
*"Russians?"*

*"Ay, in truth, my Lord,*

*"Trim gallants, full of courtship and of state."*

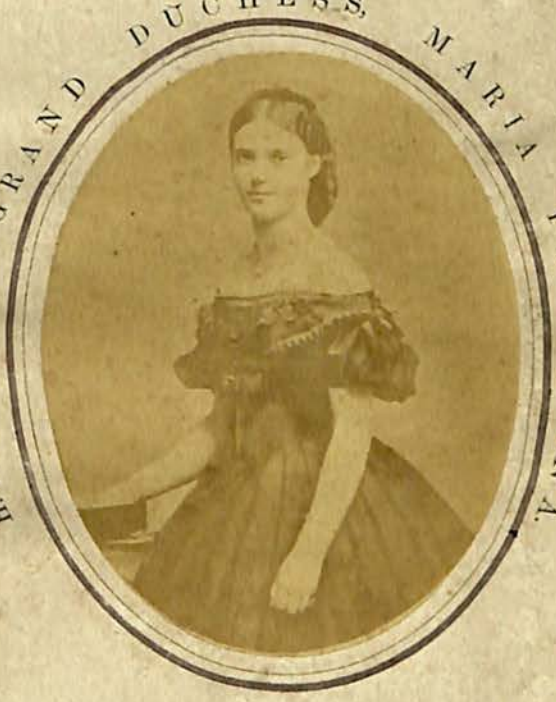
LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

# A MONTH IN RUSSIA

DURING THE

## *MARRIAGE OF THE CZAREVITCH.*






BY

EDWARD DICEY.



London:

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1867.

*DEDICATED BY PERMISSION*

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

Albert Edward,

PRINCE OF WALES.

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# A MONTH IN RUSSIA.

## CHAPTER I.

### LONDON TO ST. PETERSBURG.

St. Petersburg, *November* 4.

Was it yesterday or this day week, or a month ago, that I started on my journey northwards? Dates and places and distances have become so jumbled together in my helter-skelter passage across many lands, that I find it hard to recall anything distinctly. As civilization proceeds, and the whole globe is traversed by railroads, the Wandering Jew will, I fancy, have the mode of his everlasting punishment changed to suit the requirements of the age. Instead of being bidden to walk on for ever, never halting and never resting, he will be ordered to travel by express trains round and round the world. If so, I can only say that in

those latter days his doom will be yet more cruel than it has ever been before. It is not one of the least of the many blessings which England owes to her insular position, that it is now physically impossible to travel any great number of hours in her island domain without being brought perforce to a dead halt. I am old enough to have travelled for days and nights together in a diligence; but, weary as such journeys were, they were not to be compared in weariness with journeys of like length taken by rail. In the old coaching days, to break the dread monotony of the way, there were the constant changes of horses, the stoppages at the roadside inns, the passings through towns and villages, the constant glimpses of home life, pleasant to look at anywhere. But nowadays the toil and weariness of the journey remain the same; the adventures and incidents which alleviated its burden have been taken from us; the tale of bricks is unaltered, the straw is no longer given us. It is dull enough at all times, this travelling without stopping; dullest of all in this hybrid season, when the leaves are gone, and the snow is not yet upon the ground, and the nights are so unconscionably long. Not even Rip Van Winkle himself could sleep right on through a night of railway travelling. Long practice has

made me tolerably perfect in the art. I know that my fellow-travellers always comment in an injured tone upon my powers of sleep, as if my sleepfulness were somehow an additional grievance when compared with their waking. But, even at the best, sleep in a railway carriage is a sorry imitation of the real article. Cramped, heated, aching, you wake up ever and anon from troubled dreams to a too vivid sense of the life around you. Fancying the night is well nigh over, you find it is early still. Everything you would gladly not think of thrusts itself upon your memory; faces you have forgotten come before you; persons, and names, and places you have not thought of for years, and never wish to recall in the daytime, haunt you with hazy recollections; and then you doze off again, to dream once more that you are hastening after somebody you cannot catch—reaching one point after another to find always that you have come too late.

For four long days and longer nights I have been thus journeying to the north as fast as express trains would carry me; yet I own that of those hundred hours I have but a confused and dim recollection. I know that it was dark as the lights of London faded from my view—dark as I heard the names of French towns

shouted at the railway stations, and that the morning was breaking cold and cheerless as I was turned out of my carriage at the frontier town of Mouscron. Then a long day through Belgium, and the evening is drawing in when I hear my ticket asked for in German, and find myself once more in Prussia. So on through a country lit up with the fires of countless forges, till the train rolls into Cologne, and again I am greeted by the well-known request to visit the Dom Kirche and buy a bottle of the true Jean Marie Farina's brand. Within the last few years I have passed through Cologne in this fashion no small number of times, and have always been pestered by the same solicitation. One would think beforehand the very last thing a traveller coming into Cologne by one train and leaving it by the next, with just interval enough to pass his luggage through the custom-house, would ever dream of doing, would be to run off and see the Cathedral, or provide himself with a wickerwork bottle, certain to break in his bag. Many foreigners, however, must do both, or else the touts and guides who encumber the station could never get a living. Here, let me add, I come upon the first traces of the spectacle I am journeying to witness. There is in the carriage with me a Russian Government courier also bound to

St. Petersburg. Besides his ordinary luggage he conveys with him twelve enormous wooden cases covered with black oilcloth, and of most funereal aspect. Four men are required to carry every case, and the time taken in transporting them from one van to another delays us long in starting. They contain, so I am told, wedding-dresses for the Imperial family, made in Paris. The famous black box in poor Albert Smith's entertainment was a nutshell compared with any one of them.

On again out of the glaring gas-lit station into the dark gloomy night. Passengers got in and out, and each time the door was opened the night air felt colder and colder, and you could tell we were getting further north as the accent in which the guards woke you to ask for your ticket grew harsher and more guttural. The grey dull morning mist hung low over the waters of the Potsdam Meer, as we passed it in the early morning, and the streets of Berlin were even emptier than usual as I drove across it on my way to the hotel. Then a few hours' waiting—not long enough to go to bed, but long enough to grow unutterably sleepy—and then I had to hurry off again to the Northern Railroad. Two or three times before now it has happened to me to travel by the evening express which leaves

Berlin for the North, and it always struck me then, as now it did again, that here you were leaving behind you the Western Europe in which we live. England, France, Italy, and Germany are, no doubt, different enough, but still in the outward aspect of their people they have a strange sort of family resemblance. At London and Paris, at Turin and Brussels, at Berlin and Vienna, the men you meet in your travels wear chimney-pot hats and trousers, and the ordinary garb of a European gentleman. By differences in the cut and colour, and the assortment of his clothes, you can generally, if you pay attention to such matters, distinguish a Frenchman from an Englishman, or a German from both. But yet, if you had to describe in writing the costume of each nation, you would have to use much the same general terms. You may cross the Atlantic, you may go as far west as St. Louis, Missouri—beyond that I speak only from hearsay—and you will find the same fashion of dress universally predominant. But the moment you get on the confines of the East you have entered on another era of costume. And this fact is, I think, important from other than a sartorial point of view. In our Western world, in spite of the eccentricities of individuals, the tendency of society is to avoid

anything in dress which calls attention to the person. But the East has not reached this stage of æsthetic development. There one man still seeks to distinguish himself above others by the richness of his costume and the brilliancy of his attire.

Whether these reflections are sound or otherwise, they were a great deal too profound for me to make in the hazy, half-awake state in which I stood amidst the motley crowd collected at the Northern terminus. I only noticed lazily that I was surrounded by men dressed in what looked like stage costumes, with velvet trousers braided and embroidered, with gorgeous caps set jauntily upon their heads, with immense fur pelisses, and with boots of the Bombastes Furioso order. Wallachians, Magyars, Bohemians, Poles, Muscovites, I know not what they were, except that they chattered in tongues which seemed to have no affinity to any with which we are familiar. The train was crowded with passengers travelling northwards, and the platform was literally covered with piles of luggage. But at last, somehow or other, we were all packed into our seats, and then once more we were hastening onwards through the night. Ever and anon I woke to hear the wind sighing through the telegraph wires with that unearthly sound which you only hear on great flat prairie plains.

As we dashed past the roadside stations we rang, I know not how, an electric bell, whose slow sad notes seemed to haunt us long after their sound had died away; and, when at length the night was over, we had left Prussian Poland far behind us, and were rushing on along the Pomeranian Baltic provinces of the great German kingdom. About the day's journey there was this peculiar feature, that you never appeared to make any progress. If you fell asleep, or read, or brooded, or turned your eyes away for any cause from the window, and then looked out again, you seemed to see before you exactly the same scene on which you last had gazed. Around and about you there stretched an endless expanse of broad rolling fields, bare, colourless, and cold. I recollect we crossed a broad, swollen, leaden-hued river, laden with vast rafts of wood floating lazily down the stream, and somebody said it was the Vistula. At one time we passed a red-brick palace, whose quaint turrets and gable-ends stood out clear and sharp against the dull grey sky. But beyond this I can recall nothing with any degree of distinctness. I experienced, I know, a feeling of absolute relief when for a few minutes we caught a view of the Baltic Sea, studded with white sails gleaming in a glimpse of pallid sunlight, stretching far away

upon our left. But the view was a very hurried one; and then we looked out once more over the dull, drear prairie. Of the Russian land, towards which we were approaching rapidly, there was neither sign nor symptom. We were still in an altogether German country. The fields, dismal as their aspect was, looked rich and fertile, the towns wonderfully well built and comfortable, the people clean and warmly clad. Right up to the frontier everything was as orderly, as well arranged, as unpicturesque, as Prussian in fact, as it is in Westphalia or in Brandenburg.

The night had closed in again when we left the last Prussian station, passed over a narrow stream on which the rails on either side were painted in different colours, and found ourselves in Russia. I have never crossed a frontier where the change between two countries was so marked and signal. We could still see the lamps of the Prussian station, and yet we were amidst a population to whom German appeared well-nigh unknown. Wild-looking porters, dressed in sheepskin coats, and resembling the Anabaptist peasants in the "Prophète," jabbered round us in an unknown jargon. Passports were asked for, and scrutinized rigidly; we were driven through one room after another, provided with

mysterious passes to enable us to make our way past sentries, so that nobody could leave the room unauthorized; and were soon taught by unmistakeable signs that, if we wanted to get our passports viséd and our luggage passed without unnecessary detention, we must fee somebody for the privilege. The rooms in which we waited were really magnificent of their kind; but the food was bad, the attendance worse, the charges for everything were enormous, and cheating appeared to be the received rule of everybody connected with the establishment. Possibly these generalizations are based upon too narrow an experience; but you cannot reasonably expect a man who has not been to bed for nights to take a charitable view of human nature.

Hours passed before the Russian officials had completed their inspection of the dead and living freight. But at last we got off, and again went travelling through the night. Thanks to a bribe judiciously administered, we got a carriage not inconveniently overcrowded. But every hour or so we were waked up by a request to show our passports, and the night was bitterly cold; there was ice upon the ponds, and the stoves, for some reason or other, were not yet lighted; and the morning seemed longer than ever in coming to us. When at last it grew light enough to

see the surrounding country, we were in the midst of Russia. The day was bright, but the sky had that pale washed-out hue peculiar to the North; the last leaves had fallen from the trees; the whole scene was to me inexpressibly dreary. Pomerania was "triste" enough; but there, at any rate, there was the look of life and comfort and prosperity. Here the one prevailing aspect was that of exceeding loneliness. For mile after mile we went creeping on—our average pace, I should say, was fifteen miles an hour—through immense stunted forests. The pine woods of Poland are dismal, but they are cheerful compared to these endless larch forests, half swamps, half plantations. The bare white stalks of the larch and the silver birch stood gaunt and grim by the side of the squat fir-trees amidst which they were interspersed. The earth was dun-coloured, covered with dark mosses and lichens. All through the woods there lay charred and blackened stumps; there was water everywhere, not running brooks or clear streams, but dark pools surrounded with dank weeds, and gloomy meres with stacks of black turf piled beside them. The woods appeared well-nigh tenantless; a few wild fowl hovered about the marshes; I saw a hare or two startled from the ferns by the rattle of the train; water rats could be seen stealing down to the edge of the pools; but

other life there was none. When you left the forest for a time, and got out into the cleared country, the aspect was not much more cheerful. The bare fields were half covered with boulders of grey round stone; the soil looked so sodden with wet, it seemed hard to believe any crops could ever grow there; the field roads were black tracks of earth, mashed down by horses' feet; every now and then you saw a herd of black pigs, or a few lean oxen, guarded by a peasant clad in sheepskin so dirty as to have become the same colour as the sombre fields; in the distance there were blocks of low wooden huts or sheds, which I suppose were villages, but from which no smoke issued; heaps of dead soaked hay could be seen stacked together loosely; in the fields themselves there were pools without end, fringed with rows of bare bulrush stalks. Half a dozen times within the day I caught sight of a town with gilt minaret towers, which, I presume, were those of churches. Twice, I think, we passed a château, with white-washed Corinthian pillars, and a stucco façade, cracked and weather-stained. But the general impression left by the fleeting glances I caught of such things in passing was one of extreme desolation. In many respects the country strangely resembled the half-cleared settlements of the Western States in

America; but there was this difference, that while in the New World you see at once that the wilderness is being brought into cultivation, it looked here as if the forest and the swamp were gaining ground upon the settlers. Readers of Mr. Dickens's "American Notes" must remember a remarkable passage in his description of the voyage down the Ohio, when he speculates how many ages or æons must pass by before the savage becomes once more the sole tenant of those boundless plains. I fancy, if once the time should come when the civilization of the West will be as extinct as that of Central America, that the Western settlements then relapsing into barbarism will look very much as this part of Russia looks to-day. Russians tell me that to see their country in its true aspect I must go southwards. I only speak of what I have seen.

Day passed on with long and frequent stoppages, till the early evening closed in, and then there was another weary space of night travelling, and broken snatches of sleep and uneasy dreams; and then at last I saw bright lights gleaming far away across the plain, and was told that St. Petersburg was in sight. But the sort of weirdness that characterised this journey remained with it to the end. When at last I had secured my luggage, and left the train to my heart's

delight, I found myself on the steps of the station, surrounded by a crowd of about a hundred droshki-drivers, gesticulating, screaming, and pulling me from side to side. In fact, I felt very much as the ancient martyrs must have felt when they saw the gates of the arena opened and the wild beasts come leaping in. Happily, I had secured the services of a hotel porter, who, with a series of cuffs and oaths, drove away the crowd, singled out one of the multitude of drivers, and seated me in the chosen droshki. Fancy an arm-chair without arms placed on four low wheels, with a common chair in front, and you will form a good impression of a Russian droshki. There is nothing to hold on by—nothing whatever to hinder you from falling off. Almost before I had taken my seat, the driver set off at full gallop, shouting wildly to his horse, and lashing him on by holding the reins apart with either hand and then bringing them sharply together. Over dark half-lit roads, across ruts innumerable, we went tearing on, racing wildly with every other droschki that we met, dashing between carriages, steering close to wheels, and turning short round at the sharpest angles. I candidly confess I saw but little of St. Petersburg. I discovered soon that, by sitting bolt upright, by opening my legs and pressing my feet hard against the footboard, I had some chance

of not being pitched head-foremost into the street. I only know that we passed innumerable shrines of the Virgin, and that at each shrine, greatly to my dismay, the driver put his reins between his knees, while he took off his fur cap and crossed himself. If the famous "wild, untamed steed of the Ukraine" had only been like mine, then Menken's performance at Astley's would have been indeed a marvel. However, I have reached my hotel at last, to find that all the rooms are full, and that I must sleep, if at all, on the table of the dining-room.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NEWSKI PROSPEKT.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 6.

THE longer you live, if you learn to disbelieve many things, you learn also to believe things you deemed incredible. For instance, through many years I have entertained a profound incredulity as to the story of Prince Potemkin and the Empress Catherine. We have all been told in our youthful days how, when the Czarina made her tour through Russia, the unprincipled favourite persuaded her that the country was prosperous and populated, by having cardboard, lath and plaster cities erected within view of the line of the Imperial progress. I forget what moral the story was intended to point; whether it served as evidence that appearances are deceitful, that princes never learn the truth, or that honesty is the best policy; but I do know that, even at a tender age, I regarded the story as a monstrous fiction. Well, since

I have been in St. Petersburg, I have begun to doubt whether my scepticism was not premature. The city of the Czar Peter is itself so like a pasteboard town, that the Empress might well have been unable to discover the difference between the copy and the original. Supposing you had an order to run up so many suites of streets, quays, squares, and arcades, to dot the space over with palaces, all of regulation grandeur, to erect the proper number of churches with gilt cupolas, to be liberal of statues, and not sparing of barracks; and supposing, after you had fulfilled your contract according to the terms of the order, your pasteboard city had had its colours somewhat washed by the rain and cracked by the frost, you would have produced a marvellous resemblance of the Neva capital. There never was a city, I think, which had such a "put-up-to-day-to-be-taken-down-to-morrow" look about it all. Washington has something of the same air, but then the American capital makes no pretence to be a city built to last; whereas in St. Petersburg everything is of the massive, solid order, only that the massiveness is of the most transparent kind, the solidity of the most palpably delusive description. Indeed, if such an event were possible, the universal prevalence of sham in every Muscovite building I yet have seen would drive Mr. Ruskin mad.

It is this appearance of the whole town's being run up for show which seems to me to characterize St. Petersburg; otherwise it is not easy to say in what it differs exactly from any other town or towns with which ordinary tourists are acquainted. In its different parts it is so like an excellent imitation of so many other cities. There are streets, grave and dull and uniform enough to have been transported bodily from Westbournia or Albertopolis; but somehow they are wanting in that one look of solid respectability which redeems the thoroughfares of Western London. There are streets, again, without number, lined with long arcades, which, so far as dimensions go, might be fac-similes of the Strade of Bologna and Ferrara; but they lack the heavy dignity of their Italian models. There are thoroughfares so like the Boulevards as to make you doubt whether you are not in France, and whether, through some decline of fortune, the great central highways of Paris have not lost the sparkle, and brightness, and brilliancy which constitute their especial charm. There are canals and bridges which resemble Venice as closely as an indifferent uncoloured engraving resembles Canaletti's pictures. Everything has an untidy, unfinished air. Even the "Newski Prospekt" itself is a second-rate street, after all. I have always observed that people

who have travelled at all beyond the ordinary beat are full of the wonders of some street or other which the bulk of their acquaintance are not likely to have seen. I have a friend who never loses an opportunity of asserting that some quay or other in Monte Video, or Rio Janeiro, or Valparaiso, I forget now which, is the finest thoroughfare in the world. If I thought St. Petersburg were far enough off, I would certainly declare that persons who had never seen the "Newski Prospekt" have no notion of street architecture. But, as the imposture is certain to be detected, I confess that even Regent Street, not to mention the Boulevards, or the Corso at Milan, is a much handsomer street than the far-famed "Prospekt." The latter bears a strong family resemblance to the modern portion of the Rue Rivoli, after the arcades have ceased. It has a close cousinship with New Oxford Street; it shows an unmistakeable affinity to Tottenham Court Road and to Market Street, Manchester. I do not say this from the slightest wish to cry that all is barren from Dan to Beersheba. But when I am told, as I have been constantly by travellers in Russia, that the "Newski Prospekt" is one of the grandest of European streets, I am bound, in common honesty, to protest that it is not. The roadway is very broad, and the street stretches for an interminable length;

but when you have said this, you have said pretty well all. Externally, the shops are not brilliant to look at. Signboards, advertising placards, and painted figureheads are stuck all over the frontage. The lower part of every house is occupied by shops; and most of those shops have a miscellaneous "general-store" look about them which deprives them of any appearance of grandeur. Possibly some portion of their apparent untidiness may be due to the Russian inscriptions with which they are covered; for a new comer will find it impossible to avoid the impression that the letters of the Muscovite alphabet are our own letters put topsy-turvy, or designed by a drunken house-painter. The P's have got upside down, the R's have been turned the wrong way, and the Y's have lost half their arms; and you feel that, if you were the proprietor of the shop, your first care would be to send for a gilder, and get the inscription over your shop door put straight and tidy.

