil" by making use of the word at all, hence a thing to be preached and practiced against.

Perhaps Count Tolstoy had never been so unfortunate as to meet certain specimens of the human race which it has been my ill-luck to observe; so we both still held our positions, after a long skirmish, and silence reigned for a few moments. Then the count asked, with that winning air of good-will and interest which is peculiar to him:—

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"Have you ever visited a church of the Old Believers?"

"No. They told me that there was one in Petersburg, but that I should not be admitted because I wore a bonnet instead of a kerchief, and did not know how to cross myself and bow properly."

"I'll take you, if you like," he said. "We will go as guests of the priest. He is a friend of mine." Then he told us about it. Many years ago, a band of Kazaks and their priests migrated across the frontier into Turkey because they were "Old Believers;" that is to say, they belonged to the sect which refused to accept the reforms of errors (which had crept into the service-books and ritual through the carelessness of copyists and ignorance of the proper forms) instituted by the Patriarch Nikon in the time of Peter the Great's father, after consulting the Greek Patriarchs and books. In earlier times, these Old Believers burned themselves by the thousand. In the present century, this band of Kazaks simply emigrated. Then came the Crimean war. The Kazaks set out for the wars, the priest blessed them for the campaign, and prayed for victory against Russia. Moreover, they went to battle with their flock, and were captured. Prisoners of war, traitors to both church and state, these three priests were condemned to residence in a monastery in Suzdal. "I was in the army then," said Count Tolstoy, "and heard of the matter at the time. Then I forgot all about it; so did everybody else, apparently. Long afterward, an Old Believer, a merchant in Tula, spoke to me about it, and I found that the three priests were still alive and in the monastery. I managed to get them released, and we became friends. One died; one of the others is here in Moscow, a very old man now. We will go and see him, but I must find out the hour of the evening service. You will see the ritual as it was three hundred years ago."

"You must not utter a word, or smile," said one of the company. "They will think that you are ridiculing them, and will turn you out."

"Oh, no," said the count. "Still, it is better not to speak."

"I have had some experience," I remarked. "Last Sunday, at the Saviour Cathedral, I asked my mother if I should hold her heavy fur coat for her; and she smiled slightly as she said, 'No, thank you.' A peasant heard our foreign tongue, saw the smile, and really alarmed us by the fierce way in which he glared at us. We only appeased his wrath by bowing low when the priest came out with the incense."

So that plan was made, and some others.

When we were descending the stairs, Count Tolstoy came out upon the upper landing, which is decorated with the skin of the big bear which figures in one of his stories, and called after us:—

"Shall you be ashamed of my dress when I come to the hotel for you?"

“I am ashamed that you should ask such a question,” I answered; and he laughed and retreated. I allowed the lackey to put on my galoshes and coat, as usual, by the way.

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The next afternoon there came a series of remarkable knocks upon our door, like a volley of artillery, which carried me across the room in one bound. Servants, messengers, and the like, so rarely knock in Russia that one gets into the way of expecting to see the door open without warning at any moment, when it is not locked, and rather forgets what to do with a knock when a caller comes directly to one's room and announces himself in the ordinary way. There stood Count Tolstoy. He wore a peasant's sheepskin coat (*tulup*). The *tulup*, I will explain, is a garment consisting of a fitted body and a full, ballet skirt, gathered on the waist line and reaching to the knees. The wool is worn on the inside. The tanned leather exterior varies, when new, from snow white to gray, pale or deep yellow, or black, according to taste. A little colored chain-stitching in patterns on the breast and round the neck gives firmness where required. In this case the *tulup* was of a deep yellow hue; over it streamed his gray beard; peasant boots of gray felt, reaching to the knee, and a gray wool cap of domestic manufacture completed his costume.

"It is too cold for our expedition, and I am afraid that I started a little late also," he said, as he divested himself of his sheepskin. "I will find out the exact hour of service, and we will go on Christmas Eve."

It was only 15 to 20 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and I felt inclined to remonstrate. But it is useless to argue with a Russian about the thermometer; and, moreover, I discovered that the count had come all the long way on foot, and was probably afraid of freezing us. I politely but not quite truthfully agreed that Christmas Eve was a better time.

Presently he proposed to go to the shop where books for popular reading are published by the million at from one and a half to five kopeks. He had business there in connection with some popular editions of the masterpieces of all ages and literatures.

The temperature of our room was 65 degrees, but the count's felt boots and a cardigan jacket, worn over his ordinary costume of dark blue trousers and strap-belted blouse, made him uncomfortable, and he sought coolness in the hall while we donned our outdoor garments. The only concession in the way of costume which I could make to suit the occasion was to use a wool instead of a fur cap.

This was not sufficient to prevent us from being a remarkable trio in the eyes of all beholders, beginning with the real *muzhik* ("boots") and the waiter, who were peering round corners in disapproval. Our appearance at the door effected a miracle. I could not believe my ears, but not one of the numerous cabbies standing in front of the hotel opened his lips to offer his services. Ordinarily, we had to run the gauntlet of offers. On this occasion the men simply ranged themselves in a silent, gaping row, and let us pass in peace. I had not supposed that anything could quell a Russian cabby's tongue. Did they recognize the count? I doubt it. I had been told that every one in Moscow knew him and his costume; but diligent inquiry of my cabbies always elicited a negative. In

one single instance the man added: "But the count's a good gentleman and a very intimate friend of a chum of mine!"

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"Are you a good walker?" asked the count, as he plied his thick stick, evidently recently cut in the grove adjoining his house. "I walk everywhere myself. I never ride; I can't, for I never have any money."

I announced myself as a crack pedestrian,—but not when burdened with Russian coat and galoshes. And I added: "I hope that you do not expect us to walk all those versts to church, because we must stand through the whole service afterward; they would be too strict to allow us chairs."

"We will go in the horse-cars, then," he replied. "But this constant use of horses is a relic of barbarism. As we are growing more civilized, in ten years from now horses will have gone out of use entirely. But I am sure that, in enlightened America, you do not ride so much as we do here."

Familiar as I am with Count Tolstoy's theories, this was a brand-new one to me. I thought of several answers. Bicycles I rejected as a suggestion, because the physical labor seems to be counterbalanced by the cost of the steel steed. I also restrained myself from saying that we were coming to look upon horses as a rather antiquated, slow, and unreliable mode of locomotion. I did not care to destroy the count's admiration for American ways too suddenly and ruthlessly, so I said:—

"I think that people ride more and more, with us, every year. If they do not ride even more than they do, it is because we have not these thousands of delightful and cheap carriages and sledges. And how are people to get about, how are burdens to be carried, how is the day long enough, if one goes everywhere on foot? Are the horses to be left to people the earth, along with the animals which we now eat and which we must give up eating?"

"That will regulate itself. It is only those who have nothing to do who have no time to do it in, and must be carried, in all haste, from place to place. Busy people always have time for everything." And the count proceeded to develop this argument. The foundation, of course, was the same as for his other doctrines,—the dependence on one's self, freeing others from bondage to his wants and whims. The principle is excellent; but it would be easier for most of us to resist the temptation to do otherwise on a desert island, than to lead such a Robinson Crusoe and physical encyclopedic existence in a city of today. This is almost the only argument which I felt capable of offering in opposition.

Thus we discussed, as we walked along the streets of China Town. When the sidewalk was narrow, the count took to the gutter. And so we came to the old wall and the place where there is a perennial market, which bears various names,—the Pushing Market, the Louse Market, and so on, —and which is said to be the resort of thieves and receivers of stolen goods. Strangers always hit upon it the first thing. We had ventured into its borders alone, had chatted with a cobbler, inspected the complete

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workshop on the sidewalk, priced the work,—“real, artistic, high-priced jobs were worth thirty to forty kopeks,”—had promised to fetch our boots to be repaired with tacks and whipcord,—“when they needed it,”—and had received an unblushing appeal for a bottle of *vodka* in which to drink the health of ourselves and the cobblers. With true feminine faith in the efficacy of a man’s presence, we now enjoyed the prospect of going through the middle of it, for its entire length. I related the cobbler episode to explain why I did not give the count a job, and the count seemed to find no little difficulty in not laughing outright.

Imagine a very broad street, extending for several blocks, flanked on one side by respectable buildings, on the other by the old, battlemented city wall, crowned with straggling bushes, into which are built tiny houses with a frontage of two or three windows, and the two stories so low that one fancies that he could easily touch their roofs. These last are the real old Moscow merchant houses of two or three hundred years ago. They still serve as shops and residences, the lower floor being crammed with cheap goods and old clothes of wondrous hues and patterns, which overflow upon the very curbstone. The signs of the fur stores, with their odd pictures of peasant coats and fashionable mantles, add an advertisement of black sheepskins which precisely resemble rudely painted turtles. In the broad, place-like street surged a motley, but silent and respectful crowd. A Russian crowd always is a marvel of quietness,—as far down as the elbows, no farther! Along the middle of the place stood rows of rough tables, boxes, and all sorts of receptacles, containing every variety of bread and indescribable meats and sausages. Men strolled about with huge brass teapots of *sbiten* (a drink of honey, laurel leaves, spices, *etc.*), steaming hot. Men with trays suspended by straps from their necks offered “delicious” snacks, meat patties kept hot in hot-water boxes, served in a gaudy saucer and flooded with hot bouillon from a brass flask attached to their girdles behind; or sandwiches made from a roll, split, buttered, and clapped upon a slice of very red, raw-looking sausage, fresh from the water-box. But we did not feel hungry just then, or thirsty.

“There are but two genuine Russian titles,” said the count, as we walked among the merchants, where the women were dressed like the men in sheepskin coats, and distinguished only by a brief scrap of gay petticoat, and a gay kerchief instead of a cap on the head, while some of the dealers in clothing indulged in overcoats and flat caps with visors, of dark blue cloth. “Now, if I address one of these men, he will call me *batiushka*, and he will call you *matushka*.”*

* A respectfully affectionate diminutive, equivalent to *dear little father*, *dear little mother*.

We began to price shoes, new and old, and so forth, with the result which the count had predicted.

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"You can get very good clothing here," the count remarked, as a man passed us, his arm passed through the armholes of a pile of new vests. "These mittens," exhibiting the coarse, white-fingered mittens which he wore, piles of the same and stockings to match being beside us, "are very stout and warm. They cost only thirty kopeks. And the other day, I bought a capital shirt here, for a man, at fifty kopeks" (about twenty-five cents).

I magnanimously refrained from applying to that shirt the argument which had been used against my suggestion in regard to giving bread. This market goes on every day in the year, hot or cold, rain, sun, or shine. It is a model of neatness. Roofs improvised from scraps of canvas protect the delicate (?) eatables during inclement weather. In very severe weather the throng is smaller, the first to beat a retreat being, apparently, the Tatars in their odd *kaftans* "cut goring," as old women say, who deal in old clothes, lambskins, and "beggars' lace." Otherwise, it is always the same.

Our publisher's shop proved to be closed, in accordance with the law, which permits trading—in buildings—only between twelve and three o'clock on Sundays. On our way home the count expressed his regret at the rapid decline of the republican idea in America, and the surprising growth of the baneful "aristocratic"—not to say snobbish—sense. His deductions were drawn from articles in various recent periodical publications, and from the general tone of the American works which had come under his observation. I have heard a good deal from other Russians about the snobbishness of Americans; but they generally speak of it with aversion, not, as did Count Tolstoy, with regret at a splendid opportunity missed by a whole nation.

I am sorry to say that we never got our expedition to the Old Believers' Church, or the others that were planned. Two days later, the count was taken with an attack of liver complaint, dyspepsia,—caused, I am sure, by too much pedestrian exercise on a vegetable diet, which does not agree with him,—and a bad cold. We attended Christmas Eve service in the magnificent new Cathedral of the Saviour, and left Moscow before the count was able to go out-of-doors again, though not without seeing him once more.

I am aware that it has become customary of late to call Count Tolstoy "crazy," or "not quite right in the head," *etc.* The inevitable conclusion of any one who talks much with him is that he is nothing of the sort; but simply a man with a hobby, or an idea. His idea happens to be one which, granting that it ought to be adopted by everybody, is still one which is very difficult of adoption by anybody,—peculiarly difficult in his own case. And it is an uncomfortable theory of self-denial which very few people like to have preached to them in any form. Add to this that his philosophical expositions of his theory lack the clearness which generally—not always—results from a course of strict preparatory training, and we have more than sufficient foundation for the reports of his mental aberration. On personal acquaintance he proves to be a remarkably earnest, thoroughly convinced, and winning man, although he does not deliberately do or say anything to attract one. His very earnestness is provocative of argument.*

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* From *The Independent*.

VIII.

COUNT TOLSTOY AT HOME.

On one winter's day in Moscow, the Countess Tolstoy said to us: "You must come and visit us at Yasnaya Polyana next summer. You should see Russian country life, and you will see it with us. Our house is not elegant, but you will find it plain, clean, and comfortable."

Such an invitation was not to be resisted. When summer came, the family wrote to say that they would meet us at the nearest station, where no carriages were to be had by casual travelers, if we would notify them of our arrival. But the weather had been too bad for country visits, and we were afraid to give Fate a hint of our intentions by announcing our movements; moreover, all the trains seemed to reach that station at a very late hour of the night. We decided to make our appearance from another quarter, in our own conveyance, on a fair day, and long before any meal. If it should prove inconvenient for the family to receive us, they would not be occasioned even momentary awkwardness, and our retreat would be secured. We had seen enough of the charmingly easy Russian hospitality to feel sure of our ground otherwise.

Accordingly, we set out for Tula on a June day that was dazzling with sunshine and heat, after the autumnal chill of the recent rains. As we progressed southward from Moscow the country was more varied than north of it, with ever-changing vistas of gently sloping hills and verdant valleys, well cultivated, and dotted with thatched cottages which stood flatter on the ground here than where wood is more plentiful.

The train was besieged at every station, during the long halts customary on Russian railways, by hordes of peasant children with bottles of rich cream and dishes of fragrant wild strawberries. The strawberries cost from three to four cents a pound,—not enough to pay for picking,—and the cream from three to five cents a bottle.

Halfway to Tula the train crosses the river Oka, which makes so fine a show when it enters the Volga at Nizhni Novgorod, and which even here is imposing in breadth and busy with steamers. It was not far from here that an acquaintance of mine one day overtook a wayfarer. He was weather-beaten and travel-stained, dressed like a peasant, and carried his boots slung over his shoulder. But there was something about him which, to her woman's eye, seemed out of keeping with his garb. She invited him to take advantage of her carriage. He accepted gladly, and conversed agreeably. It appeared that it was Count Tolstoy making the journey between his estate and Moscow. His utterances produced such an effect upon her young son that the lad insisted upon making his next journey on foot also.

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We reached Tula late in the evening. The guidebook says, in that amusing German fashion on which a chapter might be written, that “the town lies fifteen minutes distant from the station.” Ordinarily, that would mean twice or thrice fifteen minutes. But we had a touch of our usual luck in an eccentric cabman. Vanka—that is, Johnny—set out almost before we had taken our seats; we clutched his belt for support, and away we flew through the inky darkness and fathomless dust, outstripping everything on the road. We came to a bridge; one wheel skimmed along high on the side rail, the loose boards rattled ominously beneath the other. There are no regulations for slow driving on Russian bridges beyond those contained in admonitory proverbs and popular legends. One’s eyes usually supply sufficient warning by day. But Vanka was wedded to the true Russian principle, and proceeded in his headlong course *na avos* (on chance). In vain I cried, “This is not an obstacle race!” He replied cheerfully, “It is the horse!”

We were forced to conclude that we had stumbled upon the hero of Count Tolstoy’s story, Kholstomir, in that gaunt old horse, racing thus by inspiration, and looking not unlike the portrait of Kholstomir in his sad old age, from the hand of the finest animal-painter in Russia, which, with its companion piece, Kholstomir in his proud youth, hangs on the wall in the count’s Moscow house.

Our mad career ended at what Vanka declared to be the best hotel; the one recommended by the guidebook had been closed for years, he said. I, who had not found the guide-book infallible, believed him, until he landed us at one which looked well enough, but whose chief furnishing was smells of such potency that I fled, handkerchief clapped to nose, while the limp waiter, with his jaw bound up like a figure from a German picture-book, called after me that “perhaps the drains were a little out of order.” Thrifty Vanka, in hopes of a commission, or bent upon paying off a grudge, still obstinately refused to take us to the hotel recommended; but a hint of application to the police decided him to deposit us at another door. This proved to be really the best house in town, though it does not grace the printed list. It was on the usual plan of inns in Russian country towns. There was the large, airy dining-room, with clean lace curtains, polished floor, and table set with foliage plants in fancy pots; the bedrooms, with single iron beds, reservoir washstands, and no bed linen or towels without extra charge.

The next morning we devoted to the few sights of the town. The Kremlin, on flat ground and not of imposing size, makes very little impression after the Moscow Kremlin; but its churches exhibit some charming new fancies in onion-shaped cupolas which we had not noticed elsewhere, and its cathedral contains frescoes of a novel sort. In subject they are pretty equally divided between the Song of Solomon and the Ecumenical Councils, with a certain number of saints, of course, though these are fewer than usual. The artist was evidently a man who enjoyed rich stuffs of flowered patterns, and beautiful women.

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The Imperial Firearms Factory we did not see. We had omitted to obtain from the Minister of War that permission without which no foreigner of either sex can enter, though Russians may do so freely, and we did not care enough about it to await the reply to a telegram. We contented ourselves with assuring the officer in charge that we were utter simpletons in the matter of firearms, afraid of guns even when they were not loaded,—I presume he did not understand that allusion,—and that it was pure curiosity of travelers which had led us to invade his office.

However, there was no dearth of shops where we could inspect all the wares in metal for which this Russian Birmingham has been celebrated ever since the industry was founded by men from Holland, in the sixteenth century. In the matter of *samovars*, especially, there is a wide range of choice in this cradle of “the portable domestic hearth,” although there are only two or three among the myriad manufacturers whose goods are famed for that solidity of brass and tin which insures against dents, fractures, and poisoning.

During the morning we ordered round a *troika* from the posting-house. It did not arrive. Probably it was asleep, like most other things on that warm day. It was too far off to invite investigation, and sallying forth after breakfast to hire an *izvostchik*, I became a blessed windfall to a couple of bored policemen, who waked up a cabman for me and took a kindly interest in the inevitable bargaining which ensued. While this was in progress, up came two dusty and tattered “pilgrims,”—“religious tramps” will designate their character with perfect accuracy,—who were sufficiently wide awake to beg. I positively had not a kopek in change; but not even a Russian beggar would believe that. I parried the attack.

“I’m not an Orthodox Christian, my good men. I am sure that you do not want money from a heretic.”

“Never mind; I’m a bachelor,” replied one of them bravely and consolingly.

When we had all somewhat recovered from this, the policemen, catching the spirit of the occasion, explained to the men that I and my money were extremely dangerous to the Orthodox, both families and bachelors, especially to pious pilgrims to the shrines, such as they were, and they gently but firmly compelled the men to move on, despite their vehement protestations that they were willing to run the risk and accept the largest sort of change from the heretic. But I was obdurate. I knew from experience that for five kopeks, or less, I should receive thanks, reverences to the waist or even to the ground; but that the gift of more than five kopeks would result in a thankless, suspicious stare, which would make me feel guilty of some enormous undefined crime. This was Count Tolstoy’s experience also. We devoted ourselves to cabby once more.

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Such a winning fellow as that Vanka was, from the very start! After I had concluded the bargain for an extra horse and an apron which his carriage lacked, he persuaded me that one horse was enough—at the price of two. To save time I yielded, deducting twenty-five cents only from the sum agreed on, lest I should appear too easily cheated. That sense of being ridiculed as an inexperienced simpleton, when I had merely paid my interlocutor the compliment of trusting him, never ceased to be a pain and a terror to me.

The friendly policemen smiled impartially upon Vanka and us, as they helped to pack us in the drosky.

Tula as we saw it on our way out, and as we had seen it during our morning stroll, did not look like a town of sixty-four thousand inhabitants, or an interesting place of residence. It was a good type of the provincial Russian town. There were the broad unpaved, or badly paved, dusty streets. There were the stone official buildings, glaring white in the sun, interspersed with wooden houses, ranging from the pretentious dwelling to the humble shelter of logs.

For fifteen versts (ten miles) after we had left all these behind us, we drove through a lovely rolling country, on a fine macadamized highway leading to the south and to Kieff. The views were wide, fresh, and fair. Hayfields, plowed fields, fields of green oats, yellowing rye, blue-flowered flax, with birch and leaf trees in small groves near at hand, and forests in the distance, varied the scene. Evergreens were rarer here, and oak-trees more plentiful, than north of Moscow. The grass by the roadside was sown thickly with wild flowers: Canterbury bells, campanulas, yarrow pink and white, willow-weed (good to adulterate tea), yellow daisies, spiraea, pinks, corn-flowers, melilot, honey-sweet galium, yellow everlasting, huge deep-crimson crane's-bill, and hosts of others.

Throughout this sweet drive my merry *izvostchik* delighted me with his discourse. It began thus. I asked, "Did he know Count Tolstoy?"

"Did he know Count Tolstoy? Everybody knew him. He was the first gentleman in the empire [!]. There was not another such man in all the land."

"Could he read? Had he read the count's 'Tales'?"

"Yes. He had read every one of the count's books that he could lay his hands on. Did I mean the little books with the colored covers and the pictures on the outside?" (He alluded to the little peasant "Tales" in their original cheap form, costing two or three cents apiece.) "Unfortunately they were forbidden, or not to be had at the Tula shops, and though there were libraries which had them, they were not for such as he."*

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* At this time, in Moscow, the sidewalk bookstalls, such as this man would have been likely to patronize, could not furnish a full set of the *Tales* in the cheap form. The venders said that they were “forbidden;” but since they openly displayed and sold such as they had, and since any number of complete sets could be obtained at the publishers’ hard by, the prohibition evidently extended only to the issue of a fresh edition. Meanwhile, the *Tales* complete in one volume were not forbidden. This volume, one of the set of the author’s works published by his wife, cost fifty kopeks (about twenty-five cents), not materially more than the other sort. As there was a profit to the family on this edition, and none on the cheap edition, the withdrawal of the latter may have been merely a private business arrangement, to be expected under the circumstances, and the cry of “prohibition” may have been employed as a satisfactory and unanswerable tradesman’s excuse for not being supplied with the goods desired.

“How had they affected him? Why, he had learned to love all the world better. He knew that if he had a bit of bread he must share it with his neighbor, even if he did find it hard work to support his wife and four small children. Had such a need arisen? Yes; and he had given his children’s bread to others.” (He pretended not to hear when I inquired why he had not given his own share of the bread.) “Was he a more honest man than before? Oh, yes, yes, indeed! He would not take a kopek from any one unless he were justly entitled to it.”

“And Count Tolstoy! A fine man, that! The Emperor had conferred upon him the right to release prisoners from the jail,—had I noticed the big jail, on the left hand as we drove out of town?” (I took the liberty to doubt this legend, in strict privacy.) “Tula was a very bad place; there were many prisoners. Men went to the bad there from the lack of something to do.” (This man was a philosopher, it seemed.)

So he ran on enthusiastically, twisting round in his seat, letting his horse do as it would, and talking in that soft, gentle, charming way to which a dozen adjectives would fail to do justice, and which appears to be the heritage of almost every Russian, high or low. It was an uncomfortable attitude for us, because it left us nowhere to put our smiles, and we would not for the world have had him suspect that he amused us.

But the gem of his discourse dropped from his lips when I asked him what, in his opinion, would be the result if Count Tolstoy could reconstruct the world on his plan.

“Why, naturally,” he replied, “if all men were equal, I should not be driving you, for example. I should have my own horse and cow and property, and I should do no work!”

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I must say that, on reflection, I was not surprised that he should have reached this rather astonishing conclusion. I have no doubt that all of his kind—and it is not a stupid kind, by any means—think the same. I tried to tell him about America, where we were all equals in theory (I omitted “theory”), and yet where some of us still “drive other people,” figuratively speaking. But he only laughed and shook his head, and said he did not believe that all men were equal in such a land any more than they were in Russia. That was the sort of wall against which I was always being brought up, with a more or less painful bump, when I attempted to elucidate the institutions of this land of liberty. He seemed to have it firmly fixed in his brain that, although Count Tolstoy worked in the fields “like one of us poor brethren,” he really did no work whatever.

Thus did I obtain a foretaste of the views held by the peasant class upon the subject of Count Tolstoy’s scheme of reformation, since this man was a peasant himself from one of the neighboring villages, and an average representative of their modes of thought.

At last we reached the stone gateposts which mark the entrance to the park of Yasnaya Polyana (Clearfield), and drove up the formerly splendid and still beautiful avenue of huge white birch-trees, from whose ranks many had fallen or been felled. The avenue terminated near the house in hedges of lilacs and acacias.

Most of the family were away in the fields, or bathing in the river. But we were cordially received, assured that our visit was well timed and that there were no guests, and were installed in the room of the count’s eldest son, who was at his business in St. Petersburg.

Then I paid and dismissed the beaming Vanka, whose name chanced to be Alexei, adding liberal “tea-money” for his charming manners and conversation. My sympathy with the hardship of being unable to procure books had moved me so deeply that I had already asked the man for his address, and had promised to send him a complete set of the count’s “Tales” from Moscow.

We parted with the highest opinion of each other. Alas! a day or two later one of the count’s daughters happened to inquire how much I had paid for the carriage, probably in consequence of former experiences, and informed me that I had given just twice as much as any cabman in Tula would have been glad to take. (The boredom of those policemen must have been relieved by another smile—behind our backs.) Then I repeated my conversation with that delicately conscientious *izvostchik*, nurtured on the “Tales,” and mentioned my promise. Even the grave count was forced to laugh, and I declared that I should be afraid to send the set of books, for fear of the consequences.

When we were ready, being unfamiliar with the house, we asked the maid to conduct us to the countess. She took this in its literal sense, and ushered us into the bedroom where the countess was dressing, an introduction to country life which was certainly informal enough.

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We dined at a long table under the trees at a little distance from the house. The breeze sifted the tiny papery birch seeds into our soup and water. Clouds rolled up, and at every threat of the sky we grasped our plates, prepared to make a dash for the house.

The count, who had been mowing, appeared at dinner in a grayish blouse and trousers, and a soft white linen cap. He looked even more weather-beaten in complexion than he had in Moscow during the winter, if that were possible. His broad shoulders seemed to preserve in their enhanced stoop a memory of recent toil. His manner, a combination of gentle simplicity, awkward half-conquered consciousness, and half-discarded polish, was as cordial as ever. His piercing gray-green-blue eyes had lost none of their almost saturnine and withal melancholy expression. His sons were clad in the pretty blouse suits of coarse gray linen which are so common in Russia in the summer, and white linen caps.

After dinner, on that first evening, the countess invited us to go to the fields and see her husband at work. He had not observed the good old recipe, "After dinner, rest awhile," but had set off again immediately, and we had been eager to follow him. We hunted for him through several meadows, and finally came upon him in a sloping orchard lot, seated under the trees, in a violent perspiration. He had wasted no time, evidently. He was resting, and chatting with half a dozen peasants of assorted ages. It appeared that he had made a toilet for dinner, since he now wore a blue blouse faded with frequent washing, and ornamented with new dark blue patches on the shoulders. It was the same blouse with which Repin's portrait of him engaged in plowing had already made us familiar.

We talked with the peasants. They remained seated, and gave no greeting. I do not think they would have done so on any other estate in Russia. It is not that the count has inspired his humble neighbors with a higher personal sense of independence and the equality of man; all Russian peasants are pretty well advanced along that path already, and they possess a natural dignity which prevents their asserting themselves in an unpleasant manner except in rare cases. When they rise or salute, it is out of politeness, and with no more servility than the same act implies in an officer of the Guards in presence of a Court dame. The omission on this occasion interested me as significant.

The conversation turned upon the marriage of one of the younger men, which was to come off in a neighboring village two days later, at the conclusion of the fast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. A middle-aged peasant took up the subject in a rather unpleasant and not very respectful manner, saying that he saw no use for priests, who had everything provided for them (*na gatovayu ruku*), and charged so high for baptizing and marrying.

"They demand seven rubles for marrying this fellow," said he. "I'll do it for a ruble, and be glad to."

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"If it is so easy, go pass your examinations and become a priest at once," replied the countess.

"I don't know enough for that."

"Then go hire yourself out as a clown. You are always making bad jokes."

The man was subdued. The count took no part in this conversation, and looked somewhat disturbed when the other men joined disagreeably in the laugh against their comrade. He turned the subject.

"Look at the oldest of these men," he said to us in English. "He has lost the first joint of all the fingers on one hand from frost."

He was a weak-looking, withered little man, but when they began to mow again, at the count's suggestion, he grasped his scythe as well as any of them. The scythes were short, thick, straight, looked very heavy, and were set on very long, straight handles, so that it was not necessary to stoop in mowing.

We watched the party for a while. The count made good progress over the uneven ground and thin grass, as though he were used to the work which he has described so inimitably in "Anna Karenin." (Another reminder of this book is the old nurse of Levin, who still lives on the place, has charge of the dogs because she is fond of animals, and carries her mania to the extent of feeding and petting the black beetles. The grave of Karl Ivanovitch, the tutor in "Childhood, Boyhood, Youth," which lies in the cemetery a mile or two distant, is another memento of his writings.) As we strolled back to the house, we paused to look at the long white stables, the thatched granary with walls of wattled tree boughs, and other farm buildings. In the space between the house and the dining-table we found the children, with their cousins, the French tutor, and the English governess, engaged in a game of ball called *wapta*, which involves much running and some skill.

To this table the *samovar* was brought about half past seven, and the early tea, the children's tea, was served at twilight in the open air heavy with the perfume of the linden-trees. Late tea was always served in the house, in the large hall, accompanied by various viands, and by wild strawberries fetched by the peasant children.

That evening the count talked to me chiefly about the pamphlets on the Hopedale community and the peace doctrines advocated by Adin Ballou, which had been sent to him shortly before from America. He had then learned for the first time that his principles in that direction had been anticipated, and he seemed to be genuinely gratified to know that this was the case. He prophesied that this movement in favor of non-resistance would attract much more attention in the future than it has attracted in the past. The fate of Mr. Ballou's community did not seem to shake his faith.

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Naturally, the house was the first point which engaged our attention. In 1860, Count Tolstoy, being then thirty-two years of age, made up his mind unalterably that he would never marry. All the world knows that when the count has irrevocably determined upon anything he immediately furnishes substantial proof of his convictions. On this occasion his demonstration took the form of selling the manor house, which was taken down and set up again on another estate in the same government by the purchaser. The wings of the former house alone remained, detached buildings, such as were used in the olden days to accommodate the embroiderers, weavers, peasant musicians and actors of the private troupes kept by wealthy grandees, as a theatre, or as extra apartments. The count occupied one of these wings.

Two years later, he changed his mind and married. He brought his beautiful bride of half his age to this tiny wing,—it chanced to be tiny in this case,—and there she lived for seventeen years. The horrible loneliness of it, especially in winter, with not a neighbor for miles, unless one reckon the village at the park gate, which could not have furnished anything but human beings, and never a congenial companion for her! Needless to say that she never had on a low-bodied gown, never went to the theatre or a ball, in all her fair young life; and to the loneliness of the country must be added the absolute loneliness during the absences of the count, who had much reading to do in Moscow for the historical portions of his great war drama. When he got tired of his village school, of his experiments upon the infant peasant mind, of things in general, he could and did go away for rest. The countess did not. Decidedly, the Countess Sophia Tolstoy is one of those truly feminine heroines who are cast into shadow by a brilliant light close to them, but a heroine none the less in more ways than need be mentioned. Her self-denial and courage gave to the world “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenin;” and she declares that were it to do over again she would not hesitate a moment. The public owes the count’s wife a great debt of gratitude, and not of reproaches, for bravely opposing his fatal desire to live in every detail the life of a peasant laborer. Can any one blessed with the faintest particle of imagination fail to perceive how great a task it has been to withstand him thus for his own good; to rear nine healthy, handsome, well-bred children out of the much larger family which they have had; to bear the entire responsibility of the household and the business?

She remarked, one day, that there was no crying need for the Russian nobility to follow her husband’s teachings and give away all their goods in order to be on a level with the peasants. Plenty of them would soon attain that blissful state of poverty in the natural course of things, since they were not only growing poorer every year, but the distribution of inheritances among the numerous children was completing

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the work, and very many would be reduced to laboring with their hands for a living. This is perfectly true. There is no law of primogeniture in Russia. The one established by Peter the Great having produced divers and grievous evils, besides being out of harmony with the Russian character, it was withdrawn. All the male children share equally in the father's estate as in title. The female children receive by law only an extremely small portion of the inheritance, but their dowry is not limited.

Among the count's most ardent followers is one of his daughters. She does everything for herself, according to his teachings, in a manner which American girls, in even moderately well-to-do families, would never dream of. She works for the peasants in various ways, and carries out her father's ideas in other matters as far as possible. Her Spartan (or Tolstoyan) treatment of herself may be of value in character-building, as mortification of the flesh is supposed to be in general. Practically, I think the relations between peasants and nobles render her sacrifices unavailing. For example: one of the peasant women having been taken ill,—there was a good deal of sickness in the village,—she went to the hayfield to do the woman's work and prevent the forfeit of fifteen or twenty cents, the price of the day's labor. We strolled out to find her. The thermometer must have stood at 100 degrees F., and although the dry inland heat can be better borne than the same amount of damp heat, it was far from being comfortable weather even for indolent persons. We found her under a tree, resting and drinking cold tea, while she awaited the return, from some errand of their devising, of the peasant women who had been at work with her. She looked wretchedly ill, and we tried to prevail on her to go back to the house with us. But the count (who was not well enough to work) happened along, and as he said nothing she decided to stay and to resume labor at once, since the women seemed to have been detained.

As we beat a retreat homeward under that burning sun, we discovered the nature of the peasant women's urgent business. They were engaged in stripping the count's bushes of their fruit and devouring it by the handful. We could not persuade him to interfere. "They want it, or they would not take it," he said. It was none of our business, to be sure, but those strong, muscular women offered such a contrast, in physique and conduct, to the fair, delicate young girl whom we had just left that we felt indignant enough to attack them ourselves, if it would have done any good. The next day his daughter was more seriously ill than the peasant woman whose place she had taken. I should not have felt unhappy to learn that those women had been uncomfortably ill in consequence of their greediness.

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The count has no longer a school for the peasant children, by the way. The necessity for that is past. But he must have been an original professor. A friend of mine in St. Petersburg, who was interested, during the sixties, in the secular Sunday-schools for workingmen who could not attend on week days, repeated to me the count's method as imparted to her by himself while visiting the capital. He objected to the rules which compelled the men to be regular in attendance, on the ground that learning must not be acquired thus mechanically, under compulsion, but when the scholar feels an inward impulse. He would not listen to the suggestion that this method would hardly answer when study must be prosecuted on specified days under penalty of eternal ignorance. He said that when he found his peasant pupils indisposed to learn he dismissed the school, went home, and occupied himself in his own affairs. After an interval, more or less long, a scuffling of feet and a rapping would become audible at the door, and small voices would plead: "Please, Lyeff Nikola'itch, we want to study. Please, come and teach us." He went, and they made rapid progress because all was purely voluntary.

One of the whitened stone wings of the old manor house stands unchanged. It is occupied in summer by the countess's sister and her family. She is a handsome and clever woman, who translates, and who has written some strong short stories. The wing used by the count has been enlarged to meet the requirements of the large family, and yet it is not a great or imposing house. At one end a stone addition, like the original building, contains, on the ground floor, the count's two rooms, which open on an uncovered stone terrace facing the hedge-inclosed lawn, with beds of bright flowers bordering it, and the stately lindens of the grand avenues waving their crests beyond in the direction of the ponds. Over these rooms and the vestibule is the hall, indispensable as a dining-room and a play-room for the small children in wet weather and in winter. A wooden addition at the other end furnishes half a dozen rooms for members of the family, the tutor and the maids. Near by stand several log cottages,—the bakehouse, the servants' dining-room, and other necessary offices.

The count's study is very plain. The walls are in part lined with bookcases; in part they are covered with portraits of relatives and of distinguished persons whom he admires. There are more bookcases in the vestibule, for people are constantly sending him books of every conceivable sort. I imagine that the first copies of every book, pamphlet, and journal on any hobby or "ism," especially from America, find their way to the address of Count Tolstoy. He showed me some very wild products of the human brain. The hall upstairs has a polished wood floor, as is usual with such rooms, and a set of very simple wicker furniture. Portraits of ancestors, some of whom figure in "War and Peace,"

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hang upon the walls. A piano, on which the count sometimes plays, and a large table complete the furniture. Everything in the house is severely simple. If I take the liberty of going into these details, it is in the interest of justice. The house has been described in print—from imagination, it would seem—as “a castle luxuriously furnished,” and the count has been reproached with it. Cheap as the furniture is, he grumbled at it when it was purchased; he grumbles at it still, and to me spoke of it as “sinful luxury.” But then he cannot be regarded a fair judge of what constitutes luxury.

The whole house, outside and in, is modest in the extreme. The park with its avenues of lindens, which were in full bloom during our visit, the ponds and lawns and forest, must have been superb in the time of his grandfather, and even of his mother, from whom he inherited it. A grove and thicket now occupy the site of the former manor, and screen the view of each wing from the other. Vegetable gardens and berry patches lie near at hand, and beds of brilliant but not rare flowers enliven the immediate vicinity of the house.

The estate is large and fertile, though it does not lie in the famous “black-earth zone.” This begins a few miles south of it.

Plain wholesome food, simple dress, an open-air life without fixed programme, were what we found. In the morning, after drinking tea or coffee, with bread and butter, in the hall, we usually strolled through the lovely forest, filled with flowers and perfumes, to the little river about a mile distant, for a bath. The unpainted board bath-house had seats running along the walls, and steps leading down into the water. A framework supporting thick screens of golden rye straw extended far out over the stream. A door upstream swung open at will for ambitious swimmers. It was a solitary spot. The peasant girls pitching hay in the meadows beyond with three-pronged boughs stripped of their leaves were the only persons we ever saw. Clad in their best scarlet cotton *sarafani* and head kerchiefs, they added greatly to the beauty of the landscape. Haying is such easy work compared to the rest of the summer labors, that the best gowns are donned as for a festival.

If the boys got ahead of us on those hot mornings, when we had dispensed with every article of clothing not absolutely necessary, we lay in the shadow of the fragrant birches at the top of the hill on the soft, short sward, which seems in Russia to grow as thick in dense forests as in open glades, and waited until they could tear themselves from the cool embrace of the stream. Then we went in, great and small, but with no bathing-dress. The use of such a garment on such an occasion would be regarded as a sign that one was afflicted with some bodily defect which one was anxious to conceal. By the time we had refreshed ourselves and rambled back, searching for early mushrooms through the forest or the great

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plantation of birches set out by the count's own hands a quarter of a century before, and grown now to stout and serviceable giants, the twelve o'clock breakfast was ready under the trees. At this informal meal every one sat where he pleased, and helped himself. At dinner, on the contrary, my place was always at the count's left hand. We sat on whatever offered itself. Sometimes I had a wooden chair, sometimes a bit of the long bench like a plasterer's horse. Once, when some one rose suddenly from the other end of this, I tumbled over on the count and narrowly escaped wrecking his dinner.

At no meal did the count ever eat a mouthful of meat, despite urgent persuasion. Boiled buckwheat groats, salted cucumbers, black bread, eggs with spinach, tea and coffee, sour *kvas* (beer made from black bread), and cabbage soup formed the staple of his diet, even when ill, and when most people would have avoided the cucumbers and *kvas*, at least.

The family generally met as a whole for the first time at breakfast. The count had been busy at work in the fields, in writing or reading in his study; the boys with their tutor; the countess copying her husband's manuscript and ordering the household. After breakfast every one did what he pleased until dinner. There was riding, driving,—anything that the heat permitted. A second bath, late in the afternoon, was indulged in when it was very hot. The afternoon bathing party generally drove down in a *lineika*, a sort of long jaunting-car with a central bench, not too wide, on which the passengers sit back to back, their feet resting on a narrow footboard which curves over the wheels as a shield. This *lineika* had also cross-seats at each end, and with judicious packing could be made to hold sixteen persons. As it was upholstered in leather and had no springs, there was some art in keeping one's seat when the three horses were going at full speed over the uneven forest road.

After breakfast I sometimes sat under the trees with the countess, and helped her sew on baby Ivan's clothes, for the pleasure of her conversation. Nothing could be more fascinating. This beautiful woman has not rusted during her long residence in the country. There are few better informed women than she, few better women of business, few women who are so clever and practical.

One day, as I was sitting, armed with thimble and needle, waiting for her, the count discovered a hole in his pocket, and asked his niece to mend it for him. She had not her implements. I volunteered,—to do the mending, not to lend the wherewithal. The pocket was of black silk, my thread of white cotton, but that was of no consequence. I seated myself comfortably on the sand, and speedily discovered not one hole, but a row of holes such as wear along the seams of pockets. The count was greatly annoyed at the trouble he was giving me, protested as I began on each new hole, and was very restless. I was finally obliged to speak.

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"Lyeff Nikola'itch," I said, "do me the favor to sit still. Your reputation as well as mine is involved in this work. It must be done thoroughly and neatly quite as much for your sake as for mine."

"How so?" he asked in surprise.

"My woman's reputation for neat mending trembles in the balance; and do not you advocate the theory that we should help our fellow-men? You have helped others; it is your turn now to be experimented on. And besides, if the fellow-man obstinately refuses to be helped by others, how are we to do our duty by him? How could you work for others, if they persisted in following out the other half of your doctrine and doing everything for themselves? 'Tis plain that you understand how to render services far better than to receive them. Reform. Submit."

The count laughed, with a sort of grim bewilderment in his eye, and behaved in an exemplary manner for the few remaining moments. I mentally thanked Fate for providing me with an opportunity for suggesting an object lesson on a point which had puzzled me not a little, and which I had been pining to attack in some form. He did not explain away my difficulties, it is true, but I was satisfied with having presented the other side of the shield to his attention.

On another occasion, as we sat under the trees, a peasant came, scythe on shoulder, to complain to the countess of his wrongs. No one ever went to the count, knowing that his wife had full management. Peasants who came in a deputation to parley about hiring or buying extra land, and so on, applied directly to her. The comrades of this Vasily Alexei'itch had got two buckets of *vodka*, and had forced him, who detested liquor, to drink of it. Then they had become quarrelsome (he was peaceable), and they had torn his shirt—so! Hereupon he flung back his coat, worn in Russian fashion with the sleeves hanging, and let his faded red cotton shirt fall from his muscular shoulders, leaving him nude to the waist, save for the cheap little baptismal cross suspended round his neck by a cord. The small boys set up a shout of laughter at his story and his action. The countess rebuked him sharply for such conduct before the children, and refused to interfere in the quarrel. The man pulled his torn shirt over his body and slouched off. That evening, after tea, the count happened to hit upon a couple of Mr. Rider Haggard's books for discussion, and, for the benefit of those in the company who had not read it, gave the chief points of "She" in particularly lively style, which kept us all in laughter. In describing the heroine, he said that "she was clothed in an airy garment, like Vasily Alexei'itch;" and again that "she dropped her garment, and stood like Vasily Alexei'itch." He pronounced "She" and other works of Haggard "the lowest type of literature," and said that "it was astonishing how so many English people could go wild over them." He seemed to read everything, good and bad, and to possess not only an omnivorous literary appetite, but a wonderful memory for books, even in small details.

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Among the innumerable things which he read were Mormon publications, sent him regularly from headquarters. I cannot explain the object of the Mormons in making him the point of attack. He thought very highly of the doctrines of the Mormons as set forth by themselves, and could not understand why they were “persecuted” in America. No one had ever sent him documents on the other side of the question, and he seemed as ignorant of it as I was of the Mormon arguments. In answer to his queries, I told him that the problems involved were too numerous, serious, and complicated for me to enter upon; that the best way, under such circumstances, was for him to read statements set down in black and white by recognized authorities on the subject; and that I would cause books on the matter to be forwarded to him, which I did. But he persisted that our government is in the wrong.

“It is a shame,” said he, “that in a great and free country like America a community of people should be so oppressed, and not allowed that liberty of which you boast.”

“You know your Dickens well,” I answered. “Have you any recollection of Martin Chuzzlewit? You will remember that when Martin was in America with Mark Tapley he saw a slave being sold. Mark Tapley observed that ‘the Americans were so fond of Liberty that they took liberties with her.’ That is, in brief, what ails the Mormons. The only argument in favor of them which can possibly be made is that their practice, not their preaching, offers the only solution of your own theory that all women should be married. But that theory has never been advanced in extenuation of their behavior. I offer it to you brand new, as a slight illustration of a very unpleasant subject.”

One day, during a chat in his study, he had praised Dickens.

“There are three requisites which go to make a perfect writer,” he remarked. “First, he must have something worth saying. Second, he must have a proper way of saying it. Third, he must have sincerity. Dickens had all three of these qualities. Thackeray had not much to say; he had a great deal of art in saying it; but he had not enough sincerity. Dostoevsky possessed all three requisites. Nekrasoff knew well how to express himself, but he did not possess the first quality; he forced himself to say something, whatever would catch the public at the moment, of which he was a very keen judge. As he wrote to suit the popular taste, believing not at all in what he said, he had none of the third requisite.” He declared that America had not as yet produced any first-class woman writer, like George Eliot and George Sand.

Count Tolstoy’s latest book at that time was “What to Do?” It was much discussed, though not very new. It will be remembered that in the final chapter of that work he argues that woman’s whole duty consists in marrying and having as large a family as possible. But, in speaking of Mr. Howells’s “The Undiscovered Country,” which he had just discovered, —it was odd to think he had never heard of Mr. Howells before,—he remarked, in connection with the Shakers, that “it was a good thing that they did not marry.”

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He said this more than once and at some length. I did not like to enter on the subject lest he should go too far, in his earnestness, before the assembled company. Therefore I seized an opportunity to ask his wife how he reconciled that remark with his creed that all women should marry.

She answered that it certainly was not consistent, but that her husband changed his opinion every two years; and, to my consternation, she instantly appealed to him. He did not go into details, however. He pulled out a letter which he had received from a Russian woman, a stranger to him. The writer said: "While acknowledging the justice of your views, I must remark that marriage is a fate which is not possible to every woman. What, then, in your opinion, should a woman who has missed that fate do?"

I was interested in his reply, because six months earlier he had advised me to marry. I inquired what answer he intended to send,—that is, if he meant to reply at all. He said that he considered the letter of sufficient importance to merit an answer, and that he should tell her that "every woman who had not married, whatever the reason, ought to impose upon herself the hardest cross which she could devise, and bear it."

"And so punish herself for the fault of others, perhaps?" I asked. "No. If your correspondent is a woman of sufficient spirit to impose that cross, she will also have sufficient spirit to retort that very few of us choose our own crosses; and that women's crosses imposed by Fate, Providence, or whatever one pleases to call it, are generally heavier, more cruel, than any which they could imagine for themselves in the maddest ecstasy of pain-worship. Are the Shaker women, of whom you approve, also to invent crosses? And how about the Shaker men? What is their duty in the matter of invoking suffering?"

He made no reply, except that "non-marriage was the ideal state," and then relapsed into silence, as was his habit when he did not intend to relinquish his idea. Nevertheless I am convinced he is always open to the influence—quite unconsciously, of course—of argument from any quarter. His changes of belief prove it.

These remarks anent the Shakers seemed to indicate that another change was imminent; and as the history of his progress through the links of his chain of reasoning was a subject of the greatest interest to me, I asked his wife for it. It cannot be called anything but a linked progress, since the germs—nay, the nearly full-fledged idea—of his present moral and religious attitude can be found in almost all of his writings from the very beginning.

When the count married, he had attained to that familiar stage in the spiritual life where men have forgotten, or outgrown, or thoroughly neglected for a long time the religious instruction inculcated upon them in their childhood. There is no doubt that the count had been well grounded in religious tenets and ceremonies; the Russian church is particular on this point, and examinations in "the law of God" form part of the conditions

for entrance to the state schools. But, having reached the point where religion has no longer any solid grasp upon a man, he did not like to see other people observe even the forms.

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Later on he began a novel, to be called "The Decembrists." The Decembrists is the name given to the participants in the disorders of 1825, on the accession of the Emperor Nicholas I. to the throne. Among the preparations which he made for this work were excursions taken with the object of acquainting himself with the divers dialects and peculiarities of expression current in the different parts of the empire. These he collected from pilgrims on the highways and byways.

"A pilgrim," said the witty countess, "is a man who has grown tired of the jars and the cares and responsibilities of the household; out of patience with the family in general. He feels the necessity, inborn in every Russian, for roaming, for getting far away from people, into the country and the forests. So he makes a pilgrimage to some distant shrine. I should like to be a pilgrim myself, but the family ties me down. I feel the need of freshening up my ideas."

In these excursions the count came to see how great a part religion plays in the life of the lower classes; and he argued that, in order to get into sympathy with them, one must share their ideas as to religion. Accordingly he plunged into it with his customary ardor,—“he has a passionate nature,”—and for several years he attended every church service, observed every rite, kept every fast, and so on. He thought it horrible if those about him did not do the same,—if they neglected a single form. I think it quite probable that he initiated the trouble with his stomach by these fasts. They are nothing to a person who has always been used to them; but when we consider that the longer fasts cover about four solid months,—not to mention the usual abstinence on Wednesdays and Fridays and the special abstinences,—and that milk, eggs, cheese, and butter are prohibited, as well as other customary articles of food, it is not difficult to imagine the effect of sudden and strict observance upon a man accustomed during the greater part of his life to a meat diet. The vegetable diet in which he now persists only aggravates the evil in one who is afflicted with liver trouble, and who is too old to train his vital economy in fresh paths.

His religious ardor lasted until he went to church one day, during the last Russo-Turkish war, when prayers were offered for the success of the Russian army. It suddenly struck him that it was inconsistent with “Love your enemies,” “Love one another,” “Do not kill,” that prayers should be offered for the death of enemies. From that day forth he ceased to go to church, as he had also perceived that the practice of religious forms did not, in reality, bring him much nearer to the peasants, and that one must live among them, work among them, to appreciate their point of view.

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The only surprising thing about this is that he should never have noticed that the army is prayed for, essentially in the same sense, at every church service. After the petitions for the Emperor and the imperial family, the liturgy proceeds, "And we pray for the army, that Thou wilt assist Them [that is, the Imperial family and its army], and subdue all foes and enemies under Their feet." Perhaps these familiar words came home to him with special force on that particular day, as familiar words sometimes do. Possibly it was a special prayer. In any case, the prayer was strictly logical. If you have an army, pray for it; and the only prayer that can be offered is, obviously, not for its defeat. That would be tantamount to praying for the enemy; which might be Scriptural, in one way, but would be neither natural, popular, nor further removed from objections of murder than the other.

But Count Tolstoy was logical, also, in another way. Once started on this train of thought, most worldly institutions of the present day, beginning with the army, appeared to him opposed to the teaching of Christ, on which point no rational man will differ from him. As to the possibility of living the life of Christ, or even the advisability of trying it, at this period of the world, that is quite another matter.

It is not necessary for me to recapitulate here that which all the world knows already,—the minute details of his belief in personal property, labor, the renunciation of art and science, and so forth. We discussed them. But I neglected my opportunities to worry him with demands for his catechism, which his visitors delight in grinding out of him as though from a machine, when the reading public must be sufficiently informed on that score already. I have endeavored to set down only the special illustrations of his doctrines, out of the rich mass of his conversation.

Those who have perused attentively his earlier works will have perceived that there is really very little that is absolutely new in these doctrines. They are so strictly the development of ideas which are an integral part of him, through heredity, environment, and personal bias, that the only surprise would be that he should not have ended in this way. Community of goods, mutual help, and kindred doctrines are the national birthright of every Russian, often bartered, it is true. But long residence in the country among the peasants who do not preach these doctrines, but simply practice them, naturally affected the thoughtful student of humanity though he was of a different rank. He began to announce his theories to the world, and found followers, as teachers of these views generally do,—a proof that they satisfy an instinct in the human breast. Solitary country life anywhere is productive of such views.

Disciples, or "adepts," began to make pilgrimages to the prophet. There is a characteristic, a highly characteristic history of one such who came and established himself in the village at the count's park gate.

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"This F. was a Jew, who did not finish his studies, got led astray by socialists, and joined a community where, like the other members, he lived out of marriage with a young girl student. At last he came across a treatise of Lyeff Nikolaevitch, and decided that he was wrong and Lyeff Nikolaevitch right. He removed to Yasnaya Polyana, married his former mistress, and began to live and work among the peasants." (He first joined the Russian church, and one of the count's daughters stood godmother for him.) "His wife worked also; but, with delicate health and two small children to care for, she could do little, through weakness and lack of skill. The peasants laughed at him and at Lyeff Nikola'itch."

Mrs. F. came to the countess with her griefs, and the latter helped her with food, clothing, and in other ways. "One day nothing remained in the house to eat but a single crust. F. was ill. His wife, who was also ill and feeble, went off to work. On her return she found no bread. Some one had come along begging '*Khristi radi*' [for Christ's sake], and F. had given him the crust,—with absolute consistency, it must be confessed. This was the end. There was a scene. The wife went back to her friends. F. also gave up, went off to Ekaterinoslaff, learned the tailor's trade, and married again!" How he managed this second marriage without committing bigamy, in view of the laws of Russia on that point, I am at a loss to understand.

"All my husband's disciples," said the countess, "are small, blond, sickly, and homely; all as like one to another as a pair of old boots. You have seen them. X. Z.—you know him—had a very pretty talent for verses; but he has ruined it and his mind, and made himself quite an idiot, by following my husband's teachings."

The count provided a complement to these remarks in a conversation on Russian writers. He said of a certain author; "That man has never been duly appreciated, has never received the recognition which his genius deserves. Yet you know how superbly he writes,—or rather, did write. He has spoiled himself now by imitating me. It is a pity."

This ingenuous comment is rescued from any tinge of conceit or egotism by its absolute simplicity and truth. The imitation referred to is of the moral "Tales" for popular reading of the lower classes, which my cabman had studied. The pity of it is, when so many of the contemporary writers of Russia owe their inspiration, their very existence, to Turgeneff and Tolstoy having preceded them, that a man who possesses personal talent and a delightful individual style should sacrifice them. In his case it is unnecessary. Count Tolstoy's recognition of this fact is characteristic.

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The countess's description of the "adepts" was as clever as the rest of her remarks, and absolutely accurate. One of them was at the house for a day or two. (I had seen them elsewhere as well.) He had evidently got himself a new blouse for the visit. It was of coarse blue and white cloth, checked, and so stiff with newness that, having a long slit and only one button, at the neck, I could see the whole of his hairy breast every time I looked at him from the left side. I sympathized with Prince K., who being next him at table turned his back on him and ignored him conversationally; which embarrassed the young man extremely. Apropos of his shirt, I never saw any one but the count himself wear a shirt that a real peasant would have worn; and I do not believe that even he had one of the characteristic red cotton garments which are the peasant's pride.

I found this adept interesting when he sat opposite me, and he incited the count to vivacity. He contributed a very good anecdote illustrative of the count's followers.

A man in one of the southern governments—which one is immaterial here —sent a quantity of lithographed copies of five or ten forbidden books (Tolstoy's and others) to a disciple of Tolstoy in one of the northern governments. In the village of this disciple, some young women students in the higher or university courses for women, and followers of Tolstoy, were living for the summer in peasant fashion, and working in the fields, "*to the scornful pity of the peasants*" (I italicize this phrase as remarkable on the lips of an adept.) These young women, having heard of the dispatch by post of the books, and being in the town, thought to do the count's disciple a favor by asking if they had arrived. Had they refrained, nothing would have happened and the books would have been delivered without a question. As it was, attention was attracted to the parcel by the inquiry of these girls of eccentric behavior. The fifty or sixty copies were confiscated; the girls' passports were taken from them. The disciple appealed to a relative in high official position in their behalf. The girls were informed, in consequence, that they might hire themselves out to work for this disciple of gentle birth as much as they liked; but they were forbidden to work for or among the peasants. The adventure was not ended when this story was told. Whether the students were satisfied with the permission to work I do not know. Probably not; their fellow-disciple would not have scorned them as the peasants did, and contradiction, that spice of life to enthusiastic worshipers of impracticable ideas, would have been lacking. In my opinion, the authorities committed an error in judgment. They should have shown more faith in the peasants, the toil, and the girls' unhardened frames. All three elements combined could have been trusted to effect a permanent cure of those disciples by the end of the harvest, had they been gently encouraged not only to work with the peasants but to prove that they were capable of toiling and enduring in precisely the same manner and measure.

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Still the authorities very naturally looked upon the action of the girls as a case of *idti v narod* (going to the people), in the sense understood by the revolutionary propagandists. Their prohibition was based on this ground.

In some way we got upon the subject of English things and ways. The count's eyes flashed.

"The English are the most brutal nation on earth!" he exclaimed. "Along with the Zulus, that is to say. Both go naked: the Zulus all day long, the Englishwomen as soon as dinner is served. The English worship their muscle; they think of it, talk of it. If I had time, I should like to write a book on their ways. And then their executions, which they go to see as a pleasure!"

I asked which nation was a model, in his opinion.

"The French," he answered, which seemed to me inconsistent, when he told of the execution which he had witnessed in Paris, where a father had lifted up his little child that it might have a good view of the horrors of the guillotine.

"Defective as is Russian civilization in many respects," he said, "you will never find the Russian peasant like that. He abhors deliberate murder, like an execution."

"Yet he will himself commit murder," I objected. "There has been a perfect flood of murders reported in the newspapers this very spring. Those perpetrated in town were all by men of the peasant class; and most of them were by lads under twenty years of age."

He insisted that I must have misread the papers. So I proceeded to inquire, "What will a peasant do in case of an execution?"

"He will murder, but without premeditation. What he will do in case of an execution I can illustrate for you by something which occurred in this very neighborhood some years ago.

"The regimental secretary of a regiment stationed at Z. was persecuted by one of his officers, who found fault with him continually, and even placed him under arrest for days at a time, when the man had only obeyed his own orders. At last the secretary's patience failed him, and one day he struck the officer. A court-martial followed. I was chosen to defend him. He was sentenced to death. I appealed to the Emperor through Madame A.,—you know her. For some reason she spoke to one of the ministers. 'You have not stated the number of his regiment; that is indispensable,' was the reply. Evidently this was a subterfuge, that time might be consumed in correspondence, and the pardon might arrive too late. The reason for this was, in all probability, that just at this time a soldier had struck an officer in Moscow and had been condemned. If one

were pardoned, in justice the other must be also. Otherwise discipline would suffer. This coincidence was awkward for the secretary, strong as his case was, and he was shot.

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"The adjutant's hands trembled so with emotion that he could not apply the bandage to the prisoner's eyes. Others tried and gave it up. Well, as soon as that man was buried his grave was covered with flowers, crosses, and all sorts of things by the peasants, who came many versts from all directions, as to the grave of a martyr. Masses for the dead were ordered there, in uninterrupted succession, by these poor peasants. The feeling was so great and appeared to be spreading to such an extent that the authorities were forced not only to prohibit access to the grave, but even to level it off so that it could not be found. But an Englishman! If he were told to cut the throat of his own father and eat him, he would do it."

"Still, in spite of your very striking illustration, and your doubts as to my having read the papers correctly," I remarked, "I am sure that the Russian peasant does, occasionally, murder with premeditation. He is a fine-tempered, much-enduring, admirable fellow, I admit, but he is human. He cannot be so different in this respect from all other races of men. Moreover, I have the testimony of a celebrated Russian author on my side."

"What author? What testimony?"

"Have you ever read The 'Power of Darkness'? The amount of deliberation, of premeditation, in any murder is often a matter of opinion; but the murder of the child in the last act of that comedy is surely deliberate enough to admit of no difference of judgment. Don't you think that the author supports me?"

He gasped at my audacity in quoting his own writings against him, and retreated into the silence which was his resource when he could not or would not answer. Put him in a corner and he would refuse to come out.

Beggars used to come while we were eating out-of-doors; some called themselves "pilgrims." The count would give them a little money, and they would tramp off again. One day, when the birthday of an absent member of the family was being celebrated, and we were drinking healths in *voditchka* (a sort of effervescent water flavored with fruit juices), we had a distinguished visitor, "Prince Romanoff." This was the crazy Balakhin mentioned in "What to Do?" as having had his brain turned by the sight of the luxury in the lives of others. His rags and patches, or rather his conglomeration of patches, surpassed anything we had seen in that line. One of the lads jumped up and gave him a glass of raspberry *voditchka*, telling him that it was rare old wine. The man sipped it, looked through it, and pretended (I am sure that it was mere pretense) to believe that it was wine. He promised us all large estates when the Emperor should give him back his own, now wrongfully withheld from him.

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Balakhin stayed about the place, making himself at home with the servants, for twenty-four hours or more. I believe that he strays about among the landed proprietors of the district as a profession. In spite of his willingness to call himself "Prince Romanoff" as often as any one chose to incite him thereto, this did not impress me as a proof that he was too deranged to earn his own living, with his healthy frame, if he saw fit. I had observed the mania for titles in other persons (not all Russians, by any means) who would vigorously resent the imputation that they should be in a lunatic asylum. Moreover, this imperial "Prince Romanoff" never forgot his "manners." He invariably rose when his superiors (or his inferiors, perhaps I should say) approached, like any other peasant, and he looked far more crafty than crazy.

As the peasants were all busy haying, we postponed our visit to the village until the afternoon of Peter and Paul's day, in the hope that we should then find some of them at home. The butler's family were drinking tea on the porch of their neat new log house with a tinned roof, at the end of the village near the park gate. They rose and invited us to honor them with our company and share their meal. We declined, for lack of time.

One of the count's daughters had told me of a curious difference existing between the cut of the aprons of maidens and of those of married women. I had been incredulous, and she suggested that I put the matter to the test by asking the first married woman whom we should see. We found a pretty woman, with beautiful brown eyes and exquisite teeth (whose whiteness and soundness are said to be the result of the sour black bread which the peasants eat exclusively), standing at the door of her cottage.

"Here's your chance!"

"Show me your window, please," I said.

She laughed, and turned her back to me. There was the "window," sure enough. The peasant apron, which is fastened under the armpits, is pretty evenly distributed as to fullness all the way round, and in the case of a maiden falls in straight lines in the back. But the married woman makes hers with a semicircular opening a few inches below the band. The points of the opening are connected by a loop of fringe, a couple of cords not always tied, or anything that comes handy, apparently for ornament. Now, when the husband feels moved to demonstrate his affection for his spouse by administering a beating, he is not obliged to fumble and grope among those straight folds for the awkward triangular little opening, quite unsuited to accommodate his fist. He can grasp her promptly by the neck of her chemise and this comfortable semicircle, and not force her to doubt his love by delay and hesitation in expression. I asked the pretty woman if her husband found it very useful. "Sometimes," she answered nonchalantly. The Russian peasant theory is: "No beating, no jealousy; no jealousy, no love."

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She offered to sell us a new petticoat similar to the one which she wore. It was of homespun, hard-twisted wool *etamine* very durable, of a sort which is made, with slight variations, in several governments. Ordinarily, in this district, it is of a bright scarlet plaided off with lines of white and yellow. A breadth of dark blue cotton is always inserted in the left side. When a woman is in mourning, the same plaid on a dark blue foundation is used. Married women wear coarse chemises and aprons of homespun linen; and their braided hair coiled on top of the head imparts a coronet shape to the gay cotton kerchief which is folded across the brow and knotted at the nape of the neck.

Young girls wear cotton chemises and aprons and print dresses, all purchased, not home made. It is considered that if a girl performs her due share of the house and field work she will not have time to weave more than enough linen for her wedding outfit, and the purchase of what is needed before that unhappy event is regarded as a certificate of industry. I call it an unhappy event because from the moment of her betrothal the prospective bride wears mourning garments. Black beads for the neck are the height of fashion here.

The girl's gown, called a *sarafan*, is plaited straight and full into a narrow band, and suspended just below the armpits by cross-bands over the shoulders. She prefers for it plain scarlet cotton (*kumatch*), or scarlet printed in designs of yellow, white, and green. Her head kerchief matches in style. Her betrothal gown and kerchief have a dark blue or black ground with colored figures.

The bargain for the petticoat was closed at two rubles, its real worth, subject to "sister's approbation,"—an afterthought on the part of the pretty woman. When she brought it to us at the house, a couple of hours later, modestly concealed under her apron, and with sister's blessing, she demanded half a ruble more, because we had not beaten her down, and perhaps also as an equivalent for sister's consent.

She showed us her cottage, which was luxurious, since it had a brick half for winter use, exactly corresponding to the summer half of logs. Behind, in a wattled inclosure, were the animals and farming implements. It was not a cheerful dwelling, with its tiny windows, wall benches to serve as seats and beds, pine table, images in the corner, great whitewashed oven, in which the cooking was done, and on which, near the ceiling, they could sleep, and sheepskin coats as well as other garments lying about.

Practically, a small Russian village consists of one street, since those peasants who live on the occasional parallel or side lanes are "no account folks," and not in fashion. It seemed inconsistent that ranks and degrees should exist in peasant villages; but human nature is much the same in the country as in capitals, even in the village of the man who advocates absolute equality of poverty, and despite the views of my merry *izvostchik* Alexei.

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The aged mother of the woman to whom the count's daughter was carrying a gift of a new kerchief was at home, and bestowed some smacking kisses in thanks. The old woman even ran after us to discharge another volley of gratitude on the young countess's pretty cheeks.

In the evening we set out once more for the village, to see the choral dances and hear the songs with which the peasants celebrate their holidays. A dozen or so of small peasant girls, pupils of the count's daughter, who had invited themselves to swing on the Giant Steps on the lawn opposite the count's study windows, abandoned their amusement and accompanied us down the avenue, fairly howling an endless song in shrill voices that went through one's nerves.

As we emerged from the shadows of the avenue and proceeded up the broad, grassy village street to the place of assembly, the children dispersed. A crowd was collected at a fairly level spot ready for the dancing. All wore their gayest clothes. The full moon, with brilliant Jupiter close beside her, furnished an ideally picturesque light, and displayed the scene to the greatest advantage. Low gray cottages framed the whole.

It was a grand occasion. One of the count's sons had brought his violin, his cousin had a *balalaika*, a triangular peasant guitar, and one of the lackeys had his harmonica, to play for the dancing. The young men sat on a rough improvised bench; the servant stood beside them. The peasants seemed shy. They hesitated and argued a good deal over beginning each song. Finally they joined hands and circled slowly to the tones of the generally monotonous airs. Some of the melodies were lively and pleasing, but the Great Russian peasant woman's voice is undeniably shrill. The dancing, when some bold peasant ventured to enter the circle, after much urging and pushing, was far tamer and more unvarying than I had seen elsewhere. We felt very grateful to our maid, Tatiana, for stepping forward with spirit and giving us a touch of the genuine thing.

Alas! the fruits of Tatiana's civilization were but too visible in her gown of yellow print flounced to the waist and with a tight-fitting bodice. The peasant costume suits the dance far better. Her partner was unworthy of her, and did not perform the squat-and-leap step in proper form. She needed Fomitch, the butler, who had been obliged to stay at home and serve tea; to his regret, no doubt, since we were informed that "he danced as though he had ten devils in his body." As we saw no prospect of any devils at all,—and they are very necessary for the proper dash in Russian dancing,—we strolled home, past the pond where the women were wont to wash their clothes, and up the dark avenue. Perhaps the requisite demons arrived after our departure. It was a characteristic scene, and one not readily to be forgotten.

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One of the most enjoyable incidents of the evening was the rehearsal of the maid's coquettish steps and graces given by one of our young hostesses for the benefit of those members of the family who had not been present. It reminded us of the scene in "War and Peace" after the hunt, when charming young Countess Natalya Ilinitchna astonishes her old relative by her artistic performance of the Russian dance, which she must have inherited with the traditions of her native land, since she had never learned it.

Balalaika duets were one of the joys of our evenings under the trees, after dinner. The young men played extremely well, and the popular airs were fascinating. Our favorite was the "*Barynya-Sudarynya*," which invariably brings out volleys of laughter and plaudits when it is sung on the stage. Even a person who hears it played for the first time and is ignorant of the words is constrained to laughter by the merry air. In the evenings there were also hare-and-hounds hunts through the meadows and forests, bonfires over which the younger members of the family jumped in peasant fashion, and other amusements.

In consequence of vegetarian indiscretions and of trifling with his health in other ways during the exceptionally hot weather then prevailing, the count fell ill. When he got about a little he delighted to talk of death. He said he felt that he was not going to live long, and was glad of it. He asked what we thought of death and the other world, declaring that the future life must be far better than this, though in what it consisted he could not feel any certainty. Naturally he did not agree with our view, that for the lucky ones this world provides a very fair idea of heaven, because his ideal was not happiness for all, but misery for all. He will be forced to revise this ideal if he ever really comes to believe in heaven.

During this illness I persuaded him to read "Looking Backward," which I had received as I was leaving Moscow. When I presented it to him, he promised to examine it "some time;" but when I give books I like to hear the opinion of the recipient in detail, and I had had experience when I gave him "Robert Elsmere." Especially in this case was I anxious to discuss the work.