Having thus delivered my mind, I am now free to confess that the "Newski Prospekt," though one of the least striking, is to me one of the most interesting thoroughfares I have ever strolled about. The crowd which passes up and down it all day long is so unlike any other crowd one can see elsewhere.

Ladies dressed in the richest sables, with mantles that even to inexperienced eyes convey an impression of immense value, may be seen crossing the pavement to the shops, followed by Chasseurs or Heiduks, decked out with gilt braid and feathers and stripes, till they look at the very least like Field-Marshals in mufti. Side by side with them are troops of Russian peasants, all clad in the long grey sheepskins hanging down to their heels, and tied tightly round their waists. In many parts of the world you see dirty people. London can furnish no unworthy contribution to the great anti-soap-and-water league; but there is a dirt about these Russian peasants not known in the Western world. You must go to a Slavonian nation to know what filth is in perfection. In those sheepskin coats the peasants live night and day. Till the garments fall to pieces, they never dream of any change. The wearer grows into the coat, and the two become one substance. Nor are the faces of these men like European faces; their foreheads are broad and low, their cheek-bones stick out, their eyes are sunken, their noses flattened, with wide, open nostrils, their mouths large, and their complexion of a yellow hue not common in the West. But in spite of their filth and squalor, they are a not unhealthy-looking race of men. What they do in the "Newski Pros-

pekt" I have not been able to clearly ascertain. To all outward appearance, they loaf about with no particular design, staring languidly. You will see them sitting for hours on the steps of houses or at street corners, doing nothing. The common women, in St. Petersburg at any rate, have more or less got rid of any particular costume, and resemble the women of any ordinary German town, except that they wear such masses of shawls and petticoats as to give them the air of walking bundles. In the midst of the crowd, from time to time, you meet Cossacks or Tartars dressed in strange embroidered jackets, with arms by their side, and the butts of pistols protruding from their belts. The grey-coated Russian soldiers meet you at every turn. Beggars of the regular hermit type solicit alms with an air of vested right. Apple-stalls stand on the pavement in front of the handsomest shops; and the vendors call out the names of their wares in unknown tongues, with a shrill pertinacity which would do honour to Clare Market. Add to this that the pavement is crowded with a motley gathering of all nations. Half the resident population of the city is said to be of foreign origin; and certainly, as you walk along, you hear the strangest Babel of many languages. Meanwhile the centre of the street is even

more crowded than the footways. It is immensely broad. In the middle there runs a street railroad, along which American cars keep passing constantly. On either side there is a strip of wood pavement, over which the droshkis race at the top of their speed; and between the wood pavement and the curb there is a sort of chaussée of round rough stones. The ground has sunk here as it does everywhere in St. Petersburg; and wood work, stone work, and iron work alike have been trampled into ups and downs. Indeed, of all the villainously ill-paved cities it has been my lot to traverse with pain and peril, St. Petersburg is by far the worst. Berlin is bad, but then no Prussian driver ever goes above a gentle trot, whereas in Russia they drive as hard as their horses can tear. Everybody for himself and God for us all seems to be the motto of the Muscovite coachmen. You are driving along as fast as you well can, you hear a rattle behind you as if a fire engine were coming, your droshki swerves on one side with a shock which all but throws you off the seat, and a calèche with an officer in uniform seated in it comes thundering past. It is apparently in its normal state—a one-horse droshki with a head to it, but on either side the horse within shafts there are one or more horses fastened simply by traces.

Lashed along at full speed, with the outside horses at an angle of some forty-five degrees to the pole, the calèche is very like the car of Phaëton in mythological pictures—curious to look at from the pavement, but not pleasant to have dash by you within an inch of your wheels.

To-day, while driving about, it appeared as if every staff officer in the city—and one person in twelve well-nigh seems to be at least a general—were amusing himself by galloping about the town in wild huntsman fashion. At the Winter Palace there were any number of imperial, royal, grand ducal, and princely personages; and everybody, who was anybody, was engaged in paying his respects to some one or more of the illustrious visitors. The day, unfortunately, was one of pelting, pitiless rain, so that the Royal strangers who had arrived for the first time at St. Petersburg must have had a dismal impression of the Muscovite capital.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE MARRIAGE PROGRAMME.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 6.

IT was rumoured this morning that the Prince of Wales was to arrive in the afternoon; and, judging from the number of people who collected at the station to witness his arrival, the crowd would have been immense if it had not been for the weather.

The Emperor himself went down to the station to meet the Prince, who had been brought by express train from the Russian frontier. The Imperial carriages were ordered to be in waiting at the station at half-past two; and within a minute or two of that time the train was telegraphed as having passed the last stopping-place. The Czar was in the full uniform of a Russian field officer; on passing the Prussian frontier the Prince and his suite had exchanged their travelling dresses for their undress uniforms. At Tsarskoe-Selò the undress uniforms were laid aside

for full dress, so that the whole party reached St. Petersburg in military costume. Altogether, in the four immense saloon carriages of which the express was composed, there must have been nearly a hundred officers, all in the most brilliant uniforms. On a rough calculation, based on a study of the coat fronts of two of the minor officials who stood near me, I should say that in the train there must also have been at least 1,500 crosses and stars. Indeed, the exit from the station would really have been a striking spectacle, if it had not been for the rain. Oddly enough, nobody had thought of putting up an awning over the steps, and the result was, that Czar, Princes, Grand Dukes, and Imperial Highnesses, had to dart into their carriages as best they could, while equerries and aides-de-camp plunged about hopelessly in the sludge and mire, trying vainly to find their conveyances in the sea of vehicles of every kind with which the approaches were crowded. However, at last everybody got seated, though not, I am afraid, without a good deal of swearing, and loss of temper, if not of dignity.

The Prince of Wales drove off alone with the Czar in a brougham, and reached the palace by half-past three. In the evening his Royal Highness went privately to the opera, where the ballet of *Satanella*

was given, with all the splendour which characterizes Russian performances of the kind.

*November 7.*

To-day the marriage of the Czarevitch was fixed to take place, and the plans of the Prince of Wales and the Crown Prince of Prussia had been arranged, so that their arrival should immediately precede the wedding. Owing, however, to some accidental delay in the necessary arrangements, the wedding has been put off till Friday; and, in consequence, the Royal guests have two days' rest before the marriage ceremonies begin. Perhaps the original plan would have been the best, as these two days, during which there is nothing to be done by the visitors, while their hosts are occupied with all sorts of business, must probably hang heavy upon both parties. However, as the members of the Imperial family are numbered by scores, and as etiquette is most rigidly observed at Court, the time of the Prince of Wales has been fully taken up to-day paying and receiving visits, and will doubtless be occupied in the same manner to-morrow. His Royal Highness, together with his suite, is lodged in the Hermitage Palace, in apartments looking on the Neva. The suite, I may add, consists of Lord Frederick Paulet, chief of the staff; Viscount

Hamilton, lord of the bed-chamber; the Marquis of Blandford, acting as aide-de-camp; Major Teesdale, equerry; Captain Ellis, acting as equerry; and the Hon. Harry Bourke. Nothing, I am told, could exceed the courtesy shown to the Prince during his passage through Russia. On Sunday morning he was met at the Potsdam Station by the Crown Princess of Prussia, and passed the day with the Royal family at Sans Souci. He went to church with the Court in the morning, dined with the King and Queen in the afternoon, and was sent on to Berlin at night by a special train. During the journey he was received at all the chief stations by a guard of honour; and every care was taken to make the long travel as little wearisome as possible. At present the Prince is the great lion of St. Petersburg. Crowds always collect wherever there is any chance of seeing him; and, to judge from the questions that are asked me by everybody I meet, I should say more curiosity was felt here about him than about any other personage in the approaching pageant. The Crown Prince of Prussia was already well known in St. Petersburg; the Prince Royal of Denmark is heir to too small a kingdom to attract much attention; but the heir-apparent of the English crown is an object of never-failing interest. To the ordinary Russian, France, and

even Germany, are little more than names; but to him, as to every other inhabitant of the North, the chief maritime Power, whose ships are in every sea, and whose flag flies in every port, is the great nation of the Western world.

The programme of the marriage ceremonial has at last been issued. It is too long to quote in full—let me give you its main features.

On the morning, then, of the appointed day; at about 4 A.M. a salute of twenty-one guns fired from the garrison fort will announce to the loyal citizens the approaching marriage of the Czarevitch, the Hereditary Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovitch, and the Grand Duchess Maria Federovna. It is for this stilted title, I regret to say, that the Princess has had to exchange the name of Dagmar. At mid-day the members of the Holy Synod and the Court Chapel, the Councillors of the Empire, the Senators, Ladies, and Maids of Honour, the Mistresses of the Robes of the Grand Duchesses, the Officials of the Court, the Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors, the Diplomatic Corps with their wives, the Suites of the Foreign Princes, the Aides-de-Camp of the Emperor and of the Grand Dukes, General Officers, Officers of the Guard, all persons of distinction who have the right of going to Court,

the Nobles, the Mayor of St. Petersburg, and the chief merchants of the city, native and foreign, are to meet at the Winter Palace. The ladies are to be dressed in Russian costume, gentlemen in full uniform.

When the ladies of honour who have been selected to preside over the toilet of the illustrious Bride—I am quoting the words of the programme as closely as may be—quit the private apartments, the Grand Master of the Ceremonies will inform the illustrious Bridegroom of the fact, and will escort his Imperial Highness to the apartments in question. Throughout the day the Bride is to wear a crown, and to be dressed in a mantle of crimson velvet lined with ermine; the train is to be held up by four Chamberlains, and the end carried by the Marshal of the Czarevitch's Court. The moment when the Imperial family commence their progress from the private apartments to the palace chapel will be announced by a salute of one-and-twenty guns. The order in which the members of the procession are to be placed occupies a column of small print in the programme; the Emperor and the Empress precede the Bride and Bridegroom, who are followed by the Prince of Wales and the Crown Princes of Prussia and Denmark. As the procession enters the chapel,

the anthem, "Lord, the king shall rejoice in Thy strength," will be performed; and meanwhile the Emperor will lead the illustrious pair to a tribune raised for the purpose. During the marriage ceremony, to the ordinary prayer for the Imperial family there will be added the words, "We pray for Monseigneur the Czarevitch, the orthodox Grand Duke, heir to the throne, Alexander Alexandrovitch, and his wife, Madame the orthodox Grand Duchess Maria Federovna." After the ceremony is completed the Bride and Bridegroom will present their thanks to the Emperor and Empress, and will receive in turn the congratulations of the Imperial family. Then the Metropolitan and his clergy will sing the "Te Deum," and a salute of one hundred and one guns is to inform St. Petersburg that the marriage is completed. The procession will then return to the private apartments in the same order as it left them.

Later in the day, though at what hour is not yet announced, there will be a State banquet in the Nicholas Hall. At table the Grand Marshal, the Marshals, and the dignitaries of the Court, decorated with the insignia of office, stand behind the chairs of the Emperor and Empress. The Imperial family and their Royal guests are waited

on by the Chamberlains; and personages of august though non-Royal rank by the Gentlemen of the Chamber. During the banquet there will be vocal and instrumental music. The following toasts are to be drunk at the dinner: "The Emperor and Empress," "The Illustrious Bride and Bridegroom," "The Imperial Family," "The King and Queen of Denmark," "The Clergy, and all Faithful Subjects of the Czar." The first toast will be accompanied by a salute of fifty-one guns; the others by salutes of thirty-one guns, fired from the Citadel of St. Petersburg.

In the evening there will be a ball in St. George's Hall. When the ball is over the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaievitch and the Grand Duchess Alexandra Josephovna proceed in a gilt coach to the palace appointed as a residence for the wedded pair, to be ready to receive their Imperial Highnesses. When word has been received that everything is in readiness, the Imperial party will make their way to the Czarevitch's palace. The procession is to be opened by a squadron of Cossacks of the Guard and the Master of the Stables on horseback. Then, in the gilt coaches for which the Imperial Court is famous, follow the Masters of the Ceremonies, the Chamberlains, and the Grooms of the

Chamber, and so on. When six of these carriages have passed, all drawn by six horses, there are to come another squadron of Cossacks and six running footmen. Then in a coach with eight horses, led by the head, come the Emperor and Empress, the Czarevitch, and his bride. The chief aides-de-camp and six pages of the palace follow the carriage on horseback; and then, after another squadron of Cossacks belonging to the Czarevitch's own regiment, the Prince of Wales and the Crown Princes of Denmark and Prussia come next in order; and after them the different members of the Imperial family follow according to their rank. The number of the Royal Russian household may be estimated from the fact that five coaches are required to carry the chief members of the different branches of the Romanoff family.

When the destination of the procession is reached, the high officers and dignitaries are to wait outside the palace. Meanwhile the Emperor and Empress and the bridal couple proceed, escorted by all the Court, to the upper chambers, where the Grand Duke Constantine and the Grand Duchess Alexandra will present their Imperial Highnesses with the Holy likeness of the Saviour, the salt and bread. Then the Court remain below stairs while the

members of the Imperial family and the ladies of honour, who preside over the toilet of the illustrious bride, and the Grand Mistress of the Robes of the Court of Denmark proceed to the private apartments.

With this the official proceedings of the day terminate. By Royal order, "Te Deums" will be performed in every church, and the bells of all places of worship are to ring all that day and all the two next. For these three days, too, the city is to be illuminated. On the morning of the third day, a grand reception will be held in the Winter Palace, at which the congratulations of the city are to be offered to the Imperial bride and bridegroom.

On the following days there are to be State visits to the opera, balls at the Winter Palace and at the Czarevitch's residence, and performances at the Imperial Theatre in the Hermitage; but the days for these festivities are not yet officially announced.

After all this recital of titles, Court ceremonials, costumes, and chamberlain's regulations, it is refreshing, I think, to come on anything which reminds us that Czars, Grand Dukes, and Imperial Highnesses are subject to the same joys and sorrows as ordinary humanity. To-day, in my wanderings

about the city, I entered the Garrison church, where the members of the House of Romanoff are interred. I was shown the tomb of the Great Peter, of the Empress Catherine, of the Czar Nicholas, to which, no doubt, any number of historical recollections ought to attach themselves. But I own, the one which interested me most was the last and latest in that gallery of tombs, underneath which there lay the body of the poor lad who died at Nice, who was, had fate so willed it, to have been Czar of All the Russias, the hero of the coming festival, the husband of the Danish Princess. On his tomb there lay a plain black chaplet, newly placed amidst the many with which the grave was decorated. It had been hung there the other day, so the sexton told me, by the lady who was sometime Princess Dagmar, and is now the orthodox Grand Duchess Maria Fedcrovna.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE WEDDING DAY.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 9.

THE wedding-day of the heir to the Crown of All the Russias opened with fair omen. The weather was as good as could be desired, for from a very early hour in the morning it snowed hard and heavily. This statement is not what Mr. Artemus Ward would call a "goak," but a simple statement of plain literal fact. Of late the weather in St. Petersburg has been eminently unseasonable. The Neva ought to be frozen over by this time, and the droshkies on the Newski Prospekt should have exchanged their wheels for the iron rods on which they run in sleighing time; and fingers and noses ought to be bitten off by the frost every hour in the four-and-twenty. But hitherto the thermometer has remained obstinately above freezing-point, and furs have been a burden instead of a necessity, and Russians generally have felt warm and uncomfortable. So the sight this morning of the

streets powdered over with white, and of the snow-flakes falling heavily, gladdened the heart of every true Muscovite; while the aspect of a grey leaden sky laden with heavy snow-clouds delighted the loyal Russians as much as a clear, cloudless, blue horizon would, on such an occasion, have pleased the dwellers in more southern lands. If the Russians wished that their future Empress should see their capital upon her wedding day in its most favourable aspect, I think they were right in their wish for wintry weather. The city of the Czar Peter, I should say, was built for snow, and snow not only covers its defects but enhances its merits. The vastness of the town, the length of its endless vistas of streets, the immense façades of its huge palaces and still huger barracks, impress a stranger more when the very density of the snow mist makes every object he looks upon seem indistinct and distant. And while everything is covered with a coating of fleecy white, you cannot notice the irregularities in the buildings, the want of harmony in their proportions, the slovenliness of execution, the general untidiness of aspect, which to my mind mar the grandeur of every street and edifice in the capital. In such weather as we had this morning stucco appears like marble, and paint like stone.

Certainly, I have not yet seen St. Petersburg look anything like so impressive as it did to-day, when I drove through it at an early hour on my way to the Winter Palace. There was not much of stir about the streets. In the chief thoroughfares flags were hung out, though somewhat sparingly, and every house almost was covered with planks and scaffolding, on which the lamps were to be hung for the night's illumination. A considerable crowd was collected in the Admiralty Square, about the approaches of the palace; but otherwise there was little sign that this was a great gala day. Indeed, till nightfall, there was nothing of the marriage festivities in which the general public could possibly take any part; and as far as I could observe, business went on all day very much as usual. It was only the favoured few having the right of entering the palace who shared, in any sense, in the day's rejoicing. Thanks to the liberality of the Court, the right of access was granted to the few representatives of the English press who had come to St. Petersburg; and let me here take the opportunity of expressing my gratitude for the extraordinary courtesy with which we, speaking for myself, were treated.

Out of the grey snow mist and chill frosty air, I was shown this morning, at about the hour when

people in London are beginning to breakfast, into the rooms of the Chamberlain who had been deputed to escort our party to the places appointed for us. I have had before now no very small experience of state ceremonials seen from a correspondent's point of view; and I own candidly that when on such occasions I have to go out in evening dress at broad daylight, I look forward to a day of misery—of waiting about in cold passages, of being penned up in doorways, squeezed in crowds, and left pretty much to shift for myself under every possible disadvantage. But from the moment that I made my way into the palace I found myself in an atmosphere of luxury and comfort. The different private rooms into which I was shown on my way to the state chambers were merely haphazard specimens of the countless apartments composing the immense block of buildings which, under the name of the Winter Palace, stretches for nearly half a mile along the banks of the Neva. Their occupants were ordinary officials connected with the Court, whose abodes were not likely to be more spacious or better furnished than those of their fellow-courtiers of the same rank. But never in Albany chambers or English country-houses have I seen rooms fitted up with such excessive comfort and profusion. The inlaid oak floors, the marble fireplaces,

the rich damask curtains, the heavy Turkey carpets, the gorgeous Circassian divans, the paintings, statues, and charts, the bookcases filled with books of every language, the tables covered with curiosities gathered from every land—all seemed to tell, not only of great wealth, but of a cultivated taste, which wealth alone could not command. I dwell on this because it was the first insight, so to speak, that I got of what appears to me the characteristic feature of the day's spectacle. The chief impression left on my mind by what I have witnessed to-day is one of a wealth, and splendour, and luxury to which I know no parallel. It is an impression not easily to be conveyed by words; and yet I shall fail altogether to give any idea of the spectacle, unless I make constant mention of its exceeding gorgeousness.