At first he was very favorably impressed, and said that he would translate the book into Russian. He believed that this was the true way: that people should have, literally, all things in common, and so on. I replied that matters would never arrive at the state described unless this planet were visited by another deluge, and neither Noah nor any other animal endowed with the present human attributes saved to continue this selfish species. I declared that nothing short of a new planet, Utopia, and a newly created, selected, and combined race of Utopian angels, would ever get as far as the personages in that book, not to speak of remaining in equilibrium on that dizzy point when it should have been once attained. He disagreed with me, and an argument royal ensued. In the course of it he said that his only objection lay in the degree of luxury in which the characters of the new perfection lived.

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“What harm is there in comfort and luxury to any extent,” I asked, “provided that all enjoy it?”

“Luxury is all wrong,” he answered severely. “You perceive the sinful luxury in which I live,” waving his hand toward the excessively plain furniture, and animadverting with special bitterness on the silver forks and spoons. “It is all a fallacy that we can raise those below us by remaining above them. We must descend to their level in habits, intelligence, and life; then all will rise together.”

“Even bread must have yeast; and if we all make ourselves exactly alike, who is to act as yeast? Are we to adopt all vices of the lower classes? That would be the speediest way of putting ourselves on a complete equality with them. But if some of us do not remain yeast, we shall all turn out the flattest sort of dough.”

“We certainly cannot change the position of a thing unless we go close enough to grasp it, unless we are on the same plane with it.”

“Perhaps not; but being on the same plane does not always answer. Did you ever see an acrobat try that trick? He puts one leg on the table, then tries to lift his whole body by grasping the other leg and putting it on a level to begin with. Logically, it ought to succeed and carry the body with it, if your theory is correct. However, it remains merely a curious and amusing experiment, likely to result in a broken neck to any one not skilled in gymnastics, and certain to end in a tumble even for the one who is thus skilled.”

He reiterated his arguments. I retorted that human beings were not moral kangaroos, who could proceed by leaps, and that even the kangaroo is obliged to allow the tip of his tail to follow his paws. I said that in the moral as well as in the physical world it is simply a choice between standing still and putting one foot before the other; that one cannot get upstairs by remaining on the bottom step; one member of the body must rise first.

We were obliged to agree to disagree, as usual, but I fancy that he may have changed to my opinion of the book and the subject by this time. I have already noted that he is open to influence.

One evening, as we sat on the steps of the uncovered terrace outside his study, the conversation fell on the book which he was then engaged upon, and which the countess had shown us that she was copying for the fourth time. He had been busy on it for two years. Neither of them went into details nor mentioned the plot, but I had heard on my arrival in Russia, twenty months previously, that it related to the murder of a woman by her husband, and had a railway scene in it. I did not interrogate them, and when the count said that he hoped I would translate the book when it should be finished I accepted the proposal with alacrity. I inquired whether I was to read it then.

"You may if you wish," was the reply, "but I shall probably make some changes, and I should prefer that you would wait; but that shall be as you please."

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His wife said that he might suddenly take a fancy to view the subject from an entirely different point, and write the book all over.

I declined to anticipate my future pleasure by even glancing at it, and I asked no questions. Neither did I ask to see "The Fruits of Civilization," which was already written and named, I was not there to exploit their hospitality.

The count and his wife differed as to what ought to be the fate of the coming volume. He wished to give it to the world (that is, to some publisher) for nothing. She argued that some one, the publisher at least, would make money out of it; then why not let his own family have the profit, as was just? He insisted that it was wrong, inconsistent, in the same strain as he discusses the subject of his writings in "What to Do?" But she urged him, in case he would not consent to justice, to leave the manuscript with her, unpublished, so that the family could use it after his death. (When the book was ready it was named "The Kreutzer Sonata.")

I think that every one must side with the countess in her view of this matter and in her management of the family. It is owing solely to her that the younger members of the family are receiving that education to fit them for their struggle with life which her husband bestowed upon the elder members voluntarily. It is due to her alone, also, that her husband is still alive. It is not an easy task to protect the count against himself. One adds to one's admiration for the count's literary genius an admiration for the countess's talent and good sense by an extended acquaintance with this family.

More than one community has been organized for the express purpose of carrying out the life of toil which Count Tolstoy has advocated at times. One of these communities, of which I had direct information, purchased an estate of a landed proprietor, including the manor house, and began to work. This acquisition of an estate by them, while the count would like to give away his as sinful to retain, does not strike one as a good beginning. However, they did not use the manor house, but lived in one small peasant hut. "They all slept on the floor and benches, men and women," said a Russian to me. A wealthy man had sold his property to join this community against the wishes of his wife, who accompanied him, nevertheless. When her baby came, they allowed her to occupy a room in the mansion and required no work from her, since she had the care of the child. "They never swept or scrubbed anything, and they propagated every insect known to man, and probably a few new ones." But the count has never preached this doctrine, or that an indefinite number of persons should occupy a single cottage. Thus do his too enthusiastic disciples discredit him by running into excesses.

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So far as he is concerned, there is not the slightest doubt that he would gladly attempt the life which he advocates. But if he were to take up his residence in a peasant's cottage, and try to support himself on what his labors brought in exclusively, he would be dead in less than a month. He suffers from liver disease; he has not been used to hard labor from early youth; he cannot, at his age, accustom himself to it any more than he can compel his stomach to accept a purely vegetable diet in place of the meat diet on which he has been brought up. He strives conscientiously to do it. Even the fits of illness caused by his severe treatment of himself do not break his spirit. He exercises not the slightest calculation or forethought in the care of his health, either before it breaks down or afterwards. For example: about five years ago he bruised his leg seriously against the wheel of a peasant cart. Instead of resting it, he persisted in working. Erysipelas developed. The Tula doctor paid him numerous visits, at fifteen rubles a visit. Then gangrene threatened, and a doctor was sent for from Moscow. He was a celebrity; price three hundred and fifty rubles. This was penny wise and pound foolish, of course. But in all probability the count feels the responsibility of exerting his will in this matter of labor all the more because it does not come easy to him, and he attributes to weakness of will power what a peasant would recognize as simple physical exhaustion. The peasant would not hesitate to climb to the top of his oven and stay there until his illness was over, with not a thought whether the work were done or not; and yet the peasant would work far beyond the bounds of what one would suppose that a man could endure. But Count Tolstoy overrates his powers of endurance, and, having exhausted his forces in one desperate spurt, he is naturally obliged to spend more than a corresponding amount of time in recuperating, even if no serious complication intervenes; and this gives rise to the accusation of laziness and insincerity from those who chance to see him in one of these intervals of rest.

Another point which is too often lost sight of by people who disapprove of his labor theories is that, while he advocates living in all respects like a peasant, descending to that level in mind as well as in body, which doctrine seems to include the incessant toil of the masses, he has also announced his theory that men should divide their time each day between (1) hard labor unto perspiration and callosities; (2) the exercise of some useful handicraft; (3) exercise of the brain in writing and reading; (4) social intercourse; sixteen hours in all. This is not a programme which a peasant could follow out. In summer, during the "suffering" season, the peasant toils in the fields for nearly the whole of the twenty-four hours instead of the four thus allotted. In winter, when no field labor is possible, he is likely to spend much more than four hours at whatever remunerative

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handicraft he may be acquainted with, or in intercourse with his fellow-men (detrimental as likely as not), and a good deal less in reading at any season of the year, for lack of instruction, interest, or books. On the other hand, this reasonable *regime* is not practicable for many men of other than peasant rank. It happens to be perfectly practicable for Count Tolstoy when his health permits. But as he has also said much about doing everything for one's self, earning in some form of common labor all that one spends, those who remember this only, and who know how little can be earned by a whole day's toil in Russia, not to mention toil divided between two branches, which agriculture does not permit, are not altogether to blame for jumping to the conclusion that the count makes no effort to practice what he preaches. He does what he can. He is reproached with having made over his property to his wife and with living as before. It is really difficult to see what other course is open to him. An unmarried man, under obligations to no one but himself, may reasonably be blamed for not carrying out the doctrine which he volunteers to teach the world. A married man can only be blamed for volunteering the doctrine. No blame can possibly attach to the wife who defends the interest of the family to the extent of working havoc with his doctrines.

Even if Count Tolstoy were able to support himself, he certainly could not support a wife and the nine living children out of sixteen which he has had. There is no justice in expecting the adult members of the family to accept and practice his doctrines. They do not compel him to accept theirs, though they are in the majority. The little ones could not feed themselves, even were they ideal peasant children. It would be nearer the truth to say that the countess has taken possession of the property; she administers it wisely and economically, for the good of the family and her husband. She issued, about five years ago, a cheaper edition of her husband's works, the only edition available hitherto having been very expensive. The wisdom of her step was proved by the large profits derived from it in the course of three years,—fifty thousand dollars,—all of which was applied to the needs of the family.

The count is not the only one at Yasnaya Polyana to deny himself. For the past two winters the whole family have remained on the estate, and have not gone to Moscow, with the exception of one who is in business at the capital, one member who is at his studies, and one who is married and resides on another estate. This is because the income did not amount to a certain sum, a very moderate sum in American eyes, without which a stay in town would have been imprudent.

The question naturally follows: If the countess holds the property, and the count continues to get the good of it, in a modest way; if the count does not do everything for himself, and earn his daily bread by manual toil, is not he mentally unbalanced to proclaim his theories to the world, and to change his mind so often on other points?

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The answer is: No. Undoubtedly the count, when he attained to his convictions on the subject of poverty and labor, hoped to carry his family with him. The countess, like a brave woman, like a devoted wife and mother, refused to adopt his views. She is willing to shoulder the responsibility of her refusal, and her conduct is an honor to her. As for his changes of doctrine, we are all very much like him in the matter of inconsistency. Only, as very few of us enjoy the renown or the authority of Count Tolstoy, it rarely occurs to us to proclaim our progressive opinions to the world; at most, one or two experiences cure us of that weakness, even if any one thinks it worth while to notice them in the slightest degree. Very few of us are so deeply rooted in our convictions, or so impressed with their importance to the world as principles, that we will raise a finger to defend them. We alternately know that we shall never change them again, and suspect that we may see something better at any moment; and we refrain from committing ourselves unnecessarily in any form which can be brought up against us hereafter.

The case is precisely the reverse with Count Tolstoy. He is so full of the missionary spirit, so persuaded of the truth and value of his beliefs, that he rushes into print with them instantly. There they are, all ready for those who do not sympathize with him to use as missiles when he gets a new inspiration. Change of opinion is generally progress. Continuity, an absolute lack of change, means stagnation and death in the mental as well as in the physical world. As the count is impressible and reads much, his reading and meditation are fruitful of novelties, which he bravely submits to the judgment of the world without pausing to consider whether they coincide with his other utterances or not. That he does not always express his abstract ideas clearly is the inevitable result of the lack of philosophical training.

But enthusiastic souls who grieve over the imperfections in the present organization of society are always waiting for some one of warmer zeal to lead them. Such persons perceive the ideal side of every argument, interpret doctrines with their hearts, not with their heads, and are fired by the newest conception of social relations. As one of the most marked characteristics of Count Tolstoy lies in infusing his own personality into every word he writes, it is only natural that these people should adopt him as their guide. It is not the fault of any one in particular that he has abandoned a doctrine by the time others have mastered it. The only refuge is in the cry of Hamlet:—

“The time is out of joint; O cursed spite! That ever I was born to set it right.”

Thus much I think I may say of the home life of the famous Russian writer without sinning against the duties imposed by the frank and cordial hospitality for which we are indebted to the family. It has seemed time to enter a protest against various misrepresentations and misconceptions in regard to them which are current. In conclusion, I beg leave to explain that my spelling of the name is that used by themselves when writing in English, and in print upon their French cards.

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IX.

A RUSSIAN HOLY CITY.

It was close on midnight when we left Yasnaya Polyana. A large and merry party of Count Tolstoy's children and relatives escorted us: some in the baggage cart, perched on our luggage; some in the jaunting-car-like *lineika* with us, on our moonlight drive to the little station where we were to join the train and continue our journey southward.

We should have preferred to travel by daylight, as we were possessed of the genuine tourist greed for seeing "everything;" but in this case, as in many others in Russia, the trains were not arranged so that we could manage it.

There is very little variety along the road through central Russia, but the monotony is of a different character from that of the harsh soil and the birch and pine forests of the north. The vast plains of this *tchernozyom*—the celebrated "black earth zone"—swell in long, low billows of herbage and grain, diversified only at distant intervals by tracts of woodland. But the wood is too scarce to meet the demands for fuel, and the manure of the cattle, well dried, serves to eke it out, a traveling native in our compartment told us, instead of being used, as it should be, to enrich the land, which is growing poor. Now and then, substantial brick cottages shone out amidst the gray and yellow of the thatched log huts in the hamlets. We heard of one landed proprietor who encouraged his peasant neighbors to avoid the scourge of frequent conflagrations by building with brick, and he offered a prize to every individual who should comply with the conditions. The prize consisted of a horse from the proprietor's stables, and of the proprietor's presence, in full uniform and all his orders, at the house-warming. The advantages of brick soon became so apparent to the peasants that they continued to employ it, even after their patron had been forced to abolish the reward, lest his horses and his time should be utterly exhausted.

Minor incidents were not lacking to enliven our long journey. In the course of one of the usual long halts at a county town, a beggar came to the window of our carriage. He was a tall, slender young fellow, about seven-and-twenty years of age. Though he used the customary forms,— "Give me something, *sudarynya** if only a few kopeks, *Khristi radi!*"** there was something about him, despite his rags, there was an elegance of accent in his language, to which I was not accustomed in the "poor brethren" generally.

* Madam. ** For Christ's sake.

I pretended ignorance of Russian and the sign language, but watched him as I continued my conversation in English. Thereupon my man repeated his demands in excellent French, with a good accent. I turned on him.

“This is unusual,” I said in Russian, by way of hinting that I belonged to the category of the willfully deaf. “Accept my compliments on your knowledge of French and of Russian. But be so good as to explain to me this mystery before I contribute.”

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"Madam," he retorted, "I'd have you know that I am a gentleman,—a gentleman of education."

"Then pray solve the other mystery,—why you, strong, young, healthy, handsome, are a professional beggar."

He stalked off in a huff. Evidently he was one of that class of "decayed nobles" of whom I had heard many curious tales in Moscow; only he had decayed at a rather earlier age than the average.

As we proceeded southward, pretty Little Russian girls took the place of the plainer-featured Great Russian maidens. Familiar plants caught our eyes. Mulleins—"imperial sceptre" is the pretty Russian name—began to do sentinel duty along the roadside; sumach appeared in the thickets of the forests, where the graceful cut-leaved birch of the north was rare. The Lombardy poplar, the favorite of the Little Russian poets, reared its dark columns in solitary state. At last, Kieff, the Holy City, loomed before us in the distance.

I know no town in Russia which makes so picturesque and characteristic an impression on the traveler as Kieff. From the boundless plain over which we were speeding, we gazed up at wooded heights crowned and dotted with churches. At the foot of the slope, where golden domes and crosses, snowy white monasteries and battlemented walls, gleamed among masses of foliage punctuated with poplars, swept the broad Dnyepyr. It did not seem difficult then to enter into the feelings of Prince Oleg when he reached the infant town, on his expedition from unfertile Novgorod the Great, of the north, against Byzantium, and, coveting its rich beauty, slew its rulers and entered into possession, saying, "This shall be the Mother of all Russian Cities." We could understand the sentiments of the pilgrims who flock to the Holy City by the million.

The agreeable sensation of approach being over, our expectations, which had been waxing as the train threaded its way through a ravine to the station, received a shock. It was the shock to which we were continually being subjected whenever we made pious pilgrimages to places of historic renown. On each occasion of this sort we were moved to reflect deeply on the proverbial blessings of ignorance. It makes a vast difference in one's mental comfort, I find, whether he accepts the present unquestioningly, with enthusiasm, and reconstructs the historic past as an agreeable duty, or whether he already bears the past, in its various aspects, in his mind, in involuntary but irrational expectation of meeting it, and is forced to accept the present as a painful task! Which of these courses to pursue in the future was the subject of my disappointed meditations, as we drove through the too Europeanized streets, and landed at a hotel of the same pattern. It is easy to forgive St. Petersburg, in its giddy youth of one hundred and seventy-five winters, for its Western features and comforts; but that Kieff, in its venerable maturity of a thousand summers, should be so spick and span with newness and reformation seemed at first utterly unpardonable. The inhabitants think otherwise,

no doubt, and deplore the mediaeval hygienic conditions which render the town the most unhealthy in Europe, in the matter of the death-rate from infectious diseases.

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Our comfortable hotel possessed not a single characteristic feature, except a line on the printed placard of regulations posted in each room. The line said, "The price of this room is four rubles [or whatever it was] a day, except in Contract Time." "Contract Time," I found, meant the Annual Fair, in February, when the normal population of about one hundred and sixty-six thousand is swelled by "arrivers"—as travelers are commonly designated on the signboards of the lower-class hotels— from all the country round about. When, prompted by this remarkable warning, I inquired the prices during the fair, the clerk replied sweetly,—no other word will do justice to his manner,—"All we can get!" Such frankness is what the French call "brutal."

The principal street of the town, the Krestchatik, formerly the bed of a stream, in front of our windows, was in the throes of sewer-building. More civilization! Sewage from the higher land had lodged there in temporary pools. The weather was very hot. The fine large yellow bricks, furnished by the local clay-beds, of which the buildings and sidewalks were made, were dazzling with heat. It is only when one leaves the low-lying new town, and ascends the hills, on which the old dwellers wisely built, or reaches the suburbs, that one begins thoroughly to comprehend the enthusiastic praises of many Russians who regard Kieff as the most beautiful town in the empire.

The glare of the yellow brick melts softly into the verdure of the residence quarter, and is tempered into inoffensiveness in the Old Town by the admixture of older and plainer structures, which refresh the eye. But the chief charm, unfailing, inexhaustible as the sight of the ocean, is the view from the cliffs. Beyond the silver sweep of the river at their feet, animated with steamers and small boats, stretches the illimitable steppe, where the purple and emerald shadows of the sea depths and shallows are enriched with hues of golden or velvet brown and misty blue. The steppe is no longer an unbroken expanse of waving plume-grass and flowers, wherein riders and horses are lost to sight as, in Gogol's celebrated tale, were Taras Bulba and his sons, fresh from the famous Academy of Kieff, which lies at our feet, below the cliffs. Increasing population has converted this virgin soil into vast grainfields, less picturesque near at hand than the wild growth, but still deserving, from afar, of Gogol's enraptured apostrophe: "Devil take you, steppe, how beautiful you are!"

Naturally, our first pilgrimage was to the famous Kievo-Petcherskaya Lavra, that is, the First-Class Monastery of the Kieff Catacombs, the chief monastic institution and goal of pilgrims in all the country, of which we had caught a glimpse from the opposite shore of the river, as we approached the town. Buildings have not extended so densely in this direction but that a semblance of ascetic retirement is still preserved. Between the monastery and the city

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lies the city park, which is not much patronized by the citizens, and for good reasons. To the rich wildness of nature is added the wildness of man. Hordes of desperadoes, "the barefoot brigade," the dregs of the local population, have taken up their residence there every spring, of late years, in the ravines and the caves which they have excavated, in humble imitation of the holy men of the monastery of old. From time to time the police make a skirmish there, but an unpleasant element of danger is still connected with a visit to this section of the city's heart, which deters most people from making the attempt.

Beyond this lie the heights, on which stand the fortress and the Catacombs Monastery. Opposite the arsenal opens the "Holy Gate," all Russian monasteries seem to have a holy gate. "The wall, fourteen feet in height, and more in some places, surrounding the principal court, was built by Hetman Mazeppa," says the local guide-book. Thus promptly did we come upon traces of that dashing Kazak chieftain, who would seem, judging from the solid silver tombs for saints, the churches, academy, and many other offerings of that nature in Kieff alone, to have spent the intervals between his deeds of outrageous treachery and immorality in acts of ostentatious piety. In fact, his piety had an object, as piety of that rampant variety usually has. He meditated betraying Little Russia into the power of Poland; and knowing well how heartily the Little Russians detested the Poles because of the submission to the Pope of Rome in those Greek churches designated as Uniates, he sought to soothe their suspicions and allay their fears by this display of attachment to the national church. His vaingloriousness was shown by his habit of having his coat of arms placed on bells, *ikonostasi*,* and windows of the churches he built. In one case, he caused his portrait to be inserted in the holy door of the *ikonostas*,—a very improper procedure,—where it remained until the middle of the last century. Highly colored frescoes of the special monastery saints and of historical incidents adorned the wall outside the holy gate. Inside, we found a monk presiding over a table, on which stood the image of the saint of the day, a platter covered with a cross-adorned cloth, for offerings, and various objects of piety for sale.

* Image screens.

The first thing which struck us, as we entered the great court, was the peculiar South Russian taste for filling in the line of roof between the numerous domes with curving pediments and tapering turned-wood spirelets surmounted by golden stars and winged seraphs' heads surrounded by rays. The effect of so many points of gold against the white of the walls, combined with the gold of the crosses, the high tints of the external frescoes, and the gold of the cupolas, is very brilliant, no doubt; but it is confusing, and constitutes what, for want of a better word, I must call a Byzantine-rococo style of architecture.

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The domes, under Western influence, during the many centuries when Kieff was divorced from Russia, under Polish and Lithuanian rule, assumed forms which lack the purity and grace of those in Russia proper. Octagonal cupolas supported on thick, sloping bases involuntarily remind one of the cup-and-ball game. Not content with this degenerate beginning, they pursue their errors heavenward. Instead of terminating directly in a cross, they are surmounted by a lantern frescoed with saints, a second octagonal dome, a ball, and a cross. These octagons constitute a feature in all South Russian churches.

Along the sides of the court leading to the great Assumption Cathedral stood long, plain one and two story buildings, the cells of the monks. Rugs of fine coloring and design were airing on the railings in front of them. I examined their texture, found it thick and silky, but could not class it with any manufacture of my acquaintance. I looked about for some one to question. A monk was approaching. His long, abundant hair flowed in waves from beneath the black veil which hung from his tall, cylindrical *klobuk*, resembling a rimless silk hat. His artistically cut black robe fell in graceful folds. I should describe him as dandified, did I dare apply such an adjective to an ecclesiastical recluse. I asked him where such rugs were to be found. He answered that they were of peasant manufacture, and that I could probably find them in Podol, the market below the cliffs. These specimens had been presented to the monastery by "zealous benefactors."

Then he took his turn at questioning. I presume that my accent was not perfect, or that I had omitted some point of etiquette in which an Orthodox Russian would have been drilled, such as asking his blessing and kissing his hand in gratitude, by way of saying "good-morning," or something of that sort. His manner was that of a man of the world, artistically tinged with monastic conventionality, and I wondered whether he were not an ex-officer of the Guards who had wearied of Court and gayeties. He offered to show us about, and took us to the printing-house, founded in the sixteenth century. It is still one of the best and most extensive in the country, with a department of chromo-lithography attached for the preparation of cheap pictures of saints. One of the finest views in town is from the balcony at the rear of this building, and the monk explained all the points to us.

There was an air of authority about our impromptu guide, and the profound reverences bestowed upon him and upon us by the workmen in the printing-house, as well as by all the monks whom we met, prompted me to inquire, as we parted from him, to whom we were indebted for such interesting guidance and explanations.

"I am *otetz kaznatchei*," he replied, with a smile, as he not only offered his hand, but grasped mine and shook it, with an expression of his cordial good wishes, instead of bestowing upon me a mechanical cross in the air, and permitting me to kiss his plump

little fingers in return, as he would undoubtedly have done had I been a Russian. I understood the respect paid, and our reflected importance, when I discovered that the “Father Treasurer” occupies the highest rank next to the permanent head of the monastery officially, and the most important post of all practically.

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Shortly after, the question fever having attacked me again, I accosted another monk, equal in stateliness of aspect to the Father Treasurer. He informed me that from seven hundred to one thousand persons lived in the monastery. Not all of them were monks, some being only lay brethren. Each monk, however, had his own apartments, with a little garden attached, and the beautiful rugs which I had seen formed part of the furnishings of their cells. A man cannot enter the monastery without money, but fifty rubles (about twenty-five dollars) are sufficient to gain him admittance. Some men leave the monastery after a brief trial, without receiving the habit. "In such a throng one comes to know many faces," he said, "but not all persons."

I inquired whether it were not a monotonous, tiresome life.

"It seems so to you!" he replied, when he had recovered from his amazement; and when I mentioned the liturgy which is peculiar to the monastery cathedral, and famed throughout Russia as "the Kieff-Catacombs singing," all he found to say was, "It is very long."

He took advantage of the chance presented by a trip to his cell to get us some water, to remove his tall *klobuk*. He must have read in our glances admiration of his beauty mingled with a doubt as to whether it were not partly due to this becoming cowl and veil, and determined to convince us that it was nature, not adventitious circumstances, in his case. I think he must have been content with the expression of our faces, as he showed us the way to the most ancient of all the churches in Kieff,—in Russia, in fact,—built by Prince-Saint Vladimir immediately after his return from the crusade in search of baptism.

The church door was locked. The wife of the deacon in charge was paddling about barefooted, in pursuit of her fowls, in the long grass of the dooryard. She abandoned the chickens and hunted up her husband, who took a peep at us, and then kept us waiting while he donned his best cassock before escorting us.

It is a very small, very plain church which adjoined Prince Vladimir's summer palace, long since destroyed, and still preserves its gallery for women and servants, and a box for the ladies of the household. Everything about it is nine hundred years old, except the roof and the upper portion of the walls. The archaic frescoes of angels in the chancel, which date from the same period, and are the best in Kieff, were the only objects which the deacon could find to expound, to enhance the "tea-money" value of his services in putting on his best gown and unlocking the door, and he performed his duty meekly, but firmly. We did ours by him, and betook ourselves to the principal church, the Cathedral of the Assumption, where less is left to the imagination.

There, very few of the frescoes are more than a hundred and sixty years old, the majority dating back less than sixty years, and being in a style to suit the rococo gilt carving, and the silver-gilt Imperial Gate to the altar. In the *papert*, or corridor-vestibule,

a monk who was presiding over a Book of Eternal Remembrance invited us to enter our subscriptions for general prayers to be said on our behalf, or for special prayers to be said before the “wonder-working image” of the Assumption so long as the monastery shall exist.

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“We are not *pravoslavny*” (Orthodox Christians), I said. But, instead of being depressed by this tacit refusal, he brightened up and plied us with a series of questions, until he really seemed to take a temporary interest in life, in place of his permanent official interest in death alone, or chiefly.

Service was in progress, in accordance with the canons of the Studieff monastery, adopted by St. Fedosy in the eleventh century. The singers, placed in an unusual position, in the centre of the church, were as remarkable for their hair as for their voices and execution. The russet-brown and golden locks of some of them fell in heavy waves to their waists. In fact, long, waving hair seemed to be a specialty with the monks of this monastery, and they wore it in braids when off duty. I had seen priests in St. Petersburg who so utterly beyond a doubt frizzed their scanty hair on days of grand festivals, that the three tufts pertaining to the three too slender hair pins on which they had been done up stood out in painfully isolated disagreement. What would they not have given for such splendid manes as these Kieff singers possessed!

We ascended to the gallery, to obtain a better view of the scene. Peasant men in sheepskins (*tulupi*),—the temperature verged on 100 degrees Fahrenheit,—in coats of dark brown homespun wool girt with sashes which had once been bright; female pilgrims in wadded coats girt into shapelessness over cotton gowns of brilliant hues, knelt in prayer all about the not very spacious floor. Their traveling-sacks on their backs, the tin tea-kettles and cooking paraphernalia at their belts, swayed into perilous positions as they rocked back and forth, striking the floor devoutly with their brows, rising only to throw back their long hair, cross themselves rapidly, and resume the “ground salutations,” until we were fairly dizzy at the sight. Some of them placed red, yellow, or green tapers—the first instance of such a taste in colors which we had observed—on the sharp points of the silver candelabra standing before the holy pictures in the *ikonostas*, already overcrowded. A monk was incessantly engaged in removing the tapers when only half consumed, to make way for the ever-swelling flood of fresh tapers. Another monk was as incessantly engaged in receiving the *prosfori*. A *prosfora* is leavened bread in the shape of a tiny double loaf, which is sold at the doors of churches, and bears on its upper surface certain symbolic signs, as a rule. The Communion is prepared from similar loaves by the priest, who removes certain portions with a spear-shaped knife, and places them in the wine of the chalice. The wine and bread are administered with a spoon to communicants. From the loaves bought at the door pieces are cut in memory of dead friends, whose souls are to be prayed for, or of living friends, whose health is prayed for by the priest at a certain point of the service, in

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accordance with the indications sent up to the altar with the loaves on slips of paper, such as “For the soul of Ivan Vasilievitch,” “For the health of Tatiana Pavlovna.” Thus is preserved the memory of early Christian times, when the Christians brought wine and oil and bread for their worship; and the best having been selected for sacred use, portions were taken from the remainder in memory of those who sent or brought them, after the rest was used to refresh the congregation during a pause in the all-night service between vespers and matins. After the service, in our modern times, the *prosfori* are given back to the owners, who cross themselves and eat the bread reverently on the spot or elsewhere, as blessed but not sacramental. At this monastery, the *prosfori* prepared for memorial use had a group of the local saints stamped on top, instead of the usual cross and characters. It is considered a delicate attention on the part of a person who has been on a pilgrimage to any of the holy places to bring back a *prosfora* for a friend. It is very good when sliced and eaten with tea, omitting the bottom crust, which may have been dated in ink by the pilgrim. Some of the peasants at this monastery church sent in to be blessed huge packages of *prosfori* tied up in gay cotton kerchiefs.

The service ended, and the chief treasure of the monastery, the miraculous image of the Assumption of the Virgin,—the Falling Asleep of the Virgin is the Russian name,—was let slowly down on its silken cords from above the Imperial Gate, where a twelve-fold silver lamp, with glass cups of different colors, has burned unquenched since 1812, in commemoration of Russia’s deliverance from “the twelve tribes,” as the French invasion is termed. The congregation pressed forward eagerly to salute the venerated image. Tradition asserts that it was brought from Constantinople to Kieff in the year 1073, with the Virgin’s special blessing for the monastery. By reason of age and the smoke from conflagrations in which the monastery has suffered, the image is so darkened that one is cast back upon one’s imagination and the copies for comprehension of this treasure’s outlines. What is perfectly comprehensible, however, is the galaxy of diamonds, brilliants, and gems thickly set in the golden garments which cover all but the hands and feet of the personages in the picture, and illuminate it with flashes of many-hued light. After a few minutes, the image was drawn up again to its place,—a most unusual position for a valued holy image, though certainly safe, and one not occupied, so far as I am aware, by any other in the country.

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It occurred to us that it might prove an interesting experiment to try the monastery inn for breakfast, and even to sojourn there for a day or two, and abandon the open sewers and other traces of advanced civilization in the town. Our way thither led past the free lodgings for poor pilgrims, which were swarming with the devout of both sexes, although it was not the busiest season for shrine-visiting. That comes in the spring, before the harvest, at all monasteries, and, in this particular monastery, on the feast of the Assumption, August 15 (Russian style), 27 (European style). But there was a sufficient contingent of the annual one million pilgrims present to give us a very fair idea of the reverence in which this, the chief of all Russian monasteries, is held, and of the throngs which it attracts. But, as usual in Russia, sight alone convinced us of their existence; they were chatting quietly, sitting and lying about with enviable calmness, or eating the sour black bread and boiled buckwheat groats provided by the monastery. I talked with several of them, and found them quite unconscious that they were not comfortably, even luxuriously, housed and fed.

The inn for travelers of means was a large, plain, airy building, with no lodgers, apparently. The monks seemed frightened at the sight of us. That was a novelty. But they escorted us over the house in procession. We looked at a very clean, very plain room, containing four beds. It appeared, from their explanations, that pilgrims have gregarious tastes, and that this was their nearest approach to a single room. I inquired the price. "According to your zeal," was the reply. How much more effective than "What you please" in luring the silver from lukewarm pockets! The good monks never found out how warm our zeal was, after all, for the reason that their table was never furnished with anything but fish and "fasting food," they said, though there was no fast in progress. The reason why, I could not discover; but we knew our own minds thoroughly on the subject of "fasting food," from mushroom soup, fish fried in sunflower oil, and coffee without milk to that most insipid of dessert dishes, *kisel*, made of potato flour, sweetened, and slightly soured with fruit juice. They told us that we might have meat sent out from town, if we wished; but as the town lay several versts distant, that did not seem a very practical way of coquetting with the Evil One under their roof. Accordingly, we withdrew; to their relief, I am sure. As we had already lived in a monastery inn, it had not occurred to us that there could be any impropriety in doing so, but that must have been the cause of their looks of alarm. I believe that one can remain for a fortnight at this inn without payment, unless conscience interferes; and people who had stayed there told me that meat had been served to them from the monastery kitchen; so that puzzle still remains a puzzle to me.

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We went to see the brethren dine in the refectory, an ancient, vaulted building of stone, near the cathedral. Under a white stone slab near the entrance lie the bodies of Kotchubey and Iskra, who were unjustly executed by Peter the Great for their loyal denunciation of Mazeppa's meditated treachery. Within, the walls of the antechamber were decorated with dizzy perspective views of Jerusalem, the saints, and pious elders of the monastery. At the end of the long dining-hall, beyond an *ikonostas*, was a church, as is customary in these refectories. Judging from the number of servitors whom we had met hurrying towards the cells with sets of porcelain dinner-trays, not many monks intended to join the common table, and it did not chance to be one of the four days in the year when the Metropolitan of Kieff and other dignitaries dine there in full vestments.

At last, a score of monks entered, chanted a prayer at a signal from a small bell, and seated themselves on benches affixed to the wall which ran round three sides of the room. The napkins on the tables which stood before the benches consisted of long towels, each of which lay across four or five of the pewter platters from which they ate, as the table was set in preparation. If it had been a festal day, there would have been several courses, with beer, mead, and even wine to wash them down. As it was, the monks ate their black bread and boiled buckwheat groats, served in huge dishes, with their wooden spoons, and drank *kvas*, brewed from sour black bread, at a signal from the bell, after the first dish only, as the rule requires. While they ate, a monk, stationed at a desk near by, read aloud the extracts from the Lives of the Saints appointed for the day. This was one of the "sights," but we found it curious and melancholy to see strong, healthy men turned into monks and content with that meagre fare. Frugality and dominion over the flesh are good, of course, but minds from west of the Atlantic Ocean never seem quite to get into sympathy with the monastic idea; and we always felt, when we met monks, as though they ought all to be off at work somewhere, —I will not say "earning money," for they do that as it is in such great monasteries as that of Kieff, but lightening the burden of the peasants, impossible as that is under present conditions, or making themselves of some commonplace, practical use in the world.

The strongest point of the Lavra, even equal to the ancient and venerated *ikona* of the Assumption in the great cathedral, is the catacombs, from which the convent takes its name.

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In the days of the early princes of Kieff, the heights now occupied by the Lavra were covered with a dense growth of birch forest, and entirely uninhabited. Later on, one of the hills was occupied by the village of Berostovo, and a palace was built adjoining the tiny ancient "Church of the Saviour in the Birch Forest," which I have already mentioned. It was the favorite residence of Prince-Saint Vladimir, and of his son, Prince Yaroslaff, after him. During the reign of the latter, early in the eleventh century, the priest of this little church, named Ilarion, excavated for himself a tiny cave, and there passed his time in devout meditation and solitary prayer. He abandoned his cave to become Metropolitan of Kieff. In the year 1051, the monk Antony, a native of the neighboring government of Tchernigoff, came to Kieff from Mount Athos, being dissatisfied with the life led in the then existing monasteries. After long wanderings over the hills of Kieff, he took possession of Ilarion's cave, and spent his days and nights in pious exercises. The fame of his devout life soon spread abroad, and attracted to him, for his blessing, not only the common people, but persons of distinction. Monks and worldlings flocked thither to join him in his life of prayer. Among the first of these to arrive was a youth of the neighborhood, named Fedosy. Antony hesitated, but at last accepted the enthusiastic recruit.

The dimensions of holy Antony's cave were gradually enlarged; new cells, and even a tiny church, were constructed near it. Then Antony, who disliked communal life, retreated to the height opposite, separated from his first residence by a deep ravine, and dug himself another cave, where no one interfered with him. This was the origin of the caves of Fedosy, known at the present day as the "far catacombs," and of the caves of Antony, called the "near catacombs." The number of the monks continued to increase, and they soon erected a small wooden church aboveground, in the name of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, as well as cells for those who could not be contained in the caverns. At the request of holy Antony, the prince gave the whole of the heights where the catacombs are situated to the brethren, and in 1062 a large new monastery, surrounded by a stockade, was erected on the spot where the Cathedral of the Assumption now stands. Thus was monastic life introduced into Russia.

The venerated monastery shared all the vicissitudes of the "Mother of all Russian Cities" in the wars of the Grand Princes and the incursions of external enemies, such as Poles and Tatars. But after each disaster it waxed greater and more flourishing. Restored, after a disastrous fire in 1718, by the zeal of Peter the Great and his successors, enriched by the gifts of all classes, the Lavra now consists of six monasteries,—like a university of colleges,—four situated within the inclosure, while two are at a distance of several versts, and

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serve as retreats and as places of burial for the brethren. The catacombs, abandoned as residences on the construction of the cells above ground, have not escaped disasters by caving in. Drains to carry off the percolating water, and stone arches to support the soil, have been constructed, and a flourishing orchard has been planted above them to aid in holding the soil together. Earthquakes in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries permanently closed many of them, and when the Tatars attacked the town, in the thirteenth century, the monks boarded up all the niches and filled in the entrances with earth. Some of these boards were removed about a hundred years ago; some are still in place. The original extent of the caves cannot now be determined.

The entrance to the near catacombs of St. Antony is through a long wooden gallery supported on stone posts, at a sharp slope, as they are situated twenty-four fathoms below the level of the cathedral, and twenty-two fathoms above the level of the Dnyepri.

A fat merchant, with glowing black eyes and flowing, crisp, black beard, his tall, wrinkled boots barely visible beneath his long, full-skirted coat of dark blue cloth, hooked closely across his breast, descended the gallery with us. Roused to curiosity, probably, by our foreign tongue, he inquired, on the chance of our understanding Russian, whence we came.

I had already arrived at the conclusion that the people at Kieff, especially the monks and any one who breathed the atmosphere within their walls, were of an enterprising, inquisitive disposition. My last encounter had been with the brother detailed, for his good looks and fascinating manners, to preside over the chief image shop of the monastery.

"Where do you come from?" he had opened fire, with his most bewitching glance.

"From the best country on earth."

"Is it Germany?"

The general idea among the untraveled classes in Russia is, that all of the earth which does not belong to their own Emperor belongs to Germany, just as *nyemetzky* means "German" or "foreign," indifferently.

"No; guess again," I said.

"France?"

"No; further away."

"England, then?"

“No.”

“Hungary?”

Evidently that man’s geography was somewhat mixed, so I told him.

“America!” he exclaimed, with great vivacity. “Yes, indeed, it is the best land of all. It is the richest!”

So that is the monastic as well as the secular standard of worth! This experience, repeated frequently and nearly word for word, had begun to weary me. Consequently I led the fat merchant a verbal chase, and baffled him until he capitulated with, “Excuse me. Take no offense, I beg, *sudarynya*. I only asked so by chance.” Then I told him with the same result.

This was not the last time, by many, that I was put through my national catechism in Kieff. Every Kievlyanin to whom I spoke quizzed me. Of course I was on a grand quizzing tour myself, but that was different, in some way.

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Over the entrance to these catacombs stands a church. The walls of the vestibule where my mother, the merchant, and I waited for a sufficient party to assemble, were covered with frescoes representing the passage of the soul through the various stages of purgatory. Beginning with the death scene (which greatly resembled the *ikona* of the Assumption in the cathedral) in the lower left-hand corner, the white-robed soul, escorted by two angels, passed through all the halting-places for the various sins, each represented by the appointed devil, duly labeled. But the artist's fancy had not been very fruitful on this fascinating theme. The devils were so exactly alike that the only moral one could draw was, that he might as well commit the biggest and most profitable sin on the list, and make something out of it in this life, as to confine himself to the petty peccadilloes which profit not here, and get well punished hereafter. The series ended with the presentation of the soul before the judgment seat, on the fortieth day after death. Round the corner, Lazarus reclining in Abraham's bosom and the rich man in the flames were conversing, their remarks crossing each other in mid-air, in a novel fashion.

When the guide was ready, each of us bought a taper, and the procession set out through the iron grating, down a narrow, winding stair, from which low, dark passages opened out at various angles. On each side of these narrow passages, along which we were led, reposed the "incorruptible" bodies of St. Antony and his comrades, in open coffins lacquered or covered with sheets of silver. The bodies seemed very small, and all of one size, and they were wrapped in hideous prints or plaid silks. At the head of each saint flickered a tiny shrine-lamp, before a holy picture (*ikona*) of the occupant of the coffin. It was a surprise to find the giant Ilya of Murom, who figures as the chief of the *bogatyri* (heroes) in the Russian epic songs, ensconced here among the saints, and no larger than they. Next to the silk-enveloped head of St. John the Great Sufferer, which still projects as in life, when he buried himself to the neck in the earth,—as though he were not sufficiently underground already,—in order to preserve his purity, the most gruesome sight which we beheld in those dim catacombs was a group of chrism-exuding skulls of unknown saints, under glass bells.

On emerging from this gloomy retreat, we postponed meditating upon the special pleasure which the Lord was supposed to have taken in seeing beings made to live aboveground turning into troglodytes, and set out for the Fedosy, or far catacombs, in the hope that they might assist us in solving that problem.

We chose the most difficult way, descending into the intervening ravine by innumerable steps to view the two sacred wells, only to have our raging thirst and our curiosity effectually quenched by the sight of a pilgrim thrusting his head, covered with long, matted hair, into one of them. The ascent of more innumerable steps brought us to the cradle of the monastery, Ilarion's caverns.

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In the antechamber we found a phenomenally stupid monk presiding over the sale of the indispensable tapers, and the offerings which the devout are expected to deposit, on emerging, as a memento of their visit. These offerings lay like mountains of copper before him. The guide had taken himself off somewhere, and the monk ordered us, and the five Russians who were also waiting, to go in alone and “call to the monk in the cave.” We flatly declined to take his word that there was any monk, or to venture into the dangerous labyrinth alone, and we demanded that he should accompany us.

“No guide—no candles, no coppers,” we said.

That seemed to him a valid argument. Loath to leave his money at the mercy of chance comers, he climbed up and closed the iron shutters of the grated window,—the cliff descended, sheer, one hundred and two feet to the Dnyepr at that point,—double-locked the great iron doors, and there we were in a bank vault, with all possible customers excluded. Luckily, the saints in these caverns, which differed very little from those in the former, were labeled in plain letters, since the monk was too dull-witted to understand the simplest questions from any of us. At intervals we were permitted a hasty glimpse of a cell, about seven feet square, furnished only with a stone bench, and a holy picture, with a shrine-lamp suspended before it. Ugh! There were several sets of chrism-dripping saintly skulls in these catacombs, also,—fifteen of the ghastly things in one group. I braced my stomach to the task, and scrutinized them all attentively; but not a single one of them winked or nodded at me in approval, as a nun from Kolomna, whom I had met in Moscow, asserted that they had at her. I really wished to see how an eyeless skull could manage a wink, and hoped I might be favored.

After traversing long distances of this subterranean maze, and peering into the “cradle of the monastery,” St. Antony’s cell, the procession came to a halt in a tiny church. There stood a monk, actually, though we might have wandered all day and come out on the banks of the Dnyepr without finding him, had we gone in without a guide. Beside him, denuded of its glass bell, stood one of the miraculous skulls. The first Russian approached, knelt, crossed himself devoutly, and received from the priest the sign of the cross on his brow, administered with a soft, small brush dipped in the oil from the skull. Then he kissed the priest’s hand, crossed himself again, and kissed the skull. When we beheld this, we modestly stood aside, and allowed our companions, the other four Russian men, to receive anointment in like manner, and pass on after the monk, who was in haste to return to his bank vault. As I approached the priest, he raised his brush.

“We are not Orthodox Christians, *batiushka*,”* I said. “But pray give us your blessing.”

* Little father.

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He smiled, and, dropping his brush, made the sign of the cross over us. I was perfectly willing to kiss his pretty, plump hand,—I had become very skillful at that sort of thing,—but I confess that I shrank from the obligatory salute to the skull, and from that special chrism. Nevertheless, I wished the Russians to think that I had gone through with the whole ceremony, if they should chance to look back. I felt sure that I could trust the priest to be liberal, but I was not so certain that our lay companions, who were petty traders and peasants, might not be sufficiently fanatical to construe our refusal into disrespect for their church, and resent it in some way.

Though we returned to the monastery more than once after that, we were never attracted to the catacombs again, not even to witness the mass at seven o'clock in the morning in that subterranean church. The beautiful services in the cathedral, the stately monks, the picturesque pilgrims, with their gentle manners, ingenuous questions, and simple tales of their journeys and beliefs, furnished us with abundant interest in the cheerful sunlight aboveground.

Next to the Catacombs Monastery, the other most famous and interesting sight of Kieff is the Cathedral of St. Sophia. Built on the highest point of the ancient city, with nine apses turned to the east, crowned by one large dome and fourteen smaller domes,—all gilded, some terminating in crosses, some in sunbursts,—surrounded by turf and trees within a white wall, with entrance under a lofty belfry, it produces an imposing but reposeful effect. The ancient walls, dating from the year 1020, are of red brick intermixed with stone, stuccoed and washed with white. It has undergone changes, external and internal, since that day, and its domes and spires are of the usual degenerate South Russian type, without a doubt of comparatively recent construction. So many of its windows have been blocked up by additions, and so cut up is its space by large frescoed pillars, into sixteen sections, that one steps from brilliant sunshine into deep twilight when he enters the cathedral. It is a sort of church which possesses in a high degree that indefinable charm of sacred atmosphere that tempts one to linger on and on indefinitely within its precincts. Not that it is so magnificent; many churches in the two capitals and elsewhere in Russia are far richer. It is simply one of those indescribable buildings which console one for disappointments in historical places, as a rule, by making one believe, through sensations unconsciously influenced, not through any effort of the reason, that ancient deeds and memories do, in truth, linger about their birthplace.

Ancient frescoes, discovered about forty years ago, some remaining in their original state, others touched up with more or less skill and knowledge, mingle harmoniously with those of more recent date. Very singular are the best preserved, representing hunting parties and banquets of the Grand Princes, and scenes from the earthly life of Christ. But they are on the staircase leading to the old-fashioned gallery, and do not disturb the devotional character of the decoration in the church itself.

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From the wall of the apse behind the chief of the ten altars gazes down the striking image of the Virgin, executed in ancient mosaic, with her hands raised in prayer, whom the people reverently call "The Indestructible Wall." This, with other mosaics and the frescoes on the staircase, dates from the eleventh century.

I stood among the pillars, a little removed from the principal aisle, one afternoon near sunset, listening to the melodious intoning of the priest, and the soft chanting of the small week-day choir at vespers, and wondering, for the thousandth time, why Protestants who wish to intone do not take lessons from those incomparable masters in the art, the Russian deacons, and wherein lies the secret of the Russian ecclesiastical music. That simple music, so perfectly fitted for church use, will bring the most callous into a devotional mood long before the end of the service. Rendered as it invariably is by male voices, with superb basses in place of the non-existent organ, it spoils one's taste forever for the elaborate, operatic church music of the West performed by choirs which are usually engaged in vocal steepleschases with the organ for the enhancement of the evil effects. My meditations were interrupted by the approach of a young man, who asked me to be his godmother! He explained that he was a Jew from Minsk, who had never studied "his own religion," and was now come to Kieff for the express purpose of getting himself baptized by the name of Vladimir, the tenth century prince and patron saint of the town. As he had no acquaintances in the place, he was in a strait for god-parents, who were indispensable.

"I cannot be your godmother," I answered. "I am neither *pravoslavnyaya* nor Russian. Cannot the priest find sponsors for you?"

"That is not the priest's place. His business is merely to baptize. But perhaps he might be persuaded to manage that also, if I had better clothes."

He wore a light print shirt, tolerably clean, belted outside his dark trousers, and his shoes and cap were respectable enough.

I recalled instances which I had heard from the best authority—a priest—of priests finding sponsors for Jews, and receiving medals or orders in reward for their conversion. I recalled an instance related to me by a Russian friend who had acted, at the priest's request, as godmother to a Jewess so fat that she stuck fast in the receptacle used for the baptism by immersion; and I questioned the man a little. He said that he had a sister living in New York, and gave me her name and address in a manner which convinced me that he knew what he was saying. He had no complaint to make of his treatment by either Russians or Jews; and when I asked him why he did not join his sister in America, he replied,

"Why should I? I am well enough off here."

Perhaps I ought to state that he was a plumber by trade. On the other hand, justice demands the explanation that Russian plumbing in general is not of a very complicated character, and in Minsk it must be of a very simple kind, I think.

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He intended to return to Minsk as soon as he was baptized. How he expected to attend the Russian Church in Minsk when he had found it inexpedient to be baptized there was one of the points which he omitted to explain.

I was at last obliged to bid him a decisive “good-day,” and leave the church. He followed, and passed me in the garden, his cap cocked jauntily over his tight bronze curls, and his hips swaying from side to side in harmony. Under the long arch of the belfry-tower gate hung a picture, adapted to use as an *ikona*, which set forth how a mother had accidentally dropped her baby overboard from a boat on the Dnyepyr, and coming, disconsolate, to pray before the image of St. Nicholas, the patron of travelers, she had found her child lying there safe and sound; whence this holy picture is known by the name of St. Nicholas the Wet.

Before this *ikona* my Jew pulled off his cap, and crossed himself rapidly and repeatedly, watching me out of the corner of his eye, meanwhile, to see how his piety impressed me. It produced no particular effect upon me, except to make me engage a smart-looking cabby to take me to my hotel, close by, by a roundabout route. Whether this Jew returned to Minsk as Vladimir or as Isaac I do not know; but I made a point of mentioning the incident to several Russian friends, including a priest, and learned, to my surprise, that, though I was not a member of a Russian Church, I could legally have stood godmother to a man, though I could not have done so to a woman; and that a godmother could have been dispensed with. Men who are not members of the Russian Church can, in like manner, stand as godfathers to women, but not to men. Moreover, every one seemed to doubt the probability of a Jew quitting his own religion in earnest, and they thought that his object had been to obtain from me a suit of clothes, practical gifts to the godchild being the custom in such cases. I had been too dull to take the hint!

A few months later, a St. Petersburg newspaper related a notorious instance of a Jew who had been sufficiently clever to get himself baptized a number of times, securing on each occasion wealthy and generous sponsors. Why the man from Minsk should have selected me, in my plain serge traveling gown, I cannot tell, unless it was because he saw that I did not wear the garb of the Russian merchant class, or look like them, and observation or report had taught him that the aristocratic classes above the merchants are most susceptible to the pleasure of patronizing converts; though to do them justice, Russians make no attempt at converting people to their church. I have been assured by a Russian Jew that his co-religionists never do, really, change their faith. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how they can even be supposed to do so, in the face of their strong traditions, in which they are so thoroughly drilled. Therefore, if Russians stand sponsors to Jews, while expressing skepticism as to conversion in general, they cannot complain if unscrupulous persons take advantage of their inconsistency. I should probably have refused to act as godmother, even had I known that I was legally entitled to do so.

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Our searches in the lower town, Podol, for rugs like those in the monastery resulted in nothing but amusement. Those rugs had been made in the old days of serfdom, on private estates, and are not to be bought.

By dint of loitering about in the churches, monasteries, catacombs, markets, listening to that Little Russian dialect which is so sweet on the lips of the natives, though it looks so uncouth when one sees their ballads in print, and by gazing out over the ever beautiful river and steppe, I came at last to pardon Kieff for its progress. I got my historical and mythological bearings. I felt the spirit of the Epic Songs stealing over me. I settled in my own mind the site of Fair-Sun Prince Vladimir's palace of white stone, the scene of great feasts, where he and his mighty heroes quaffed the green wine by the bucketful, and made their great brags, which resulted so tragically or so ludicrously. I was sure I recognized the church where Diuk Stepanovitch "did not so much pray as gaze about," and indulged in mental comments upon clothes and manners at the Easter mass, after a fashion which is not yet obsolete. I imagined that I descried in the blue dusk of the distant steppe Ilya of Murom approaching on his good steed Cloudfall, armed with a damp oak uprooted from Damp Mother Earth, and dragging at his saddle-bow fierce, hissing Nightingale the Robber, with one eye still fixed on Kieff, one on Tchernigoff, after his special and puzzling habit, and whom Little Russian tradition declares was chopped up into poppy seeds, whence spring the sweet-voiced nightingales of the present day.

The "atmosphere" of the cradle of the Epic Songs and of the cradle of Pravoslavnyaya Russia laid its spell upon me on those heights, and even the sight of the cobweb suspension bridge in all its modernness did not disturb me, since with it is connected one of the most charming modern traditions, a classic in the language, which only a perfect artist could have planned and executed.

The thermometer stood at 120 degrees Fahrenheit when we took our last look at Kieff, the Holy City.

X.

A JOURNEY ON THE VOLGA.

I.

We had seen the Russian haying on the estate of Count Tolstoy. We were to be initiated into the remaining processes of the agricultural season in that famous "black earth zone" which has been the granary of Europe from time immemorial, but which is also, alas! periodically the seat of dire famine.



It was July when we reached Nizhni Novgorod, on our way to an estate on the Volga, in this “black earth” grainfield, vast as the whole of France; but the flag of opening would not be run up for some time to come. The Fair quarter of the town was still in its state of ten months’ hibernation, under padlock and key, and the normal town, effective as it was, with its white Kremlin crowning the turfed and terraced heights, possessed few charms to detain us. We embarked for Kazan.

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If Kazan is an article in the creed of all Russians, whether they have ever seen it or not, Matushka Volga (dear Mother Volga) is a complete system of faith. Certainly her services in building up and binding together the empire merit it, though the section thus usually referred to comprises only the stretch between Nizhni Novgorod and Astrakhan, despite its historical and commercial importance above the former town.

But Kazan! A stay there of a day and a half served to dispel our illusions. We were deceived in our expectations as to the once mighty capital of the imperial Tatar khans. The recommendations of our Russian friends, the glamour of history which had bewitched us, the hope of the Western for something Oriental,—all these elements had combined to raise our expectations in a way against which our sober senses and previous experience should have warned us. It seemed to us merely a flourishing and animated Russian provincial town, whose Kremlin was eclipsed by that of Moscow, and whose university had instructed, but not graduated, Count Tolstoy, the novelist. The bazaar under arcades, the popular market in the open square, the public garden, the shops,—all were but a repetition of similar features in other towns, somewhat magnified to the proportions befitting the dignity of the home port of the Ural Mountains and Siberia.

The Tatar quarter alone seemed to possess the requisite mystery and “local color.” Here whole streets of tiny shops, ablaze with rainbow-hued leather goods, were presided over by taciturn, olive-skinned brothers of the Turks, who appeared almost handsome when seen thus in masses, with opportunities for comparison. Hitherto we had thought of the Tatars only as the old-clothes dealers, peddlers, horse-butchers, and waiters of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Here the dignity of the prosperous merchants, gravely recommending their really well-dressed, well-sewed leather wares, bespoke our admiration.

The Tatar women, less easily seen, glided along the uneven pavements now and then, smoothly, but still in a manner to permit a glimpse of short, square feet incased in boots flowered with gay hues upon a green or rose-colored ground, and reaching to the knee. They might have been houris of beauty, but it was difficult to classify them, veiled as they were, and screened as to head and shoulders by striped green *kaftans* of silk, whose long sleeves depended from the region of their ears, and whose collar rested on the brow. What we could discern was that their black eyes wandered like the eyes of unveiled women, and that they were coquettishly conscious of our glances, though we were of their own sex.

We found nothing especially striking among the churches, unless one might reckon the Tatar mosques in the list; and, casting a last glance at Sumbeka’s curious and graceful tower, we hired a cabman to take us to the river, seven versts away.

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We turned our backs upon Kazan without regret, in the fervid heat of that midsummer morning. We did not shake its dust from our feet. When dust is ankle-deep that is not very feasible. It rose in clouds, as we met the long lines of Tatar carters, transporting flour and other merchandise to and from the wharves across the “dam” which connects the town, in summer low water, with Mother Volga. In spring floods Matushka Volga threatens to wash away the very walls of the Kremlin, and our present path is under water.

Fate had favored us with a clever cabman. His shaggy little horse was as dusty in hue as his own coat,—a most unusual color for coat of either Russian horse or *izvostchik*. The man's *armyak* was bursting at every seam, not with plenty, but, since extremes meet, with hard times, which are the chronic complaint of Kazan, so he affirmed. He was gentle and sympathetic, like most Russian cabmen, and he beguiled our long drive with shrewd comments on the Russian and Tatar inhabitants and their respective qualities.

“The Tatars are good people,” he said; “very clean,—cleaner than Russians; very quiet and peaceable citizens. There was a time when they were not quiet. That was ten years ago, during the war with Turkey. They were disturbed. The Russians said that it was a holy war; the Tatars said so, too, and wished to fight for their brethren of the Moslem faith. But the governor was not a man to take fright at that. He summoned the chief men among them before him. ‘See here,’ says he. ‘With me you can be peaceable with better conscience. If you permit your people to be turbulent, I will pave the dam with the heads of Tatars. The dam is long. Allah is my witness. Enough. Go!’ And it came to nothing, of course. No; it was only a threat, though they knew that he was a strong man in rule. Why should he wish to do that, really, even if they were not Orthodox? A man is born with his religion as with his skin. The Orthodox live at peace with the Tatars. And the Tatars are superior to the Russians in this, also, that they all stick by each other; whereas a Russian, *Hospodi pomilui!* [Lord have mercy] thinks of himself alone, which is a disadvantage,” said my humble philosopher.

We found that we had underrated the power of our man's little horse, and had arrived at the river an hour and a half before the steamer was appointed to sail. It should be there lading, however, and we decided to go directly on board and wait in comfort. We gave patient Vanka liberal “tea-money.” Hard times were evidently no fiction so far as he was concerned, and we asked if he meant to spend it on *vodka*, which elicited fervent asseverations of teetotalism, as he thrust his buckskin pouch into his breast.

Descending in the deep dust, with a sense of gratitude that it was not mixed with rain, we ran the gauntlet of the assorted peddlers stationed on both sides of the long descent with stocks of food, soap, white felt boots, gay sashes, coarse leather slippers too large for human wear, and other goods, and reached the covered wharf. The steamer was not there, but we took it calmly, and asked no questions—for a space.

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We whiled away the time by chaffering with the persistent Tatar venders for things which we did not want, and came into amazed possession of some of them. This was a tribute to our powers of bargaining which had rarely been paid even when we had been in earnest. We contrived to avoid the bars of yellow “egg soap” by inquiring for one of the marvels of Kazan,—soap made from mare’s milk. An amused apothecary had already assured us that it was a product of the too fertile brain of Baedeker, not of the local soap factories. May Baedeker himself, some day, reap a similar harvest of mirth and astonishment from the sedate Tatars, who can put mare’s milk to much better use as a beverage!

In the hope of obtaining a conversation-lesson in Tatar, we bought a Russo-Tatar grammar, warranted to deliver over all the secrets of that gracefully curved language in the usual scant array of pages. But the peddler immediately professed as profound ignorance of Tatar as he had of Russian a few moments before, when requested to abate his exorbitant demands for the pamphlet.

By the time we had exhausted these resources one o’clock had arrived. The steamer had not. The office clerk replied to all inquiries with the languid national “*saytchas*” which the dictionary defines as meaning “immediately,” but which experience proves to signify, “Be easy; any time this side of eternity,—if perfectly convenient!” Under the pressure of increasingly vivacious attacks, prompted by hunger, he finally condescended to explain that the big mail steamer, finding too little water in the channel, had “sat down on a sand-bank,” and that two other steamers were trying to pull her off. “She might be along at three o’clock, or later,—or some time.” It began to be apparent to us why the success of the Fair depends, in great measure, on the amount of water in the river.

Our first meal of bread and tea had been eaten at seven o’clock, and we had counted upon breakfasting on the steamer, where some of the best public cooking in the country, especially in the matter of fish, is to be found. It was now two o’clock. The town was distant. The memory of the ducks, the size of a plover, and other things in proportion, in which our strenuous efforts had there resulted, did not tempt us to return. Russians have a way of slaying chickens and other poultry almost in the shell, to serve as game.

Accordingly, we organized a search expedition among the peddlers, and in the colony of rainbow-hued shops planted in a long street across the heads of the wharves, and filled chiefly with Tatars and coarse Tatar wares. For the equivalent of seventeen cents we secured a quart of rich cream, half a dozen hard-boiled eggs, a couple of pounds of fine raspberries, and a large fresh wheaten roll. These we ate in courses, as we perched on soap-boxes and other unconventional seats, surrounded by smoked fish, casks of salted cucumbers, festoons of dried mushrooms, “cartwheels” of sour black bread, and other favorite edibles, in the open-fronted booths. A delicious banquet it was,—one of those which recur to the memory unbidden when more elaborate meals have been forgotten.

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Returning to the wharf with a fresh stock of patience, we watched the river traffic and steamers of rival lines, which had avoided sand-banks, as they took in their fuel supplies of refuse petroleum from the scows anchored in mid-stream, and proceeded on their voyage to Astrakhan. Some wheelbarrow steamers, bearing familiar names, "Niagara" and the like, pirouetted about in awkward and apparently aimless fashion.

Passengers who seemed to be better informed than we as to the ways of steamers began to make their appearance. A handsome officer deposited his red-cotton-covered traveling-pillow and luggage on the dock and strolled off, certain that no one would unlock his trunk or make way with his goods. The trunk, not unusual in style, consisted of a red-and-white tea-cloth, whose knotted corners did not wholly repress the exuberance of linen and other effects through the bulging edges.

A young Tatar, endowed with india-rubber capabilities in the way of attitudes, and with a volubility surely unrivaled in all taciturn Kazan, chatted interminably with a young Russian woman, evidently the wife of a petty shopkeeper. They bore the intense heat with equal equanimity, but their equanimity was clad in oddly contrasting attire. The woman looked cool and indifferent buttoned up in a long wadded pelisse, with a hot cotton kerchief tied close over ears, under chin, and tucked in at the neck. The Tatar squatted on his haunches, folded in three nearly equal parts. A spirally ribbed flat fez of dark blue velvet, topped with a black silk tassel, adorned his cleanly shaven head. His shirt, of the coarsest linen, was artistically embroidered in black, yellow, and red silks and green linen thread in Turanian designs, and ornamented with stripes and diamonds of scarlet cotton bestowed unevenly in unexpected places. It lay open on his dusky breast, and fell unconfined over full trousers of home-made dark blue linen striped with red, like the gussets under the arms of his white shirt. The trousers were tucked into high boots, slightly wrinkled at the instep, with an inset of pebbled horsehide, frosted green in hue, at the heels. This green leather was a part of their religion, the Tatars told me, but what part they would not reveal. As the soles were soft, like socks, he wore over his boots a pair of stiff leather slippers, which could be easily discarded on entering the mosque, in compliance with the Moslem law requiring the removal of foot-gear.

Several peasants stood about silently, patiently, wrapped in their sheepskin coats. Apparently they found this easier than carrying them, and they were ready to encounter the chill night air in the open wooden bunks of the third-class, or on the floor of the fourth-class cabin. The soiled yellow leather was hooked close across their breasts, as in winter. An occasional movement displayed the woolly interior of the *tulup's* short, full ballet skirt attached to the tight-fitting body. The

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peasants who thus tranquilly endured the heat of fur on a midsummer noon would, did circumstances require it, bear the piercing cold of winter with equal calmness clad in cotton shirts, or freeze to death on sentry duty without a murmur. They were probably on their way to find work during the harvest and earn a few kopeks, and very likely would return to their struggling families as poor as they went. As we watched this imperturbable crowd, we became infected with their spirit of unconcern, and entered into sympathy with the national *saytchas*—a case of atmospheric influence.

At last the steamer arrived, none the worse for its encounter with the bar. Usually, the mail steamers halt three hours—half-merchandise steamers four hours—at Kazan and other important towns on the Volga, affording hasty travelers an opportunity to make a swift survey in a drosky; but on this occasion one hour was made to suffice, and at last we were really off on our way to the estate down the river where we were to pay our long-promised visit.

We were still at a reach of the river where the big steamer might sit down on another reef, and the men were kept on guard at the bow, with hardly an intermission, gauging the depth of the water with their striped poles, to guide the helmsman by their monotonous calls: “*Vosim!*” “*Schest-s-polovino-o-o-iu!*” “*Sim!*” (Eight! Six and a half! Seven!) They had a little peculiarity of pronunciation which was very pleasing. And we soon discovered that into shallower water than five and a half quarters we might not venture.

The river was extremely animated above the mouth of the Kama, the great waterway from the mines and forests of the Ural and Siberia. Now and then, the men on a float heavily laden with iron bars, which was being towed to the Fair at Nizhni Novgorod, would shout a request that we would slacken speed, lest they be swamped with our swell. Huge rafts of fine timber were abundant, many with small chapel-like structures on them, which were not chapels, however. Cattle steamers passed, the unconfined beasts staring placidly over the low guards of the three decks, and uttering no sound. We had already learned that the animals are as quiet as the people, in Russia, the Great Silent Land. Very brief were our halts at the small landings. The villagers, who had come down with baskets of fresh rolls and berries and bottles of cream, to supply hungry passengers whose means or inclination prevented their eating the steamer food, had but scant opportunity to dispose of their perishable wares.

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As the evening breeze freshened, the perfume of the hayfields was wafted from the distant shores in almost overpowering force. The high right bank, called the Hills, and the low left shore, known as the Forests, sank into half-transparent vagueness, which veiled the gray log-built villages with their tiny windows, and threw into relief against the evening sky only the green roofs and blue domes of the churches, surmounted by golden crosses, which gleamed last of all in the vanishing rays of sunset. A boatload of peasants rowing close in shore; a red-shirted solitary figure straying along the water's edge; tiny sea-gulls darting and dipping in the waves around the steamer; a vista up some wide-mouthed affluent; and a great peaceful stillness brooding over all,—such were the happenings, too small for incidents, which accorded perfectly with the character of the Volga. For the Volga cannot be compared with the Rhine or the Hudson in castles or scenery. It has, instead, a grand, placid charm of its own, imperial, indefinable, and sweet. One yields to it, and subscribes to the Russian faith in the grand river.

No one seemed to know how much of the lost time would be made up. Were it spring, when Mother Volga runs from fifty to a hundred and fifty miles wide, taking the adjoining country into her broad embrace, and steamers steer a bee-line course to their landings, the officers might have been able to say at what hour we should reach our destination. As it was, they merely reiterated the characteristic "*Ne znaem*" (We don't know), which possesses plural powers of irritation when uttered in the conventional half-drawl. Perhaps they really did not know. Owing to a recent decree in the imperial navy, officers who have served a certain number of years without having accomplished a stipulated amount of sea service are retired. Since the Russian war vessels are not many, while the Naval Academy continues to turn out a large batch of young officers every year, the opportunities for effecting the requisite sea service are limited. The officers who are retired, in consequence, seek positions on the Volga steamers, which are sometimes commanded by a rear-admiral, in the imperial uniform, which he is allowed to retain, in addition to receiving a grade. But if one chances upon them during their first season on the river, their information is not equal to their fine appearance, since Mother Volga must be studied in her caprices, and navigation is open only, on the average, between the 12th of April and the 24th of November. Useless to interrogate the old river dogs among the subordinates. The "We don't know" is even more inveterate with them, and it is reinforced with the just comment, "We are not the masters."

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Knowing nothing, in the general uncertainty, except that we must land some time during the night, we were afraid to make ourselves comfortable even to the extent of unpacking sheets to cool off the velvet divans, which filled two sides of our luxurious cabin. When we unbolted the movable panels from the slatted door and front wall, to establish a draft of fresh air from the window, a counter-draft was set up of electric lights, supper clatter, cigarette smoke, and chatter, renewed at every landing with the fresh arrivals. We resolved to avoid these elegant mail steamers in the future, and patronize the half-merchandise boats of the same line, which are not much slower, and possess the advantage of staterooms opening on a corridor, not on the saloon, and are fitted with skylights, so that one can have fresh air and quiet sleep.

At four o'clock in the morning we landed. The local policeman, whose duty it is to meet steamers, gazed at us with interest. The secret of his meditations we learned later. He thought of offering us his services. "They looked like strangers, but talked Russian," he said. The combination was too much for him, and, seeing that we were progressing well in our bargain for a conveyance, he withdrew, and probably solved the riddle with the aid of the postboy.

The estate for which we were bound lay thirty-five versts distant; but fearing that we might reach it too early if we were to start at once, I ordered an equipage for six o'clock. I was under the impression that the man from the posting-house had settled it for us that we required a pair of horses, attached to whatever he thought fit, and that I had accepted his dictation. The next thing to do, evidently, was to adopt the Russian stop-gap of tea.