The hour or so which we had to pass before it was time to take up our places was spent pleasantly enough. Cigarettes, made at Kiew, and cigars of a brand to which, in a long experience as a smoker, I know few equal, were pressed upon us by our entertainers. Then, when eleven o'clock had struck, we were led up narrow winding staircases into the grand suite of the state apartments. It seemed to me as if I had got into one of those palaces which the genii in the "Arabian Nights" raised for those who

possessed the almighty ring of Solomon the Great. Wealth was lavished everywhere, in every form. Outside immense picture-galleries, along spacious corridors, across vast reception-rooms, by winter gardens filled with aloes, and orange trees, and cactuses, and palm trees, we passed on and on. Through the windows you could see the snow-flakes falling against the dull dim sky; and when you looked back again you seemed to be in fairy land. I have a confused recollection of splendid malachite vases, of porphyry tables, plates of solid gold, cups studded with precious stones, of cases full of gems, of gilded cornices, and silver hangings, scattered about in every corner where room could be found to place them. Old Blucher's saying, when he surveyed London, rose unbidden to one's mind. Even the least covetous of mankind could not, I deem, have avoided thinking to himself what a place it would be to plunder. At last we reached the long suite of halls—for I know no other name to give those monster rooms—which look out upon the Neva. In these halls all persons admitted to witness the procession of the Court to the chapel were already collected. Forming a very rough and uncertain calculation, I should say some two to three thousand persons, of whom at least two-thirds were men, must have been assembled there. Of this throng of men—

with the exception of a couple of hundred merchants, who were in evening dress—every single person was in full uniform. Anything more brilliant than the crowd so formed cannot easily be imagined. There was to be seen well-nigh every description of uniform which sartorial ingenuity could devise; though they differed in every other respect, they were all alike in their elaborate richness. Gold was literally scattered about them by handfuls. An officer with one of the least gilt-be-braided uniforms I observed there, told me that the gold upon his coat alone had cost him a hundred pounds. If this was the case, it is terrible to think what must have been the value of many of these costumes. Looking on the rooms from above, you must have seemed to see below a floating haze of gold and scarlet. To and fro the crowd moved constantly. When your eye became accustomed to the blaze of colour, you could distinguish, more or less, the different groups of which the mass was composed. Drawn up by the wall stood detachments of the Chevalier Garde, standing each some six foot two in height, with immense jack-boots and helmets sparkling like steel, and gilt breastplates fastened over their snow-white tunics. There were officers in red, officers in blue, officers in white, all decked out with gold, all covered with stars and crosses. The Court

Chamberlains, with blue frockcoats, so stiff with golden braid that I fancy they would have stood upright alone, passed amidst the crowd, trying, with little success, to arrange the spectators in their appointed order. Body guards of the Czar's own regiment, with white hussar jackets slung loosely across their shoulders; Circassian chiefs, with snow-white turbans; Cossacks and Tartars from the far east of the Empire, whose uniforms seemed scarcely known by sight to the Russians themselves, could be seen pacing backwards and forwards, looking about them constantly with fierce, glistening eyes. And all about the rooms, though few in number compared with the men, were ladies dressed in the Russian Court costume. The formal difference between this costume and the ordinary evening dress of European ladies consists in the fact that the front of the dress is cut somewhat after the fashion of a pair of stays, that three long stripes of bright colour stretch from the top to the skirt, and that as a matter of necessity every lady wears a coif over her forehead. Barring the universality of this peculiar kind of head-dress, I own that unless my attention had been called to the details I have mentioned, I should not have observed that the costume worn was unlike in its character to that which we are accustomed to see

ladies wear in our own country. The one difference I should have noticed was that these Russian dames affected a gorgeousness of colour to which we are strangers. Crimson, saffron, violet, pink, and green, were only a few amongst the colours of the shining silks with which the floor of the hall appeared at times to be covered. As for jewels, there was hardly a lady I observed who had not such a profusion of them as would have made their wearer an object of attention in any London ball-room. Dim yellow daylight is not favourable to beauty at any time; and the complexion of Russian ladies errs upon the side of sallowness. On the whole, therefore, I should not say there was a very great display of female loveliness. But the brilliancy of the silks and jewels added wonderfully to the splendour of the scene.

There was a stir in the crowd soon after noon, as the booming of the cannon from across the Neva told us that the Emperor had left the private apartments. The chapel in which the marriage service was to be performed is scarcely worthy, as a building, of the magnificence of the palace in which it is situated. Entering from the halls of which I have spoken, you find yourself within the small chapel of the court. The walls and ceilings are covered

with gilt decorations of the Renaissance order. But the windows are uncoloured, and the building has neither the gorgeousness of the shrines of the Catholic faith nor the simplicity of those of the Reformed Churches. Still, as you looked closer, you saw here as everywhere traces of the exceeding wealth of the abode of Russian Royalty. From the dome which covered the centre of the church an immense golden chandelier hung down, lit with hundreds of wax candles. Beneath this chandelier there was a low platform covered with red cloth; on either side, behind gilt railings, the choristers of the Imperial Chapel, dressed in scarlet cloaks, had taken up their station. Beyond the choir you saw a deep recess brilliantly lighted up. A high gold crucifix was raised above the spot, where, according to Western notions, the altar should have stood. Two embroidered banners, representing the Transfiguration and the Baptism of the Saviour, were waved beneath the cross. Other decoration there was little, I think, to notice.

In the chapel there was barely room for a couple of hundred people, and at no time was it inconveniently crowded. Gradually the chamberlains, and equerries, and ministers, and attachés, who did not take part in the procession through the rooms, took

up their places, and then the doors were thrown open, and from the recess behind the dome the dignitaries of the Greek Church came trooping in stately procession. Their vestments seemed covered with sheaves of solid gold. The round, globe-like mitres they bore upon their heads were enchased with precious stones, and inlaid with miniature portraits of the Holy Family. But even more remarkable than the richness of their attire was the strangeness of their aspect. One and all had beards of immense length, and wore their hair long like women. To the elder priests, whose snow-white hair curled in great masses down to their waists, the custom of so wearing it gave an air of dignity I have not seen amidst the priests of other creeds. Moreover, whether from accident or not, these high priests of the Russian Church were men of high stature, and of more than ordinary stateliness of figure. Down the nave they advanced slowly; and then, as they approached the doorway, the bridal procession came flocking in.

At the head of the priests stood Monsignor Isidore, the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Novgorod, holding the cross in his hand. As each member of the Imperial family entered the chapel he advanced to the Primate, and, having first pressed his lips to the cross, kissed the back of the Primate's right

hand. Then the holy water was handed by another of the officiating clergy, the High Priest Baganoff, to those who had thus saluted the Metropolitan, and, chanting in a low voice, the priests retired to the platform beneath the dome, and the procession once more recommenced its interrupted progress.

First of that Royal party, first in place and rank and in appearance, was the Czar himself. A tall, stately man, with clear cut features and dark hair, he would, I think, have been counted one of the most kingly of kings, if he had not succeeded an Emperor whose personal grandeur of stature and aspect was beyond description. By his side was the Empress, a pale, delicate-looking lady, with handsome, even features, and a graceful figure, and covered with such a mass of diamonds that her head and neck and breast sparkled with light as she moved along. Four pages bore behind her the sweeping train of her gold-burnished dress. Then came the Czarevitch, a strong, well-built lad, over six feet in height, with broad chest, and a look of great strength about his tall, powerful figure. People say he resembles closely the Emperor Paul: certainly his face has those massive broad features which we are wont to consider especially Russian. Whether, when the bloom of youth has passed, and the marked lines

of the face grow harder, it will be as pleasant a one as his father's to look upon, may well be questioned. But, whatever else it may be, it is not the face of a man devoid of energy, or weak in will. Leaning lightly upon her bridegroom's arm stepped the Grand Duchess Maria Federovna. It scarcely seems three years since she passed through the streets of London on the day when her sister was welcomed to the country she has made her own. Those who witnessed that spectacle can scarcely have forgotten the bright young girl, then almost a child, who sat, if I remember rightly, at the back of the carriage which carried the present King and Queen of Denmark. It is two years now since I saw her dressed in black, on the day when Copenhagen was mourning for the dead who had fallen in the defence of Sonderburg. She had then become a girl from a child, and now the girl had ripened into a woman. In those three short years which had gone by since her Royal sister's wedding, the life of the lady on whom all eyes were turned has been surely an eventful one. Her father has become a king; her brother has been called to the throne of a distant kingdom; the country of her birth has been conquered and bereft of its fairest provinces, and the fortunes of Denmark have sunk as the fortunes of

her Royal House have risen; and she herself has been betrothed, and has had to mourn for the death of her Imperial lover almost before her hand had been plighted to him, and then has been wooed and won again to become the bride of another Czarevitch.

The black curls cluster as richly as ever about that high white forehead, and the features are as fair to look upon and the smile as sweet as when all London gazed upon her three years ago. But the brightness of the child has given place to the grave beauty of the woman; the face is very pale; and already there are those lines about the brow, very faint indeed, but still visible, which tell of both men and women that they have known sorrow as well as joy. Possibly the pallor of the countenance was made more conspicuous by the very gorgeousness of the Princess's dress. On her head she wore a tiara of diamonds, glittering with stones of every size and shade; and round about her neck there hung strings of diamonds each worth a fortune; two million roubles' worth of stones, so I was told, were placed upon the bride's person. Her dress was of some shining silvery texture. The train itself was a thing of splendour; it was lined throughout with ermine; and diamonds trimmed the joining of the ermine and the stuff: while a mantle of ermine-lined crimson velvet was

thrown round her shoulders. Next in order came the heirs of three European thrones. In the centre, upright and tall, stood the Crown Prince of Prussia, looking, like all his race, a soldier prince. On his right was the Prince Royal of Denmark, fresh and boyish in aspect; on his left, dressed in the uniform of a Colonel of Hussars, with his English, Russian, and Danish orders upon his breast, walked our own Prince of Wales; and then there followed any number of grand dukes and duchesses, and serene highnesses, and princes of the blood, whose names can hardly be written so as to be intelligible to English readers, and if intelligible would recall no recollections. The men, as a rule, were tall and well built, dressed in uniforms of extreme splendour; the ladies, if not handsome, had all a certain air of regal dignity, and wore dresses of such exceeding brilliancy as to require that air of dignity to deprive them of a somewhat stage-like aspect. How all the endless trains were ever carried within the chapel, and compressed in the small space where the ladies of the Imperial family took up their station, is a mystery of which I can offer no explanation.

Somehow or other, the different members of the *cortége* grouped themselves in perfect order about

the platform of which I have spoken, and on which the bride and bridegroom took up their station, surrounded by the priests. The Emperor, who, like the Czarevitch, wore the uniform of a Cossack Hetman, stood with the Empress in front of the platform. A little way behind them were placed the Royal princes. On the right stood the ladies of the Imperial family; on the left the ladies of the diplomatic corps; while the body of the chapel was filled with the courtiers on the left, and with the ladies of honour, all wearing scarlet coifs, upon the right. In the whole of the gorgeous gathering there were literally not half a dozen persons—of these the writer was one—in civilian costume. Had the chapel been darkened the effect would have been far more striking; as it was, the grey daylight dimmed the brilliancy of the spectacle.

The marriage service occupied about an hour, during the whole of which period, with the exception of one minute, every one remained standing. The greater part consisted of prayers chanted in low recitative by the clergy; and, so far as I could gather the bride and bridegroom had very little to do except to stand still and to listen devoutly. Throughout the whole ceremony golden crowns were held aloft above the heads of the Czarevitch and the Princess; over the former by the second son of the Czar, the Grand

Duke Vladimir Alexandrovitch; over the latter by the Crown Prince of Denmark. The exertion of holding out these crowns at arm's length must have been very great; and the holders were relieved at intervals by the Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovitch and the Duke of Leuchtenberg. But even with these changes the fatigue was great, and I could see the Royal crown-bearers changing their hands constantly in order to support the weight. Not understanding Russian, the words of the service were of course unintelligible to me; and even the Russian spectators caught but little of the meaning of the somewhat monotonous sing-song in which the prayers were chanted. In the body of the chapel there was a good deal of conversation during the early part of the ceremony; and numbers of the celebrities present were kindly pointed out to me by the officers who happened to be near me. But a long list of names, all ending in "off," or "ski," or "vitch," or some far less pronounceable termination, would not interest my readers any more than it did myself. One or two, however, of the men I saw around me have a fame which reaches far beyond the limits of the great Muscovite empire. Standing close to me was a little, wiry, bent old man, with hooked nose, keen grey eyes, and quick restless movements, who I was told in a whisper was Prince Menschikoff, the old antagonist of Lord Stratford

de Redcliffe—the man who, if Mr. Kinglake is to be believed, brought on the Crimean war. There too, in the crowd, was a stalwart officer, with an open German face, his scant fair hair brushed away from his broad massive forehead—a man I should guess of some fifty years of age, looking younger than his years; that is—General Todleben, the man who by his genius kept the armies of France and England at bay before Sebastopol. There also was Field-Marshal de Berg, of Polish memory, and Prince Gortschakoff, the Vice-Chancellor of the empire, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and men whose names were familiar to us in the old Crimean days, but are forgotten in England now.

Then, after half an hour or so, the running conversation stopped, and all eyes were turned towards the low altar, which had been erected in the centre of the platform. Slowly, hand in hand together, escorted by the priests, who chanted as they stepped along, the bride and bridegroom walked thrice round the altar, in memory of the Holy Trinity; then, when the ceremony was over, they were again placed before the altar, and the singing began once more. But this time the chapel choir joined in. No music is allowed except that of the human voice, and the choir in Russia has to supply the place of the organ. No knowledge of

melody was required to know that the chanting of these choristers was something far beyond any ordinary ecclesiastical music. It seemed hard to believe that the deep surges of sound—I can use no other word—which appeared to roll from side to side of the chapel as each choir in turn took up the strain, were produced by the joint voices of some scores of singers. Close as we stood to the choir it was well-nigh impossible to distinguish the separate voices; each blended into each other with such perfect harmony. Then, as far as I could follow the course of the ceremony, the Emperor and Empress kissed their son and their adopted daughter, and then the chief priests in their turn saluted the Czarevitch and his bride. The marriage was accomplished; and, as divorce is impossible under any circumstances in Russia, the Imperial couple were united for ever till death should part them. For a moment the whole congregation knelt upon the pavement, while the Metropolitan invoked the blessing of Heaven upon the heir to the crown and his royal wife; and then the *Te Deum* was sung by the choirs in a strange, plaintive chaunt, sometimes swelling forth with a burst of melody, sometimes dying away like the murmur of the wind amidst the trees. When the service had ceased, the cross was again passed to each member of the Im-

perial household, and the Primate's hand was kissed again; and then the chamberlains cleared a passage through the crowd. There was some short delay at the altar while congratulations were offered to the newly-married couple by the persons entitled to address them; and it was getting near three o'clock before the *cortége* started on its progress from the chapel. The order of the return was the same as that of the entry, except that the Crown Princes, instead of walking together, each escorted some lady of the Imperial family, the Prince of Wales leading the way, after the Czarevitch, with the Grand Duchess Constantine upon his arm. Before leaving the chapel finally, almost all the chief officers and dignitaries of the Court proceeded to the recess behind the dome, where a number of relics were exposed in a glass-covered casket of extreme splendour. There were bones there set in gold, and a pair of shrivelled hands, supposed, I believe, to have belonged to some crucified martyr of the early Greek Church. Passing in turn before the case, the officers pressed their lips reverently upon the glass; and then crossed themselves after the Russian mode, touching their face and breast some eight times in succession. There was nobody that I could see to observe who saluted the relics or not; and the priests had already left the chapel, so that I am inclined to think the

ceremony was not a mere formal one, but a genuine expression of devotion or superstition, whichever you think fit to call it.

Coming out of the chapel, I found the immense Hall of Armour even more crowded than when I had seen it earlier in the day. A great portion of the procession had turned back on its arrival at the private apartments; and the ladies who had occupied places in different parts of the building had assembled here to meet their escorts. For half an hour or so the company thus assembled promenaded about the suite of rooms open to the public. The daylight had already faded pretty well away, and the lights were lit, and the view presented by the crowd as it moved here and there was, I think, perhaps the most brilliant in the whole proceedings. Most of us must have seen upon the stage gorgeous banquet scenes, in which everything that art can do has been done to produce the expression of lavish splendour. Well, if you picture to yourself rooms more gorgeous and spacious than any scene-painter ever drew on canvas, if you substitute thousands for scores of actors in the pageant; if you clothe them with uniforms and dresses of such glitter and richness as only a few leading performers ever can wear in any operatic spectacle; if you give them all the air and gait and aspect of high-bred men

and women; if you group them as only Nature, the best of all stage-arrangers, can ever group a crowd; and if you realize that there is nothing here of tinsel and gewgaw, that the stones are neither paste nor glass, that the silks are made in the finest looms, that the dresses are the wearers', not hired out for the night; that the pageant, in fact, is as rich as a pageant possibly can be, then you will have some faint conception of the spectacle on which I gazed—the gala "of the cloth of gold."

At five o'clock there was a state dinner in the Nicholas Hall, to which the chief officials of the Court and the Diplomatic Corps were alone invited. Five hundred and fifty guests sat down to this repast, the ladies of the Court sitting at separate tables from the gentlemen. At eight the company invited to be present at the ball collected in the White Chamber and the adjoining rooms. Everybody, as before, was in the most gorgeous attire, but the number of ladies invited was comparatively small, and the crowd was far less than in the morning, as no person not presented at court could be admitted to the spectacle. The exception made in favour of the English newspaper correspondents was, I was told, almost unparalleled in the annals of court etiquette. I should only be repeating myself if I dwelt much longer upon the

extraordinary magnificence of the scene. Indeed from the fact that the ladies and gentlemen were drawn up on opposite sides of the ball-room, the spectacle was not quite so grand to my mind as it had been in the morning, when dresses and uniforms were mixed together in one gorgeous medley of colour.

Throughout the time of waiting, the one chief object of attention was a tall old man, dressed in a white cashmere robe, wearing an immense white turban bound about his head, and with a long, snow-white beard flowing over his breast. His eyes were very sunk and sad; his features hard and stern, and deeply cut; his hands, for the most part, folded together tightly. That was Schamyl—the Schamyl who, years ago, was thought to be the Tell, the Garibaldi, of the Caucasus—the man who for a time had withstood alone the advance of Russia southwards. How many times had we heard of his victories —of his reported capture—of his sudden reappearance as the conqueror of Russian legions! At last he has ceased to struggle against the manifest destiny; he lives far away in the interior, in a sort of princely exile; and lately he has come to the capital of All the Russias to do honour to the future Czar. He speaks but seldom, smiles gravely when any of the Russian generals are presented to him, and murmurs a few

words in reply. But for the most part he sits silent, looking as if his thoughts were far away from the scene, over which his eyes wander listlessly.

Nine o'clock has long passed; and then the orchestra overhead begins to play a strange, wild sort of march, and the crowd separates on either side so as to leave the passage clear, and the Imperial party enters the rooms. The ball, as it is called, is only so in name. The one dance danced is the Polonaise, in which the members of the Imperial family and their Royal guests alone take part, the music being, I believe, taken from the popular Russian opera of "La Vie pour le Czar." But dance even this is not. Three times in succession the Princes and Princesses walk up and down the room, to the sound of the strange barbaric music; and the only feature in which the Polonaise differs from an ordinary walk is that partners are changed after each time, and that the pace is somewhat more rapid and regular than that of common walking. The bride had the three Crown Princes in turn for her escort through the dance, her last partner, I believe, being the Prince of Wales. The other two partners of his Royal Highness were the Grand Duchesses Helena Paulovna and Maria Nicholaina. The third time was round the hall instead of straight up and down; and the last glimpse I caught of the scene, as I left the

room to get out in time for the procession, was the diamond tiara of the latest and youngest of the Imperial grand duchesses, the bride of the Czarevitch.

The moment the Polonaise had been finished, the Emperor and the rest of the wedding party left the hall and retired to the private apartments. The Grand Duke Constantine and his wife started at once for the palace on the Newski Prospekt, where the Czarevitch is to take up his abode, in order to see that all was in readiness. Coming out of the brilliantly lit palace into the cold, dark Neva Quays, it seemed as if I had left dreamland behind me and had woke to dull, real life. But on reaching the main streets I found there was no want of glare and glitter. The illuminations were very general, though not particularly brilliant, with the exception of the Government buildings, whose façades were literally decked out with lines of oil lamps. The Newski itself was closed to all carriages, and was crammed with a very considerable, though not a dense, crowd. The night had turned to heavy rain, the frost had broken, and the ground was covered with deep pools of muddy water and thick layers of slush. A Russian crowd is at all times a dirty one, and, in the damp reeking moisture of the air, the sheepskins in which the bulk of the poorer lookers-on were clad emitted an odour not pleasant even to noses that are by no

means delicate. That the crowd was an ill-natured one I could not fairly say; but in my experience of many crowds I never saw a dirtier or a more turbulent one, or one in which the "rough element" seemed more strongly marked. Moreover, when you have got on thin boots soaked to the skin, when you are stifled beneath the weight of heavy furs, when you are hustled to and fro, and have every sense offended at once, after you have just left the most gorgeous of palaces, it is not easy to take a pleasant view of a crowd, especially a Russian one. It was close on eleven before the procession came by. The order, I think, was not strictly observed; and the heavy gilt coaches, fac-similes of the one we are accustomed to on Lord Mayor's Day in London, came lumbering after each other at long intervals. The night was so bad that every window was closed, and the occupants of the carriage could be scarcely recognized. But even in the gloom of the night the diamond tiara of the bride shone brightly through the windows of the coach where she was seated with the Emperor and Empress and the Czarevitch. The populace cheered loudly enough when the Czar's carriage passed; but the night was too wretched for any outburst of popular enthusiasm. And so ended the wedding-day of the Czarevitch and of the Grand Duchess Maria Federovna.