The wharfinger, who occupied a tiny tenement on one end of the dock, supplied us with a bubbling *samovar*, sugar, and china, since we were not traveling in strictly Russian style, with a fragile-nosed teapot and glasses. We got out our tea, steeped and sipped it, nibbling at a bit of bread, in that indifferent manner which one unconsciously acquires in Russia. It is only by such experience that one comes to understand the full—or rather scanty—significance of that puzzling and oft-recurring phrase in Russian novels, "drinking tea."

As we were thus occupied in one of the cells, furnished with a table and two hard stuffed benches, to accommodate waiting passengers, our postboy thrust his head in at the door and began the subject of the carriage all over again. I repeated my orders. He said, "*Kharasho*" (Good), and disappeared. We dallied over our tea. We watched the wharfinger's boys trying to drown themselves in a cranky boat, like the young male animals of all lands; we listened to their shrill little songs; we counted the ducks, gazed at the peasants assembled on the brow of the steep hill above us, on which the town was situated, and speculated about the immediate future, until the time fixed and three quarters of an hour more had elapsed. The wharfinger's reply to my impatient questions was an unvarying apathetic "We don't know," and, spurred to action by this, I set out to find the posting-house.

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It was not far away, but my repeated and vigorous knocks upon the door of the *izba* (cottage), ornamented with the imperial eagle and the striped pole, received no response. I pushed open the big gate of the courtyard alongside, and entered. Half the court was roofed over with thatch. In the far corner, divorced wagon bodies, running-gear, and harnesses lay heaped on the earth. A horse, which was hitched to something unsubstantial among those fragments, came forward to welcome me. A short row of wagon members which had escaped divorce, and were united in wheeling order, stood along the high board fence. In one of them, a rough wooden cart, shaped somewhat like a barrel sawed in two lengthwise, pillowed on straw, but with his legs hanging down in an uncomfortable attitude, lay my faithless postboy (he was about forty years of age) fast asleep. The neighboring vehicle, which I divined to be the one intended for us, was in possession of chickens. A new-laid egg bore witness to their wakefulness and industry.

While I was engaged in an endeavor to rouse my should-be coachman, by tugging at his sleeve and pushing his boots in the most painful manner I could devise, a good-looking peasant woman made her tardy appearance at the side door of the adjoining *izba*, and seemed to enjoy the situation in an impartial, impersonal way. The horse thrust his muzzle gently into his master's face and roused him for me, and, in return, was driven away.

I demanded an explanation. Extracted by bits in conversational spirals, it proved to be that he had decided that the carriage needed three horses, which he had known all along; and, chiefly, that he had desired to sleep upon a little scheme for exploiting the strangers. How long he had intended to pursue his slumberous meditations it is impossible to say.

He dragged me through all the mazes of that bargain once more. Evidently, bargaining was of even stricter etiquette than my extensive previous acquaintance had led me to suspect; and I had committed the capital mistake of not complying with this ancestral custom in the beginning. I agreed to three horses, and stipulated, on my side, that fresh straw should replace the chickens' nest, and that we should set out at once,—not *saytchas* but sooner, "this very minute."

I turned to go. A fresh difficulty arose. He would not go unless I would pay for three relays. He brought out the government regulations and amendments,—all that had been issued during the century, I should think. He stood over me while I read them, and convinced myself that his "*Yay Bogu*" (God is my witness) was accurately placed. The price of relays was, in reality, fixed by law; but though over-affirmation had now aroused my suspicions, in my ignorance of the situation I could not espy the loophole of trickery in which I was to be noosed, and I agreed once more. More quibbling. He would not stir unless he were allowed to drive the same horses the whole distance, though paid for three relays, because all the horses would be away harvesting, and so forth and so

on. Goaded to assert myself in some manner, to put an end to these interminable haggings, I asserted what I did not know.

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"Prince X. never pays for these relays," I declared boldly.

"Oh, no, he does n't," replied the man, with cheerful frankness. "But you must, or I'll not go."

That settled it; I capitulated once more.

We had omitted to telegraph to our friends, partly in order to save them the trouble of sending a carriage, partly because we were thirsting for "experiences." It began to look as though our thirst was to be quenched in some degree, since we were in this man's power as to a vehicle, and it might be true that we should not be able to obtain any other in the town, or any horses in the villages, if indeed there were any villages. Fortified by another volley of "*Yay Bogu*" of triumphant fervor, we survived a second wait. At last, near nine o'clock, we were able to pack ourselves and our luggage.

The body of our *tarantas*, made, for the sake of lightness, of woven elm withes, and varnished dark brown, was shaped not unlike a baby carriage. Such a wagon body costs about eight dollars in Kazan, where great numbers of them are made. It was set upon stout, unpainted running-gear, guiltless of springs, in cat's-cradle fashion. The step was a slender iron stirrup, which revolved in its ring with tantalizing ease. It was called a *pletuschka*, and the process of entering it resembled vaulting on horseback.

Our larger luggage was tied on behind with ropes, in precarious fashion. The rest we took inside and deposited at our feet. As there was no seat, we flattened ourselves out on the clean hay, and practiced Delsartean attitudes of languor. Our three horses were harnessed abreast. The reins were made in part of rope; so were the traces. Our *yamtschik* had donned his regulation coat over his red shirt, and sat unblenchingly through the heat. All preliminaries seemed to be settled at last. I breathed a sigh of relief, as we halted at the posting-house to pay our dues in advance, and I received several pounds of copper coin in change, presumably that I might pay the non-existent relays.

The *troika* set off with spirit, and we flattered ourselves that we should not be long on the road. This being a county town, there were some stone official buildings in addition to the cathedral, of which we caught a glimpse in the distance. But our road lay through a suburb of log cabins, through a large gate in the wattled town fence, and out upon the plain.

For nearly five hours we drove through birch forests, over rolling downs, through a boundless ocean of golden rye, diversified by small patches of buckwheat, oats, millet, and wheat. But wheat thrives better in the adjoining government, and many peasants, we are told, run away from pressing work and good wages at hand to harvest where they will get white bread to eat, and return penniless.

Here and there, the small, weather-beaten image of some saint, its face often indistinguishable through stress of storms, and shielded by a rough triangular penthouse, was elevated upon a pole, indicating the spot where prayers are said for the success of the harvest. Corn-flowers, larkspur, convolvulus, and many other flowers grew profusely enough among the grain to come under the head of weeds.

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The transparent air allowed us vast vistas of distant blue hills and nearer green valleys, in which nestled villages under caps of thatch, encircled by red-brown fences cleverly wattled of long boughs. In one hollow we passed through a village of the Tchuvashi, a Turkish or Finnish tribe, which was stranded all along the middle Volga in unrecorded antiquity, during some of the race migrations from the teeming plateaux of Asia. The village seemed deserted. Only a few small children and grannies had been left at home by the harvesters, and they gazed curiously at us, aroused to interest by the jingling harness with its metal disks, and the bells clanging merrily from the apex of the wooden arch which rose above the neck of our middle horse.

The grain closed in upon us. We plucked some ears as we passed, and found them ripe and well filled. The plain seemed as trackless as a forest, and our postboy suspected, from time to time, that he had lost his way among the narrow roads. A few peasant men whom we encountered at close quarters took off their hats, but without servility, and we greeted them with the customary good wishes for a plentiful harvest, "*Bog v pomozh*" (God help), or with a bow. The peasant women whom we met rarely took other notice of us than to stare, and still more rarely did they salute first. They gazed with instinctive distrust, as women of higher rank are wont to do at a stranger of their own sex.

Although the grain was planted in what seemed to be a single vast field, belonging to one estate, it was in reality the property of many different peasants, as well as of some proprietors. Each peasant had marked his plot with a cipher furrow when he plowed, and the outlines had been preserved by the growing grain. The rich black soil of the fallow land, and strips of turf separating sections, relieved the monotony of this waving sea of gold.

The heat was intense. In our prone position, we found it extremely fatiguing to hold umbrellas. We had recourse, therefore, to the device practiced by the mountaineers of the Caucasus, who, in common with the Spaniards, believe that what will keep out cold will also keep out heat. We donned our heavy wadded pelisses. The experiment was a success. We arrived cool and tranquil, in the fierce heat, at the estate of our friends, and were greeted with fiery reproaches for not having allowed them to send one of their fifteen or twenty carriages for us. But we did not repent, since our conduct had secured for us that novel ride and a touch of our coveted "experience," in spite of the strain of our thirty hours' vigil and the jolts of the springless vehicle.

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Then we discovered the exact extent of our *yamtschik's* trick. He had let us off on fairly easy terms, getting not quite half more than his due. By the regular route, we might really have had three relays and made better time, had we been permitted. By the short cut which our wily friend had selected, but one change was possible. This left the price of two changes to be credited to his financial ability (in addition to the tea-money of gratitude, which came in at the end, all the same), and the price of the one which he would not make. And, as I was so thoughtless as not to hire him to carry away those pounds of "relay" copper, I continued to be burdened with it until I contrived to expend it on peasant manufactures. The postboy bore the reputation of being a very honest fellow, I learned,—something after the pattern of the charming cabby who drove us to Count Tolstoy's estate.

The village, like most Russian villages, was situated on a small river, in a valley. It consisted of two streets: one running parallel with the river, the other at right angles to it, on the opposite bank. The connecting bridge had several large holes in it, on the day of our arrival, which were mended, a few days later, with layers of straw and manure mixed with earth. We continued, during the whole period of our stay, to cross the bridge, instead of going round it, as we had been advised to do with Russian bridges, by Russians, in the certainty that, if we came near drowning through its fault, it would surely furnish us with an abundance of straws to catch at.

In one corner of the settlement, a petty bourgeois,—there is no other word to define him,—the son of a former serf, and himself born a serf, had made a mill-pond and erected cloth-mills. His "European" clothes (long trousers, sack coat, Derby hat) suited him as ill as his wife's gaudy silk gown, and Sunday bonnet in place of the kerchief usual with the lower classes, suited her face and bearing. He was a quiet, unassuming man, but he was making over for himself a handsome house, formerly the residence of a noble. Probably the money wherewith he had set up in business had been wrung out of his fellow-peasants in the profession of a *kulak*, or "fist," as the people expressively term peasant usurers.

On the other side of the river stood the church, white-walled, green-roofed, with golden cross, like the average country church, with some weather stains, and here and there a paling missing from the fence. Near at hand was the new schoolhouse, with accommodations for the master, recently erected by our host. Beyond this began the inclosure surrounding the manor house, and including the cottages of the coachmen and the steward with their hemp and garden plots, the stables and carriage houses, the rickyard with its steam threshing machine and driers, and a vast abandoned garden, as well as the gardens in use. The large brick mansion, with projecting wings, had its drawing-rooms at the

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back, where a spacious veranda opened upon a flower-bordered lawn, terminating in shady acacia walks, and a grove which screened from sight the peasant cottages on the opposite bank of the river. A hedge concealed the vegetable garden, where the village urchins were in the habit of pilfering their beloved cucumbers with perfect impunity, since a wholesome spanking, even though administered by the Elder of the Commune, might result in the spanker's exile to Siberia. Another instance of the manner in which the peasants are protected by the law, in their wrongs as well as their rights, may be illustrated by the case of a load of hay belonging to the owner of the estate, which, entering the village in goodly proportions, is reduced to a few petty armfuls by the time it reaches the barn, because of the handfuls snatched in passing by every man, woman, and child in the place.

No sound of the village reached us in our retreat except the choral songs of the maidens on holiday evenings. We tempted them to the lawn one night, and overcame their bashfulness by money for nuts and apples. The airs which they sang were charming, but their voices were undeniably shrill and nasal, and not always in harmony. We found them as reluctant to dance as had been the peasants at Count Tolstoy's village. Here we established ourselves for the harvest-tide.

II.

Our life at Prince X.'s estate on the Volga flowed on in a semi-monotonous, wholly delightful state of lotus-eating idleness, though it assuredly was not a case which came under the witty description once launched by Turgeneff broadside at his countrymen: "The Russian country proprietor comes to revel and simmer in his ennui like a mushroom frying in sour cream." Ennui shunned that happy valley. We passed the hot mornings at work on the veranda or in the well-filled library, varying them by drives to neighboring estates and villages, or by trips to the fields to watch the progress of the harvest, now in full swing. Such a visit we paid when all the able-bodied men and women in the village were ranged across the landscape in interminable lines, armed with their reaping-hooks, and forming a brilliant picture in contrast with the yellow grain, in their blue and scarlet raiment. They were fulfilling the contract which bound them to three days' labor for their landlord, in return for the pasturage furnished by him for their cattle. A gay kerchief and a single clinging garment, generally made of red and blue in equal portions, constituted the costume of the women. The scanty garments were faded and worn, for harvesting is terribly hard work, and they cannot use their good clothes, as at the haying, which is mere sport in comparison. Most of the men had their heads protected only by their long hair, whose sunburnt outer layer fell over their faces, as they stooped and reaped the grain artistically close to the ground. Their shirts were of faded red cotton; their full trousers, of blue-and-red-striped home-made linen, were confined by a strip of coarse crash swathed around the feet and legs to the knee, and

cross-gartered with ropes. The feet of men and women alike were shod with low shoes of plaited linden bark over these cloths.

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They smiled indulgently at our attempts to reap and make girdles for the sheaves,—the sickles seemed to grow dull and back-handed at our touch,—chatting with the dignified ease which characterizes the Russian peasant. The small children had been left behind in the village, in charge of the grandams and the women unfit for field labor. Baby had been brought to the scene of action, and installed in luxury. The cradle, a cloth distended by poles, like that of Peter the Great, which is preserved in the museum of the Kremlin at Moscow, was suspended from the upturned shafts of a *telyega* by a stiff spiral spring of iron, similar to the springs used on bird-cages. The curtain was made of the mother's spare gown, her *sarafan*. Baby's milk-bottle consisted of a cow's horn, over the tip of which a cow's teat was fastened. I had already seen these dried teats for sale in pairs, in the popular markets, but had declined to place implicit faith in the venders' solemn statements as to their use.

It was the season which the peasants call by the expressive title *strada* (suffering). Nearly all the summer work must be done together, and, with their primitive appliances, suffering is the inevitable result. They set out for the fields before sunrise, and return at indefinite hours, but never early. Sometimes they pass the night in the fields, under the shelter of a cart or of the grain sheaves. Men and women work equally and unweariedly; and the women receive less pay than the men for the same work, in the bad old fashion which is, unhappily, not yet unknown in other lands and ranks of life. Eating and sleeping join the number of the lost arts. The poor, brave people have but little to eat in any case,—not enough to induce thought or anxiety to return home. Last year's store has, in all probability, been nearly exhausted. They must wait until the grain which they are reaping has been threshed and ground before they can have their fill.

One holiday they observe, partly perforce, partly from choice, though it is not one of the great festivals of the church calendar,—St. Ilya's Day. St. Ilya is the Christian representative of the old Slavic god of Thunder, Perun, as well as of the prophet Elijah. On or near his name day, July 20 (Old Style), he never fails to dash wildly athwart the sky in his chariot of fire; in other words, there is a terrific thunderstorm. Such is the belief; such, in my experience, is the fact, also.

Sundays were kept so far as the field work permitted, and the church was thronged. Even our choir of ill-trained village youths and boys could not spoil the ever-exquisite music. There were usually two or three women who expected to become mothers before the week was out, and who came forward to take the communion for the last time, after the newborn babes and tiny children had been taken up by their mothers to receive it.

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Every one was quiet, clean, reverent. The cloth-mill girls had discovered our (happily) obsolete magenta, and made themselves hideous in flounced petticoats and sacks of that dreadful hue. The sister of our Lukerya, the maid who had been assigned to us, thus attired, felt distinctly superior. Lukerya would have had the bad taste to follow her example, had she been permitted, so fast are evil fashions destroying the beautiful and practical national costumes. Little did Lukerya dream that she, in her peasant garb, with her thick nose and rather unformed face, was a hundred times prettier than Annushka, with far finer features and “fashionable” dress.

Independent and “fashionable” as many of these villagers were, they were ready enough to appeal to their former owners in case of illness or need; and they were always welcomed. Like most Russian women who spend any time on their estates, our hostess knew a good deal about medicine, which was necessitated by the circumstance that the district doctor lived eight miles away, and had such a wide circuit assigned to him that he could not be called in except for serious cases. Many of the remedies available or approved by the peasants were primitive, not to say heroic. For example, one man, who had exhausted all other remedies for rheumatism, was advised to go to the forest, thrust the ailing foot and leg into one of the huge ant-hills which abounded there, and allow the ants to sting him as long as he could bear the pain, for the sake of the formic acid which would thus be injected into the suffering limb. I confess that I should have liked to be present at this bit of— surgery, shall I call it? It would have been an opportunity for observing the Russian peasant’s stoicism and love of suffering as a thing good in itself.

The peasants came on other errands, also. One morning we were startled, at our morning coffee, by the violent irruption into the dining-room, on his knees, of a man with clasped hands uplifted, rolling eyes, and hair wildly tossing, as he knocked his head on the floor, kissed our hostess’s gown, and uttered heart-rending appeals to her, to Heaven, and to all the saints. “*Barynya!* dear mistress!” he wailed. “Forgive! *Yay Bogu*, it was not my fault. The Virgin herself knows that the carpenter forced me to it. I’ll never do it again, never. God is my witness! *Barynya! Ba-a-rynya! Ba-a-a-a-a-rynya!*” in an indescribable, subdued howl. He was one of her former serfs, the keeper of the dramshop; and the carpenter, that indispensable functionary on an isolated estate, had “drunk up” all his tools (which did not belong to him, but to our hostess) at this man’s establishment. The sly publican did not offer to return them, and he would not have so much as condescended to promises for the misty future, had he not been aware that the law permits the closing of pothouses on the complaint of proprietors in just such predicaments as this, as well as on the vote of the peasant Commune. Having won temporary respite by his well-acted anguish, he was ready to proceed again on the national plan of avos which may be vulgarly rendered into English by “running for luck.”

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But even more attractive than these house diversions and the village were the other external features of that sweet country life. The mushroom season was beginning. Equipped with baskets of ambitious size, we roamed the forests, which are carpeted in spring with lilies of the valley, and all summer long, even under the densest shadow, with rich grass. We learned the home and habits of the shrimp-pink mushroom, which is generally eaten salted; of the fat white and birch mushrooms, with their chocolate caps, to be eaten fresh; of the brown and green butter mushroom, most delicious of all to our taste, and beloved of the black beetle, whom we surprised at his feast. However, the mushrooms were only an excuse for dreaming away the afternoons amid the sweet glints of the fragrant snowy birch-trees and the green-gold flickerings of the pines, in the “black forest,” which is a forest composed of evergreens and deciduous trees. Now and then, in our rambles, we met and skirted great pits dug in the grassy roads to prevent the peasants from conveniently perpetrating thefts of wood. Once we came upon a party of timber-thieves (it was Sunday afternoon), who espied us in time to rattle off in their rude *telyega* with their prize, a great tree, at a rate which would have reduced ordinary flesh and bones to a jelly; leaving us to stare helplessly at the freshly hewn stump. Tawny hares tripped across our path, or gazed at us from the green twilight of the bushes, as we lay on the turf and discussed all things in the modern heaven and earth, from theosophy and Keely’s motor to—the other extreme.

When the peasants had not forestalled us, we returned home with masses of mushrooms, flower-like in hue,—bronze, pink, snow-white, green, and yellow; and Osip cooked them delicately, in sour cream, to accompany the juicy young blackcock and other game of our host’s shooting. Osip was a *cordons bleu*, and taxed his ingenuity to initiate us into all the mysteries of Russian cooking, which, under his tuition, we found delicious. The only national dish which we never really learned to like was one in which he had no hand,—fresh cucumbers sliced lengthwise and spread thick with new honey, which is supposed to be eaten after the honey has been blessed, with the fruits, on the feast of the Transfiguration, but which in practice is devoured whenever found, as the village priest was probably aware. The priest was himself an enthusiastic keeper of bees in odd, primitive hives. It was really amazing to note the difference between the good, simple-mannered old man in his humble home, where he received us in socks and a faded cassock, and nearly suffocated us with vivaciously repetitious hospitality, tea, and preserves, and the priest, with his truly majestic and inspired mien, as he served the altar.

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Among the wild creatures in our host's great forests were hares, wolves, moose, and bears. The moose had retreated, for the hot weather, to the lakes on the Crown lands adjacent, to escape the maddening attacks of the gadflies. Though it was not the hungry height of the season with the wolves, there was always an exciting possibility of encountering a stray specimen during our strolls, and we found the skull and bones of a horse which they had killed the past winter. From early autumn these gray terrors roam the scene of our mushroom-parties, in packs, and kill cattle in ill-protected farmyards and children in the villages.

It was too early for hare-coursing or wolf-hunting, but feathered game was plentiful. Great was the rivalry in "bags" between our host and the butler, a jealously keen sportsman. His dog, Modistka (the little milliner), had taught the clever pointer Milton terribly bad tricks of hunting alone, and was even initiating her puppies into the same evil ways. When "Monsieur, Madame, and Bebe;" returned triumphantly from the forest with their booty, and presented it to their indignant masters, there were fine scenes! Bebe and his brothers of the litter were so exactly alike in every detail that they could not be distinguished one from the other. Hence they had been dubbed *tchinovniki* (the officials), a bit of innocent malice which every Russian can appreciate.

Of the existence of bears we had one convincing glimpse. We drove off, one morning, in a drizzling rain, to picnic on a distant estate of our host, in a "red" or "beautiful" forest (the two adjectives are synonymous in Russian), which is composed entirely of pines. During our long tramp through a superb growth of pines, every one of which would have furnished a mainmast for the largest old-fashioned ship, a bear stepped out as we passed through a narrow defile, and showed an inclination to join our party. The armed Russian and Mordvinian foresters, our guides and protectors, were in the vanguard; and as Misha seemed peaceably disposed we relinquished all designs on his pelt, consoling ourselves with the reflection that it would not be good at this season of the year. We camped out on the crest of the hill, upon a huge rug, soft and thick, the work of serfs in former days, representing an art now well-nigh lost, and feasted on nut-sweet crayfish from the Volga, new potatoes cooked in our gypsy kettle, curds, sour black bread, and other more conventional delicacies. The rain pattered softly on us, —we disdained umbrellas,—and on the pine needles, rising in hillocks, here and there, over snowy great mushrooms, of a sort to be salted and eaten during fasts. The wife of the priest, who is condemned to so much fasting, had a wonderfully keen instinct for these particular mushrooms, and had explained to us all their merits, which seemed obscure to our non-fasting souls. Our Russian forester regaled us with forest lore, as we lay on our backs to look at the tops of the trees. But,

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to my amazement, he had never heard of the *Leshi* and the *Vodyanoi*, the wood-king and water-king of the folk-tales. At all events, he had never seen them, nor heard their weird frolics in the boughs and waves. The Mordvinian contributed to the entertainment by telling us of his people's costumes and habits, and gave us a lesson in his language, which was of the Tatar-Finnish variety. Like the Tchuvashi and other tribes here on the Volga, the Mordvinians furnish pleasurable excitement and bewilderment to ethnographers and students of religions.

These simple amusements came to an end all too soon, despite the rain. We were seized with a fancy to try the peasant *telyega* for the descent, and packed ourselves in with the rug and utensils. Our Mordvinian, swarthy and gray-eyed, walked beside us, casting glances of inquiry at us, as the shaggy little horse plunged along, to ascertain our degrees of satisfaction with the experiment. He thrust the dripping boughs from our faces with graceful, natural courtesy; and when we alighted, breathless and shaken to a pulp, at the forester's hut, where our carriages awaited us, he picked up the hairpins and gave them to us gravely, one by one, as needed. We were so entirely content with our *telyega* experience that we were in no undue haste to repeat it. We drove home in the persistent rain, which had affected neither our bodies nor our spirits, bearing a trophy of unfringed gentians to add to our collection of goldenrod, harebells, rose-colored fringed pinks, and other familiar wild flowers which reminded us of the western hemisphere.

The days were too brief for our delights. In the afternoons and evenings, we took breezy gallops through the forests, along the boundary sward of the fields, across the rich black soil of that third of the land which, in the "three-field" system of cultivation, is allowed to lie fallow after it has borne a crop of winter grain, rye, and one of summer grain, oats. We watched the peasants plowing or scattering the seed-corn, or returning, mounted side-saddle fashion on their horses, with their primitive plows reversed. Only such rich land could tolerate these Adam-like earth-scratchers. As we met the cows on their way home from pasture, we took observations, to verify the whimsical barometer of the peasants; and we found that if a light-hued cow headed the procession the next day really was pretty sure to be fair, while a dark cow brought foul weather. As the twilight deepened, the quail piped under the very hoofs of our horses; the moon rose over the forest, which would soon ring with the howl of wolves; the fresh breath of the river came to us laden with peculiar scents, through which penetrated the heavy odor of the green-black hemp.

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One day the horses were ordered, as usual. They did not appear. The cavalryman who had been hired expressly to train them had not only neglected his duty, but had run away, without warning, to reap his own little field, in parts unknown. He had carefully observed silence as to its existence, when he was engaged. This was item number one. Item number two was that there was something the matter with all the horses, except Little Boy, Little Bird, and the small white Bashkir horse from the steppes, whose ear had been slit to subdue his wildness. The truth was, the steward's young son had been practicing high jumping, bareback, in a circus costume of pink calico shirt and trousers, topped by his tow-colored hair. We had seen this surreptitious performance, but considered it best to betray nothing, as the lad had done so well in the village school that our hosts were about to send him to town, to continue his studies at their expense.

The overseer, another soldier, was ordered to don his uniform and accompany us. He rebelled. "He had just got his hair grown to the square state which suited his peasant garb, and it would not go with his dragoon's uniform in the least. Why, he would look like a Kazak! Impossible, utterly!" He was sternly commanded not to consider his hair; this was not the city, with spectators. When he finally appeared, in full array, we saw that he had applied the shears to his locks, in a hasty effort to compromise between war and peace without losing the cut. The effect was peculiar; it would strike his commanding officer dumb with mirth and horror. He blushed in a deprecating manner whenever we glanced at him.

There was a bath-house beside the river. But a greater luxury was the hot bath, presided over by old Alexandra. Alexandra, born a serf on the estate, was now like a humble member of the family, the relations not having changed, perceptibly, since the emancipation, to the old woman's satisfaction. She believed firmly in the *Domovoi* (the house sprite), and told wonderful tales of her experiences with him. Skepticism on that point did not please her. When the horses were brought round with matted manes, a sign of an affectionate visit from the *Domovoi*, which must not be removed, under penalty of his displeasure, it was useless to tell Alexandra that a weasel had been caught in the act, and that her sprite was no other. She clung to her belief in her dreaded friend.

The bath was a small log house, situated a short distance from the manor. It was divided into anteroom, dressing-room, and the bath proper. When we were ready, Alexandra, a famous bath-woman, took boiling water from the tank in the corner oven, which had been heating for hours, made a strong lather, and scrubbed us soundly with a wad of linden bast shredded into fibres. Her wad was of the choicest sort; not that which is sold in the popular markets, but that which is procured by stripping into rather coarse

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filaments the strands of an old mat-sack, such as is used for everything in Russia, from wrappers for sheet iron to bags for carrying a pound of cherries. After a final douche with boiling water, we mounted the high shelf, with its wooden pillow, and the artistic part of the operation began. As we lay there in the suffocating steam, Alexandra whipped us thoroughly with a small besom of birch twigs, rendered pliable and secure of their tender leaves by a preliminary plunge in boiling water. When we gasped for breath, she interpreted it as a symptom of speechless delight, and flew to the oven and dashed a bucket of cold water on the red-hot stones placed there for the purpose. The steam poured forth in intolerable clouds; but we submitted, powerless to protest. Alexandra, with all her clothes on, seemed not to feel the heat. She administered a merciless yet gentle massage to every limb with her birch rods,—what would it have been like if she had used nettles, the peasants' delight?—and rescued us from utter collapse just in time by a douche of ice-cold water. We huddled on all the warm clothing we owned, were driven home, plied with boiling tea, and put to bed for two hours. At the end of that time we felt made over, physically, and ready to beg for another birching. But we were warned not to expose ourselves to cold for at least twenty-four hours, although we had often seen peasants, fresh from their bath, birch besom in hand, in the wintry streets of the two capitals.

We visited the peasants in their cottages, and found them very reluctant to sell anything except towel crash. All other linen which they wove they needed for themselves, and it looked as even and strong as iron. Here in the south the rope-and-moss-plugged log house stood flat on the ground, and was thatched with straw, which was secured by a ladder-like arrangement of poles along the gable ends. Three tiny windows, with tinier panes, relieved the street front of the house. The entrance was on the side, from the small farmyard, littered with farming implements, chickens, and manure, and inclosed with the usual fence of wattled branches. From the small ante-room designed to keep out the winter cold, the store-room opened at the rear, and the living-room at the front. The left hand corner of the living-room, as one entered, was occupied by the oven, made of stones and clay, and whitewashed. In it the cooking was done by placing the pots among the glowing wood coals. The bread was baked when the coals had been raked out. Later still, when desired, the owners took their steam bath, more resembling a roasting, inside it, and the old people kept their aged bones warm by sleeping on top of it, close to the low ceiling. Round three sides of the room ran a broad bench, which served for furniture and beds. In the right-hand corner, opposite the door,—the “great corner” of honor,—was the case of images, in front of which stood the rough table whereon meals were eaten. This was convenient, since

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the images were saluted, at the beginning and end of meals, with the sign of the cross and a murmured prayer. The case contained the sacred picture wherewith the young couple were blessed by their parents on their marriage, and any others which they might have acquired, with possibly a branch of their Palm Sunday pussy willows. A narrow room, monopolizing one of the windows, opened from the living-room, beyond the oven, and served as pantry and kitchen. A wooden trough, like a chopping-tray, was the washtub. The ironing or mangling apparatus consisted of a rolling-pin, round which the article of clothing was wrapped, and a curved paddle of hard wood, its under-surface carved in pretty geometrical designs, with which it was smoothed. This paddle served also to beat the clothes upon the stones, when the washing was done in the river, in warm weather. A few wooden bowls and spoons and earthen pots, including the variety which keeps milk cool without either ice or running water, completed the household utensils. Add a loom for weaving crash, the blue linen for the men's trousers and the women's scant *sarafans*, and the white for their aprons and chemises, and the cloth for coats, and the furnishing was done.

The village granaries, with wattled walls and thatched roofs, are placed apart, to lessen the danger from fire, near the large gates which give admission to the village, through the wattled fence encircling it. These gates, closed at night, are guarded by peasants who are unfitted, through age or infirmities, for field labor. They employ themselves, in their tiny wattled lean-tos, in plaiting the low shoes of linden bark, used by both men and women, in making carts, or in some other simple occupation. An axe—a whole armory of tools to the Russian peasant—and an iron bolt are their sole implements.

We were cut off from intercourse with one of the neighboring estates by the appearance there of the Siberian cattle plague, and were told that, should it spread, arrivals from that quarter would be admitted to the village only after passing through the disinfecting fumes of dung fires burning at the gate.

Incendiaries and horse-thieves are the scourges of village life in Russia. Such men can be banished to Siberia, by a vote of the Commune of peasant householders. But as the Commune must bear the expense, and people are afraid that the evil-doer will revenge himself by setting the village on fire, if he discovers their plan, this privilege is exercised with comparative rarity. The man who steals the peasant's horse condemns him to starvation and ruin. Such a man there had been in our friends' village, and for long years they had borne with him patiently. He was crafty and had "influence" in some mysterious fashion, which made him a dangerous customer to deal with. But at last he was sent off. Now, during our visit, the village was trembling over a rumor that he was on his way back to wreak vengeance on his former neighbors. I presume they were obliged to have him banished again, by administrative order from the Minister of the Interior,—the only remedy when one of this class of exiles has served out his term,—before they could sleep tranquilly.

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When seen in his village home, it is impossible not to admire the hard-working, intelligent, patient, gentle, and sympathetic *muzhik*, in spite of all his faults. We made acquaintance with some of his democratic manners during a truly unique picnic, arranged by our charming hosts expressly to convince us that the famous sterlet merited its reputation. We had tried it in first-class hotels and at their own table, as well as at other private tables, and we maintained that it was merely a sweet, fine-grained, insipid fish.

“Wait until we show you *zhiryokha* [sterlet grilled in its own fat] and *ukha* [soup] as prepared by the fishermen of the Volga. The Petersburg and Moscow people cannot even tell you the meaning of the word ‘*zhiryokha*’” was the reply. “As for the famous ‘amber’ soup, you have seen that even Osip’s efforts do not deserve the epithet.”

Accordingly, we assembled one morning at seven o’clock, to the sound of the hunting-horn, to set out for a point on the Volga twelve miles distant. We found Milton, the Milliner, and the whole litter of officials in possession of the carriage, and the coachman’s dignity relaxed into a grin at their antics, evoked by a suspicion that we were going hunting. Our vehicle, on this occasion, as on all our expeditions to field and forest, was a stoutly built, springless carriage, called a *lineika*, or little line, which is better adapted than any other to country roads, and is much used. In Kazan, by some curious confusion of ideas, it is called a “guitar.” Another nickname for it is “the lieutenant’s coach,” which was bestowed upon it by the Emperor Nicholas. The Tzar came to visit one of the Volga provinces, and found a *lineika* awaiting him at the landing, for the reason that nothing more elegant, and with springs, could scale the ascent to the town, over the rough roads. The landed proprietors of that government were noted for their dislike for the service of the state, which led them to shirk it, regardless of the dignity and titles to be thus acquired. They were in the habit of retiring to their beloved country homes when they had attained the lowest permissible rung of that wonderful Jacob’s ladder leading to the heaven of officialdom, established by Peter the Great, and dubbed the Table of Ranks. This grade was lieutenant in the army or navy, and the corresponding counselor in the civil service. The story runs that Nicholas stretched himself out at full length on it for a moment, and gave it its name. Naturally, such men accepted the Emperor’s jest as a compliment, and perpetuated its memory.

This style of carriage, which I have already described in my account of our visit to Count Tolstoy, is a development of the Russian racing-gig, which is also used for rough driving in the country, by landed proprietors. In the latter case it is merely a short board, bare or upholstered, on which the occupant sits astride, with his feet resting on the forward axle. Old engravings represent this uncomfortable model as the public carriage of St. Petersburg at the close of the last century.

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Our *troika* of horses was caparisoned in blue and red leather, lavishly decorated with large metal plaques and with chains which musically replaced portions of the leather straps. Over the neck of the middle horse, who trotted, rose an ornamented arch of wood. The side horses, loosely attached by leather thongs, galloped with much freedom and grace, their heads bent downward and outward, so that we could watch their beautiful eyes and crimson nostrils. Our coachman's long *armyak* of dark blue cloth, confined by a gay girdle, was topped by a close turban hat of black felt, stuck all the way round with a row of eyes from a peacock's tail. He observed all the correct rules of Russian driving, dashing up ascents at full speed, and holding his arms outstretched as though engaged in a race, which our pace suggested.