## CHAPTER V.

### RUSSIAN CONTRASTS.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 11.

SOMEBODY once called Washington the city of magnificent distances; I should be inclined to call St. Petersburg the city of extraordinary contrasts. The more I see of this strange capital, the more I am struck with the spectacle at once of its luxury and its squalor. Foreigners often say that in London you see the extremes of wealth and poverty. The remark is true enough; but then between the two extremes there exist enormous intermediate stages of comfort. St. James's is unlike St. Giles's, but between the two quarters there is a region of respectability. In St. Petersburg, however, poverty and wealth, luxury and misery, splendour and shabbiness, civilization and barbarism, go hand in hand, lie side by side together. It is a place which can only be described by superlatives. Everything is either superb or wretched; everybody is either

wealthy or poor; Dives and Lazarus are the only two parts in the Russian life-drama. I attempted in my last letter to convey to you some idea of the magnificence of the Imperial palace and of the spectacle presented at the Czarevitch's wedding. Looking back upon the scene, now that the colours of the ceremony have faded somewhat from my mind, I still feel that no words I could have written would furnish you with an adequate idea of its magnificence. But, at the same time, no faithful description of St. Petersburg could dwell alone upon the gorgeousness of scenes like these. Nothing can be more splendid than the Winter Palace, yet in many parts the stucco is peeled off the walls, and the façade is left in a state which the occupant of any sixty-pound house in a decent suburban street in London would be ashamed to behold on the front of his dwelling. Of all the gorgeous shrines which I have entered, I think the Isaac's Church is perhaps the most perfect. It is absolutely matchless in the richness of its decoration. The porphyry steps, the basalt pillars, the marble walls, the bronze capitals, the gilded dome, are all marvels of splendour; yet the square on the centre of which the shrine is placed is worse paved than the back streets of the poorest German town with which I am acquainted.

The same sort of contrast pervades everything. Residents here, who have good means of judging, speak of the private life of the Russian magnates, as being luxurious to an unparalleled degree; and the little I myself have seen leads me to believe the statement is correct; yet in such luxuries as are available to travellers the capital is strangely deficient. There is not, for instance, a first-class, or even a good second-class hotel in the whole city. The inn where I am lodged is reckoned the best in St. Petersburg; its prices are certainly high enough to justify its reputation for excellence; and being in the hands of German proprietors, it is well managed and arranged. But even here the native savagery asserts itself. The Russian servants are incurably dirty; in the middle of the day you will find groups of waiters playing cards and smoking about the passages; the eating rooms are soddened with stale smoke; the floors are left unswept; the whole place is hopelessly untidy: and yet it is fitted up with many of the latest appliances of Western luxury. In the same way there is not a single café or restaurant in the capital equal to what you would find in any third-rate provincial town in France. At the very best and most expensive you must put up with soiled tablecloths, dirt-begrimed floors, and

unwashed waiters. On the other hand, the clubs are very handsome and well appointed. People say that if you choose to pay some twenty shillings or so, you can get an excellent dinner at the public eating-houses. It may be so. I can only state that the dinners they provide for their ordinary customers are miserably bad.

In fact, it is a mystery to me how people of moderate incomes live at St. Petersburg. My explanation is, that there are very few people there with moderate incomes; and that those few live wretchedly. I never was in a city in which the million seemed to be so little catered for. There are shops of every kind except cheap ones. If you can afford to drive in a private carriage, you can traverse the city as comfortably as the villainous condition of the roads will permit; if not, rain or fine, hail or snow, you must drive about in an open droshki, the shabbiest and most unluxurious public vehicle to be found in any European capital; or else you must walk on foot. Within the last year or two street railroads have been introduced along the Newski Prospekt; but otherwise there are no general conveyances of any kind. And walking is by no means an easy operation during the greater part of the year. When the streets are buried with

snow trodden into ridges and hollows; when every uncovered spot is as slippery as polished oak: when the biting wind whistles round every corner, so that it is well-nigh impossible to cross the road; when sleighs dash over the thoroughfares in every direction, with an utter disregard for the lives of the foot passengers, it is neither pleasant nor safe to be much on foot. Yet there are no means of locomotion provided for the vast bulk of the population. So, in like manner, you must be clad either in sables or sheepskin. Well-to-do people are dressed in furs, which cost as much as most English or French middle class persons spend upon their year's clothing. Common people are wrapped up in greasy skins, which an English labourer would be unwilling to wear. Moreover, in St. Petersburg, the command of boundless wealth and the most profuse expenditure will not secure you the same perfection of material comfort as it would in more civilized communities. Metaphorically as well as literally, the stucco is always getting broken off your walls in Russia. Take, for example, the equipages you meet driving about the city. The carriages are often London built; the horses are superb; but the finest harness will be patched together with string, and the liveries of the drivers will be soiled and ragged. You may

occupy a palace if you like, but you cannot place your dwelling amidst palaces. Rich and poor live in the same blocks of buildings. In the midst of hovels you come upon gorgeous edifices, and the palaces are surrounded by houses of surpassing shabbiness. In short, my dictum with regard to St. Petersburgh would be that if you have not ten thousand a year, you had better not live there at all, and if you have you can live much better in most parts of the civilized world.

The same sort of contrast pervades everything. The Russian gentlemen whom a stranger meets with here are, so far as manner goes, wonderfully polished, intelligent, and well-bred. They are all officers or officials; but externally they have little of that caste-feeling and prejudice which somehow cling to similar classes in Germany, and even to a lesser extent in France and England. In the best sense of that much-abused word, they seem to me to be thorough men of the world, quiet in manner, anxious to make life go smoothly, courteous by habit if not by instinct. Of course, the Tartar may lie underneath this external coating. Very likely he does; though I think any stranger must be singularly infelicitous who contrives to scratch hard enough to remove the Russian surface; but to any one who,

for his sins, has been thrown much into contact with foreign military and civil officials, it is absolute enjoyment to meet men so polished as these higher Russians. But then, when you sink out of the society of Princes, you fall at once to the lowest grades of the social scale. Of course, there is at St. Petersburg a large and wealthy community of merchants and traders. But they are a complete anomaly in the Muscovite world; and live pretty well, I fancy, as much apart from the local native society as the English mercantile colony does at Hong Kong or Jeddo. A stranger like myself, who strolls about the streets of a strange town, in which he can neither read the names of the streets nor pronounce them if he could read them, is obliged constantly to inquire his way from passers-by. Naturally, I am compelled to make my inquiries of well-dressed people, because they alone are likely to understand any language with which I am acquainted; and every time I am thus on the look-out for a person to whom to address my inquiries, I am struck with the extreme paucity of decently-dressed people about the streets. Officers are plentiful, and always ready to answer a foreigner's question courteously; moujiks are plentiful also; but respectable bourgeois are very rare indeed. I am told that the Russian

common people are kindly and civil enough; and the droshki drivers, of whom alone I can speak from personal experience, have a sort of stolid good humour, which contrasts favourably with the manners of London cabmen or Parisian *cochers*; but the peasants and workmen you see about are in outward look and demeanour rough and brutal, dirty and degraded. We hear a great deal about the drunkenness of London. Goodness knows we have no reason to boast of our national sobriety; but London is a model of temperance compared with St. Petersburg. Everywhere, and at all hours of the day, you meet intoxicated people. After all, a well-dressed elderly gentleman, attired in handsome furs, could not go reeling down Regent Street, in the busiest hours of the day, lurching from lamp-post to lamp-post, without attracting notice. But the other day I saw this spectacle in the Newski, at the time when the *beau monde* was assembled there; and nobody appeared to regard the incident as extraordinary. Amongst the lower class—for the word class can hardly be used in the plural number with reference to Russia—drunkenness is said to be universal. It is not odd that it should be so, for any sort of intellectual or even innocent amusement is out of their reach as a body. The theatres here

are splendid, and the performances excellent; but then the prices of admittance are utterly beyond the means of common pockets. Popular entertainments of any kind there seem to be absolutely none. Boozing on bad spirits, in stifling cellars of cut-throat aspect, is, so far as I can learn, the one solitary enjoyment provided for the Russian peasant.

St. Petersburg must indeed be a terrible residence for the masses who have not the means to secure ample firing. The weather, everybody assures me, is exceptionally mild and genial. In fact, people are complaining that the seasons have lost their due order; yet, personally, I should call the climate—judging from the samples I have seen—perfectly detestable. On Friday, as I told you, it snowed hard all day, and a few sledges were seen about the streets. In the night it thawed, and yesterday the thermometer stood just above freezing point; but the wind blew straight across the Gulf of Finland, and its cruel sharpness was indescribable. Fancy an east wind chilled by just passing over glaciers, and you will have some idea of our sufferings. Last night it froze hard, and to-day the wind has sunk, the sky is bright, and the cold is intense. Indoors, where all the rooms and passages are heated with hot air, the atmosphere is absolutely oppressive.

You feel too hot ever to get cold again; you wrap yourself up in furs and cloaks, under which you can hardly walk; and yet, before you have been two minutes in the open air, your feet are tingling with cold, and your ears are smarting with pain.

Copenhagen is cold and bleak and cheerless enough in all conscience; but the Danes complain bitterly of the climate of St. Petersburg. Everybody suffers in health before he becomes acclimatized to Russia, and even Royal personages are no exception to the common rule. Ever since her arrival in St. Petersburg, the Princess Dagmar has suffered greatly from the severity of the weather as compared with that to which she has been accustomed; and it seems as if the fatigues of the marriage ceremonies had been too much for her not very vigorous health. Yesterday she was driving about with the Empress, paying visits to her new relations; and on her return she had an attack of some sort of bronchial affection. To-day she is very unwell indeed, so unwell, that the Court festivities, which were to have followed the marriage, have been adjourned till further orders; and the police went round the city to-night to stop the illuminations. In any other country, you would imagine, this measure would only have been adopted in the

case of very serious illness; but they manage things oddly in Russia; and people, who ought to be well informed, do not profess to regard the Crown Princess's malady as of an alarming character.

Meanwhile this *contretemps* has deranged the whole plans of the Court and its Royal guests, and nobody seems to know what is to be the programme for the next week. The Imperial Government are very anxious to have a grand review before the Prince of Wales takes his departure; and, besides this, there are to be all sorts of Court balls and State visits to the opera; but, for the present, every preparation is suspended.

Yesterday, the Emperor, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and the Crown Prince of Prussia, went in the evening to the French Theatre, where Sardou's play of *Nos Bons Villageois* was brought out for the first time; the part of Pauline being played by Mdlle. Stella Colas, who is a great favourite at St. Petersburg. This morning his Royal Highness attended service at the English chapel. The building was absolutely crammed with English residents, who had come to get a view of the Prince. The sermon was preached by the chaplain, Mr. Thompson, whose name will be well known to all parishioners of St. Mary's, Bryanston Square.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AN ENGLISH ADDRESS.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 12.

THE law of compensation has entailed upon English princes the penalty of being Addressed upon every possible occasion. They never can go anywhere, or do anything, or meet with any incident in life, whether pleasurable or otherwise, without receiving addresses. All modern sovereigns are subject to the same calamity in greater or less degree; but our Royal family must, I think, be the heaviest sufferers. Our people are, in American phrase, "death upon" addresses. I don't know why it should be so: we are not fond of impromptu speaking; we are very indifferent hands at it when we try; we have not, as a nation, any taste for ceremonials; yet we must present addresses on every possible and impossible occasion. It is our fate, our allotted destiny; and to struggle against it is vain. Most Englishmen, however humble

their sphere in life, must have been addressed at some time or other by somebody upon something. All who have been subject to the infliction must sympathize with those luckless mortals whose doom it is to pass their lives in receiving addresses. "It is the same old coon," as poor Abraham Lincoln is recorded to have exclaimed in bitterness of heart and weariness of spirit, when, for about the hundredth thousandth time, some visitor who had solicited an audience began nervously to pull an application for office from out his breast pocket. The same sentiment, if not expressed in the same words, must often suggest itself to the minds of our Royal family, when they hear the established phrase, "May it please your Royal Highness." They know it all so well, have heard it so often before, and, what is more, know that they shall hear it so constantly again.

The Prince of Wales must have been subject to attacks of intermittent addresses from too early a period of life not to have grown accustomed in some measure to his cross. There is probably no town or village in the civilized globe that he could visit without finding an address prepared for him, and he must have profited little by the lessons of experience, if he imagined that, by going to the extreme north, he would get beyond the region of addresses. An

address atmosphere has surrounded him from his cradle; and even his death will some day or other—we may hope a far distant one—furnish the occasion for addresses innumerable. There exists, and has existed here for centuries, an important British colony of merchants; there are houses, representatives by lineal descent of the old Russian Trading Company whose first seat was at Archàngel, which have carried on trade between England and Russia for upwards of a hundred years: and so it was not perhaps inappropriate that this remote British community should take the opportunity of the Prince's visit to St. Petersburg to congratulate him on the connexion which the Czarevitch's marriage has created between the reigning families of Russia and Great Britain.

The Prince had appointed to-day for the reception of the address, the composition and arrangement of which has been, I need hardly say, the subject of much discussion ever since the Prince's visit was first announced. Fifteen gentlemen had been chosen as representatives of the British resident community. At eleven o'clock this morning, they were received by the Prince in his quarters at the Hermitage. After having been presented to his Royal Highness by Sir Andrew Buchanan, the following address was read by the treasurer of the British factory:

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, the undersigned members of the British factory, and British residents at St. Petersburg, impressed with feelings of devotion to our Sovereign, and of attachment to our country, are desirous of presenting to your Royal Highness our tribute of respectful homage on the occasion of your visit to the Court of St. Petersburg.

"The auspicious event, which has brought for the first time in the annals of history an heir to the throne of Great Britain to Russia, is one in which our heartfelt sympathies are enlisted. Grateful for the many advantages we enjoy under the Government of the beneficent Emperor who rules this land, we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity now afforded of giving expression to our earnest wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the Imperial family, while we hail with satisfaction an event which, by uniting the heir apparent to the throne of All the Russias to the Royal House of Denmark, establishes, in the person of the august consort of your Royal Highness, a tie between Russia and Great Britain of the happiest augury for friendly relations between the two countries.

"As residents at St. Petersburg, interested for the most part in commerce and manufactures, we are in a position to appreciate the manifold advantages

which extended trade cannot fail to afford to both countries; for it is no imaginary bond which draws the two nations together, but a community of interests, based upon an interchange of services, which the greatest agricultural people and the greatest manufacturing nation of Europe are capable of rendering to each other.

"We recognise the happy influence which the many important social and administrative reforms inaugurated during the present reign must inevitably exercise upon the development of the internal resources and foreign trade of this Empire. We know that these signs of a coming prosperity will be as gladly welcomed by our countrymen in England as they are by the British residents in St. Petersburg; and the friendly feelings of our most gracious Sovereign towards Russia, evinced by the visit of your Royal Highness to this country, will be as fully appreciated by Englishmen as they doubtless are by the Russian people."

This address was signed by two hundred and fifty English residents in St. Petersburg. On its being handed to the Prince, who received it surrounded by his suite, his Royal Highness read the following reply:

"Gentlemen,—I am much gratified by the sentiments which you have expressed to me on the occasion

of my visit to St. Petersburg, and I shall not fail to acquaint the Queen with the feelings of loyalty and patriotism that animate her Majesty's subjects in Russia.

"It is also gratifying to me to learn, as I am sure it will be to the Princess of Wales, that you hail the connexion now established between us and the Hereditary Grand Duke as a means of strengthening the friendly relations of Great Britain with an Empire in which you enjoy so many advantages. I sympathize with your earnest wishes for the happiness of the Emperor and the Imperial family, and for the prosperity of the Russian nation.

"You say truly that a community of national interests must have a favourable influence on the intercourse of the two countries; and it affords me the highest satisfaction to know that these interests are still upheld in Russia, as they have been for the last three hundred years, by a body of British residents who possess the respect and confidence of the Government and people, and who occupy a position at once honourable to themselves and to their country.

"We have happily become aware in England that our own well-being is promoted by that of other nations, and I congratulate you sincerely on your anticipations of a further development of the resources and commerce of Russia.

"Gentlemen, I thank you again for the interest you manifest in the marriage of the sister of the Princess of Wales with the Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovitch, and for the hope you have so well expressed of happy results from my alliance with the Imperial family."

The Prince then spoke a few words to some of the gentlemen presented, and the deputation departed, as provincial reporters say in their accounts of children's school feasts, "highly gratified by their reception."

The Princess, I am glad to state, has rallied from the sharp attack under which she suffered yesterday, and it is hoped that the Court festivities may be resumed immediately upon the return of the Prince of Wales from Moscow, where he goes in a day or two. Yesterday evening an Imperial amnesty was issued on the occasion of the Czarevitch's marriage. Persons sentenced to hard labour for an indefinite period are to have their remaining term of punishment limited to twenty years: and offenders who have served at least four years without giving any fresh cause of complaint are to be remitted one-fourth of the rest of their time of punishment. I can only hope that they are duly grateful; but the human heart is so naturally depraved that I should not be surprised if even a Siberian climate had failed to eradicate the vice of ingratitude.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE REVIEW IN THE ZARYZYN.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 13.

ST. PETERSBURG was planned—so guide-books state—on such a gigantic scale, that not even the energy of the Czar Peter and his successors has sufficed to carry out the original scheme. Immense spaces in the very heart of the city are still but thinly covered with buildings. Certainly, the area occupied by the town is quite disproportionate to the amount of the population; and it is this fact which gives it the half-unfinished, half-empty air so characteristic of all except the few main thoroughfares. Just at the back of the Winter Palace, and within a quarter of a mile of the Newski Prospekt, there is, for instance, a vast open space, used for a parade ground. On this Zaryzyn Platz there was held this morning a review in honour of the Prince of Wales. It was not what in any other important country except England could be called a great review. Only some thirty thousand men were

marched from the different barracks with which the capital is crowded. I believe, if the Emperor had consulted his personal wishes, a far grander and more elaborate military spectacle would have been arranged; but in the present inclement weather it was felt that the Royal visitors ought not to be exposed to the fatigue and cold attending a lengthy open-air review, and therefore it was resolved to contract the ceremony within as short limits as possible. Happily, the frost broke this morning, and the day was not so bitterly chilly as might have been expected from the intensity of the cold yesterday.

At twelve o'clock, punctual to a minute, the Prince of Wales, accompanied by his suite, arrived in an open carriage at the foot of the Michael's Bridge, where his horses were in readiness. His Royal Highness wore the English Hussar's uniform. The Crown Prince of Prussia, who followed almost immediately after, was dressed in the uniform of the Russian regiment of which he is the honorary colonel. Whether it was owing to this fact that he was not recognized by the crowd, or whatever may have been the reason, our English Prince was much more loudly cheered by the people assembled in the streets than his German brother-in-law. As soon as the two Princes had mounted, they rode across the bridge into the parade

ground, where the Czar had already arrived. The Emperor, escorted by a brilliant staff, took up his position on one side of the Platz, and the troops commenced defiling past without any unnecessary delay. The public was allowed access to the sides of the wide square, which is as large, I should think, as Wormwood Scrubs; and there would have been ample room for everybody to see if the spectators had been numbered by as many tens as there were units of thousands. For no conceivable apparent reason, some of the approaches to the ground were closed by detachments of troops, who drove back the crowd with utterly unnecessary brutality. But there were numbers of roads by which anybody could enter the square without the least difficulty. For the most part, I should add, the crowd was composed of Moujiks and peasants; there were but few well-dressed people present, and hardly any private carriages. I was fortunate enough to get a place upon a stand which an enterprising individual, whose sheepskin coat was the dirtiest I have yet seen, had run up for the occasion close behind the spot where the Imperial staff was posted; and, for the sum of sixpence, I witnessed the whole of the spectacle in such comfort as can be enjoyed while the feet are aching with cold.

The spectacle was undoubtedly striking. On my right the square was bounded by the Marble Palace and by the broad stone quays, across which, from my raised position, I could see the dark waters of the Neva rolling rapidly along. On my left was the palace of the Grand Duke Michael, standing in its wooded park-like garden; opposite was a long, low line of stucco-covered barracks; and behind me were the bare, leafless trees of the Summer Garden. Everything looked wintry to a degree we can hardly understand in England. It seems quite absurd to suppose that the scene can ever be a bright one, or the trees clad in green. The sombre leaden sky, the roofs whitened with hoar frost, the frozen pools, the hard snow-dabbled ground appeared the permanent, not the accidental features of the scene you looked upon.

The troops were drawn up in a hollow square; behind the soldiers the crowd had placed itself in close dark lines; on the roofs of the houses overlooking the Platz, a few adventurous spirits had taken up their station; and over the roofs you could see the mosque-like domes of the Russian churches, glittering with gilt or green. The soldiers all wore their overcoats, and the masses of troops, posted on every side, were dull and colourless in aspect. We always used

to hear, in the Crimean days, of the grey-coated Russians. If grey is considered identical with sombre, the description is accurate enough; but the case is different if the word is intended to express a shade of colour. A dull lustreless brown would be a nearer approach to the colour in which most of the Muscovite troops are clad. Regiment after regiment of infantry defiled past the Emperor; the first company of each regiment raised a hoarse, harsh cheer as it marched by; and the cheers succeeded each other at fixed intervals with mechanical regularity. Whenever a battalion marched past, the Emperor made some remark to them—"Very good," or "Very steadily marched." The custom is for the entire battalion to answer—"We pray to meet your approval always," or "Better next time;" or some words equivalent. Every reviewing officer says it, and it is part of every parade all over Russia. At times they passed with a slow steady tramp; at others they ran past at full speed; but in neither instance did their pace and step appear to me to be remarkable for precision. The march was not to be compared with that of the Prussian line; the running was very inferior to that of the Italian Bersaglieri. The last time I had seen troops defile was at the triumphal entry into Berlin, when the Crown Prince of Prussia was

the hero of the spectacle. To-day he was looking on as a spectator, and not a very conspicuous one; but I fancy the sight must have been gratifying to him in a military point of view. The regiments were picked bodies, selected for the purpose, and, to say the least, were very favourable specimens of the Russian line; but neither in size, in strength, nor in military aspect could they rank with the grand army which the Crown Prince had led to victory. There was nothing in their march of the free steady swing which distinguishes the Prussian infantry. Man for man, the troops were not equal to the soldiers of an ordinary Prussian regiment, and their faces lacked that air of intelligence which is so marked in the common Prussian private. There is no doubt that the Russians make good soldiers; we ourselves paid too dearly for our knowledge of the fact to forget it in a hurry. But, judging from the look of the troops, I should say the Russian army as a military instrument does not appear equal to the Prussian. Meanwhile the bands played lustily as the troops marched on. The music was of no very great excellence. But as the fingers of the unhappy musicians must have been nearly frozen off, it is not wonderful they should at times have played somewhat out of tune. In the same way allowance should be made for any slight

irregularity in the marching, on account of the state of the ground. The parade place was so hard and slippery that it was a marvel how the horses could keep their feet; and the men must have found it difficult to move with rapidity. The Russian troops have abandoned the Prussian "*picklehaube*" (all except one regiment) for the French kepi, so that they can wear the "Bashlik"—that little grey monk's-hood with tails with which they cross their breasts like belts, and put up at night in bad weather.

When the infantry regiments had passed the artillery followed. The guns were so polished that they shone brightly right across the square; the caissons were painted a light green colour; on each ammunition waggon two soldiers were seated back to back. Then, when the guns had rattled by, the cavalry followed, passing the Czar for the most part at full gallop. The cavalry, I should add, were preceded by the Emperor's Circassian body-guard—all Circassian gentlemen; two sons of Schamyl being among the number. There were Cossacks of the Don, Tartars of the Ukraine, amidst that vast body of mounted horsemen. With their gay pennants of many colours, their red lances, and their bright trappings, these cavalry regiments relieved the general sombreness of the scene. Moreover, the men were

splendidly mounted, and rode admirably. Whether the small short-backed Russian horses would bear heavy fatigue I do not know; but there can be no question about their activity and beauty. The men rode with very short stirrups, so that their knees were drawn up nearly to the pummel of their saddles; and they necessarily leaned forward in riding. This circumstance, coupled with the wildness of their aspect, gave them a sort of savage look, which increased the impression of power conveyed by their charge. I have always thought that, of all unpleasant incidents of warfare, the most disagreeable must be to receive a charge of cavalry; and, of all cavalry I have ever seen, I should dislike more than any other to see the Russian Cossacks come galloping down upon a position from which retreat was impossible.

Rapidly as the troops moved, the short winter day was getting on before all the regiments had passed by. As fast as they had finished defiling, they marched back to their barracks through the different thoroughfares which lead to the Zaryzyn; so that the square was nearly empty before the parade was over. When the last squadron had gone by the Emperor left his post in front of the staff, spoke a few words to some of the officers, and then rode slowly off the ground, with the Prince of Wales close by his side. A large

crowd had collected along the quays to witness the return to the Palace, and the Imperial party were cheered very loudly. On this, I should say, as on every other occasion, every care was obviously taken to make our English Prince the most prominent person in the day's proceedings Whether the Crown Prince of Prussia is regarded as less of a stranger and a guest at St. Petersburg, or whether recent events have created a coldness between St. Petersburg and Berlin, I do not profess to understand; I only note a patent fact, which has been much commented upon here.

To-morrow the Prince of Wales leaves for Moscow, where he will stop for a couple of days. The journey is likely to be a cold one. Even here, though this afternoon it thawed fast, the winter, I take it, has really set in. The Neva is covered with immense sheets of ice, which come whirling down the rapid current from Lake Ladoga. Last night the wooden bridges of boats which cross the Neva were taken down to avoid their being swept away by the ice, and will not be put up again till next spring. Little cornucopia-shaped papers, filled with salt, are already stuck between the double windows, under some impression—whether true or false I have no idea—that the presence of salt hinders the glass from cracking

with the frost. Oddly enough, St. Petersburg is, I find, one of the few cities where a large number of people sleep habitually in the open streets at night. The other evening I was coming home late, and saw to my horror men dressed in sheepskins lying on benches before the street doors. I fancied they were drunk, and, as the night was bitterly cold, would be frozen to death before morning. I had no means whatever of communicating with them, and was relieved on mentioning the fact, when I returned to the hotel, to learn that the men I had fancied drunk were as sober as moujiks of their class are ever likely to be. Each third dwelling in St. Petersburg is obliged to have a watchman outside the house for the night, to see that all is safe. These men are supposed not to sleep, but, as a rule, they doze upon benches in the doorways. Wrapped up in immense sheepskins, they somehow keep out the cold, and do not suffer from the exposure. So I was assured. I hope that the statement is true. I do not guarantee its truth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ST. PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW.

Moscow, *November* 15.

I HAVE travelled since yesterday exactly the same distance as that from London to Edinburgh. But, if you look upon the chart of Russia, you will see that the space between St. Petersburg and Moscow is a mere footstep, so to speak, in the passage across this vast empire. For some twenty hours I have been travelling over snow-covered, cheerless plains, getting farther and farther every hour from the civilization of the West; and yet I can truly say that I am far less fatigued than if I had made a journey from London to Oxford. Till the present day I never knew what was the real perfection of railway travelling. I saw lately in *Punch* a picture of the interior of an ideal first-class carriage. Well, the ideal, intended as a caricature, fell far short of the Russian reality. In fact, if you want to know, in the language of the Roscherville placards, "where to spend a happy day,"

I should recommend you, provided you can select your own companions, to take a ticket by the Express train between St. Petersburg and Moscow. I have said in some of my previous letters that Russia looked to me still half civilized. I withdraw the statement. I retract the assertion. There must be the germ of high culture in a nation which, alone and unassisted, has solved the hitherto insoluble problem how to make a railway journey pleasant and comfortable.

At half-past two in the afternoon the Moscow Express leaves St. Petersburg. It gets dusk here soon after three; and I looked forward with dread to one of those long, dreary journeys, of which I have had so many—when the time goes by so inexpressibly slowly; when it is too dark to read and too early to go to sleep, and there is nothing to be done except to watch the dark shadows flitting past the windows, and listen to the ceaseless rattle of the train. I did not leave my hotel till three successive deputations of waiters had been sent up to inform me that I should certainly be late if I delayed another moment; and, as I expected, I found myself at the station exactly three-quarters of an hour before the time at which the train was advertised to start. Why all foreigners should entertain an unalterable conviction that you must miss a train if you are not on the spot to catch

it at least an hour before its departure is one of the many mysteries of Continental life I never hope to penetrate. At the station I was served with a ticket —the document looked so like a writ that the word "served" suggests itself naturally—about a foot in length, covered with cabalistic characters. Then I had to procure another document of the same length for my sleeping berth in the train, and then I had to obtain a separate ticket for every article of luggage I did not take in the carriage with me. One ticket would have done as well; but it is the cardinal principle of all Russian administration never to use one piece of writing where two can possibly be employed. I may mention, as an instance of the way in which business is carried on, that at one bureau in the station they gave me a five-rouble note in change so tattered and torn and greasy, that I declined taking it till I was assured of its genuineness; at another bureau in the self-same hall I tendered this note in payment, and had it positively refused as worthless. Happily I had time to insist on its being changed. It was returned to the railway officials, and will doubtless be passed off on some other stranger, who is either more unsuspicious or more pressed for time than I chanced to be myself.

Amidst a crowd of fellow-passengers, all so wrapped

in furs, hoods, and cloaks that it was difficult to predicate anything more about their sex or nation than that they were animated bundles of clothes, we stayed for about half an hour in a long, low waiting room. At last an English acquaintance, who had lived long in Russia, informed us that there was no need of our stopping till the doors were thrown open. "Walk straight up to the guard before the door"—such was his advice—"go on as if you had a right to do so, and the chances are a hundred to one he will let you pass without objection." We followed the advice, presented ourselves boldly, and were admitted as privileged persons upon the platform. The train consisted of half a dozen cars of immense length. They were all much of a pattern. Entering by the middle, you come first into a small saloon, with a table in the centre, surrounded by sofas and divans. From one side of this saloon a passage, broad and high enough for a tall man or a lady in crinoline to walk along without much difficulty, leads to the further end of the carriage, opening by a door on to the iron platform outside. Out of this passage you pass, pushing aside the heavy curtains, into any one of the three private apartments—I know of no more appropriate word—into which the carriage is divided. In the daytime these apartments look like

very luxurious first-class carriages, with arm-chair seats for six persons. On the other side of the saloon I have spoken of was a passage leading to similar apartments, reserved for ladies; and on the roof there was a sleeping saloon, to which you ascended by a winding staircase. The view from this upper floor is excellent, but in winter time the lower apartments are chosen by preference. Everything in the whole place was admirably arranged; the doors fitted closely; and, as in entering the carriage you have to pass through a succession of doors, one of which you close before you open the other, there is no draught from the cold, bleak air outside. Over the passage there runs a kind of loft, into which you can stow away, within arm's reach, the small articles of luggage that travellers carry with them, and which in other countries are such a nuisance to their owners. The double windows excluded the air completely; but still, with an excellent system of ventilation through the roof, the cars were never unpleasantly close. And besides the apartments set apart for travellers, there were washing-places and dressing-rooms, all handsomely fitted up, and, what is even more remarkable, scrupulously clean.

Two English gentlemen engaged in the great iron works of Zwickau were the only other occupants of the

compartment that my friend and I had selected. Each of us had a corner seat, and the room was virtually our own. But, indeed, if it had received the full complement of travellers, we should not have been inconveniently crowded. When once we were off there was little probability of our being disturbed. When the Czar Nicholas had the plans of the railroad laid before him, which was intended to pass through the large towns lying in the district between St. Petersburg and Moscow, he drew a straight line on the chart between the two capitals, and said that must be the route adopted. The Imperial autocrat looked on a railway as a device for expediting the carriage of troops, not as an invention for the development of traffic. The result is, that this grand railroad only passes one important town in the whole of the six hundred versts it traverses. There is not a single branch, not a solitary feeder of any kind. A fellow-traveller assured me he had never, constantly as he had been over the line, seen anybody get in or out at the roadside stations. The statement, of course, is an exaggeration, but I can confirm it to the extent of saying that during our whole journey I observed neither arrivals nor departures in our own car. There is very little, I gather, to see upon the route. The station at St. Petersburg is in the suburbs, so that in

a very few minutes we were out upon the bleak, bare plains along which our road lay to Moscow.

> "For the sky was blue and the fields were green
> All on the way to Moscow."

Such was the burden of Southey's triumphal ode on the overthrow of the *Grande Armée*. Nothing could well look less like the picture thus presented than the country as I saw it. Immense tracks of marshy commons, covered with stunted dwarf pines; wooden shanties half buried in snow; an endless expanse of dull brown moor, hardly distinguishable from the dull leaden sky. This is about all I can recall of the fifty odd miles or so of country that I saw before the early night closed in and wrapped up everything in darkness. Then the attendants, three of whom—two men and one woman—are attached to every car, lit the lamps, the curtains were drawn, a green baize portable table was fixed in the centre of our compartment, wax-candles were fastened at the corners, and chess and drafts and cards were offered to us in case we did not wish to sleep or to read. Learning that the duty upon cards was paid over to the funds of the noble foundling hospitals with which Russia is provided, we thought ourselves justified in supporting the cause of charity, and from dark till it was time

to go to bed we played at whist as comfortably as if we had been seated in a London club-room. It is true the carriage jolted a little at times, but so slightly that a candlestick we were not able to screw on stood unfastened on the table without moving perceptibly, and the rattle of the train added, I think, rather than otherwise, to our sense of comfort. The roadway, which was laid down only a few years ago by a French company, is in such bad condition that the express trains have had their speed much reduced. Still, including frequent and lengthy stoppages, we performed the journey at an average speed of twenty miles an hour.

Those stoppages, instead of being, as with us, periods of vexatious trial to the temper, broke not unpleasantly the monotony of the long journey. Every fifty miles or so there was a first-class station. It was not that these stations marked important stopping points: often there was no appearance of any habitation being near at hand. We stopped simply because we had completed so many versts of our journey. The attendants informed us we had ten, twenty, thirty minutes to stop, as the case might be; and wrapping ourselves up in our furs, we left the cards upon the table, and came out into a brilliantly lit station, with handsome arcades. One

was the exact counterpart of the other. We were shown into the long refreshment rooms, and there beheld a spectacle which made me blush, when I thought of the shabby counters, the stale buns, the grizzly fly-blown patties, the horsebean soup, the scraggy drumsticks of similar establishments in our dear native land. On one side there was a stall where tea was dispensed in glasses—not the dreadful compound we are accustomed to at a railway bar, but a rich, fragrant beverage, whose aroma it was pleasant to smell, as you stood beside the counter. Another stall was supplied with rows of curiously shaped bottles, out of which wonderful liqueurs were poured into small sparkling glasses. A third stall was covered with boxes of bonbons, sweetmeats, candies, "goodies" of every kind, the sight of which made you wish that you were a child, and could sit and eat, and gaze, and eat again for hours. And in the centre was a long table decked out with snow-white linen, flowers, and wax candles. As to the dishes I cannot number them. I never before appreciated the meaning of the phrase, "groaning beneath the weight of viands." I have dined at civic banquets; but the table was not more richly spread than those of these Russian refreshment rooms. The show was brilliant, but the substance was better still. Ducks and

geese and venison, huge fishes and plump partridges, galantines, jellies and puddings, pies, tarts and pasties, were all laid out in such neat order that it seemed a shame to eat them. Besides, for those who preferred hot meals to cold, there were soups and joints, and I know not what besides. Amidst the épergnes were stacks of bottles of French wines, and decanters of native liqueurs. The waiters, clad in long red linen coats fastened by a sash round the waist, were bright and outwardly clean. The difficulty was to know what to choose amidst the number of delicacies offered to you.

Besides, even if you were not hungry, the scene was so strange to look upon. In each room was a picture of the Saviour, surrounded with a rich carved frame, and decked out with gold leaf and jewels. Before and after meat you could see the Russians crossing themselves with muttered prayers. Peasant women offered strange worked slippers and scarves for sale; an old priest, with a white beard, walked up and down the room, holding a gilt plate, on which kopecks were laid by the travellers: he never begged, but whenever anybody presented him with anything he recited a prayer, and crossed himself times without number. At three of these stations we dined, and had tea and supped in succession. How many more

we passed after it was time to turn in it is impossible for me to say. At the last stoppage, I can remember, we told the servant we were ready for bed, and when we returned to our carriage we found our sitting room converted into a sleeping room. The cushions and mats had been taken away, and berths were ready for us far more comfortable than any I have ever slept in on board ship, and as good—and that is saying a good deal—as the berths in the state cabins of an American river steamer. As to the American railway sleeping cars, they are not to be mentioned in the same breath with the Russian. There we slept till nine o'clock in the morning, as soundly as if we had been under a roof, and by the time we had washed and dressed we found ourselves approaching Moscow.

The Prince of Wales left St. Petersburg, after a day's wolf hunting at Gatschina, at nine o'clock at night, and arrived here at one o'clock. His Royal Highness travelled in a special Imperial train, consisting of eleven carriages, holding eighty persons. There were dining-rooms, drawing-rooms, sleeping-rooms, kitchen, pantry, servants' rooms, and all in the train. The Royal party sat down thirty in one car, both for supper and breakfast. A large crowd had collected at the station, and lined the streets through which he passed to the Kremlin.

Immediately on his arrival at the palace he began to visit the curiosities of the place, accompanied by his suite; and for some four hours they were constantly on foot inspecting the wonders of that extraordinary building. Very glad, I believe, they all were when they had time to take a few minutes' rest before dinner. There was a banquet at the Kremlin at six o'clock, and at half-past eight the Royal Princes, in company with the Governor of Moscow, Prince Dolgorouki, visited the theatre. It was known beforehand that the Prince would probably be there; and the enormous opera house was crammed in consequence. Next to the Scala at Milan, the Dresden Theatre, the Old Academy at New York, and Covent Garden, I should say that the Moscow Theatre was the handsomest I have ever seen; the stage, I believe, is one of the largest in the world. There are no private boxes except those close to the stage; and the effect of the immense tiers filled, row after row, with handsomely-dressed women, sparkling in diamonds, and with officers in gorgeous uniforms, is brilliant in the extreme. As the Prince's visit to Moscow is not a State affair, the Imperial box in the centre of the house was not occupied by the Royal visitors. The Prince sat in the corner of the stage-box, somewhat hidden by the curtains,

with the Crown Prince of Denmark, the Prince of Saxe-Weimar, and the Governor-General on his left; and it was some time before he was recognised by the public, who kept constantly looking towards the Imperial box in the hope of seeing his Royal Highness enter the theatre. But when the curtain dropped on the first act of the opera a rumour ran through the house, and every face in the whole building was turned upon the stage-box where the Royal visitors were seated. Even to one so inured to being stared at as the Prince, it must, I think, be trying to know that some thousands of opera-glasses are turned full upon you, and that their owners are all commenting on your personal appearance. The Prince, however, bore the ordeal with great equanimity; and looked, indeed, unusually well as he stood up in his Hussar uniform, leaning on the hilt of his sword. Then there was a tremendous shout from the audience, and calls for something or other in language that to me was unintelligible. The musicians had left the orchestra, but at last the shouts became so loud that the Governor came forward and waved his hand; then the musicians returned, and played the Russian national anthem, the whole audience standing up. When that was over, there was a cry of "God save the Queen," of which the only two intelligible words

were "God" and "Kin;" and the band, in answer to the Governor's signal, obeyed the call. At the conclusion there was another burst of applause, and the Prince came to the front of the box, and bowed repeatedly in answer to the cheering. The Danish national hymn was played next, and was acknowledged in like manner by the Crown Prince of Denmark. But the audience were not satisfied, and insisted on a repetition of "God save the Queen" and the Russian anthem. At the close of the last the Prince again advanced, smiled, and clapped his hands, to the great delight of the Russians. There was again a demand for an encore, but the Royal party quitted the box, and the excitement subsided. The opera was indifferent, the ballet, as usual, splendid; but the real attraction was the Prince of Wales, and nobody had eyes for the performance.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MOSCOW.