Our road to the Volga lay, at first, through a vast grainfield, dotted with peasants at the harvest. Miles of sunflowers followed. They provide oil for the poorer classes to use in cooking during the numerous fasts, when butter is forbidden, and seeds to chew in place of the unattainable peanut. Our goal was a village situated beneath lofty chalk hills, dazzling white in the sun. A large portion of the village, which had been burned a short time before, was already nearly rebuilt, thanks to the ready-made houses supplied by the novel wood-yards of Samara.

The butler had been dispatched on the previous evening, with a wagon-load of provisions and comforts, and with orders to make the necessary arrangements for a boat and crew with fisherman Piotr. But, for reasons which seemed too voluble and complicated for adequate expression, Piotr had been as slow of movement as my bumptious *yamtschik* of the posting-station, and nothing was ready. Piotr, like many elderly peasants, might sit for the portrait of his apostolic namesake. But he approved of more wine "for the stomach's sake" than any apostle ever ventured to recommend, and he had ingenious methods of securing it. For example, when he brought crayfish to the house, he improved the opportunity. The fishermen scorn these dainties, and throw them out of the nets. The fact that they were specially ordered was sufficient hint to Piotr. He habitually concealed them in the steward's hemp patch or some other handy nook, and presented himself to our host with the announcement that he would produce them when he was paid his "tea-money" in advance, in the shape of a glass of *vodka*. The swap always took place.

In spite of this weakness, Piotr was a very well-to-do peasant. We inspected his establishment and tasted his cream, while he was exhausting his stock of language. His house was like all others of that region in plan, and everything was clean and orderly. It had an air about it as if no one ever ate or really did any work there, which was decidedly deceptive, and his living-room contained the nearest approach to a bed and bedding which we had seen: a platform supported by two legs and the wall, and spread with a small piece of heavy gray and black felt.

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Finding that Piotr's eloquence had received lengthy inspiration, we bore him off, in the middle of his peroration, to the river, where we took possession of a boat with a chronic leak, and a prow the exact shape of a sterlet's nose reversed. But Piotr swore that it was the stanchest craft between Astrakhan and Rybinsk, and intrepidly took command, steering with a long paddle, while four alert young peasants plied the oars. Piotr's costume consisted of a cotton shirt and brief trousers. The others added caps, which, however, they wore only spasmodically.

A picnic without singing was not to be thought of, and we requested the men to favor us with some folk-songs. No bashful schoolgirls could have resisted our entreaties with more tortuous graces than did those untutored peasants. One of them was such an exact blond copy of a pretty brunette American, whom we had always regarded as the most affected of her sex, that we fairly stared him out of countenance, in our amazement; and we made mental apologies to the American on the spot.

"Please sing 'Adown dear Mother Volga,'" the conversation ran.

"We can't sing." "We don't know it." "You sing it and show us how, and we will join in."

The Affected One capped the climax with "It's not in the mo-o-o-ode now, that song!" with a delicate assumption of languor which made his comrades explode in suppressed convulsions of mirth. Finally they supplied the key, but not the keynote.

"Give us some *vodka*, and we may, perhaps, remember something."

Promises of *vodka* at the end of the voyage, when the danger was over, were rejected without hesitation. We reached our breakfast-ground in profound silence.

Fortunately, the catch of sterlet at this stand had been good. The fishermen grilled some "in their own fat," by salting them and spitting them alive on peeled willow wands, which they thrust into the ground, in a slanting position, over a bed of glowing coals. Anything more delicious it would be difficult to imagine; and we began to revise our opinion of the sterlet. In the mean time our boatmen had discovered some small, sour ground blackberries, which they gallantly presented to us in their caps. Their feelings were so deeply wounded by our attempts to refuse this delicacy that we accepted and actually ate them, to the great satisfaction of the songless rogues who stood over us.

Our own fishing with a line resulted in nothing but the sport and sunburn. We bought a quantity of sterlet, lest the fishermen at the camp where we had planned to dine should have been unlucky, placed them in a net such as is used in towns for carrying fish from market, and trailed them in the water behind our boat.

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We were destined to experience all possible aspects of a Volga excursion, that day, short of absolute shipwreck. As we floated down the mighty stream, a violent thunderstorm broke over our heads with the suddenness characteristic of the country. We were wet to the skin before we could get at the rain-cloaks on which we were sitting, but our boatmen remained as dry as ever, to our mystification. In the middle of the storm, our unworthy vessel sprung a fresh leak, the water poured in, and we were forced to run aground on a sand-bank for repairs. These were speedily effected, with a wad of paper, by Piotr, who, with a towel cast about his head and shoulders, looked more like an apostle than ever.

It appeared that our fishing-camp had moved away; but we found it, at last, several miles downstream, on a sand-spit backed with willow bushes. It was temporarily deserted, save for a man who was repairing a net, and who assured us that his comrades would soon return from their trip, for supplies, to the small town which we could discern on the slope of the hillshore opposite. There was nothing to explore on our sand-reef except the fishermen's primitive shelter, composed of a bit of sail-cloth and a few boards, furnished with simple cooking utensils, and superintended by a couple of frolicsome kittens, who took an unfeline delight in wading along in the edge of the water. So we spread ourselves out to dry on the clean sand, in the rays of the now glowing sun, and watched the merchandise, chiefly fish, stacked like cord wood, being towed up from Astrakhan in great barges.

At last our fisher hosts arrived, and greeted us with grave courtesy and lack of surprise. They began their preparations by scouring out their big camp kettle with beach sand, and building a fire at the water's edge to facilitate the cleaning of the fish. We followed their proceedings with deep interest, being curious to learn the secret of the genuine "amber sterlet soup." This was what we discovered.

The fish must be alive. They remain so after the slight preliminaries, and are plunged into the simmering water, heads and all, the heads and the parts adjacent being esteemed a delicacy. No other fish are necessary, no spices or ingredients except a little salt, the cookery-books to the contrary notwithstanding. The sterlet is expensive in regions where the cook-book flourishes, and the other fish are merely a cheat of town economy. The scum is not removed,—this is the capital point,—but stirred in as fast as it rises. If the *ukha* be skimmed, after the manner of professional cooks, the whole flavor and richness are lost.

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While the soup was boiling and more sterlet were being grilled in their own fat, as a second course, our men pitched our tent and ran up our flag, and the butler set the table on our big rug. It was lucky that we had purchased fish at our breakfast-place, as no sterlet had been caught at this camp. When the soup made its appearance, we comprehended the epithet “amber” and its fame. Of a deep gold, almost orange color, with the rich fat, and clear as a topaz, it was utterly unlike anything we had ever tasted. We understood the despair of Parisian gourmets and cooks, and we confirmed the verdict, provisionally announced at breakfast, that the sterlet is the king of all fish. As it is indescribable, I may be excused for not attempting to do justice to it in words.

While we feasted, the fishermen cooked themselves a kettle of less dainty fish, as a treat from us, since the fish belong to the contractor who farms the ground, not to the men. Their meal ended, the regulation cross and prayer executed, they amiably consented to anticipate the usual hour for casting their net, in order that we might see the operation. The net, two hundred and fifty fathoms in length, was manoeuvred down the long beach well out in the stream by one man in a boat, and by five men on shore, who harnessed themselves to a long cable by halters woven from the soft inner bark of the linden-tree. We grasped the rope and helped them pull. We might not have been of much real assistance, but we learned, at least, how heavy is this toil, repeated many times a day, even when the pouch reveals so slender a catch as in the present instance. There was nothing very valuable in it, though there was variety enough, and we were deceived, for a moment, by several false sterlet.

The small *samovar* which we had brought gave us a steaming welcome, on our return to camp. Perched on the fishermen’s seatless chair and stool, and on boxes, we drank our tea and began our preparations for departure, bestowing a reward on the men, who had acted their parts as impromptu hosts to perfection. It was late; but our men burst into song, when their oars dipped in the waves, as spontaneously as the nightingales which people these shores in springtime,—inspired probably by the full moon, which they melodiously apostrophized as “the size of a twenty-kopek bit.” They sang of Stenka Razin, the bandit chief, who kept the Volga and the Caspian Sea in a state of terror during the reign of Peter the Great’s father; of his “poor people, good youths, fugitives, who were no thieves nor brigands, but only Stenka Razin’s workmen.” They declared, in all seriousness, that he had been wont to navigate upon a felt rug, like the one we had seen in Piotr’s cottage; and they disputed over the exact shade of meaning contained in the words which he was in the habit of using when he summoned a rich merchant vessel to surrender as his prize. Evidently, Stenka was no semi-epic, mythical hero to them, but a living reality.

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“Adown dear Mother Volga, Adown her mighty sweep,”

they sang; and suddenly ran the boat aground, and fled up the steep slope like deer, carrying with them their tall winter boots of gray felt, which had lain under the thwarts all day. We waited, shivering in the keen night air, and wondering whether we were deserted on this lonely reach of the river at midnight. If the apostle Peter understood the manoeuvre, he was loyal and kept their counsel. He gave no comfort beyond the oracular *saytchas*, which we were intended to construe as meaning that they would be back in no time.

When they did return, after a long absence, their feet were as bare as they had been all day. Their boots were borne tenderly in their arms, and were distended to their utmost capacity with apples! In answer to our remonstrances, they replied cheerfully that the night was very warm, and that the apples came from “their garden, over yonder on the bank.” On further questioning, their village being miles distant, they retorted, with a laugh, that they had gardens all along the river; and they offered to share their plunder with us. The Affected One tossed an apple past my head, with the cry, “Catch, Sasha!” to our host, of whose familiar name he had taken note during the day. After this and other experiences, we were prepared to credit an anecdote which had been related to us of a peasant in that neighborhood, to illustrate the democratic notions of his class which prevailed even during the days of serfdom. One of the provincial assemblies, to which nobles and peasants have been equally eligible for election since the emancipation, met for the first time, thus newly constituted. One of the nobles, desirous of making the peasants feel at home, rose and began:—

“We bid you welcome, our younger brothers, to this “—

“We are nobody’s inferiors or younger brothers any more,” interrupted a peasant member, “and we will not allow you to call us so.”

The nobles took the hint, and made no further unnecessary advances. Yes, these Volga peasants certainly possess as strong a sense of democratic equality as any one could wish. But the soft ingenuousness of their manners and their tact disarm wrath at the rare little liberties which they take. Even their way of addressing their former masters by the familiar “thou” betokens respectful affection, not impertinence.

Our men soon wearied of pulling against the powerful current, dodging the steamers and the tug-boats with their strings of barks signaled by constellations of colored lanterns high in air. Perhaps they would have borne up better had we been able to obtain some Astrakhan watermelons from the steamer wharves, which we besieged in turn as we passed. They proposed to tow us. On Piotr’s assurance that it would be a far swifter mode of locomotion, and that they would pay no more visits to “their gardens,” we consented. They set up a mast through an opening in one of the thwarts, passed through

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a hole in its top a cord the size of a cod-line, fastened this to the stern of the boat, and leaped ashore with the free end. Off they darted, galloping like horses along the old tow-path, and singing vigorously. Piotr remained on board to steer. As we dashed rapidly through the water, we gained practical knowledge of the manner in which every pound of merchandise was hauled to the great Fair from Astrakhan, fourteen hundred and forty miles, before the introduction of steamers, except in the comparatively rare cases where oxen were made to wind windlasses on the deck of a bark. It would have required hours of hard rowing to reach our goal; but by this means we were soon walking across the yielding sands to Piotr's cottage. Our cunning rogues of boatmen took advantage of our scattered march to obtain from us separately such installments of tea-money as must, in the aggregate, have rendered them hilarious for days to come, if they paid themselves for their minstrelsy in the coin which they had suggested to us before breakfast.

Piotr's smiling wife, who was small, like most Russian peasant women, had baked us some half-rye, half-wheat bread, to our order; she made it remarkably well, much better than Osip. We secured a more lasting memento of her handiwork in the form of some towel ends, which she had spun, woven, drawn, and worked very prettily. Some long-haired heads were thrust over the oven-top to inspect us, but the bodies did not follow. They were better engaged in enjoying the heat left from the baking.

It was two o'clock in the morning when we drove through the village flock of sheep, that lay asleep on the grassy street. With hand on pistol, to guard against a possible stray wolf, we dashed past the shadowy chalk hills; past the nodding sunflowers, whose sleepy eyes were still turned to the east: past the grainfields, transmuted from gold to silver by the moonlight; past the newly plowed land, which looked like velvet billows in its depths of brown, as the moon sank lower and lower beyond in a mantle of flame.

By this time practice had rendered us expert in retaining our seats in the low, springless *lineika*; fortunately, for we were all three quarters asleep at intervals, with excess of fresh air. Even when the moon had gone down, and a space of darkness intervened before the day, our headlong pace was not slackened for a moment. As we drove up to the door, in the pearl-pink dawn, Tulip, the huge yellow mastiff with tawny eyes, the guardian of the courtyard, received us with his usual ceremony, through which pierced a petition for a caress. We heeded him not. By six o'clock we were fast asleep. Not even a packet of letters from home could keep our eyes open after that four-and-twenty hours' picnic, which had been unmarred by a single fault, but which had contained all the "experiences" and "local color" which we could have desired.

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How can I present a picture of all the variations in those sweet, busy-idle days? They vanished all too swiftly. But now the rick-yard was heaped high with golden sheaves; the carts came in steady lines, creaking under endless loads, from those fields which, two years later, lay scorched with drought, and over which famine brooded. The peasant girls tossed the grain, with forked boughs, to the threshing-machine, tended by other girls. The village boys had a fine frolic dragging the straw away in bundles laid artfully on the ends of two long poles fastened shaft-wise to the horse's flanks. We had seen the harvesting, the plowing with the primitive wooden plow, the harrowing with equally simple contrivances, and the new grain was beginning to clothe the soil with a delicate veil of green. It was time for us to go. During our whole visit, not a moment had hung heavy on our hands, here in the depths of the country, where visitors were comparatively few and neighbors distant, such had been the unwearied attention and kindness of our hosts.

We set out for the river once more. This time we had a landau, and a cart for our luggage. As we halted to drink milk in the Tchuvash village, the inhabitants who chanced to be at home thronged about our carriage. We espied several women arrayed in their native costume, which has been almost entirely abandoned for the Russian dress, and is fast becoming a precious rarity. The men have already discarded their dress completely for the Russian. We sent one of the women home to fetch her Sunday gown, and purchased it on the spot. Such a wonderful piece of work! The woman had spun, woven, and sewed it; she had embroidered it in beautiful Turanian, not Russian, patterns, with silks,—dull red, pale green, relieved by touches of dark blue; she had striped it lengthwise with bands of red cotton and embroidery, and crosswise with fancy ribbons and gay calicoes; she had made a mosaic of the back which must have delighted her rear neighbors in church; and she had used the gown with such care that, although it had never been washed, it was not badly soiled. One piece for the body, two for the head, a sham pocket,—that was all. The footgear consisted of crash bands, bast slippers, rope cross-garters. The artists to whom I showed the costume, later on, pronounced it an ethnographical prize.

These Tchuvashi are a small, gray-eyed, olive-skinned race, with cheek-bones and other features like the Tatars, but less well preserved than with the latter, in spite of their always marrying among themselves. There must have been dilution of the race at some time, if the characteristics were as strongly marked as with the Tatars, in their original ancestors from Asia. Most of them are baptized into the Russian faith, and their villages have Russian churches. Nevertheless, along with their native tongue they are believed to retain many of their ancient pagan customs and superstitions, although baptism is in no

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sense compulsory. The priest in our friends' village, who had lived among them, had told us that such is the case. But he had also declared that they possess many estimable traits of character, and that their family life is deserving of imitation in more than one particular. This village of theirs looked prosperous and clean. The men, being brought more into contact with outsiders than the women, speak Russian better than the latter, and more generally. It is not exactly a case which proves woman's conservative tendencies.

On reaching the river, and finding that no steamer was likely to arrive for several hours, we put up at the cottage of a prosperous peasant, which was patronized by many of the neighboring nobles, in preference to the wretched inns of that suburb of the wharves. The "best room" had a citified air, with its white curtains, leaf plants, pretty china tea service, and photographs of the family on the wall. These last seemed to us in keeping with the sewing-machine which we had seen a peasant woman operating in a shop of the little posting-town inland. They denoted progress, since many peasants cherish religious scruples or superstitions about having their portraits taken in any form.

The athletic sons, clad only in shirts and trousers of sprigged print, with fine chestnut hair, which compensated for their bare feet, vacated the room for our use. They and the house were as clean as possible. Outside, near the entrance door, hung the family washstand, a double-spouted teapot of bronze suspended by chains. But it was plain that they did not pin their faith wholly to it, and that they took the weekly steam bath which is customary with the peasants. Not everything was citified in the matter of sanitary arrangements. But these people seemed to thrive, as our ancestors all did, and probably regarded us as over-particular.

To fill in the interval of waiting, we made an excursion to the heart of the town, and visited the pretty public garden overhanging the river, and noteworthy for its superb dahlias. As we observed the types of young people who were strolling there, we recognized them, with slight alterations only, which the lapse of time explained, from the types which we had seen on the stage in Ostrovsky's famous play "The Thunderstorm." The scene of that play is laid on the banks of the Volga, in just such a garden; why should it not have been on this spot?

All peasant *izbui* are so bewilderingly alike that we found our special cottage again with some difficulty, by the light of the young moon. By this time "the oldest inhabitant" had hazarded a guess as to the line whose steamer would arrive first. Accordingly, we gathered up our small luggage and our Tchuvash costume, and fairly rolled down the steep, pathless declivity of slippery turf, groping our way to the right wharf. How the luggage cart got down was a puzzle. Here we ordered in the *samovar*, and feasted until far into the

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night on the country dainties which we had brought with us, supplemented by one of the first watermelons from Astrakhan, which we had purchased from a belated dealer in the deserted town market. The boat was late, as a matter of course; but we understood the situation now, and asked no questions. When it arrived, we and our charming hosts, whose society we were to enjoy for a few days longer, embarked for Samara, to visit the famous kumys establishments on the steppes.

Russian harvest-tide was over for us, leaving behind a store of memories as golden as the grain, fitly framed on either hand by Mother Volga.

XI.

THE RUSSIAN KUMYS CURE.

It is not many years since every pound of freight, every human being, bound to Astrakhan from the interior of Russia simply floated down the river Volga with the current. The return journey was made slowly and painfully, in tow of those human beasts of burden, the *burlaki*. The traces of their towpath along the shores may still be seen, and the system itself may even be observed at times, when light barks have to be forced upstream for short distances.

Then some enterprising individual set up a line of steamers, in the face of the usual predictions from the wiseacres that he would ruin himself and all his kin. The undertaking proved so fabulously successful and profitable that a wild rush of competition ensued. But the competition seems to have consisted chiefly in the establishment of rival lines of steamers, and there are some peculiarities of river travel which still exist in consequence. One of these curious features is that each navigation company appears to have adopted a certain type of steamer at the outset, and not to have improved on that original idea to any marked degree. There are some honorable exceptions, it is true, and I certainly have a very definite opinion concerning the line which I would patronize on a second trip. Another idea, to which they have clung with equal obstinacy, though it is far from making amends for the other, is that a journey is worth a certain fixed sum per verst, utterly regardless of the vast difference in the accommodations offered.

Possibly it is a natural consequence of having been born in America, and of having heard the American boast of independence and progress and the foreign boast of conservatism contrasted ever since I learned my alphabet, not to exaggerate unduly, that I should take particular notice of all illustrations of these conflicting systems. Generally speaking, I advocate a judicious mixture of the two, in varying proportions to suit my taste on each special occasion. But there are times when I distinctly favor the

broadest independence and progress. These Volga steamers had afforded me a subject for meditations on this point, at a distance, even before I was obliged to undergo personal experience of the defects of conservatism.

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Before I had sailed four and twenty hours on the broad bosom of Matushka Volga, I was able to pick out the steamers of all the rival lines at sight with the accuracy of a veteran river pilot. There was no great cleverness in that, I hasten to add; anybody but a blind man could have done as much; but that only makes my point the more forcible. It was when we set out for Samara that we realized most keenly the beauties of enterprise in this direction.

We had, nominally, a wide latitude of choice, as all the lines made a stop at our landing. But when we got tired of waiting for the steamer of our preference,—the boats of all the lines being long overdue, as usual, owing to low water in the river,—and took the first which presented itself, we found that the latitude in choice, so far as accommodations were concerned, was even greater than had been apparent at first sight.

Fate allotted us one of the smaller steamers, the more commodious boats having probably “sat down on a sand-bar,” as the local expression goes. The one on which we embarked had only a small dining-room and saloon, one first-class cabin for men and one for women, all nearly on a level with the water, instead of high aloft, as in the steamers which we had hitherto patronized, and devoid of deck-room for promenading. The third-class cabin was on the forward deck. The second-class cabin was down a pair of steep, narrow stairs, whose existence we did not discover when we went on board at midnight, and which did not tempt us to investigation even when we arose the next morning. Fortunately, there were no candidates except ourselves and a Russian friend for the six red velvet divans ranged round the walls of the tiny “ladies’ cabin,” and the adjoining toilet-room, and the man of the party enjoyed complete seclusion in the men’s cabin. In the large boats, for the same price, we should have had separate staterooms, each accommodating two persons. However, everything was beautifully clean, as usual on Russian steamers so far as my experience goes, and it made no difference for one night. The experience was merely of interest as a warning.

The city of Samara, as it presented itself to our eyes the next morning, was the liveliest place on the river Volga next to Nizhni Novgorod. While it really is of importance commercially, owing to its position on the Volga and on the railway from central Russia, as a depot for the great Siberian trade through Orenburg, the impression of alertness which it produces is undoubtedly due to the fact that it presents itself to full view in the foreground, instead of lying at a distance from the wharves, or entirely concealed. An American, who is accustomed to see railways and steamers run through the very heart of the cities which they serve, never gets thoroughly inured to the Russian trick of taking important towns on faith, because it has happened to be convenient to place the stations out of sight and hearing, sometimes miles out of the city. Another striking point about Samara is the abundance of red brick buildings, which is very unusual, not to say unprecedented, in most of the older Russian towns, which revel in stucco washed with white, blue, and yellow.

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But the immediate foreground was occupied with something more attractive than this. The wharves, the space between them, and all the ground round about were fairly heaped with fruit: apples in bewildering variety, ranging from the pink-and-whiteskinned “golden seeds” through the whole gamut of apple hues; round striped watermelons and oval cantaloupes with perfumed orange-colored flesh, from Astrakhan; plums and grapes. After wrestling with these fascinations and with the merry *izvostchiki*, we set out on a little voyage of discovery, preparatory to driving out to the famous kumys establishments, where we had decided to stay instead of in the town itself.

Much of Samara is too new in its architecture, and too closely resembles the simple, thrifty builders’ designs of a mushroom American settlement, to require special description. Although it is said to have been founded at the close of the sixteenth century, to protect the Russians from the incursions of the Kalmucks, Bashkirs, and Nogai Tatars, four disastrous conflagrations within the last forty-five years have made way for “improvements” and entailed the loss of characteristic features, while its rank as one of the chief marts for the great Siberian trade has caused a rapid increase in population, which now numbers between seventy-five and eighty thousand.

One modern feature fully compensates, however, by its originality, for a good many commonplace antiquities. Near the wharves, on our way out of the town, we passed a lumber-yard, which dealt wholly in ready-made log houses. There stood a large assortment of cottages, in the brilliant yellow of the barked logs, of all sizes and at all prices, from fifteen to one hundred dollars, forming a small suburb of samples. The lumber is floated down the Volga and her tributaries from the great forests of Ufa, and made up in Samara. The peasant purchaser disjoints his house, floats it to a point near his village, drags it piecemeal to its proper site, sets it up, roofs it, builds an oven and a chimney of stones, clay, and whitewash, plugs the interstices with rope or moss, smears them with clay if he feels inclined, and his house is ready for occupancy. Although such houses are cheap and warm, it would be a great improvement if the people could afford to build with brick, so immense is the annual loss by fire in the villages. Brick buildings are, however, far beyond the means of most peasants, let them have the best will in the world, and the ready-made cottages are a blessing, though every peasant is capable of constructing one for himself on very brief notice, if he has access to a forest. But forests are not so common nowadays along the Volga, and, as the advertisements say, this novel lumber-yard “meets a real want.” When the Samarcand railway was opened, a number of these cottages, in the one-room size, were placed on platform cars, and to each guest invited to the ceremony was assigned one of these unique drawing-room-car coupes.

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About four miles from the town proper, on the steppe, lie two noted kumys establishments; one of them being the first resort of that kind ever set up, at a time when the only other choice for invalids who wished to take the cure was to share the hardships, dirt, bad food, and carelessly prepared kumys of the tented nomads of the steppes. The grounds of the one which we had elected to patronize extended to the very brink of the Volga. In accordance with the admonitions of the specialist physicians to avoid many-storied, ill-ventilated buildings with long corridors, the hotel consists of numerous wooden structures, of moderate size, chiefly in Moorish style, and painted in light colors, scattered about a great inclosure which comprises groves of pines and deciduous trees,—“red forest” and “black forest,” as Russians would express it,—lawns, arbors, shady walks, flower-beds, and other things pleasing to the eye, and conducive to comfort and very mild amusement. One of the buildings even contains a hall, where dancing, concerts, and theatricals can be and are indulged in, in the height of the season, although such violent and crowded affairs as balls are, in theory, discountenanced by the physicians. All these points we took in at one curious glance, as we were being conducted to the different buildings to inspect rooms. I am afraid that we pretended to be very difficult to please, in order to gain a more extensive insight into the arrangements. As the height of the season (which is May and June) was past, we had a great choice offered us, and I suppose that this made a difference in the price, also. It certainly was not unreasonable. We selected some rooms which opened on a small private corridor. The furniture consisted of the usual narrow iron bedstead (with linen and pillows thrown in gratis, for a wonder), a tiny table which disagreeably recalled American ideas as to that article, an apology for a bureau, two armchairs, and no washstand. The chairs were in their primitive stuffing-and-burlap state, loose gray linen covers being added when the rooms were prepared for us. Any one who has ever struggled with his temper and the slack-fitting shift of a tufted armchair will require no explanation as to what took place between me and my share of those untufted receptacles before I deposited its garment under my bed, and announced that burlap and tacks were luxurious enough for me. That one item contained enough irritation and excitement to ruin any “cure.”

The washstand problem was even more complicated. A small, tapering brass tank, holding about two quarts of water, with a faucet which dripped into a diminutive cup with an unstoppered waste-pipe, was screwed to the wall in our little corridor. We asked for a washstand, and this arrangement was introduced to our notice, the chambermaid being evidently surprised at the ignorance of barbarians who had never seen a washstand before. We objected that a mixed party of men and women could not use that decently, even if two quarts of water were sufficient for three women and a man. After much argument and insistence, we obtained, piecemeal: item, one low stool; item, one basin; item, one pitcher. There were no fastenings on the doors, except a hasp and staple to the door of the corridor, to which, after due entreaty, we secured an oblong padlock.

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The next morning, the chambermaid came to the door of our room opening on the private corridor while we were dressing, and demanded the basin and pitcher. "Some one else wants them!" she shouted through the door. We had discovered her to be a person of so much decision of character, in the course of our dealings with her on the preceding day, that we were too wary to admit her, lest she should simply capture the utensils and march off with them. As I was the heaviest of the party, it fell to my lot to brace myself against the unfastened door and parley with her. Three times that woman returned to the attack; thrice we refused to surrender our hard-won trophies, and asked her pointedly, "What do you do for materials when the house is full, pray?" Afterwards, while we were drinking our coffee on the delightful half-covered veranda below, which had stuffed seats running round the walls, and a flower-crowned circular divan in the centre, a lively testimony to the dryness of the atmosphere, we learned that the person who had wanted the basin and pitcher was the man of our party. He begged us not to inquire into the mysteries of his toilet, and refused to help us solve the riddle of the guests' cleanliness when the hotel was full. I assume, on reflection, however, that they were expected to take Russian or plain baths every two or three days, to rid themselves of the odor of the kumys, which exudes copiously through the pores of the skin and scents the garments. On other days a "lick and a promise" were supposed to suffice, so that their journals must have resembled that of the man who wrote: "Monday, washed myself. Tuesday, washed hands and face. Wednesday, washed hands only." That explanation is not wholly satisfactory, either, because the Russians are clean people.

As coffee is one of the articles of food which are forbidden to kumys patients, though they may drink tea without lemon or milk, we had difficulty in getting it at all. It was long in coming; bad and high-priced when it did make its appearance. As we were waiting, an invalid lady and the novice nun who was in attendance upon her began to sing in a room near by. They had no instrument. What it was that they sang, I do not know. It was gentle as a breath, melting as a sigh, soft and slow like a conventional chant, and sweet as the songs of the Russian Church or of the angels. There are not many strains in this world upon which one hangs entranced, in breathless eagerness, and the memory of which haunts one ever after. But this song was one of that sort, and it lingers in my memory as a pure delight; in company with certain other fragments of church music heard in that land, as among the most beautiful upon earth.

I may as well tell at once the whole story of the food, so far as we explored its intricate mysteries. We were asked if we wished to take the *table d'hote* breakfast in the establishment. We said "yes," and presented ourselves promptly. We were served with beefsteak, in small, round, thick pieces.

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"What queer beefsteak!" said one of our Russian friends. "Is there no other meat?"

"No, madam."

We all looked at it for several minutes. We said it was natural, when invalids drank from three to five bottles of the nourishing kumys a day, that they should not require much extra food, and that the management provided what variety was healthy and advisable, no doubt; only we would have liked a choice; and—what queer steak!

The first sniff, the first glance at that steak, of peculiar grain and dark red hue, had revealed the truth to *us*. But we saw that our Russian friends were not initiated, and we knew that their stomachs were delicate. We exchanged signals, took a mouthful, declared it excellent, and ate bravely through our portions. The Russians followed our example. Well—it was much tenderer and better than the last horseflesh to which we had been treated surreptitiously; but I do not crave horseflesh as a regular diet. It really was not surprising at a kumys establishment, where the horse is worshiped, alive or dead, apparently, in Tatar fashion.

That afternoon we made it convenient to take our dinner in town, on the veranda of a restaurant which overlooked the busy Volga, with its mobile moods of sunset and thunderstorm, where we compensated ourselves for our unsatisfactory breakfast by a characteristically Russian dinner, of which I will omit details, except as regards the soup. This soup was *botvinya*. A Russian once obligingly furnished me with a description of a foreigner's probable views on this national delicacy: "a slimy pool with a rock in the middle, and creatures floating round about." The rock is a lump of ice (*botvinya* being a cold soup) in the tureen of strained *kvas* or sour cabbage. *Kvas* is the sour, fermented liquor made from black bread. In this liquid portion of the soup, which is colored with strained spinach, floated small cubes of fresh cucumber and bits of the green tops from young onions. The solid part of the soup, served on a platter, so that each person might mix the ingredients according to his taste, consisted of cold boiled sterlet, raw ham, more cubes of cucumber, more bits of green onion tops, lettuce, crayfish, grated horseradish, and granulated sugar. The first time I encountered this really delectable dish, it was served with salmon, the pale, insipid northern salmon. I supposed that the lazy waiter had brought the soup and fish courses together, to save himself trouble, and I ate them separately, while I meditated a rebuke to the waiter and a strong description of the weak soup. The tables were turned on me, however, when Mikhei appeared and grinned, as broadly as his not overstrict sense of propriety permitted, at my unparalleled ignorance, while he gave me a lesson in the composition of *botvinya*. That *botvinya* was not good, but this edition of it on the banks of the Volga, with sterlet, was delicious.

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We shirked our meals at the establishment with great regularity, with the exception of morning coffee, which was unavoidable, but we did justice to its kumys, which was superb. Theoretically, the mares should have had the advantage of better pasturage, at a greater distance from town; but, as they cannot be driven far to milk without detriment, that plan involves making the kumys at a distance, and transporting it to the "cure." There is another famous establishment, situated a mile beyond ours, where this plan is pursued. Ten miles away the mares pasture, and the kumys is made at a subsidiary cure, where cheap quarters are provided for poorer patients. But, either on account of the transportation under the hot sun, or because the professional "taster" is lacking in delicacy of perception, we found the kumys at this rival establishment coarse in both flavor and smell, in comparison with that at our hostelry.

Our mares, on the contrary, were kept close by, and the kumys was prepared on the spot. It is the first article of faith in the creed of the kumys expert that no one can prepare this milk wine properly except Tatars. Hence, when any one wishes to drink it at home, a Tatar is sent for, the necessary mares are set aside for him, and he makes what is required. But the second article of faith is that kumys is much better when made in large quantities. The third is that a kumys specialist, or doctor, is as indispensable for the regulation of the cure as he is at mineral springs. The fourth article in the creed is that mares grazing on the rich plume-grass of the steppe produce milk which is particularly rich in sugar, very poor in fat, and similar to woman's milk in its proportion of albumen, though better furnished: all which facts combine to give kumys whose chemical proportions differ greatly from those of kumys prepared elsewhere. Moreover, on private estates it is not always possible to observe all the conditions regarding the choice and care of the mares.

At our establishment there were several Tatars to milk the mares and make the kumys. The wife of one of them, a Tatar beauty, was the professional taster, who issued her orders like an autocrat on that delicate point. She never condescended to work, and it was our opinion that she ought to devote herself to dress, in her many leisure hours, instead of lounging about in ugly calico sacks and petticoats, as hideous as though they had originated in a backwoods farm in New England. She explained, however, that she was in a sort of mourning. Her husband was absent, and she could not make herself beautiful for any one until his return, which she was expecting every moment. She spent most of her time in gazing, from a balcony on the cliff, up the river, toward the bend backed by beautiful hills, to espy her husband on the steamer. As he did not come, we persuaded her, by arguments couched in silver speech, to adorn herself on the sly for us. Then she was afraid that the missing

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treasure might make his appearance too soon, and she made such undue haste that she faithlessly omitted the finishing touch,— blacking her pretty teeth. I gathered from her remarks that something particularly awful would result should she be caught with those pearls obscured in the presence of any other man when her husband was not present; but she may have been using a little diplomacy to soothe us. Though she was not a beauty in the ordinary sense of the Occident, she certainly was when dressed in her national garb, as I had found to be the case with the Russian peasant girls. Her loose sack, of a medium but brilliant blue woolen material, fell low over a petticoat of the same terminating in a single flounce. Her long black hair was carefully braided, and fell from beneath an embroidered cap of crimson velvet with a rounded end which hung on one side in a coquettish way. Her neck was completely covered with a necklace which descended to her waist like a breast-plate, and consisted of gold coins, some of them very ancient and valuable, medals, red beads, and a variety of brilliant objects harmoniously combined. Her heavy gold bracelets had been made to order in Kazan after a pure Tatar model, and her soft-soled boots of rose-pink leather, with conventional designs in many-colored moroccos, sewed together with rainbow-hued silks, reached nearly to her knees. Her complexion was fresh and not very sallow, her nose rather less like a button than is usual; her high cheek-bones were well covered, and her small dark eyes made up by their brilliancy for the slight upward slant of their outer corners.