Moscow, *November* 15.

RUSSIA is a country about which it is very hard to avoid exaggeration. You may dwell upon its splendour, you may dilate upon its squalor; and each description will be literally true. But yet neither the colours of the rainbow on the one hand, nor all the shades of sepia on the other, will suffice to paint Russia faithfully. You have to use both in turn, and avoid all neutral tints, if you wish to produce anything like an accurate portraiture of this extraordinary land. If, indeed, I wished to give any one a view of Russia under its fairest aspect, I should recommend him to travel straight from London to St. Petersburg, making no stoppage on the way; to drive from the Western to the Southern Terminus without casting a glance around him; to take a ticket direct to Moscow, only peeping through the frost-covered window-panes from time to time, to see that all around

was cold, and bleak, and cheerless; and then, if he could find a closed carriage awaiting him at the station, to drive to the Kremlin Terrace, timing his arrival so that he could see it, as I saw it to-day, in the still glare and pale glitter of a northern sunset. If he failed, looking on the scene, to feel that the toil, and cost, and weariness of the journey were more than repaid by that wondrous spectacle, the Telemachus to whom I had acted as Nestor must be devoid of the true roaming spirit.

You pass through the Holy Gateway of the Kremlin, raising your hat from your head as you do so in obedience to the custom of the place, and then find yourself upon a broad wide terrace. All around you, on every side, there rise minarets and domes of gold. Behind you is a confused mass of battlements, and towers, and spires, which you know can be none other than the Kremlin Palace. At your feet, some two hundred yards sheer below the spot on which you stand, there flows the narrow Moskowa, down whose rapid stream great blocks of snowdrift and ice float sparkling in the sunlight; far away on the flat plain upon the other side of the stream, the city of New Moscow lies stretched beneath you. There is not a house in this vast mass of buildings like anything on which you have looked before. The flat green iron roofs are interspersed with

countless turrets and domes. Hardly a puff of smoke rises from the silent city; the air is clear, and cold, and still; the only sounds seem to come from the clanging of the church bells, wafted by the wind across the river. In the dim west is the long low range of the Sparrow Hills, across which Napoleon's armies advanced on Moscow. If the French legions looked on Moscow for the first time on such an evening as that on which I have seen it, when the sky was tinted with a hundred shades of colour, fading from warm crimson to cold grey, and when the green roofs shone like emeralds, and the gold domes dazzled your eyes with their exceeding brightness, they must have felt much as the Ten Thousand did centuries ago, when at last they caught sight of the longed-for sea, and laid down their arms, and shouted, "Thalatta! Thalatta!"

There are old men still living in the city who can remember what Moscow was before the great fire, in which not only the "Grande Armée" but the fortunes of Napoleon came to ruin; and they say that the town as we see it now is nothing to what it was in the days of their fathers. But old men are apt to see anything through a sort of moral inverted telescope, and I doubt myself whether threescore years ago the barbaric splendour of the Muscovite capital could have

been greater than it is to-day, or the contrast between its gorgeousness and its shabbiness more marked than now. The wooden houses, as you see them in this year of grace, must be very similar to those in which Russians dwelt of old. The walls of the palaces were left standing by the fire, and the wealth of the empire has been employed to make the new Moscow as splendid as the old—not, I think, in vain. Certainly the view of Moscow as I have attempted to describe it is of its kind unequalled. The views of Prague from the Hvradschin Palace, of Pesth from the Blocksberg forts, are similar, but to my mind far inferior.

As long as you keep within the Kremlin, the glitter of enchantment hangs over you. The very ground you tread on is holy ground. About you, you may see peasants turning, time after time, towards the East, crossing themselves with an infinity of signs, kneeling before pictures of the Saviour or the Virgin, lying at times prostrate upon the cold hard stones which surround the sacred shrine. And here it is not as in Catholic lands, where the way-worshippers are chiefly women and children, where grown-up men kneel but seldom in public, and where the prayers recited are gabbled over, like a lesson learnt by rote. Here, as elsewhere in Moscow—and to a great, though a less extent, in St. Petersburg—the major part of the

population, no matter what their sex, or age, or rank, seem to share in this open-air worship, and pray aloud with a fervour whose accents are unmistakeable. Entering the Kremlin shrine, the sense of glamour, of which I have spoken, increases on you. The building you look upon is the kind of edifice you see in dreams, and do not expect to meet in real life. Critics say it is of depraved style, false to every true principle of art, unsightly in construction, barbarous in ornamentation. It may be so; I do not dispute the verdict of experts; I can only say that I do not envy persons who are not carried away at first by its overwhelming gorgeousness. From the pavement to the summit of its lofty domes, supported on its vast porphyry pillars, it is one mass of gold and colour. You can hardly put your hand upon a place not decorated with stones and jewels. Amethyst and onyx, jasper and opals, and all the stones whose names are recorded in the adornment of Solomon's Temple, seem to have been employed to make the shrine more splendid still. Upon the dusky portraits of the Virgin Mother and her Child, with which the walls are covered, you see hanging necklaces of diamonds, strings of jewels, each one of which must be worth a fortune. It is a common saying that all the wealth of all the Russias could not suffice to buy the treasures in this the cathedral church of Moscow;

and I suppose that, if purchasers could be found to buy all the articles contained there at their nominal price, the amount realized by the sale would be something fabulous. The very walls are wrought of silver; the roof is of solid gold. The odd thing is, that all this gorgeous splendour harmonizes with itself. There is nothing tawdry, or gewgawish about it at all: the dim twilight in which the church is always sunk subdues the glare of its colours; and when at times, as I chanced to see it, a ray of the setting sun shines through the windows of the lofty cupola, golden beams shoot through the gloom, and are reflected back again by the burnished walls. I recollect a lady telling me once, that she found, in reading the Bible to the paupers in a workhouse, that the only parts which served to wake their languid interest were the stories of the new Jerusalem, with its golden gateways and jewelled thrones. And so, I fancy, to the poor, hungry half-clad peasants, who crowd day by day into the sacred shrine, the glimpses of its glories must have a charm not altogether of the earth, earthy.

Not a stone's throw from the Kremlin, at the foot almost of the castellated walls with which the palace is surrounded, you pass into an open square which appears to belong to another world from that you have just left behind you. That immense low block of one-

storied buildings, faced with gaudily-painted stucco, peeled and broken from the walls, is the Gastinien-Dvor, the great mart of Moscow. Entering by any one of the gateways, you see before you a very labyrinth of dark passages, and hear a confused jargon of many voices. If you have ever been through Leadenhall Market, and can fancy that the passages were made of stone, and that the place was darkened, you will have some slight conception of the look of this, the greatest bazaar in the whole of Russia. On to the dark corridors, crammed with a dense crowd pacing constantly up and down, open the shops of the merchants. A picture of the Saviour hangs wherever the corridors intersect, and the glare of the lamps suspended before it only serves to make the general gloom more visible. Each corridor is more or less strictly reserved to one class of traders; but there is not much outward display on their open counters; and the interiors of the vaultlike shops are so dark that it is difficult to see what sorts of goods are piled up on the long lairs of shelves. But, as you pass along, the merchants call to you from their doorways, and offer you wares of every form and class and fashion. I suppose there are not many articles in the world you might not obtain in this enormous depôt; and the traders are ready to do business with you for

a kopeck or a million roubles, just as you choose. In one row there are furs enough to clothe all St. Petersburg; in another there are as many shoes and boots as would be found in Northampton and Stafford. There are yarns and cottons and Manchester goods, and Sheffield cutlery, and French silks, and German leather; and every article, in fact, which can possibly be smuggled across the frontiers. Then there are the Persian stalls, where Armenians in high dark fur caps sell Astrakhan wool and Persian silks and arms studded with stones. On other counters there are displayed all sorts of Circassian silver ornaments, cigarette cases, match-boxes, filagree caskets, crosses, and amulets; and, if you ask for anything better, and look like a possible purchaser, the shopman will take, from some queer hiding-place concealed beneath his clothes, little dirty papers, which, on opening them, are found to contain turquoises and pearls and diamonds. There also are the money-changers, seated behind desks covered with immense piles of silver roubles and copper kopecks. You would think that in this community of traders, who do business with all parts of the world, you would find no difficulty in making yourself understood in some one of the Western tongues with which most travellers are acquainted. But the impression would prove, on

putting it to the test of experience, to be a rash delusion. You are here in Russia proper, and nobody knows any language except the native tongue. With the aid of fingers, and chalking numerals upon the counter, you can with difficulty arrive at the price asked for any article; and then, if you need it, you offer a third of the price demanded, as a mere matter of course. Supposing you are a real Russian, you walk away at the first refusal, pretending not to look behind you; the merchant watches you all the time, trying to look as if he never noticed you; and then you return and walk off again, till at last the game of hide-and-seek is played out, and you and the vendor have come to some satisfactory compromise. It so happened that, while I stopped in Moscow, I was present at the completion of a contract between an English manufacturer and an immensely wealthy Moscow merchant. The terms which could alone be accepted were stated by our countryman at the commencement of the interview. The purchaser was resolved to buy from the beginning, and yet nearly two full days' negotiations were required before the contract could be completed. Whenever any demand the buyer made was not acceded to, he left the room, declaring he would break off the negotiation, but he invariably returned to say he had thought better of

the matter, when he discovered the vendor did not send to fetch him back again. Yet, according to my friend's statement, this customer was less troublesome than most of the purchasers he had to do business with.

Supposing you wish to see a yet more elementary phase of commerce than that of the Gastinien-Dvor, you have only to step across a street or two; and, right in the heart of the town, you find yourself in Jewry-land. There, in a couple of open streets, the old-clothesmen of Moscow carry on their trade. The place has a family likeness to Petticoat Lane, or the Juden-Gasse in Frankfort, or the Ghetto at Rome, or any other of the Israelite exchange-marts scattered throughout the world. But yet it has a character of its own. Except that the poor Russian Jews are a shade dirtier, if possible, than their Christian fellows, they are, in dress, and manner, and look, the counterpart of ordinary Moujiks. Everybody is screaming; everybody is gesticulating; everybody is bidding down everybody else. The street is so crowded that you can hardly make your way through it: half-a-dozen hucksters at once pull you by the sleeve, or catch your coat-tails, or stand right in your path, or resort to any possible expedient to attract your attention to the quality of the slops they have for sale. You must

want something, or to cheat somebody, or else you would not be there at all; and, acting on this preconceived theory, the rival pedlars think that your resolute refusal to look at old hats as good as new, or greasy furs, or patched coats, covers the intention to effect some more important transaction.

However, old clothes and fleas have a natural affinity for each other; and it is a luxury to be taken from the noisy bustle of the market into any one of the great traktirs which surround the mart. A traktir is not exactly a restaurant, nor exactly an exchange; it is something between the two—a place very much in its purport like Garraway's or the Baltic Coffee House, if you suppose eating to be the principal, and business the subsidiary, object of these establishments. But, though other lands have eating-houses where business is transacted, nowhere that I know of except Russia can you find a traktir. Take the great Moskovski Traktir, as an example,—the place where the chief tea-merchants in Russia have, as it were, their house of call. You go up a broad flight of stairs from the street, have the folding-doors thrown open to you by a servant in livery, and find yourself in an atmosphere of delicious warmth, after quitting the cold bleak air without. Servants are waiting at the head of the stairs to take off your furs; and then you

look around you. You stand in a long vaulted room, filled with sofas and with tables. On one side is an immense bar; at the end is a monster organ. The place, with its arched roof; and rich hangings, and lamps swinging from the ceiling, and snow white divans, has an Arabian Nights' air, which is heightened by the appearance of the servants, who move swiftly and silently about. All dressed alike in white tunics and trousers—all tall, strong-built men, with long smooth hair parted in the middle—they look like the slaves of an Eastern Sultan, such as one used to fancy them in the days when the Three Calenders and Sinbad the Sailor used to people one's dreams by night. You might eat or drink anything in this traktir, and the cooking is renowned; but tea is the staple article of consumption. Before you have been a day in Russia you learn the words for "a cup of tea;" and indeed the attendants would take it for granted you wanted tea, if they did not understand your pronunciation of the "stack an tchai,"—this, on the principle of the defunct "Fonetic Nuz," being the nearest approximation I can form to the probable spelling of the words in question. You are brought forthwith two white teapots—one large, the other small; the former containing water, the latter tea. You first—if you

wish to follow the proper routine—fill your glass tumbler half full with water; then, when the glass is thoroughly warmed, empty the water, put in a couple of lumps of white sugar; then pour out half a tumbler full of tea, and weaken it with water. Then insert a slice of lemon; and, if your mouth is fireproof enough to drink the beverage while it is scalding hot, you will get better tea than it has ever been my fortune to drink elsewhere. There is no doubt the glass retains the heat much longer than a porcelain or crockery cup would do; but then, as there is no handle, and as the glass is hot as hot can be, it is not easy to lift it. To avoid this difficulty, you must either put your head down to the glass, or hold the bottom in the hollow of your hand, neither of which methods of imbibing is considered elegant at home. Everybody around you sips his tea placidly; most of the company cross themselves before they raise the glass to their lips; and almost all sip between puffs of smoke. Those who do not, you may be pretty sure, belong to the old Russian Church, which, on the strength of the text that "not what goeth into the mouth, but what cometh out of the mouth, defileth a man," regard smoking as a deadly sin. Cigars, if you choose to pay fifteen pence a piece for them, are to be had of good quality

enough. Cigarettes are smoked more than any other form of tobacco; but the most luxurious mode of smoking, to my mind, is to be found in earthen pipes, with their long cherry-stick stems. The servant brings one to you, fills it in your presence with the fragrant Turkish yellow tobacco, lights it, inhales a whiff or two to set it well alight, and then, having wiped the mouthpiece carefully, passes it to you. If you draw in your breath steadily and slowly enough, you may make one pipeful last half an hour or more. And, when you are tired with sight-seeing, you can hardly, I think, pass time more pleasantly than in sitting on a sofa, sipping tea, and watching the wreaths of smoke curl upwards in the air. The people about do not, as in the eating-houses of all other countries, disturb you by the jingle of their knives and plates, and the chatter of their voices. Russians, I fancy, are not amongst themselves a talkative people. The peasants—so one who knows them well assures me—sit habitually silent when they are at home. And the Russian accent is by no means a harsh one when spoken. In listening to it it sounds somewhat like English, with all the hard sounds taken away. Though soft as Italian to the ear, it has nothing of its fulness or its strength. It would not, I think, be reckoned

well-bred to talk very loudly in a traktir; but indeed the buzzing of such conversation as there is is overpowered by the peal of the organ. No true Russian restaurant, however humble, can be without music of some kind. The merchants and brokers, and the factors who frequent the "Moskovski," would transfer their custom at once to another establishment if any one in Moscow could boast a better organ. The one at this place was built expressly for it in Wurtemburg, at a cost of some three thousand pounds, and plays at least a score of opera tunes. So all day long and every day this great barrel-organ grinds forth airs from "Faust" and "Dinorah" and the "Traviata" and "La Belle Hélène." I think, if I were an *habitué* of the establishment, I should grow tired of hearing the air "Di Provenza il mar il sol" played two or three times every evening; and it is rather contrary to English notions of business that bankers and merchants should want a barrel-organ to play to them when they meet on business. But after all, if the Russians had no worse failing than a child's love for musical boxes, nobody—except perhaps Mr. Babbage—would hold this trait to be a proof of national depravity.

When you have seen the Kremlin, and the churches, and the bazaar, and the traktirs, and the hospitals

—for which the city has a high, and I believe deserved, reputation—you have pretty well exhausted the actual sights of Moscow. But, to anybody fond of wandering about anywhere in general, or nowhere in particular—it comes to much the same in the long run—Moscow is a town you do not easily get tired of. It is true that a thermometer long below freezing, and an icy cold wind which seems to drive all the blood out of your face, are not favourable circumstances for lounging about an unknown city. But the experienced lounger accommodates himself to necessity, and makes the best of it. The charm of Moscow to the *flâneur* consists in its never-failing contrasts. The churches are splendid; that of the Kremlin being only the most brilliant of a brilliant company. The theatre, so Muscovites say, is the handsomest in the world. Without allowing thus much, it may be fairly said to be one of the handsomest. Of colossal size, standing alone in the centre of a vast square, it seems to belong of right to a city of palaces. So also the Foundling Hospital, barrack-like as it necessarily is, is still worthy to rank high amidst European public edifices. Scattered about the streets there are a number of grand palaces, all built since the great fire, and all therefore placed in their position at a

recent date; yet these very palaces are surrounded by the low squalid dwellings of which Moscow is mainly composed. There is not, somehow, any air of absolute misery about the shabby streets and the rows upon rows of dilapidated barn-like dwellings which run at every angle, and in every direction right up to the Kremlin itself. Judging simply from an outside glance, I should say the inhabitants had clothing enough to keep them from severe suffering by cold, and bread enough to fill their stomachs, and wodka enough to get drunk upon at all appropriate periods. The strange feature about Moscow is the utter absence of the *bourgeois* houses you see in other towns. If you are a prince you can doubtless get lodged luxuriously enough; if you are a peasant you can pig beneath a roof not more wretchedly than your class does in other countries—better perhaps than you could do in Dorsetshire; but, if you were neither a prince nor a peasant, and required an eight-roomed house or a small flat for yourself, you would hunt about Moscow a long time before you found your want satisfied. In Russia generally, and in Moscow especially, a middle-class hardly exists, and therefore no preparations are made to supply its wants. The only persons with moderate incomes in the whole country are the officials, and they are

miserably underpaid and poor. An officer of high rank, whom I met travelling the other day, informed me that his pay of 150*l.* was utterly insufficient to support him, and that he should literally be in want, if he did not carry on a private business as a sort of nondescript broker. Rightly or wrongly, every official in the country is regarded as *primâ facie* corrupt; and, considering the price of living, and the scale of government pay, it is impossible they should be regarded as otherwise. It may give you some notion of Moscow prices to say that, at a second-rate hotel, my bill, not including extras or attendance, was 1*l.* a day; and yet the hotel was frequented by English travellers because it was considered to be moderate in its charges.

But I am wandering from the streets. One is the very image of every other. The houses are white-washed, lined with great strips of red and blue paint, decorated with gilt signboards, showing the nature of the articles sold within. Shops and trades are jumbled together in the oddest juxtaposition. Here there is a French *coiffeur*, where you have your hair brushed by machinery, and can buy Pivet's gloves; next door there is a cobbler's stall. Close to a printshop, where you see all the pictures one knows so well by sight in Regent Street or the

Rue de Rivoli, is a shed where coloured prints of the lives of the saints,—prints in the very infancy of pictorial art—flutter in the wind. A milliner's establishment, where *modes de Paris* are advertised for sale, is flanked by a wodka store and a sausage shop. The streets are intersected with ruts, dotted over with holes; and yet the small-built Russian horses drag the droshkis over them at a speed which would astonish a London cabman. Except in the great streets, there is no gas, and even here it is brought round in immense cans, and pumped into the lamps. Some day or other, soon, Moscow is to be supplied with gas-works; but Russia is a country where improvements without end are about to be introduced some day or other soon. In a queer, odd, shiftless way, the trade carried on here must be very large. Every afternoon you see immense strings of one-horse carts, heavily laden with packages, going out into the country. The profit on retail transactions is enormous, and people who understand how to deal with the peasants make fortunes rapidly.

It would be absurd for a man who has only been a couple of weeks in Russia to undertake to express any opinion about the national character. Nobody, I think, can avoid feeling the charm of the manners of the educated Russians; nobody, on the other

hand, can avoid the sensation that the common people belong to a lower grade of civilization than any we are accustomed to in the West. If you are to make an objection to the higher classes, it would be that they are too well bred, and too cosmopolitan in manner. I have heard it said by a friend, given to paradox, that a mutual acquaintance talked too like a clever man to be really clever. And, in much the same way, I have sometimes felt a passing doubt whether the Russian gentlemen I have met with could possibly be so polished, so sensible, and so liberal as I should suppose from their conversation. Proverbs about nations always lead you astray; but still, when you are conversing with educated Russians, you cannot help feeling a desire, provided you are at a safe distance, to see what would be the result of administering the proverbial scratching process. On the other hand, even the most ardent of philo-Russians cannot attempt, in describing the peasantry, to say anything higher than that they look dirty and degraded.

It is curious to any one who has heard much about the incapacity of the negroes for freedom in consequence of their facial development, and their unwillingness to work except under compulsion, and their inevitable relapse into barbarism if left to take

care of themselves, to hear exactly the same argument applied in conversation here to the Russian peasants, whose defects, whatever they may be, do not arise from their being descendants of Ham. I am told here constantly that the emancipated serfs will not work, that emancipation has proved a failure, and that the peasants would be glad to have the old system restored. On the other hand, the foreign resident merchants I have met, who have come here to make money, and are by no means disposed to sentimentalism of any kind, are one and all in favour of the emancipation, because it has already given such an impetus to trade. If we put the two accounts together, the real state of the case seems not difficult to explain. Both parties agree that the Moujiks will work very hard for a time; and both agree that they have fits of insuperable indolence and drunkenness. The truth is, their wants are exceedingly few, and easily gratified. They work hard enough to keep themselves in what they consider comfort, and then, like other workmen, in all parts of the world, they decline to work more. As they become educated and civilized, their wants increase, their notion of comfort is raised, and, in consequence, they work harder. The old proprietors, who can no longer get their work done below the

market price of labour, complain that the country is going to rack and ruin. The foreign employers, who pay wages, and have no longer to compete with unpaid labour, are well satisfied with the new state of things. Meanwhile, I heard two facts from reliable sources, which seem to me to show, as far as they go, that the emancipation is not working badly. Since the abolition of serfdom, the population of Moscow has increased by fifty thousand souls. This influx is solely due to the crowds of serfs who, as soon as they are set free to go where they will, have come into the great cities, where they can get higher wages for their labour. Again, a manufacturer who employs some twenty odd thousand workmen assured me that, since the abolition of serfdom, he finds it difficult to get labour during harvest-time, because all the peasants have taken to cultivate small plots of ground of their own.

If you want to keep up your illusions about Russia, you should not, I fancy, look much below the surface. If you want to retain your impression of Moscow in all its splendour, you should look down upon the city from above, not descend into its streets. St. Petersburg is strange at its first aspect, and unlike the cities which we know in the

West; but, when you come back to St. Petersburg from Moscow, you seem to have come back to a commonplace European city. A foretaste of the East hangs about Moscow; you feel that you are standing on the extreme threshold of European civilization. In St. Petersburg, Europe has conquered Asia; but in Moscow the struggle is still undecided. The water-carriers still ply their trade about the streets; Turks, and Armenians, and Persians may be seen amongst the crowd at the market-places, looking more at home than the German traders in hats and trousers. And, when you leave Moscow behind you, you feel that you have caught a glimpse of a new and unknown world,—of a civilization that is other than our own.

## CHAPTER X.

### A MOSCOW GALA.

Moscow, *November* 16.

PREVIOUS engagements have rendered it impossible for the Prince to stop more than a few hours in Moscow, and therefore no time has been lost in giving his Royal Highness such a glimpse of the ancient Muscovite capital as could be obtained by merely hurrying through it. Happily, the day was one of unusual brilliancy; there was not a cloud to be seen in the pale blue sky; and though the frost was very severe, the bright sunshine was so pleasant you hardly seemed to feel the cold. One of the Prince's first visits was to Philaret, the Metropolitan of Moscow, the highest ecclesiastical dignitary of the Russian Church, ranking next, I believe, to the Patriarch of Constantinople in the whole Greek communion. The old priest, who is now nearer ninety than eighty, but is still in full possession of all his bodily and mental powers, expressed great gratification at the compliment paid him by the Prince's visit. Nothing, he said, but

a good heart could have caused so great a Prince to come and visit a feeble old man; and therefore he could assign no cause for the visit except charity. The Prince replied through Mr. Michell, the gentleman who fills so ably the post of British consul at St. Petersburg, that he had heard so much of the virtues and goodness of the Metropolitan, he had felt he could not leave Moscow without calling on his Holiness. The Patriarch then bestowed an episcopal blessing upon his Royal Highness, and as the Prince was leaving added he had a prayer to make. On being assured that any prayer the Prince could grant should be accorded, Philaret begged the Prince on his return to England to request his Royal Mother to protect the Christians in the East. To this somewhat embarrassing demand the Prince made answer that there was no need of such advice being tendered, that it was one of the special missions of England to promote the spread of Christianity, that our nation made great sacrifices for this object, and that the Churches of both Russia and England laboured in the same holy cause. The astute old priest, however, was not to be satisfied with generalities, and begged to call attention to the political considerations connected with the Greek Church in the East. At this stage it was thought desirable to close a discussion which

the position of the two chief interlocutors made a rather awkward one for both parties; and, so, after a fresh interchange of compliments, the Royal party bade farewell to the Metropolitan.

The next visit was to the house of the Romanoffs, the birthplace of the first member of the family, who, as a remote descendant of the great race of Rurik, was raised to the Imperial throne. There are people who say the founder of the dynasty never lived there at all: there are sceptics everywhere. I know a man who firmly disbelieves in Shakespeare's ever having lived in the house which bears his name, and who doubts whether Milton had anything to do with the famous mulberry-tree in the gardens of Christ's College, Cambridge. However, if the Romanoff in question did not live in the Romanoff house, he might have lived there, which is more than you can say for every memorial dwelling. The house has been restored in the early Russian style, and a number of articles connected by tradition with different members of the Imperial family have been collected there. I don't know that to anybody but a Russian the sight is a peculiarly interesting one; but politeness requires every guest of the Czar not to leave Moscow without visiting the Romanoff Museum. More interest, I should think, was excited by the visit to the immense

Foundling Hospital, of which the Russians are justly proud. Whether such institutions are beneficial to a country may well be doubted; but if you are to have them, you can hardly have one, to all appearance, better arranged or more richly endowed than the one at Moscow, which is the central establishment of all Russia. It is true that about 70 per cent.—so I am assured—of the luckless little waifs and strays of humanity never live to be grown up; but the survivors look healthy and comfortable, and infanticide is very uncommon within the empire. The Prince was shown over every part of the establishment, from the nurseries of the wee babies who had just been deposited at the doors, to the schoolrooms of the grown-up children, who were just about to quit the establishment. The elder girls had been taught "God save the Queen" in honour of the occasion, and sang it in the Prince's presence. Another interesting visit was that to the great Lying-in Hospital, which, like most charitable institutions in this country, is supported with a princely liberality. To a stranger, the most curious feature in the place are the secret wards. Women enter here with masks on, which they wear during the whole period of their sojourn. No questions whatever are asked; and they leave, after their confinement is over, as unknown as when they entered the establishment.

The Royal party also visited the Riding School, which is said to have the largest ceiling in the world without any support except walls. A whole regiment of cavalry was drawn up within it on the occasion of the visit.

Not the least interesting of the many sights of Moscow was that of the guns captured from the *Grande Armée* in 1812, which are all arranged in the courtyard of the Kremlin. 365 French, 189 Austrian, 123 Prussian, 70 Italian, 34 Bavarian, 40 Neapolitan, 22 Dutch, and 5 Polish guns, make up the long muster-roll of 848 guns.

After the stock sights had been seen, the Prince went through the bazaars, where he made some purchases, and looked in at the great Moskovski Traktir, the tea-mart restaurant of Moscow. All day long the Royal party was followed by a mob of idlers, who never seemed to grow tired of staring at the Prince of Wales. Even the sealskin pea-jacket which his Royal Highness wore was an object of never-failing curiosity on the part of the bystanders. The short winter day was soon over, and it was dark before the royal sight-seers got back to the Kremlin. At seven the Princes, with their suites, were to dine with Prince Dolgorouki, the Governor-General of Moscow. The Russians may be barbarians; but if so, barbarians understand hospitality far better than civilized nations.

Everybody who was in any way connected with the Royal party had lodgings provided for him in the Kremlin; and the authorities went out of their way to show civility to any Englishman who happened to be passing through Moscow on the occasion of the Prince's visit. The expense incurred in entertaining the Royal visitors must have been considerable. On the Prince's arrival at the Kremlin, the halls were lighted up with 9,000 wax candles to receive him as he passed along, and everything was conducted on the same scale of lavish liberality.

Anything more gorgeous of its kind than the Governor's banquet it has never been my lot to witness. On arriving at the palace, I was shown up a broad flight of stairs, decked out with flowers blazing with light and colour. Footmen, clad in rich red liveries, stood upon every step, bowing their powdered heads as the guests came following each other. At the doorway stood Prince Dolgorouki, shaking hands with each new comer, and addressing to each a few civil words in French. A long suite of rooms, lighted with endless chandeliers, hung with yellow damask, were thrown open to the guests, who strolled up and down them at their leisure. The square in front of the palace was illuminated with the electric light; and from between the window

curtains you could look out on the great snow-covered space, and on the strange masses of fur-clad spectators, flitting to and fro from out the deep shadows into the dazzling spots of light. Soon after seven there was a stir in the rooms, and the Royal visitors made their entrance, being received in the same manner as the ordinary guests. Then servants entered the room, bearing trays loaded with liqueur bottles. For those who were ready to accommodate themselves to Muscovite customs, there were also plates of caviar, smoked herrings, and cheese. Then the band struck up "God save the Queen," the folding doors were thrown open, and the company entered the banquetting hall. At the cross table facing the doorway, the royal guests took their seats, the Prince of Wales sitting on the right hand of Prince Dolgorouki; the side tables were reserved for persons not belonging to the staff of the Princes who seated themselves wherever they thought fit. In all there were about a hundred persons present. In the galleries looking over the hall there were numbers of ladies, but at the tables there were none. The *menu* of the dinner—precisely as I received it—was as follows:—

DINER DU 4-16 NOVEMBRE, 1866.—Potages: Chasseur à l'Anglaise; consommé aux légumes. Hors-d'œuvre: Petits vol-au-vent à la Marinière;

Petites bouchées à la Reine. Relevés : Esturgeons à la Russe ; Faisans à la Vallière. Entrées : Poulets à la Villeroi ; Crême de gélinottes aux truffes. Punch. Rôt : Cailles, perdreaux, chapons ; Salade aux concombres frais. Entremets : Asperges en branches et petits pois à la Parisienne ; pain de fruits à la Béarnaise ; glaces à la Napolitaine.

Looking on the question after the fumes of the wines and viands have passed away, I can truly say that never, even at a private house, do I remember to have had a better dinner. Where everything was good, it is invidious to select articles for praise. But the "crême de gélinottes aux truffes" (gélinotte is a sort of Russian partridge) was one of those dishes you think of after they have been eaten and digested; and asparagus in the month of November, as fine and as large as you would get it in London in June, is a thing to reflect upon. Every moment the servants behind your chair kept placing fresh filled glasses before you. I counted thirteen different sorts of wines, not to mention liqueurs. All were good; the Château d'Iquem and the red Burgundy perhaps the best. The champagne, like all Russian champagne I have yet drunk, was too sweet for English taste; that, however, is a matter of detail. But excellent as the dinner was, the splendour of the appointments struck me even more forcibly. Massive gold forks and spoons, which one would have liked to carry away as a *souvenir*, were laid before every plate; against

the white marble walls, footmen stood erect and motionless, in their gorgeous liveries, not for use, but ornament. Flowers were strewed about everywhere; the immense silver *épergnes* were a sight to gaze at. During the whole of the repast the band played with a precision I have not yet heard in Russia. A friend of mine, who has had considerable experience in the details of civic banquets, estimated the cost of the entertainment at some fourteen hundred pounds; and, comparing the prices of Moscow and London, I should think the estimate was below the mark.

It had, I believe, been intended to drink the healths of the Czar and of the Royal visitors, but, owing to some misunderstanding as to who was to propose the toasts, it was resolved to dispense with speechmaking of any kind; and as soon as dinner was over, the Governor gave the signal to rise, and the company passed into the reception rooms. There coffee, tea, liqueurs, and cigars were handed round to the guests, and, for half an hour or so, people walked about the rooms conversing with each other. The Prince of Wales went about from one to another, saying a few words to everybody he recognised. Seeing amongst the crowd a young Englishman, at whose father's table he had dined at civic festivities, he came up and apologized for not having recollected his face

before, asked after the different members of the family, and spoke those few courteous words which mean so little in themselves, but yet give so much pleasure when they come from Royal lips. It is so easy for princes to make themselves liked, that it is hard to forgive them when they fail to do so; and I mention this incident only to show that his Royal Highness has learnt what I may call the secret of princecraft.

Then there was a move to another room, where a company of Tyrolese singers gave their national entertainment. We have most of us seen the self-same persons perform the same songs and dances in our own country, and all I need say is, that the yodel was as loud and the waltzing as perfect as usual. But the next entertainment provided for the Royal visitors was one not to be matched, I think, west of the Vistula. In a saloon at the end of the suite of rooms we found seated a company of some forty gipsies. The faces were the same as those which Londoners know so well at Ascot and Epsom; but instead of being dressed in rags and tatters, these gipsy men and women were clad in rich silks and gorgeous colours, which contrasted strangely with their dark olive skin and tawny hands. Here, as much as in Hungary, England, France, or Italy, or

in any country where I have seen them, they looked as ever "a strange people in a strange land." Tawdry, and yet not vulgar; brazen-looking, and yet not immodest in aspect; without breeding of any kind, and yet not affected, they sat as unconcerned before the Royal party they were summoned to amuse as if they had been encamped on Wandsworth Common or stealing their way between the carriages before the stand on the Derby day. Some had beads and some had jewels, some wore silks and others cotton; but they all alike looked aliens to our modern costume and manners. The women, seated in a circle, gazed upon the scene with their large, dark, lascivious eyes, as if they possessed a sort of magic power to attract those who looked upon them. The men stood behind, tambourine in hand, still, and, to all outward look, utterly unconcerned. Then the Governor gave the signal, and the entertainment began. It is impossible to describe it in words. A long, low, guttural cry from the mouths of all the women seemed to open the ball; sometimes wailing, sometimes piercing in shrillness, but always fitted to a strange weird harmony, the sound of many voices rose and fell. Then one or two of the handsomest and youngest took up the dialogue in a sad sing-song tone; and then, before you exactly knew when song

changed to motion, the women were whirling round in a wild fantastic measure. The strange feature was that their feet hardly seemed to move. The arms were thrown forwards and up and down again, the head rocked to and fro, the body quivered, the shoulders shook, and with every pulsation of the frame the chorus of seated women shrieked in unison. Somehow the feet moved, but you could scarcely trace their motion. If you fancy a woman walking in her sleep, half fastened to one spot with terror, half maddened with a fever of passion which sets in motion every muscle of her frame, you will form some idea of that gipsy dance which began with a cry and ended with a scream.

When the spasm was over the women seemed to subside at once into their wonted apathy, and listened languidly enough to the compliments paid them by their Russian admirers. Indeed, except a curiosity to see the Prince of Wales, I could not observe any trace of their taking any interest in what, to them, must have been an unwonted spectacle. The dances were repeated several times. Then another short visit was paid to the Tyrolese minstrels, and then the Prince, after expressing his warm thanks to Prince Dolgorouki for the hospitality he had received, took his departure. The Royal party drove straight to the railway station,

and at midnight the express train moved off; the Prince standing at the window, and bowing courteously to the crowd assembled to witness his departure.

The journey back was managed as luxuriously as the journey to Moscow, each two persons having a separate sleeping room to themselves.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SLEIGHING IN RUSSIA.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 19.

PEOPLE talk about the variableness of the English climate. It is, so far as I can judge, a very model of atmospherical constancy compared with that of Russia. Nobody seems to know here from hour to hour whether it will snow, or freeze, or rain, or be bright sunshine; and whatever happens, nobody is in the least surprised. When we left for Moscow we were told we should find it buried in the depth of winter. We got there, and found that the snow had melted, the sleighs had vanished, that furs were too hot to wear. Then we had a day of almost Italian brightness, and then the snow set in; and before we were half-way back on our road to St. Petersburgh, we were once more in mid winter. Everybody speaks of the past summer as one of the hottest ever known in Russia; a gentleman, who has passed many years in Italy, assured me that he had never felt such heat

as he experienced this summer at Moscow; and yet, on the 27th of last May, and the 28th of last August, the thermometer at night stood respectively four and five degrees (Réaumur) below freezing point. So much for fluctuations of temperature in Russia.

However, we have no cause to grumble in the present instance, for the sudden frost has enabled us to see St. Petersburg in its true winter aspect. It snowed the whole way from Moscow, and by the time I arrived here yesterday the ground was covered some two feet thick in snow. Already the city has put on its winter garb. In the amount of furs worn there is little outward difference. If we were all moved bodily up to the North Pole, it is difficult to see how the Russians could wrap themselves up more warmly than they did during the first days of my arrival, when it was hardly colder than in an ordinary London winter. It is the custom here to put on your furs with the first frost, and never to take them off again—hot or cold, snow or sunshine—till the summer has decidedly set in. But though I have already learnt to feel no surprise at seeing balls of fur waddling about on two legs, St. Petersburg looks a different city. Carriages, and all vehicles that run on wheels, have been stowed away; and sledges are now the almost universal means of

locomotion. The Newski Prospekt is crowded all day long with sleighs of every description. Everything is carried upon skates. And as a sledge is very heavy to drag slowly, and very easy to move if once set in rapid motion, everybody drives as fast as his horse will gallop. Thus, when you first look upon the scene presented by the Newski at this period, it seems to you as if all the sleighs were trying which should reach the end of the street first. There are great heavy trucks shod with iron, on which huge barrels and high loads of hay are piled; there are fashionable sleighs with two or three horses harnessed abreast, with coachmen in low-crowned hats like those worn by the burghers in Holbein's pictures, with servants in livery standing on a foot-board behind, and ladies leaning back on velvet cushions, half buried beneath heaps of furs. There are large, clumsy omnibus sleighs with half-a-dozen benches, on which moujiks and peasant women are crowded together; there are dandy sleighs, balanced on thin iron hoops, where there is room for nobody but the driver; and amidst all these droshkies innumerable dart in and out. The sledge-droshki proper is a low box, about a yard in length, placed on skates; on the front bench the coachman is seated; on the hind bench two passengers may sit squeezed together.