Tatar girls, who made no pretensions to beauty in dress or features, did the milking, and were aided in that and the other real work connected with kumys-making by Tatar men. According to the official programme, the mares might be milked six or eight times a day, and the yield was from a half to a whole bottle apiece each time. Milk is always reckoned by the bottle in Russia. I presume the custom arose from the habit of sending the *muzhik* ("Boots") to the dairy-shop with an empty wine-bottle to fetch the milk and cream for "tea," which sometimes means coffee in the morning. The mare's milk has a sweetish, almond-like flavor, and is very thin and bluish in hue.

At three o'clock in the morning, the mares are taken from the colts and shut up in a long shed which is not especially weather-proof. In fact, there is not much "weather" except wind to be guarded against on the steppe. In about two hours, when the milk has collected, the colts follow them voluntarily, and are admitted and allowed to suck for a few seconds. Halters are then thrown about their necks, and they are led forward where the mothers can nose them over and lick them. The milkmaid's second assistant then puts a halter on the neck of a mare and holds her, or ties up one leg if she be restive. In the mean time the foolish creature continues to let down milk for her foal. The milkmaid

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kneels on one knee and holds her pail on the other, after having washed her hands carefully and wiped off the teats with a clean, damp cloth. If the mare resists at first, the milk obtained must not be used for kumys, as her agitation affects the milk unfavorably. Roan, gray, and chestnut mares are preferred, and in order to obtain the best milk great care must be exercised in the choice of pasture and the management of the horses, as well as in all the minor details of preparation.

The milking-pails are of tin or of oak wood, and, like the oaken kumys churn, have been boiled in strong lye to extract the acid, and well dried and aired. In addition to the daily washing they are well smoked with rotten birch trunks, in order to destroy all particles of kumys which may cling to them.

The next step after the milk is obtained is to ferment it. The ferment, or yeast, is obtained by collecting the sediment of the kumys which has already germinated, and washing it off thoroughly with milk or water. It is then pressed and dried in the sun, the result being a reddish-brown mass composed of the micro-organisms contained in kumys ferment, casein, and a small quantity of fat. Twenty grains of this yeast are ground up in a small quantity of freshly drawn milk in a clean porcelain mortar, and shaken in a quart bottle with one pound of fresh milk,—all mare's milk, naturally,—after which it is lightly corked with a bit of wadding and set away in a temperature of +22 degrees to +26 degrees Reaumur. In about twenty-four hours small bubbles begin to make their appearance, accompanied by the sour odor of kumys. The bottle is then shaken from time to time, and the air admitted, until it is in a condition to be used as a ferment with fresh milk. Sometimes this ferment fails, in which case an artificial ferment is prepared.

One pint of ferment is allowed to every five pints of fresh milk in the cask or churn, and the whole is beaten with the dasher for about an hour, when it is set aside in a temperature of +18 degrees to +26 degrees Reaumur. When, at the expiration of a few hours, the milk turns sour and begins to ferment vigorously, it is beaten again several times for about fifteen minutes, with intervals, with a dasher which terminates in a perforated disk, after which it is left undisturbed for several hours at the same temperature as before, until the liquid begins to exhale an odor of spirits of wine. The delicate offices of our Tatar beauty, the taster, come in at this point to determine how much freshly drawn and cooled milk is to be added in order rightly to temper the sour taste. After standing over night it is ready for use, and is put up in seltzer or champagne bottles, and kept at a temperature of +8 degrees to +12 degrees Reaumur. At a lower temperature vinegar fermentation sets in and spoils the kumys, while too high a temperature brings about equally disastrous results of another sort. Kumys has a different chemical composition according to whether it has stood only a few hours or several days, and consequently its action differs, also.

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The weak kumys is ready for use at the expiration of six hours after fermentation has been excited in the mare's milk, and must be put into the strongest bottles. The medium quality is obtained after from twelve to fourteen hours of fermentation, and, if well corked, will keep two or three days in a cool atmosphere. The third and strongest quality is the product of diligent daily churning during twenty-four to thirty-six hours, and is thinner than the medium quality, even watery. When bottled, it soon separates into three layers, with the fatty particles on top, the whey in the middle, and the casein at the bottom. Strong kumys can be kept for a very long time, but it must be shaken before it is used. It is very easy for a person unaccustomed to kumys to become intoxicated on this strong quality of milk wine.

The nourishing effects of this spirituous beverage are argued, primarily, from the example of the Bashkirs and the Kirghiz, who are gaunt and worn by the hunger and cold of winter, but who blossom into rounded outlines and freshness of complexion three or four days after the spring pasturage for their mares begins. Some persons argue that life with these Bashkirs and an exclusive diet of kumys will effect a speedy cure of their ailments. Hence they join one of the nomad hordes. This course, however, not only deprives them of medical advice and the comforts to which they have been accustomed, but often gives them kumys which is difficult to take because of its rank taste and smell, due to the lack of that scrupulous cleanliness which its proper preparation demands.

There are establishments near St. Petersburg and Moscow where kumys may be obtained by those who do not care to make the long journey to the steppe; but the quality and chemical constituents are very different from those of the steppe kumys, especially at the best period, May and June, when the plumegrass and wild strawberry are at their finest development for food, and before the excessive heats of midsummer have begun.

As I have said, when people wish to make the cure on their own estates, the indispensable Tatar is sent for, and the requisite number of middle-aged mares, of which no work is required, are set aside for the purpose. But from all I have heard, I am inclined to think that benefit is rarely derived from these private cures, and this for several reasons. Not only is the kumys said to be inferior when prepared in such small quantities, but no specialist or any other doctor can be constantly on hand to regulate the functional disorders which this diet frequently occasions. Moreover, the air of the steppe plays an important part in the cure. When a person drinks from five to fifteen or more bottles a day, and sometimes adds the proper amount of fatty, starchy, and saccharine elements, some other means than the stomach are indispensable for disposing of the refuse. As a matter of fact, in the hot, dry, even temperature of the steppe, where patients are encouraged to remain

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out-of-doors all day and drink slowly, they perspire kumys. When the system becomes thoroughly saturated with this food-drink, catarrh often makes its appearance, but disappears at the close of the cure. Colic, constipation, diarrhoea, nose-bleed, and bleeding from the lungs are also present at times, as well as sleeplessness, toothache, and other disorders. The effects of kumys are considered of especial value in cases of weak lungs, anaemia, general debility caused by any wasting illness, ailments of the digestive organs, and scurvy, for which it is taken by many naval officers.

In short, although it is not a cure for all earthly ills, it is of value in many which proceed from imperfect nutrition producing exhaustion of the patient. There are some conditions of the lungs in which it cannot be used, as well as in organic diseases of the brain and heart, epilepsy, certain disorders of the liver, and when gallstones are present. It is drunk at the temperature of the air which surrounds the patient, but must be warmed with hot water, not in the sun, and sipped slowly, with pauses, not drunk down in haste; and generally exercise must be taken. Turn where we would in those kumys establishments, we encountered a patient engaged in assiduous promenading, with a bottle of kumys suspended from his arm and a glassful in his hand.

Coffee, chocolate, and wine are some of the luxuries which must be renounced during a kumys cure, and though black tea (occasionally with lemon) is allowed, no milk or cream can be permitted to contend with the action of the mare's milk unless by express permission of the physician. "Cream kumys," which is advertised as a delicacy in America, is a contradiction in terms, it will be seen, as it is made of cow's milk, and cream would be contrary to the nature of kumys, even if the mare's milk produced anything which could rightly pass as such. Fish and fruits are also forbidden, with the exception of *klubniki*, which accord well with kumys. *Klubnika* is a berry similar to the strawberry in appearance, but with an entirely different taste. Patients who violate these dietary rules are said to suffer for it,—in which case there must have been a good deal of agony inside the tall fence of our establishment, judging by the thriving trade in fruits driven by the old women, who did not confine themselves to the outside of the gate, as the rules required, but slipped past the porter and guardians to the house itself.

We found the kumys a very agreeable beverage, and could readily perceive that the patients might come to have a very strong taste for it. We even sympathized with the thorough-going patient of whom we were told that he set off regularly every morning to lose himself for the day on the steppe, armed with an umbrella against possible cooling breezes, and with a basket containing sixteen bottles of kumys, his allowance of food and medicine until sundown. The programme consisted of a walk in the sun, a drink, a walk, a drink, with umbrella interludes, until darkness drove him home to bed and to his base of supplies.

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We did not remain long enough, or drink enough kumys, to observe any particular effects on our own persons. As I have said, we ate in town, chiefly, after that breakfast of kumys-mare beefsteak and potatoes of the size and consistency of bullets. During our food and shopping excursions we found that Samara was a decidedly wide-awake and driving town, though it seemed to possess no specialties in buildings, curiosities, or manufactures, and the statue to Alexander II., which now adorns one of its squares, was then swathed in canvas awaiting its unveiling. It is merely a sort of grand junction, through which other cities and provinces sift their products. In kumys alone does Samara possess a characteristic unique throughout Russia. Consequently, it is for kumys that multitudes of Russians flock thither every spring.

The soil of the steppe, on which grows the nutritious plume-grass requisite for the food of the kumys mares, is very fertile, and immense crops of rye, wheat, buckwheat, oats, and so forth are raised whenever the rainfall is not too meagre. Unfortunately, the rainfall is frequently insufficient, and the province of Samara often comes to the attention of Russia, or even of the world, as during the dearth in 1891, because of scarcity of food, or even famine, which is no novelty in the government. In a district where the average of rain is twenty inches, there is not much margin of superfluity which can be spared without peril. Wheat grows here better than in the government just north of it, and many peasants are attracted from the "black-bread governments" to Samara by the white bread which is there given them as rations when they hire out for the harvest.

But such a singular combination of conditions prevails there, as elsewhere in Russia, that an abundant harvest is often more disastrous than a scanty harvest. The price of grain falls so low that the cost of gathering it is greater than the market value, and it is often left to fall unreaped in the fields. When the price falls very low, complaints arise that there is no place to send it, since, when the ruble stands high, as it invariably does at the prospect of large crops, the demand from abroad is stopped. The result is that those people who are situated near a market sell as much grain and leave as little at home as possible in order to meet their bills. The price rises; the unreaped surplus of the districts lying far from markets cannot fill the ensuing demand. The income from estates falls, and the discouraged owners who have nothing to live on resolve to plant a smaller area thereafter. Estates are mortgaged and sold by auction; prices are very low, and often there are no buyers.

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The immediate result of an over-abundant harvest in far-off Samara is that the peasants who have come hither to earn a little money at reaping return home penniless, or worse, to their suffering families. Some of them are legitimate seekers after work; that is to say, they have no grain of their own to attend to, or they reap their own a little earlier or a little later, and go away to earn the ready money to meet taxes and indispensable expenditures of the household, such as oil, and so on. "*Pri khlyeby bez khlyeby*" is their own way of expressing the situation, which we may translate freely as "starvation in the midst of plenty." Thus the extremes of famine-harvest and the harvest which is an embarrassment of riches are equally disastrous to the poor peasant.

Samara offers a curious illustration of several agricultural problems, and a proof of some peculiar paradoxes. The peasants of the neighboring governments, which are not populated to a particularly dense degree,—twenty male inhabitants to a square verst (two thirds of a mile), and not all engaged in agriculture,—have long been accustomed to look upon Samara as a sort of promised land. They still regard it in that light, and endeavor to emigrate thither, for the sake of obtaining grants of state land, and certain immunities and privileges which are accorded to colonists. This action is the result of the paradox that overproduction exists hand in hand with too small a parcel of land for each peasant!

Volumes have been written, and more volumes might still be written, on this subject. But I must content myself here with saying that I believe there is no province which illustrates so thoroughly all the distressing features of these manifold and complicated problems of colonization, of permanent settlements, with the old evils of both landlords and peasants cropping up afresh, abundant and scanty harvests equally associated with famine, and all the troubles which follow in their train, as Samara. Hence it is that I can never recall the kumys, which is so intimately connected with the name of Samara, without also recalling the famine, which is, alas, almost as intimately bound up with it.

XII.

MOSCOW MEMORIES.

St. Petersburg is handsome, grand, impressive. Moscow is beautiful, poetic, sympathetic, and pervaded by an atmosphere of ancient Russia, which is indescribable, though it penetrates to the marrow of one's bones if he tarry long within her walls. Emperor Peter's new capital will not bear comparison, for originality, individuality, and picturesqueness with Tzar Peter's Heart of Holy Russia, to which the heart of one who loves her must, perforce, often return with longing in after days,—"white-stoned golden-domed, Holy Mother Moscow."

But a volume of guide-book details, highly colored impressionist sketches, and dainty miniature painting combined would not do justice to Moscow. Therefore, I shall confine

myself to a few random reminiscences which may serve to illustrate habits or traits in the character of the city or the people.

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“Eography,” says Mrs. Booby, in one of the famous old Russian comedies which we were so fortunate as to witness on the Moscow stage: “Ah! good heavens! And what are cabmen for, then? That’s their business. It’s not a genteel branch of learning. A gentleman merely says: ‘Take me to such or such a place,’ and the cabman drives him wherever he pleases.”

Nowadays, it is advisable to be vulgar and know the geography of Moscow, if one is really enjoying it independently. It is a trifle less complicated than the geography of the Balkan Principalities, and, unlike that of the Balkan Principalities, it has its humorous side, which affords alleviation. The Moscow cabby has now, as in the time of Mrs. Booby, the reputation of being a very hard customer to deal with. He is not often so ingenuous, even in appearance, as the man who drove close to the sidewalk and entreated our custom by warbling, sweetly: “We must have work or we can’t have bread.” He is only to be dreaded, however, if one be genteelly ignorant, after Mrs. Booby’s plan. I cannot say that I ever had any difficulty in finding any place I wanted, either with the aid (or hindrance) of an *izvostchik*, or on foot, in Moscow or other Russian towns. But for this and other similar reasons I acquired a nickname among the natives,—*molodyetz*, that is to say, a dashing, enterprising young fellow, the feminine form of the word being nonexistent. A Russian view of the matter is amusing, however.

“I never saw such a town in which to hunt up any one,” said a St. Petersburg man in Moscow to me. “They give you an address: ‘Such and such a street, such a house.’ For instance, ‘Green Street, house of Mr. Black.’ You go. First you get hold of the street in general, and discover that the special name applies only to one block or so, two or three versts away from the part where you chance to have landed. Moscow is even more a city of magnificent distances, you know, than St. Petersburg. Next you discover that there is no ‘house of Mr. Black.’ Mr. Black died, respected and beloved, God be with him! a hundred years ago or less, and the house has changed owners three times since. So far, it is tolerably plain sailing. Then it appears that the house you are in search of is not in the street at all, but tucked in behind it, on a parallel lane, round several corners and elbows.” (I will explain, in parenthesis, that the old system of designating a house by the name of the owner, which prevailed before the introduction of numbers, still survives extensively, even in Petersburg.)

“The next time you set out on a search expedition,” continued my informant, after a cup of tea and a cigarette to subdue his emotions, “you insist on having the number of the house. Do you get it? Oh yes! and with a safeguard added, ‘Inquire of the laundress.’ [This was a parody on, “Inquire of the Swiss,” or “of the yard-porter.”] You start off in high feather; number and guide are

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provided, only a fool could fail to find it, and you know that you are a person who is considered rather above the average in cleverness. But that is in Petersburg, and I may as well tell you at once that clever Petersburgers are fools compared to the Moscow men, in a good many points, such as driving a hard bargain. Well, suppose that the house you want is No. 29. You find No. 27 or No. 28, and begin to crow over your cleverness. But the next house on one side is No. 319, and the house on the other side is No. 15; the one opposite is No. 211, or No. 7, or something idiotic like that, and all because the city authorities permit people to retain the old district number of the house, to affix the new street number, or to post up both at their own sweet will! As you cannot find the laundress to question, under the circumstances, you interview every Swiss [hall-porter], yard-porter, policeman, and peasant for a verst round about; and all the satisfaction you get is, 'In whose house? That is Mr. Green's and this is Mr. Bareboaster's, and yonder are Count Thingumbob's and Prince Whatyoumaycall's.' So you retreat once more, baffled." Fortifying himself with more tea and cigarettes, the victim of Moscow went on:—

"But there is still another plan. [A groan.] The favorite way to give an address is, 'In the parish of Saint So-and-So.' It does n't pin you down to any special house, street, or number, which is, of course, a decided advantage when you are hunting for a needle in a haystack. And the Moscow saints and parishes have such names!" Here the narrator's feelings overcame him, and when I asked for some of the parochial titles he was too limp to reply. I had already noticed the peculiar designations of many churches, and had begun to suspect myself of stupidity or my cabman and other informants of malicious jesting. Now, however, I investigated the subject, and made a collection of specimens. These extraordinary names are all derived—with one or two exceptions for which I can find no explanation—from the peculiarities of the soil in the parish, the former use to which the site of the church was put, or the avocations of the inhabitants of its neighborhood in the olden times, when most of the space outside of the Kremlin and China Town was devoted to the purveyors and servants of the Tzars of Muscovy.

St. Nicholas, a very popular saint, heads the list, as usual. "St. Nicholas on Chips" occupies the spot where a woodyard stood. "St. Nicholas on the Well," "St. Nicholas Fine Chime," are easily understood. "St. Nicholas White-Collar" is in the ancient district of the court laundresses. "St. Nicholas in the Bell-Ringers" is comprehensible; but "St. Nicholas the Blockhead" is so called because in this quarter dwelt the imperial hatmakers, who prepared "blockheads" for shaping their wares. "St. Nicholas Louse's Misery" is, probably, a corruption of two somewhat similar words meaning Muddy Hill. "St. Nicholas on Chickens' Legs" belonged to the poulterers,

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and was so named because it was raised from the ground on supports resembling stilts. "St. Nicholas of the Interpreters" is in the quarter where the Court interpreters lived, and where the Tatar mosque now stands. Then we have: "The Life-Giving Trinity in the Mud," "St. John the Warrior" and "St. John the Theologian in the Armory," "The Birth of Christ on Broadwords," "St. George the Martyr in the Old Jails," "The Nine Holy Martyrs on Cabbage-Stalks," on the site of a former market garden, and the inexplicable "Church of the Resurrection on the Marmot," besides many others, some of which, I was told, bear quite unrepeatable names, probably perverted, like the last and like "St. Nicholas Louse's Misery," from words having originally some slight resemblance in sound, but which are now unrecognizable.

Great stress is laid, in hasty books of travel, on the contrasts presented by the Moscow streets, the "palace of a prince standing by the side of the squalid log hut of a peasant," and so forth. That may, perhaps, have been true of the Moscow of twenty or thirty years ago. In very few quarters is there even a semblance of truth in that description at the present day. The clusters of Irish hovels in upper New York among the towering new buildings are much more picturesque and noticeable. The most characteristic part of the town, as to domestic architecture, the part to which the old statements are most applicable, lies between the two lines of boulevards, which are, in themselves, good places to study some Russian tastes. For example, a line of open horse-cars is run all winter on the outer boulevard, and appreciated. Another line has the centre of its cars inclosed, and uninclosed seats at the ends. The latter are the most popular, at the same price, and as for heating a street-car, the idea could never be got into a Russian brain. A certain section of the inner boulevard, which forms a sort of slightly elevated garden, is not only a favorite resort in summer, but is thronged every winter afternoon with people promenading or sitting under the snow-powdered trees in an arctic fairyland, while the mercury in the thermometer is at a very low ebb indeed. It is fashionable in Russia to grumble at the cold, but unfashionable to convert the grumbling into action. On the contrary, they really enjoy sitting for five hours at a stretch, in a temperature of 25 degrees below zero, to watch the fascinating horse races on the ice.

In the districts between the boulevards, one can get an idea of the town as it used to be. In this "Earth Town" typical streets are still to be found, but the chances are greatly against a traveler finding them. They are alleys in width and irregularity, paved with cobblestones which seem to have been selected for their angles, and with intermittent sidewalks consisting of narrow, carelessly joined flagstones. The front steps of the more pretentious houses must be skirted or mounted, the street must

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be crossed when the family carriage stands at the door, like the most characteristic streets in Nantucket. Some of the doorplates—which are large squares of tin fastened over the *porte cochere*, or on the gate of the courtyard—bear titles. Next door, perhaps, stands a log house, flush with the sidewalk, its moss calking plainly visible between the huge ribs, its steeply sloping roof rising, almost within reach, above a single story; and its serpent-mouthed eave-spouts ingeniously arranged to pour a stream of water over the vulgar pedestrian. The windows, on a level with the eyes of the passer-by, are draped with cheap lace curtains. The broad expanse of cotton wadding between the double windows is decorated, in middle-class taste, with tufts of dyed grasses, colored paper, and other execrable ornaments. Here, as everywhere else in Moscow, one can never get out of eye-shot of several churches; white with brilliant external frescoes, or the favorite mixture of crushed strawberry and white, all with green roofs and surmounted with domes of ever-varying and original forms and colors, crowned with golden crosses of elaborate and beautiful designs. Ask a resident, whether prince or peasant, “How many churches are there in ‘Holy Moscow town’?” The answer invariably is, “Who knows? A forty of forties,” which is the old equivalent, in the Epic Songs, of incalculable numbers. After a while one really begins to feel that sixteen hundred is not an exaggerated estimate.

Very few of the streets in any part of the town are broad; all of them seem like lanes to a Petersburger, and “they are forever going up and down,” as a Petersburg cabman described the Moscow hills to me, in serious disapproval. He had found the ground too excitingly uneven and the inhabitants too evenly dull to live with for more than a fortnight, he confessed to me. Many of the old mansions in the centre of the town have been converted into shops, offices, and lodgings; and huge, modern business buildings have taken the places formerly occupied, I presume, by the picturesque “hovels” of the travelers’ tales.

One of the most interesting places in the White Town to me was the huge foundling asylum, established by Katherine II., immediately after her accession to the throne. There are other institutions connected with it, such as a school for orphan girls. But the hospital for the babies is the centre of interest. There are about six hundred nurses always on hand. Very few of them have more than one nursling to care for, and a number of babies who enter life below par, so to speak, are accommodated with incubators. The nurses stand in battalions in the various large halls, all clad alike, with the exception of the woolen *kokoshnik*,—the coronet-shaped headdress with its cap for the hair,—which is of a different color in each room. It requires cords of “cartwheels”—the big round loaves of black bread—to feed this army of nurses. If they are not fed on their ordinary peasant food, cabbage soup and sour black bread, they fall ill and the babies suffer, as no bottles are used.

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The fact that the babies are washed every day was impressed on my mind by the behavior of the little creatures while undergoing the operation. They protested a little in gentle squeaks when the water touched them, but quieted down instantly when they were wiped. It is my belief that Russian children never cry except during their bath. I heard no infantile wailing except in this asylum, and very little there. Many Russian mothers of all ranks still tie up their babies tightly in swaddling clothes, on the old-fashioned theory that it makes their limbs straight. But these foundlings are not swaddled. After its bath, the baby is laid on a fresh, warm, linen cloth, which is then wrapped around it in a particular manner, so that it is securely fastened without the use of a single pin. Two other cloths, similarly wrapped, complete the simple, comfortable toilet. This and another Russian habit, that of allowing a baby to kick about in its crib clad only in its birthday suit, I commend to the consideration of American mothers.

The last thing in the asylum which is shown to visitors is the manner in which the babies are received, washed, weighed, and numbered. It was early in December when I was there, but the numbers on the ivory disks suspended from the new arrivals' necks were a good many hundred above seventeen thousand. As they begin each year with No. 1, I think the whole number of foundlings for that particular year must have been between eighteen and nineteen thousand. The children are put out to board, after a short stay at the asylum, in peasant families, which receive a small sum per month for taking care of them. When the boys grow up they count as members of the family in a question of army service, and the sons of the family can escape their turn, I was told, if matters are rightly managed. The girls become uniformed servants in the government institutions for the education of girls of the higher classes, or marry peasants.

The most famous of the gates which lead from the White Town through the white, machicolated walls into China Town* is the Iversky, or gate of the Iberian Virgin. The gate has two entrances, and between these tower-crowned openings stands a chapel of malachite and marble, gilded bronze and painting. The Iversky Virgin who inhabits the chapel, though "wonder-working," is only a copy of one in the monastery on Mount Athos. She was brought to Russia in 1666, and this particular chapel was built for her by Katherine II. Her garment and crown of gold weigh between twenty-seven and twenty-eight pounds, and are studded with splendid jewels. But the Virgin whom one sees in the chapel is not even this copy, but a copy of the copy. The original Virgin, as we may call the first copy for convenience, is in such great demand for visits to convents and monasteries, to private houses and the shops of wealthy and devout merchants, that she is never at home from early morn till late at night, and the second copy represents her to the thousands

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of prayerful people of all classes, literally, who stop to place a candle or utter a petition. The original Virgin travels about the town, meanwhile, in a blue coach adorned with her special device, like a coat of arms, and drawn by six horses; and the persons whom she honors with a visit offer liberal gifts. The heads of her coachman, postilions, and footman are supposed to be respectfully bared in all weathers, but when it is very cold these men wind woolen shawls, of the nondescript, dirt color, which characterizes the hair of most peasants, adroitly round their heads, allowing the fringe to hang and simulate long locks. The large image of the Virgin, in its massive frame, occupies the seat of honor. A priest and a deacon, clad in crimson velvet and gold vestments, their heads unprotected, even in the most severe weather, by anything but their own thick hair, sit respectfully with their backs to the horses. When the Virgin drives along, passers-by pause, salute, and cross themselves. Evidently, under these circumstances, it is difficult for a foreigner to get a view of the original Virgin. We were fortunate, however. Our first invitation in Moscow was from the Abbess of an important convent to be present at one of the services which I have mentioned,—a sort of invocation of the Virgin's blessing,—in her cell, and at the conclusion of the service we were asked if we would not like to "salute the Virgin" and take a sip of the holy water "for health." Of course we did both, as courtesy demanded. Some time after that, as we were driving along the principal street of China Town, I saw an imposing equipage approaching, and remarked, "Here comes the Iversky Virgin."

* Ancient Moscow, lying in a walled semicircle just outside the walls of the Kremlin. All the trading was done on the "Red Square," where the Gostinny Dvor now stands, and all Oriental merchants were known by the common designation of "Chinese." At the present day "Chinese" has been replaced by "German," to designate foreigners in general.

"Excuse me, madam," said my cabman,—I had not addressed him, but as I had spoken involuntarily in Russian he thought I had,—"it is not the Virgin, it is only the Saviour. Don't you see that there are only four horses?"

"Very true; and St. Sergius drives with three, and St. Pantaleimon with two,—do they not? Tell me, which of them all would you ask to visit you, if you wished a blessing?"

"St. Pantaleimon is a good, all-round saint, who helps well in most cases," he replied thoughtfully. This seemed a good opportunity to get a popular explanation of a point which had puzzled me.

"Which," I asked, "is the real miraculous Iversky Virgin?—the one in the chapel, the one who rides in the carriage, or the original on Mount Athos?"

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"It is plain that you don't understand in the least," answered my *izvostchik*, turning round in his seat and imperiling our lives by his driving, while he plunged into the subject with profound earnestness. "None of them is the Virgin, and all of them are the Virgin. All the different Virgins are merely different manifestations of the Virgin to men. The Virgin herself is in heaven, and communicates her power where she wills. It is like the Life-giving Trinity." Assuming that as a foreigner, and consequently a heretic, I did not understand the doctrine of the Trinity, he proceeded to expound it, and did it extremely well. I lent half an ear in amazement to him, and half an ear I reserved for the objurgations of the drivers who were so good as to spare our lives in that crowded thoroughfare while my theological lesson was in progress.

While I am speaking of this unusual cabman, I may mention some unusual private coachmen in Moscow who use their masters' sledges and carriages for public conveyances while their owners are safely engaged in theatre or restaurant. I do not think that trick could be played in Petersburg. I found it out by receiving an amazingly reasonable offer from a very well-dressed man with a superb gray horse and a fine sledge. As we dashed along at lightning speed, I asked the man whether he owned that fine turnout or worked on wages. "I own it myself," he said curtly. Therefore, when I alighted, I slipped round behind the sledge and scrutinized it thoroughly under the gaslight. The back was decorated with a monogram and a count's coronet in silver! After that I never asked questions, but I always knew what had happened when I picked up very comfortable equipages at very reasonable rates in places which were between gas lanterns and near theatres and so forth.

I should not be doing my duty by a very important factor in Russian life if I omitted an illustration of the all-pervading influence of "official" rank, and the prestige which acquaintance with officialdom lends even to modest travelers like ourselves. It was, most appropriately, in the Kremlin, the heart of Russia, that we were favored with the most amusing of the many manifestations of it which came within our experience. We were looking at the objects of interest in the Treasury, when I noticed a large, handsomely bound book, flanked by pen and ink, on a side table. I opened the book, but before I could read a word an attendant pounced upon me.

"Don't touch that," he said peremptorily.

"Why not? If you do not wish people to look at this collection of ancient documents,—I suppose that is what it is,—you should lock it up, or label it 'Hands off!'"

"It is n't ancient documents, and you are not to touch it," he said, taking the book out of my hands. "It is strictly reserved for the signatures of *distinguished* visitors,—crowned heads, royal princes, ambassadors, and the like."

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"Then it does not interest me in the least, and if you would label it to that effect, no one would care to disturb it," I said.

Very soon afterwards we were joined by one of the powerful officials of the Kremlin. He had made an appointment to show us about, but was detained for a few moments, and we had come on alone and were waiting for him. As we went about with him the attendants hovered respectfully in the rear, evidently much impressed with the friendly, unofficial tone of the conversation. When we had made the round with much deliberation, we excused our official friend to his duties, saying that we wished to take another look at several objects.

No sooner was he gone than the guardian of the autograph album pounced upon us again, and invited us to add our "illustrious" names to the list. I refused; he entreated and argued. It ended in his fairly dragging us to the table and standing guard over us while we signed the sacred book. I did not condescend to examine the book, though I should have been permitted then; but—I know which three royal princes immediately preceded us.

As I am very much attached to the Russian Church, anything connected with it always interested me deeply. One of the prominent features of Moscow is the number of monasteries and convents. The Russian idea of monastic life is prayer and contemplation, not activity in good works. The ideal of devout secular life is much the same. To meet the wants in that direction of people who do not care to join the community, many of the convents have small houses within their inclosures, which they let out to applicants, of whom there is always an abundance. The occupants of these houses are under no restrictions whatever, except as to observing the hours of entry and exit fixed by the opening and closing of the convent gates; but, naturally, it is rather expected of them that they will attend more church services than the busy people of "the world." The sight of these little houses always oppressed me with a sense of my inferiority in the matter of devoutness. I could not imagine myself living in one of them, until I came across a group of their occupants engaged in discussing some racy gossip with the nuns on one of the doorsteps. Gossip is not my besetting weakness, but I felt relieved. Convents are not aristocratic institutions in Russia as they are in Roman Catholic countries, and very few ladies by birth and education enter them. Those who do are apt to rise to the post of abbess, influential connections not being superfluous in any calling in Russia any more than in other countries.

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If I were a nun I should prefer activity. I think that contemplation, except in small doses, is calculated to produce stupidity. Illustration: I was passing along a street in Moscow when my eye fell upon an elderly nun seated at the gate of a convent, with a little table whereon stood a lighted taper. Beside the taper, on a threadbare piece of black velvet, decorated with the customary cross in gold braid, lay a few copper coins before a dark and ancient *ikona*. Evidently, the public was solicited to contribute in the name of the saint there portrayed, though I could not recollect that the day was devoted to a saint of sufficient importance to warrant the intrusion of that table on the narrow sidewalk. I halted and asked the nun what day it was, and who was the saint depicted in the image. She said she did not know. This seemed incredible, and I persisted in my inquiry. She called a policeman from the middle of the street, where he was regulating traffic as usual, and asked him about the *ikona* and the day, with the air of a helpless child. Church and State set to work guessing with great heartiness and good-will, but so awkwardly that it was the easiest thing in the world for me to refute each successive guess. When we tired of that, I gave the nun a kopek for the entertainment she had unconsciously afforded, and thanked the policeman, after which the policeman and I left the good nun sitting stolidly at the receipt of custom.

Quite at the opposite pole was my experience one hot summer day in the Cathedral of the Assumption, where the emperors have been crowned for centuries; or, to speak more accurately, the two poles met and embraced in that church, the heart of the heart of Holy Russia. The early Patriarchs and Metropolitans are buried in this cathedral in superb silver-gilt coffins. Of these, the tomb and shrine of Metropolitan Jona seems to be the goal of the most numerous pilgrimages. I stood near it, in the rear corner of the church, one Sunday morning, while mass was in progress. An unbroken stream of people, probably all of them pilgrims to the Holy City, her saints and shrines, passed me, crossed themselves, knelt in a "ground reverence," kissed the saint's coffin, then the hand of the priest, who stood by to preserve order and bless each person as he or she turned away. To my surprise, I heard many of them inquire the name of the shrine's occupant *after* they had finished their prayers. After the service and a little chat with this priest, who seemed a very sensible man, we went forward to take another look at the Vladimir Virgin, the most famous and historical in all Russia, in her golden case. A gray-haired old army colonel, who wore the Vladimir cross, perceiving from our speech that we were foreigners, politely began to explain to us the noteworthy points about the church and the Virgin. It soon appeared, however, that we were far more familiar with them all than he was, and we fell into conversation.

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"I am stationed in Poland," he said, "and I have never been in Moscow before. I am come on a pilgrimage to the Holy City, but everything is so dear here that I must deny myself the pleasure of visiting many of the shrines in the neighborhood. It is a great happiness to me to be present thus at the mass in my own *pravoslavny* church, and in Moscow."

"But there are Orthodox churches in Poland, surely," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "there are a few; and I go whenever I get a chance."

"What do you do when you have not the chance?"

"I go to whatever church there is,—the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, the Synagogue."

"Is that allowed?" I asked. I knew very well that Russians attend Roman Catholic and Protestant churches when abroad, as a matter of course, though I had not before heard of the Synagogue in the list, and I wished to hear what the earnest old colonel would say.

"Why not? why should n't I?" he replied. "We all go to church to worship God and to pray to Him. Does it matter about the form or the language? A man has as much as he can do to be a Christian and an honest man,— which are two very different things nowadays, apparently,—without troubling himself about those petty details."

It is almost superfluous to say that we swore friendship with the colonel on the spot, on those foundations. Our acquaintance ended with our long talk there in the cathedral, since we could not well stop in Poland to accept the delightful old officer's invitation to visit him and his wife. But the friendship remains, I hope.

When he left us, a young fellow about seventeen years of age, who had been standing near us and listening to the last part of our conversation with an air of profound and respectful interest which obviated all trace of impertinence, stepped up and said:—

"May I have the pleasure of showing you about the cathedral? You seem to appreciate our Russian ways and thoughts. I have taken a good deal of interest in studying the history and antiquities of my native city, and I may be able to point out a few things to you here."

He was a pleasant-faced young fellow, with modest, engaging manners; a student in one of the government institutions, it appeared. He looked very cool and comfortable in a suit of coarse gray linen. He proved to be an admirable cicerone, and we let him escort us about for the pleasure of listening, though we had seen everything many times already. I commented on his knowledge, and on the evident pride which he took in his country, and especially in his church, remarking that he seemed to be very well

informed on many points concerning the latter, and able to explain the reasons for things in an unusual way.

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"Yes," he answered, "I am proud and fond of my country and my church. We Russians do not study them as we should, I am ashamed to say. There, for instance, is my cousin, Princess——, who is considered a very well-informed young woman on all necessary points. She was to make her communion, and so some one brought her to the church while the Hours were being read, as is proper, though she usually comes very much later. She had not been there ten minutes before she began to ask: 'When does the Sacrament come? Is n't it pretty soon?' and she kept that up at short intervals, despite all I could do to stop her. I am quite sure," he added, "that I need not explain to you, though you are a foreigner, where the Hours and the Sacrament come in the service?"

"No: the Hours precede the Liturgy, and the administration of the Sacrament comes very nearly at the end of all."

"Exactly. You understand what a disgrace such ignorance was on my cousin's part."

He was charming, amusingly frank on many points which I had supposed to be rather delicate with members of the "Orthodox" (as I must call it for the lack of a possible English equivalent for *pravoslavny*) Russian Church, but so well-bred and intelligent, withal, that we were sincerely sorry to say good-by to him at the door of our hotel.

XIII.

THE NIZHNI NOVGOROD FAIR AND THE VOLGA.

The most picturesque and appropriate way of reaching Nizhni Novgorod is by the Volga, with which its life is so intimately connected, and the most characteristic time to see the Volga steamers is on the way upstream during the Fair.

What an assortment of people we had on board! To begin with, our boat was commanded by a Vice-Admiral in full uniform. His family was with him, spending the summer on board sailing up and down the river between Nizhni Novgorod and Astrakhan.

The passengers over whom the vice-admiral ruled were delightfully varied. There were Russians from every quarter of the empire, and of as many races, including Armenians. One of the latter, an old man with a physiognomy not to be distinguished, even by our Russian friends who were traveling with us, from that of a Jew, seemed to take no interest in anything except in telling over a short rosary of amber beads, and standing guard at all stopping-places over his cabin, which he was determined to occupy alone, though he had paid but one fare. After he had done this successfully at several landing-places and had consigned several men to the second cabin, an energetic man appealed to the admiral. It required some vigorous language and a threat to break open the door



if the key were not forthcoming, before the admiral could overcome the resistance of the obstinate old Armenian, who protested, in very bad Russian, that he was very ill indeed, and should certainly die if any one entered his cabin. He was still alive when we reached the end of our voyage, and had cleverly made his cabin-mate pay for all his food.

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Among the second-class passengers was a party of students returning to the University of Kazan. They exhibited all degrees of shabbiness, but this was only the modest plumage of the nightingale, apparently. For hours they sang songs, all beautiful, all strange to us, and we listened entranced until tea, cigarettes, and songs came to an end in time to permit them a few hours of sleep before we reached their landing. The third-class passengers, who were also lodged on the upper deck, aft, included Tatars and other Mohammedans from the Orient, who spread their prayer-rugs at sundown and went through their complicated devotions with an air of being quite oblivious to spectators. Several got permission from the admiral to ascend to the hurricane deck. But this, while unnecessary as a precaution against crowding or interference from their numerous Russian fellow-passengers, rendered them more conspicuous; and even this was not sufficient to make the instinctively courteous Russians stare at or notice them.

The fourth-class passengers were on the lower deck. Among them was a company of soldiers in very shabby uniforms, who had been far down the river earning a little money by working in the harvest fields, where hands are always too few, and who were returning to garrison at Kazan. Some enterprising passengers from Astrakhan had laid in a large stock of the delicious round watermelons and luscious cantaloupe melons. By the time we reached Kazan, there were not many melons left in that improvised shop on the lower deck, Russians are as fond of watermelons as are the American negroes.

At Samara we had seen enormous bales of camel's-hair, weighing upwards of eight hundred pounds, in picturesque mats of red, yellow, and brown, taken on board for the Fair. The porters seemed to find it easy to carry them on their backs, aided only by a sort of small chair-back, with a narrow, seat-like projection at the lower end, which was fastened by straps passing over the shoulders and under the arms. When we left Kazan, I noticed that a huge open barge was being towed upstream alongside us, that it was being filled with these bales, to lighten the steamer for the sand-bars and shallows of the upper river, and that a monotonous but very musical cadence was being repeated at intervals, in muffled tones, somewhere on board. I went down to the cargo department of the lower deck and found the singers,—the herculean porters. One after another they bent their backs, and two mates hoisted the huge bales, chanting a refrain which enabled them to move and lift in unison. The words were to the following effect: "If all don't grasp together, we cannot lift the weight." The music was sad, but irresistibly sweet and fascinating, and I stood listening and watching until the great barge was filled and dropped behind, for the company's tug to pick up and tow to Nizhni with a string of other barges.

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It is probably a vulgar detail, but I must chronicle the fact that the cooking on these Volga steamers—on the line we patronized, at least—is among the very best to be found in Russia, in my experience. On the voyage upstream, when they are well supplied with sterlet and other fish, all alive, from Astrakhan, the dinners are treats for which one may sigh in vain in the capitals of St. Petersburg and Moscow, with their mongrel German-French-Russian cookery. The dishes are very Russian, but they are very good.

I remember one particularly delicious concoction was composed of fresh sterlet and sour cabbage, with white grapes on top, baked to a brown crispness.

We arrived at our wharf on the Volga front of the old town of Nizhni Novgorod about five o'clock in the afternoon. Above us rose the steep green hills on whose crest stood the Kremlin, containing several ancient churches, the governor's house, and so forth. On a lower terrace, to right and left, stood monasteries and churches intermingled with shops and mediocre dwellings. The only noteworthy church was that in front of us, with its picturesque but un-Russian rococo plaster decoration on red brick, crowned by genuine Russian domes and crosses of elaborately beautiful patterns.

But we did not pause long to admire this part of the view, which was already familiar to us. What a change had come over the scene since we had bidden it farewell on our way downstream! Then everything was dead, or slumbering, except the old town, the city proper; and that had not seemed to be any too much awake or alive. The Fair town, situated on the sand-spit between the Volga and the mouth of the Oka, stood locked up and deserted, as it had stood since the close of last year's Fair. Now, as we gazed over the prow of the steamer, we could see the bridge across the Oka black with the swarming masses of pedestrians and equipages.

The steamer company allows its patrons to sleep (but not to eat) on board the night after arrival and the night before starting, and we availed ourselves of the privilege, having heard that it was often no easy matter to secure accommodations in the Fair, and having no intention of returning to our former hotel, miles from all the fun, in the upper town, if we could help it.

The only vacant rooms in the Fair seemed to be at the "best hotel," to which we had been recommended, with a smile of amusement which had puzzled us, by a Moscow friend, an officer in the army. Prices were very high at this hotel, which, like American summer hotels, is forced to make its hay for the year during the season of six weeks, after which it is locked up. Our room was small; the floor, of rough boards, was bare; the beds were not comfortable. For the same price, in Petersburg or Moscow, we should have had a spacious room on the *bel etage*, handsomely furnished, with rugs on an inlaid floor.

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Across one corner of the dining-room was built a low platform, on which stood a piano. We soon discovered its use. Coming in about nine o'clock in the evening, we ordered our *samovar* for tea in the dining-room,— a most unusual place. The proper place was our own room. But we had found a peculiar code of etiquette prevailing here, governed by excessive modesty and propriety, no doubt, but an obstructionist etiquette, nevertheless. The hall-waiter, whose business it is to serve the *samovar* and coffee, was not allowed to enter our room, though his fellows had served us throughout the country, after the fashion of the land. Here we were compelled to wait upon the leisure of the chambermaid, a busy and capricious person, who would certainly not be on hand in the evening if she was not in the morning. Accordingly, we ordered our tea in the dining-room, as I have said. Presently, a chorus of girls, dressed all alike, mounted the platform, and sang three songs to an accompaniment banged upon the piano by a man. Being violently applauded by a long table-full of young merchants who sat near, at whom they had been singing and staring, without any attempt at disguise, and with whom they had even been exchanging remarks, they sang two songs more. They were followed by another set of girls, also in a sort of uniform costume, who sang five songs at the young merchants. It appeared that one party was called "Russian singers," and the other "German singers." We found out afterwards, by watching operations on another evening, that these five songs formed the extent of their respective repertoires.

A woman about forty-five years of age accompanied them into the room, then planted herself with her back against the wall near us, which was as far away from her charges as space permitted. She was the "sheep-dog," and we soon saw that, while discreetly oblivious of the smiles, glances, and behavior of her lambs,—as all well-trained society sheep-dogs are,—she kept darting sharp looks at us as though we were doing something quite out of the way and improper. By that time we had begun to suspect, for various reasons, that the Nizhni Fair is intended for men, not for—ladies. But we were determined quietly to convince ourselves of the state of affairs, so we stood our ground, dallied with our tea, drank an enormous quantity of it, and kept our eyes diligently in the direction where those of the sheep-dog should have been, but never were.

Their very bad singing over, the lambs disappeared to the adjoining veranda. The young merchants slipped out, one by one. The waiters began to carry great dishes of peaches, and other dainty fruits,—all worth their weight in gold in Russia, and especially at Nizhni,—together with bottles of champagne, out to the veranda. When we were satisfied, we went to bed, but not to sleep. The peaches kept that party on the veranda and in the rooms below exhilarated until nearly daylight. I suppose the duenna did her duty and sat out the revel in the distant security of the dining-room. Several of her charges added a number of points to our store of information the next day, at the noon breakfast hour, when the duenna was not present.

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We began to think that we understood our Moscow friend's enigmatic smile, and to regret that we had not met him and his wife at the Fair, as we had originally arranged to do.

The far-famed Fair of Nizhni Novgorod—"Makary," the Russians call it, from the town and monastery of St. Makary, sixty miles farther down the Volga, where it was held from 1624 until the present location was adopted in 1824—was a disappointment to us. There is no denying that. Until railways and steamers were introduced into these parts, and facilitated the distribution of goods, and of commonplaceness and monotony, it probably merited all the extravagant praises of its picturesqueness and variety which have been lavished upon it. The traveler arrives there with indefinite but vast expectations. A fancy dress ball on an enormous scale, combined with an International Exposition, would seem to be the nearest approach possible to a description of his confused anticipations. That is, in a measure, what one sees; and, on the other hand, it is exactly the reverse of what he sees. I must confess that I think our disappointment was partly our own fault. Had we, like most travelers who have written extravagantly about the Fair, come to it fresh from a stay of (at most) three weeks in St. Petersburg and Moscow only, we should have been much impressed by the variety of types and goods, I have no doubt. But we had spent nearly two years in the land, and were familiar with the types and goods of the capitals and of other places, so that there was little that was new to us. Consequently, though we found the Fair very interesting, we were not able to excite ourselves to any extravagant degree of amazement or rapture.

The Fair proper consists of a mass of two-story "stone" (brick and cement) buildings, inclosed on three sides by a canal in the shape of a horseshoe. Through the centre runs a broad boulevard planted with trees, ending at the open point of the horseshoe in the residence occupied by the governor during the Fair (he usually lives in the Kremlin of the Upper Town), the post-office, and other public buildings. Across the other end of the boulevard and "rows" of the Gostinny Dvor, with their arcades full of benches occupied by fat merchants or indolent visitors, and serving as a chord to the arc of the horseshoe, run the "Chinese rows," which derive their name from the style of their curving iron roofs and their ornaments, not from the nationality of the merchants, or of the goods sold there. It is, probably, a mere accident that the wholesale shops for overland tea are situated in the Chinese rows. It is a good place to see the great bales of "Kiakhta tea," still in their wrappings of rawhides, with the hair inside and the hieroglyphical addresses, weights, and so forth, cut into the skins, instead of being painted on them, just as they have been brought overland from Kiakhta on the Chinese border of Siberia. Here, also, rises the great Makary Cathedral, which

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towers conspicuously above the low-roofed town. Inside the boundary formed by this Belt Canal, no smoking is allowed in the streets, under penalty of twenty-five rubles for each offense. The drainage system is flushed from the river every night; and from the ventilation towers, which are placed at short intervals, the blue smoke of purifying fires curls reassuringly. Great care is necessary in this department, and the sanitary conditions, though as good as possible, are never very secure. The whole low sandspit is often submerged during the spring floods, and the retreating waters leave a deposit of slime and debris behind them, which must be cleared away, besides doing much damage to the buildings.

The peculiarity of this Makary Fair is that nothing is sold by sample, in modern fashion; the whole stock of goods is on hand, and is delivered at once to purchasers. The taciturn, easy-going merchants in those insignificant-looking shops of the Gostinny Dvor "rows," and, to a small extent, in the supplementary town which has sprung up outside the canal, set the prices for tea and goods of all sorts all over Russia and Siberia for the ensuing year. Contracts for the future are dated, and last year's bills fall due, at "Makary." It is hard to realize.

All the firms with whose shops we had been familiar in Petersburg and Moscow had establishments here, and, at first, it seemed not worth while to inspect their stocks, with which we felt perfectly acquainted. But we soon discovered that our previous familiarity enabled us to distinguish certain articles which are manufactured for the "Fair" trade exclusively, and which are never even shown in the capitals. For example, the great porcelain houses of St. Petersburg manufacture large pipe-bowls, ewers (with basins to match) of the Oriental shape familiar to the world in silver and brass, and other things, all decorated with a deep crimson bordering on magenta, and with gold. The great silk houses of Moscow prepare very rich and very costly brocades of this same deep crimson hue, besprinkled with gold and with tiny bouquets of bright flowers, or in which the crimson is prominent. They even copy the large, elaborate patterns from the robes of ancient Doges of Venice. All these, like the pipes and ewers, are made to suit the taste of customers in Bokhara and other Eastern countries, where a man's rank is, to a certain degree, to be recognized by the number and richness of the *khalati* which he can afford to wear at one time. This is one of the points in which the civilization of the East coincides very nearly with the civilization of the West. The *khalat* is a sort of dressing-gown, with wide sleeves, which is girt about the waist with a handsome shawl; but it would strike a European that eight or ten of these, worn one on top of the other, might conduce to the preservation of vanity, but not to comfort, in the hot countries where the custom prevails. The Bokhariots bring to the Fair *khalati* of their own thin, strong silk, in hues more gaudy than those of the rainbow and the peacock combined, which are always lined with pretty green and white chintz, and can be bought for a very reasonable price in the Oriental shops, together with jeweled arms and ornaments, rugs, and a great variety of fascinating wares.

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The choicest “overland” tea—the true name is “Kiakhta tea”—can be had only by wholesale, alas! and it is the same with very many things. There are shops full of rolls of *sarpinka*, a fine, changeable gingham in pink and blue, green and yellow, and a score of other combinations, which washes perfectly, and is made by the peasants far down the Volga, in the season when agricultural labor is impossible. There are furs of more sorts than the foreign visitor is likely ever to have seen before; iron from the Ural mines by the ton, on a detached sand-spit in the Oka River; dried and salted fish by the cord, in a distant, too odorous spot; goldsmiths’ shops; old-clothes shops, where quaint and beautiful old costumes of Russia abound; Tatar shops, filled with fine, multi-colored leather work and other Tatar goods, presided over by the stately Tatars from whom we had bought at Kazan; shops piled with every variety of dried fruit, where prime Sultana raisins cost forty cents for a box of one hundred and twenty pounds. Altogether, it is a varied and instructive medley.

We learned several trade tricks. For example, we came upon the agency of a Moscow factory, which makes a woolen imitation of an Oriental silken fabric, known as *termalama*. The agent acknowledged that it was an imitation, and said that the price by the piece was twenty-five cents a yard. In the Moscow Oriental shops the dealers sell it for eight times that price, and swear that it is genuine from the East. A Russian friend of ours had been cheated in this way, and the dealers attempted to cheat us also,—in vain, after our Nizhni investigations.

Every one seemed to be absorbed in business, to the exclusion of every other thought. But sometimes, as we wandered along the boulevard, and among the rows, we found the ground of the Gostinny Dvor strewn with fresh sprays of fragrant fir, which we took at first to be a token that a funeral had occurred among some of the merchants’ clerks who lived over the shops. However, it appeared that a holy picture had been carried along the rows, and into the shops of those who desired its blessing on their trade, and a short service had been held. The “zeal” of these numerous devout persons must have enriched the church where the *ikona* dwelt, judging from the number, of times during our five days’ stay that we came upon these freshly strewn paths.

The part of the Fair which is most interesting to foreigners in general, I think, is the great glass gallery filled with retail booths, where Russians sell embroidery and laces and the handiwork of the peasants in general; where Caucasians deal in the beautiful gold and silver work of their native mountains; where swarthy Bokhariots sit cross-legged, with imperturbable dignity, among their gay wares, while the band plays, and the motley crowd bargains and gazes even in the evening when all the other shops are closed.

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I learned here an extra lesson in the small value attached by Russians to titles in themselves. It was at the Ekaterinburg booth, where precious and semi-precious stones from the Ural and Siberia, in great variety and beauty, were for sale. A Russian of the higher classes, and, evidently, not poor, inquired the price of a rosary of amethysts, with a cross of assorted gems fit for a bishop. The attendant mentioned the price. It did not seem excessive, but the bargainer exclaimed, in a bantering tone,—

“Come now, prince, that’s the fancy price. Tell me the real price.”

But the “prince” would not make any reduction, and his customer walked away. I thought I would try the effect of the title on the Caucasians and Bokhariots. I had already dropped into the habit of addressing Tatars as “prince,” except in the case of hotel waiters,—and I might as well have included them. I found to my amusement that, instead of resenting it as an impertinence, they reduced the price of the article for which I was bargaining by five kopeks (about two and a half cents) every time I used the title, though no sign of gratification disturbed the serene gravity of their countenances any more than if they had been Americans and I had addressed them as “colonel” or “judge,” at haphazard. Truly, human nature varies little under different skies! But I know now, authoritatively, that the market value of the title of “prince” is exactly two and a half cents.

One evening we drove across the bridge to take tea at a garden on the “Atkos,” or slope,—the crest of the green hill on which stands the Kremlin. In this Atkos quarter of the town there are some really fine houses of wealthy merchants, mingled with the curious old dwellings of the merely well-to-do and the poor. In the garden the tea was not very good, and the weedy-looking chorus of women, the inevitable adjunct to every eating establishment at the Fair, as we had learned, sang wretchedly, and were rewarded accordingly when one of their number came round to take up a collection. But the view! Far below, at our feet, swept broad “Matushka Volga.” The wharves were crowded with vessels. Steamers and great barges lay anchored in the stream in battalions. Though the activity of the day was practically over, tugs and small boats were darting about and lending life to the scene. We were on the “Hills” side of the river. Far away, in dreamy dimness, lay the flat, blue-green line of the “Forests” shore. On our left was the mouth of the Oka, and the Fair beyond, which seemed to be swarming with ants, lay flat on the water level. The setting sun tinged the scene with pale rose and amber in a mild glow for a while, and then the myriad lights shone out from the city and river with even more charming effect.

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Our next visit to the old town was in search of a writer who had published a couple of volumes of agreeable sketches. It was raining hard, so we engaged an *izvostchik* who was the fortunate possessor of an antiquated covered carriage, with a queer little drapery of scarlet cotton curtains hanging from the front of the hood, as though to screen the modesty of “the young person” from the manners, customs, and sights of the Fair,—about which, to tell the truth, the less that is said in detail the better. Certainly, more queer, old-fashioned carriages and cabmen’s costumes are to be seen at the Fair than anywhere else in the country. As we were about to enter our antique conveyance, my mother’s foot caught in the braid on the bottom of her dress, and a long strip gave way.

“I must go upstairs and sew this on before we start,” said she, reentering the hotel.

The *izvostchik* ran after us. “Let me sew it on, Your High Well-born,” he cried. Seeing our surprise, he added, “God is my witness,—yay *Bogu!* I am a tailor by trade.”

His rent and faded coat did not seem to indicate anything of the sort, but I thought I would try him, as I happened to have a needleful of silk and a thimble in my pocket. I gave them to him accordingly. He knelt down and sewed on the braid very neatly and strongly in no time. His simple, friendly manner was irresistibly charming. I cannot imagine accepting such an offer from a New York cabby,—or his offering to do such a job.

When we reached the old town, I asked a policeman where to find my author. I thought he might be able to tell me at once, as the town is not densely populated, especially with authors;—and for other reasons. He did not know.

“Then where is the police office or the address office?” I asked. (There is no such thing as a directory in Russian cities, even in St. Petersburg. But there is an address office where the names and residences on passports are filed, and where one can obtain the address wanted by paying a small fee, and filling out a form. But he must know the baptismal name and the patronymic as well as the surname, and, if the person wanted be not “noble,” his profession or trade in addition!)

“There is no address office,” he answered, “and the police office is closed. It is after four o’clock. Besides, if it were open, you could not find out there. We keep no record here, except of soldiers and strangers.”

I thought the man was jesting, but after questioning him further, I was forced to conclude that it might be true, though it certainly was amazing. As the author in question had been sent to Siberia once or twice, on the charge of complicity in some revolutionary proceedings, it did seem as though the police ought to be able to give his address, if Russia meant to live up to the reputation for strict surveillance of every soul within her borders which foreigners have kindly bestowed upon her.

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As a house-to-house visitation was impossible, I abandoned the quest, and drove to a photographer's to buy some views of the town. The photographer proved to be a chatty, vivacious man, and full of information. I mentioned my dilemma to him. He said that the policeman had told the exact truth, but that my author, to his positive knowledge, was in the Crimea, "looking up material." Then he questioned me as to what we had seen at the Fair, mentioning one or two places of evening entertainment. I replied that we had not been to those places. I had understood that they were not likely to suit my taste. Had I been rightly informed, or ought I to have gone to them in spite of warning?

"No," he replied frankly, after a momentary hesitation, "you ought not to see them. But all the American women do go to them. There was a party here last year. O-o-o-oh, how they went on! They were told, as you have been, that they ought not to go to certain places; so of course they went, and took the men in the party with them,—which was just as well. I'd have given something to see their faces at the time, or even afterwards! An Englishman, who had traveled everywhere, and had seen everything, told me that nowhere, even in India, had he seen the like of the doings at this Fair; and he was greatly shocked." He added that an officer could not appear at these places in uniform.

I begged the photographer to remember in future that there were several sorts of American women, and that not all of them worked by the law of contraries. In my own mind I wondered what those particular women had done, and wished, for the hundredth time, that American women abroad would behave themselves properly, and not earn such a reputation for their country-people.

On Sunday we went to the Armenian church, to see the service and to meet some Armenian acquaintances. We found the service both like and unlike the Russian, in many points approaching more nearly to the Greek form. The music was astonishing. An undercurrent of sound, alternating between a few notes, was kept up throughout the service, almost without a break. At times, this undercurrent harmonized with the main current of intoning and chanting, but quite as often the discord was positively distressing. Perceiving that we were strangers, the Armenians showed their hospitality in an original way. First, when one of the congregation went forward to the chancel railing and received from the priest the triple kiss of peace, which he then proceeded to communicate to another person, who passed it on in dumb show, and so on through the whole assembly, neither men nor women would run the risk of offending us by offering the simulated kiss. Secondly, and more peculiar, besides throwing light on their motives in omitting the kiss, they deliberately passed us by when they brought round the plate for the collection! This was decidedly novel! A visit to the Armenian church in St. Petersburg convinced

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us that the discordant music was not an accident due to bad training, but deliberate and habitual. I noticed also that the men and women, though they stood on opposite sides of the church, as with the Russian Old Ritualists, with the women on the left,—in the State Church, at Court, the women stand on the right,—they crossed themselves from left to right, like Roman Catholics, instead of the other way about, as do the Russians.

As we were exploring the Tatar shops at noon, we heard the muezzin calling to prayer from the minaret of the mosque close by, and we set off to attend the service. If we had only happened to have on our galoshes, we might have complied with etiquette by removing them, I suppose, and could have entered in our shoes. At least, the Russian policeman said so, and that is very nearly what the Tatars did. They kicked off the stiff leather slippers in which they scuff about, and entered in their tall boots, with the inset of frosted green pebbled horsehide in the heel, and soft soles, like socks. As it was, we did not care to try the experiment of removing our shoes, and so we were obliged to stand in the vestibule, and look on from the threshold. Each Tatar, as he entered, pulled out the end of his turban, and let it float down his back. Where the turban came from for the prayers, I do not know. None of the Tatars had worn a turban in the shops from which they had just come in large numbers, abandoning the pressing engagements of the busy noontide. Several individuals arrived very late, and decided not to enter. All of these late comers, one after the other, beckoned me mysteriously out of sight of the congregation and the *mollah*, and whispered eagerly:—

“How do you like it?”

“Very much,” I answered emphatically; whereupon they exhibited signs of delight which were surprising in such grave people, and even made a motion to kiss my hand.

At least, that is what the motion would have meant from a Russian. Next to the magnificent ceremonial of the Russian Church, the opposite extreme, this simplicity of the congregational Mussulman worship is the most impressive I have ever seen.

The manner of our departure from Nizhni Novgorod was characteristically Russian,—but not by our own choice. We decided to go on up the Volga by steamer, see the river and a few of the towns, and return from some point, by rail, to Moscow.

The boat was advertised to start from the wharf, in the old town, at six o'clock in the evening. We went aboard in good season, and discovered that there were but three first-class staterooms, the best of which (the only good one, as it afterwards appeared) had been captured by some friends of the captain. We installed ourselves in the best we could get, and congratulated each other when the steamer started on time. We had hardly finished the congratulations when it drew up at another wharf and made fast. Then it was explained to us that it was to load at

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this wharf, at the “Siberian Landing,” a point on the Volga shore of the Fair sand-spit, miles nearer our hotel than the one to which we had driven through torrents of rain. We were to make our real start at ten o’clock that night! The cold was piercing. We wrapped ourselves up in our wadded cloaks and in a big down quilt which we had with us, and tried to sleep, amid the deliberate bang-bang-bang of loading. When the cargo was in we slept. When we woke in the morning we began to exchange remarks, being still in that half comatose condition which follows heavy slumber.

“What a delightfully easy boat!” “Who would have expected such smoothness of motion from such an inferior-looking old craft?” “It must be very swift to have no motion at all perceptible. Whereabouts are we, and how much have we missed?”

I rose and raised the blind. The low shore opposite and far away, the sandy islet near at hand, the river,—all looked suspiciously like what our eyes had rested upon when we went to bed the night before. We would not believe it at first, but it was true, that we had not moved a foot, but were still tied up at the Siberian Landing. Thence we returned to the town wharf, no apologies or explanations being forthcoming or to be extracted, whence we made a final start at about nine o’clock, only fifteen hours late! And the company professed to be “American”!

Progress up the river was slow. The cold rain and wind prevented our availing ourselves of the tiny deck. The little saloon had no outlook, being placed in the middle of the boat. The shores and villages were not of striking interest, after our acquaintance with the lower Volga. For hours all the other passengers (chiefly second-class) were abed, apparently. I returned to my cabin to kill time with reading, and presently found the divan and even the floor and partition walls becoming intolerably hot, and exhaling a disagreeable smell of charred wood. I set out on a tour of investigation. In the next compartment to us, which had the outward appearance of a stateroom, but was inclosed on the outside only by a lattice-work, was the smoke-pipe. The whistle was just over our heads, and the pipe almost touched the partition wall of our cabin. That partly explained the deadly chill of the night before, and the present suffocating heat. I descended to the lower deck. There stood the engine, almost as rudimentary as a parlor stove, in full sight and directly under our cabin; also close to the woodwork. It burned wood, and at every station the men brought a supply on board; the sticks, laid across two poles in primitive but adequate fashion, being deposited by the simple process of widening the space between the poles, and letting the wood fall on the deck with a noise like thunder. The halts and “wooding up” seemed especially frequent at night, and there was not much opportunity for sleep between them. Our fear of being burned alive also deprived us of the desire to sleep. We were nearly roasted, as it was, and had to go out on the deck in the wind and rain at short intervals, to cool off.

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There was nothing especially worthy of note at any of the landings, beyond the peculiar windmills, except at Gorodetz, which is renowned for the manufacture of spice-cakes, so the guide-book said. I watched anxiously for Gorodetz, went ashore, and bought the biggest “spice-cake” I could find from an old woman on the wharf. All the other passengers landed for the same purpose, and the old woman did a rushing business. After taking a couple of mouthfuls, I decided that I was unable to appreciate the merits of my cake, as I had been, after repeated efforts, to appreciate those of a somewhat similar concoction known under the name of “Vyazemsky.” So I gave the cake to the grateful stewardess, and went out on deck to look at a ray of sunlight.

“Where’s your cake?” asked a stern voice at my elbow. The speaker was a man with long hair and beard, dressed like a peasant, in a conical fur cap and a sheepskin coat, though his voice, manner, and general appearance showed that he belonged to the higher classes. Perhaps he was an “adept” of Count Tolstoy, and was merely masquerading in that costume, which was very comfortable, though it was only September.

“I gave it to the stewardess,” I answered meekly, being taken by surprise.

“What! Didn’t you eat it? Don’t you know, madam, that these spice-cakes are renowned for their qualities all over Russia, and are even carried to the remotest parts of Siberia and of China, also, I believe, in great quantities? [He had got ahead of the guide-book in that last particular!] *Why* didn’t you eat it?”

“It did not taste good; and besides, I was afraid of indigestion. It seemed never to have been cooked, unless by exposure to the sun, and it was soggy and heavy as lead. You know there has been a great deal of rain lately, and what sun we have even now is very pale and weak, hardly adapted to baking purposes.”

This seemed to enrage my hairy mentor, and he poured out a volume of indignant criticism, reproach, and ejaculations, all tangled up with fragments of cookery receipts, though evidently not the receipt for the Gorodetz cakes, which is a secret. The other passengers listened in amazement and delight. When he paused for breath, I remarked:—

“Well, I don’t see any harm in having bestowed such a delicate luxury on the poor stewardess. Did any of you think to buy a cake for her? And why not? I denied myself to give her pleasure. Look at it in that light for a while, sir, if my bad taste offends you. And, in the mean while, tell me what has inspired you with the taste to dress like a peasant?”

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That settled him, and he retreated. That evening he and the friend with whom he seemed to be traveling talked most entertainingly in the little saloon, after supper. The friend, a round, rosy, jolly man, dressed in ordinary European clothes, was evidently proud of his flow of language, and liked to hear himself talk. Actors, actresses, and theatres in Russia, from the middle of the last century down to the present day, were his favorite topic, on which he declaimed with appropriate gestures and very noticeable management of several dimples in his cheeks. As a matter of course, he considered the present day degenerate, and lauded the old times and dead actors and actresses only. It seemed that the longer they had been dead, the higher were their merits. He talked very well, also, about books and social conditions.

The progress of the weak-kneed steamer against wind and current was very slow and uncertain, and we never knew when we should reach any given point. Even the mouths of the rivers were not so exciting or important in nature as they used to look to me when I studied geography. I imparted to the captain my opinion that his engine was no better than a *samovar*. He tried hard to be angry, but a glance at that ridiculous machine convinced him of the justice of my comparison, and he broke into a laugh.

We left the steamer at Yaroslavl (it was bound for Rybinsk), two hundred and forty-one miles above Nizhni-Novgorod, and got our first view of the town at daybreak. It stands on the high west bank of the river, but is not so picturesque as Nizhni. Access to the town is had only through half a dozen cuts and ravines, as at Nizhni; and what a singular town it is! With only a little over thirty thousand inhabitants, it has seventy-seven churches, besides monasteries and other ecclesiastical buildings. There are streets which seem to be made up chiefly of churches,—churches of all sizes and colors, crowned with beautiful and fantastic domes, which, in turn, are surmounted by crosses of the most charming and original designs.

Yaroslavl, founded in 1030, claims the honor of having had the first Russian theatre, and to have sheltered Biron, the favorite of the Empress Anna Ioannovna (a doubtful honor this), with his family, during nineteen years of exile. But its architectural hints and revelations of ancient fashions, forms, and customs, are its chief glory, not to be obscured even by its modern renown for linen woven by hand and by machinery. For a person who really understands Russian architecture,—not the architecture of St. Petersburg, which is chiefly the invention of foreigners,—Yaroslavl and other places on the northern Volga in this neighborhood, widely construed, are mines of information and delight. However, as there are no books wherewith a foreigner can inform himself on this subject, any attempt at details would not only seem pedantic, but would be incomprehensible without tiresome explanations and

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many illustrations, which are not possible here. I may remark, however, that Viollet-le-Duc and Fergusson do not understand the subject of Russian architecture, and that their few observations on the matter are nearly all as erroneous as they well can be. I believe that very few Russians even know much scientifically about the development of their national architecture from the Byzantine style. Yaroslavl is a good place to study it, and has given its name to one epoch of that development.

With the exception of the churches, Yaroslavl has not much to show to the visitor; but the bazaar was a delight to us, with its queer pottery, its baskets for moulding bread, its bread-trays for washtubs, and a dozen other things in demand by the peasants as to which we had to ask explanations.

Breezy, picturesque Yaroslavl, with its dainty, independent cabbies, who object to the mud which must have been their portion all their lives, and reject rare customers rather than drive through it; with its churches never to be forgotten; its view of the Volga, and its typical Russian features! It was a fitting end to our Volga trip, and fully repaid us for our hot-cold voyage with the *samovar* steamer against the stream, though I had not believed, during the voyage, that anything could make up for the tedium. If I were to visit it again, I would approach it from the railway side and leave it to descend the river. But I would not advise any foreigner to tackle it at all, unless he be as well prepared as we were to appreciate its remarkable merits in certain directions.

A night's journey landed us in Moscow. But even the glories of Moscow cannot make us forget the city of Yaroslaff the Great and Nizhni Novgorod.