The shafts are bent outwards in a sort of semicircle, the horse's collar is fastened to the ends, and his body is left perfectly free, so that if he falls he is not likely to upset the sledge. Over his neck there rises a hoop as high as the horse himself, the use of which nobody has yet been able to explain to me. Sometimes these hoops are covered with mysterious Chinese-looking figures, more often they are simply painted black. The natural explanation would be that they were intended to hang bells upon; if so, they do not fulfil their destiny, as it is very rare to see bells upon them. Indeed, the almost total absence of bells makes sleighing far less bright and lively in St. Petersburg than it is in New York. Still, even without bells, the mere look of this multitude of sleighs of all sizes and colours, darting to and fro, has something cheering about it. It is, I think, within the city that you should keep yourself, in order to enjoy sleighing thoroughly. I drove out to-day for some miles into the country. The scenery through which we passed was not enlivening in itself; we skirted great meres and arms of the Neva, already blocked and choked with ice, covered with dun-coloured haystacks piled upon ice-locked barges; we passed through long alleys of wooden "chalet" villas, left standing solitary in their snow-clad gardens without a sign of life,

we went through vast pine-wood parks, that in the summer-time are doubtless filled with holiday folk, but are now lonely and desolate beyond description; and yet we never seemed to leave the great city quite behind us. And then I noticed, what I have observed before, the peculiar effect of this sleigh driving. As the dusk set in and the light died away, and the cold became more biting, the silence of our motion grew almost oppressive. The horses' hoofs struck no sound from the soft deep snow; the iron skates glided over it noiselessly; and though we often galloped on at the rate of ten miles an hour, it was difficult to realize the fact that we were making way at all. What it must be to travel for hundreds of miles over the barren steppes of Central Russia is one of the things you do not like to think about, for fear you should dream of it by night. Still, I must own, that, though monotonous, the actual motion of darting over the snow is singularly luxurious. I think it is the author of "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" who says somewhere that if you want to know what sleigh-riding is like, you have only to sit in a keen north wind with your feet in a pail of freezing water, and jingle a string of jangling bells, and that by so doing you avoid the expense and trouble of going out, and enjoy all the pleasure. It is not altogether an unjust

description of sleighing in Dr. Holmes's native land. Friends in America were always boasting to me of the pleasures of the pastime, but they never seemed particularly anxious to partake of it themselves. The longest sleigh ride I ever took in the States is connected in my mind with a very wearisome confirmation service performed in a very cold and empty church; but, even apart from the miseries to which I was personally subject on that occasion, when twenty small girls, with red noses and numbed fingers, and with chilblains on their feet, renounced "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," I do believe that American sleighing is far inferior in comfort to Russian. Across the Atlantic the sledges are built to hold several people, and a roomy carriage, however comfortable in summer, can hardly be kept warm in winter. Here the sleighs are so small that when two people are once stuffed in, it is not easy to get them out again. Then the Americans are by nature too restless and too active to pack themselves up in furs from head to foot, and, when the packing is completed, to sit still without changing their position for fear of letting in the cold. Moreover, the somewhat sluggish breed of horses which you find harnessed to most vehicles in America is not nearly so well fitted for drawing sleighs as the active, wiry, mettlesome

animals which are well-nigh universal in Russia. If you choose to put on fur boots and a fur cap, to wear a pelisse lined with sable, to tie a padded hood over your neck and ears, to cover your legs with heavy woollen rugs, to put bearskin gloves over kid, to drink a strong glass of real Wodka brandy before starting, and to keep a lighted cigar perpetually in your mouth, you will really be warm and comfortable enough. Even then you are obliged to feel your nose from time to time to be sure that it still smarts when you pinch it, and to breathe on the hairs of your moustache to hinder them from growing stiff with frost. In this world, however, there is nothing perfect.

But in the town itself a sleigh drive, if not too prolonged, is wonderfully pleasant—supposing always you are not of a nervous disposition. For persons accustomed, as I have been for the last fortnight, to be literally bumped about the town, over roads of preternatural roughness, it is a positive delight to glide along without shaking or jolting—to be able to sit back in your car without the necessity of grasping the hand-railing every other minute, to avoid being pitched head foremost out into the road. On the other hand, it is difficult, when you start upon a sleigh ride up and down the Newski, to avoid the conviction that, if you are ever brought home at

all, it will be upon a shutter. Of all the reckless charioteers I have ever known, the Russians are the most careless of consequences. Set your horse at full gallop, always go straight on, never let anybody pass you, and never make way for anything—these, I should judge from observation, are the maxims instilled into the Russian hack-driver when he first mounts the seat. Certainly the maxims are adhered to in practice, whatever may be the theory. The Newski is intersected by numerous streets at right angles. Sledges coming down these cross thoroughfares drive at full speed across the main lines of vehicles. If they just clear the nose of a horse or the foot-board of a sledge, the drivers utter a grunt of satisfaction; if they do not clear it, they pull their horses up—upon the hind legs—and swear. To the inexperienced it is not pleasant to see your own horse rushing full tilt at another sledge; still less pleasant is it to see the shafts of somebody else's sledge coming directly against the sides of the vehicle in which you yourself are seated. But experience teaches you that the danger is not so great as it looks. The great width and length of the shafts enables the driver to pull up his horse without the sleigh touching him; and the moment the horse stops, the sleigh, not being on wheels, stops also. Still, as the horses' heads are

left perfectly free, and their head-gear is of the lightest kind, I confess I do not like being driven, as I am constantly, with my shoulders brushing the mouths of horses who come flying across our track. I have not seen them bite; but if they did take a fancy to my nose or ears, there is nothing I can see to hinder them from gratifying their cannibal propensities. In the Newski I have witnessed jams and collisions by the score; but I have never beheld any worse result than that one of the sledges which came into contact was swung right across the street. At any rate, there is no remedy for the matter; nothing will ever induce a Russian coachman to drive slow; and if he did, you would simply be run over by every sledge you met. An Irish porter once said to a friend of mine who wanted to cross a railroad during a dense fog, "Well, sir, the express is over-due, but sure and you shall chance it." And so, if you come to St. Petersburg, the best thing you can do is to take a sleigh and "chance it."

To give an idea of the pace at which you can drive over the snow, I may mention that the Czar drove with the Prince on a sleigh, with four horses abreast, to Ossinoria Rostcha, a distance of twenty-four versts —or sixteen miles—under the hour.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A STATE VISIT TO THE OPERA.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 20.

THERE are a great many positions in life, combining hard work with small pay, which I feel myself unfitted to occupy. Now, of all such positions, the one for which I entertain the least inclination or aptitude is that of a Court official. This conviction, which I have long cherished, has grown upon me during my stay at St. Petersburg. Through no fault of my own, I have been obliged of late to have frequent interviews with marshals, chamberlains, and equerries. From one and all of these gentlemen I have received courtesy, and more than courtesy; but still I have felt in my inmost heart, judging from what would be my own sentiments if exposed to similar trials, that they must have hated the very sight of me. Fancy what it must be to be pestered all day and every day with unreasonable applications, to have upon your shoulders the responsibility of satis-

fying everybody, to have no time to eat, never to know what it is to be at peace for five minutes, and then, when you are fagged, and hungry, and sleepy, to have to dress yourself in uniform, to wear a smile upon your face, and look as if you liked it. In Russia, however, if you get little or no money for your toil and trouble, you get money's worth. There are only three courses open to any body who wants to do anything in the Muscovite empire. You may be a millionaire, a soldier, or a courtier; out of these three professions there is no career possible. You may have every inclination for the first without the opportunity of embracing it; you may have no taste for the second; and if so, you must take perforce to the third. To have the right of presenting yourself at Court is not a mere personal gratification in Russia, but is an essential condition for obtaining any of the loaves and fishes which are at the disposal of the Government. Still, whatever may be the direct or indirect advantages of a Court suit, I think few persons would be found to wear one if they had much of such work as the Russian Court officials have had during these wedding festivities.

Yesterday, for instance, must have been a terrible day for every one who has the charge of Court ceremonials. There was to be a State visit to the

theatre; and the whole arrangement, not only of the performance, but of the audience, fell upon the unhappy chamberlains. What difficulties there may have been behind the curtain, what operatic feuds to be appeased, what jealousies to be allayed, what private influences to be studied, I leave to the imagination of persons acquainted with the management of theatrical matters. It was bad enough, I know, in front of the footlights. After all, the dimensions of a theatre are limited; and even if you have three thousand seats to dispose of, you cannot possibly place ten thousand spectators within the house; yet every one of the ten thousand applicants is convinced that, since there were three thousand seats to be disposed of, it must have been possible to squeeze them in somewhere or other. When I applied last night for the tickets reserved for me, the hall and staircase of the palace where the tickets were distributed were blocked with applicants for admission to the theatre. In remorse at having to trouble the dispenser of tickets, I readily explained that I would not dream of bothering him if my position did not render it necessary for me to be present. He was too polite to dispute the statement, but I could see from the look of his face that he had had the same assurance made him a hundred times during the

course of the day. And apart from the difficulty of finding places for three times as many people as the theatre would hold, these unfortunate officials had to group them so as to enhance the effect of the spectacle. When Balzac brought out "Vautrin" on the stage, he had sketched beforehand a scheme of the manner in which the audience ought to be composed. There were to be so many stalls occupied by literary celebrities, so many boxes devoted to beauty; the artistic and commercial elements were to divide the stalls between them in such and such proportions. The enterprise which the genius of Balzac had to renounce as impossible was a light one compared with what these Muscovite masters of the ceremonies were called on to accomplish. They had so to arrange the house that all the laws of precedence should be observed, that everybody should be satisfied, and yet that the *tout ensemble* should be as brilliant as possible. I do not at all suppose they succeeded. I have no doubt there are all sorts of heartburnings to-day because Field-Marshal Snoremoff had to sit in a draught; because the Princess Rabbitzkoi was placed in the second tier; while the Countess Leveretzkoi shone resplendent from the front of the first. Doubtless each one of the chamberlains is convinced the whole

affair would have been far more brilliant if his opinion had been consulted in everything. But as a perfectly impartial spectator, who had every reason to be satisfied with his seat, I can truly say that whatever unknown sins may have been committed against etiquette, no arrangement could well have presented a more brilliant *coup d'œil* than that which was afforded yesterday to those who were fortunate enough to be admitted to the Grand Theatre of St. Petersburg.

Eight o'clock was the time fixed for the commencement of the spectacle; and long before that hour the streets leading from the Winter Palace to the theatre were brilliantly illuminated. Immense crowds lined the pavements. Mounted Cossacks, stationed all along the route, kept the road clear for the passage of the Imperial carriages. It was snowing fast as we drove to the Opera. The glare of thousands of lamps sparkled on the hard white snow over which our sledge passed silently. The lights glistening amidst the snowdrift from the windows of the high houses—the dark masses of people by the roadside—the Cossacks, in their long grey cloaks, galloping to and fro, with hoarse shouts and cries—the endless files of sledges, filled, as it seemed in the half light, with shapeless masses of

fur — gave a sort of Walpurgis dance air to the drive we had to take. We were late, and in the distance we could hear the cheers of the crowd growing louder and louder as the Czar drove through the streets on his way to the theatre. In fact, we had only just time to reach our seats before the sound of the National Anthem being played in the square without told us that the Royal party had arrived.

I have seen State performances before now in a good many capitals, but I do not think I have ever witnessed a spectacle more striking of its kind than that which the house presented at the moment the Czar entered the Imperial box. The theatre, I should think, is about the size of Her Majesty's. From the highest slips to the footlights every place was filled. Of that vast audience there was not, I believe, a score of men in civilian attire; there was not, that I observed, a lady without diamonds, or strings of pearls. Indeed, a pearl necklace is an invariable article of a Russian lady's toilette. It is said they even sleep with them on, lest the pearls should *die*, and lose colour. There being no partitions between the boxes of the theatre—or, at least, none high enough to be seen from below—the long sweep of the large horseshoe-shaped tiers was unbroken to the

eye. The pit was filled with a sea of uniforms, sparkling with waves of gold and crimson, as the officers who occupied its benches rose to their feet. No occupant of the pit stalls held rank lower than that of a general officer; and each one, without exception, wore the "Grand Cordon" of some native or foreign order. The front seats of the boxes were given up with scarcely an exception to the ladies, and between the folds of their white silk dresses you could see a background of braid, and stars, and crosses; clusters of wax candles hung on every side, and the softness of their light rendered the contrast of rich colours less gaudy than it would have seemed beneath the glare of gas.

The Royal box is placed in the centre of the first tier—not, as with us, near the stage. The Czar, with the Princess Dagmar, sat in the centre of the front seat. The Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Denmark, the Czarevitch, and the Grand Duchess Constantine, sat in the same row. The Empress was not present. Indeed, since her eldest son's death, she hardly ever appears in public. The Princess, to judge from the brightness of her face, had recovered from the attack of illness which delayed the wedding festivities. As soon as the Czar entered, the orchestra struck up the National Hymn, the whole

audience standing; then a loud cheer rang through the house, and "God save the Queen" and the Royal March of Denmark were played in succession. As all the spectators were persons invited by the Court, while the general public was entirely excluded, the audience was naturally not so enthusiastic as at Moscow; but the reception given to the Royal personages present was still a very warm one. After the national air of Russia had been repeated, in obedience to a call from the pit, the curtain rose on the fourth act of the *Africaine*. It is never fair to judge of a dramatic performance on such an occasion as this. Graziani sang as melodiously as usual, and the ballet divertissement on the island was danced gracefully enough; but when everybody is looking not at the stage but at the Royal visitors, singers and dancers have an uphill task to perform. Practically there was something of a feeling of relief amongst the audience when the curtain fell, and we found we were not to hear the remainder of Vasco di Gama's fortunes. Then there was a pause of half an hour, during which the Royal party retired to the saloon behind the Imperial box. The corridors and approaches to this box were fitted up with trees and shrubs, so as to form a conservatory, lit with oriental lanterns. Meanwhile, with the grand libe-

rality which characterises all the arrangements of the Russian Court, refreshments were provided for the audience at the cost of the Palace. Servants, in the mottled red and brown liveries of the Imperial household, carried tea and ices to the boxes; and if you chose to make your way up to the saloon you could drink champagne or punch to your heart's content. Iced lemonade was provided for persons addicted to temperate beverages; liqueurs for those who preferred quality to quantity. The one instruction given to the waiters appeared to be to fill every glass they saw empty, and they obeyed it sedulously. There were endless piles, too, of bonbons, from which, if you thought fit, you might fill not only your mouth but your pockets; and the permission was not left unused.

The *Africaine* was followed by a ballet of Russian life. Until, some day or other, we find the long-lost kingdom of Prester John, the life depicted by the ballet will bear, I am afraid, a very slight resemblance to this work-a-day life of ours in any country that the sun shines upon. Whereabouts, I wonder, is that unknown land where villagers waltz as they wend their way to the fields, where milkmaids pirouette with pails upon their shoulders, where women spin and men dig to the clink of

castanets and the strumming of guitars? Even my small experience of Russia leads me to doubt whether the Moujiks spend their days after the fashion depicted in the ballet of "The Golden Fish." I don't profess to have understood the story very clearly. I know there was a wicked count, and a funny rustic always pursuing a scornful damsel, who always slipped out of his reach by turning round upon her toe, and a mermaid shining in silver spangles. I know, too, that a cottage changed by enchantment into a palace, and that everything ended in general bliss. But beyond this I can state nothing. The music was of that low, plaintive, and somewhat monotonous order which seems to me to characterise all native Russian melodies. The dancing was graceful and elegant, but it lacked the fire and dash of the grand Italian ballet when the "prima ballerina assoluta" comes bounding on the stage. However, the dresses of the coryphées were long enough to have satisfied the scrupulous delicacy of that most devout monarch, King Bomba, of Naples, who refused to permit poor Francis II. to visit San Carlo till the ladies of the ballet had put on green inexpressibles; and if the performance was a little dull, it was eminently decorous. At the conclusion of the ballet the whole company of the theatre crowded upon the stage;

and the Russian National Anthem was sung by the chorus, assisted by the chief performers of the Italian Opera. The Czar and his Royal guests bowed their acknowledgments to the audience for the cheers with which they were greeted on rising, and then left the house. I am not sure whether there was not some further performance after the departure of the Imperial party, but if so, hardly anybody stopped to witness it.

To-day the Prince of Wales was present at an exhibition of feats of strength and agility, given by the Circassian body-guard of the Emperor, commanded by Colonel Scherématchieff. The display of horsemanship, which they call the "Gigitophka," involves a wonderful command of the horse by his rider. In the evening there was a grand ball at the Winter Palace, from which I have just returned. I am tired of telling you about the glitter of lights, the blaze of diamonds, and the splendour of these gorgeous spectacles, so much do I feel that words are inadequate to convey a true description of sheer magnificence. When the blind man was asked what scarlet resembled, he said it was like the sound of a trumpet. The description was forcible enough; but when he had uttered it once, I do not know how he could have intensified the effect by dwelling upon

the idea; and, in the same way, I am afraid I can only repeat what I have written to you before. The gentlemen who composed the play-bills for Vauxhall must, I think, have found that, after they had announced hundreds of thousands of extra lamps, the addition of a cypher or two more to the line of numerals conveyed to the public no expression of increased splendour. So I will not trouble you with a catalogue of the wax lights, the diamonds, the buffets covered with massive golden plate, the vases of malachite, the jars of porphyry, the endless galleries, the monster halls, the countless array of servants, the vast masses of gorgeous uniforms. Some idea of the magnificence of the spectacle may be gathered from the fact that it took very nearly ten minutes simply to pass up and down the immense suite of halls and corridors in which the supper tables were laid out. There were covers for 2,200 guests, and a servant in livery stood behind every chair. There was not very much dancing. The ball was opened at ten by the Polonaise, in which the Imperial and Royal personages present promenaded through the vast Nicholas Chamber, the crowd parting in two, to leave the passage clear as the Empress, escorted by the Prince of Wales, led the way. After the Polonaise was over there were a few quadrilles danced,

chiefly by the members of the Imperial family; but at no time was dancing at all general. At twelve the supper rooms were thrown open, and after supper was over the guests dispersed rapidly. During the meal the Imperial party were surrounded by a number of black Mamelukes, who were on guard for the occasion. There were guards of honour in every one of the halls; and before the doorways leading from one room to the other sentries were placed with drawn swords, so that the whole scene had a strikingly military aspect.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ST. PETERSBURG IN SNOW TIME.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 22.

"A KNOWLEDGE of either French or German is quite sufficient to enable the traveller to make himself understood at St. Petersburg." So my guide book declares. I am sorry to disagree with the author of a "Complete Manual;" but I assert, from my own experience, that the statement is a delusion and a snare. A Russian who went to London under the impression that he could get on pretty well with French and Italian would find himself very much in the position of an Englishman at St. Petersburg. Of course, there are plenty of educated Russians who speak foreign languages with marvellous facility; but then gentlemen and ladies of education do not drive droshkies or black boots, or stand behind shop counters, or wait at table, or perform any of those functions which are most essential to the comfort of travellers. If I once get inside a Russian

gentleman's house I am quite certain to find some language in which my host and myself can converse with more or less facility. French is to a great extent a second language to educated Russians; you constantly hear them talking to each other in French; and till within the last few years it was almost unfashionable to speak Russian in good society at St. Petersburg. But the average French spoken here —though uttered with great fluency, and pronounced with a nearer approach to the real accent than is common amongst Englishmen—is extremely faulty in construction, and I often hear mistakes made which no very accurate knowledge of the language is required to detect. A knowledge of English up to a certain point seems also very common amongst the upper classes. There are few people of any position who cannot make out a page of English with more or less facility; and it is highly unsafe to speak English in a mixed company with the idea that you are not likely to be understood. Still, I have hitherto met few Russians who spoke our language with anything like the perfection which is so common amongst Danes and Swedes. German, I believe, is better understood and spoken here than any other foreign language; but then, somehow the Russians are not proud of their knowledge of German, and

will only speak it when their French or English breaks down utterly. To do them justice, they are not the least ashamed of talking a foreign language because they talk it badly; and a stranger need never be reduced to explaining himself by dumb show when he gets inside a Russian well-to-do household.

The difficulty is to get inside. I am not speaking of the social difficulty; there is no city, I should think, where access to good society is more easy for any foreigner who is at all presentable. I allude to the actual difficulty of finding your way to the house you are entitled to enter. The chances are twenty to one that your friend has a name as to which you have no idea either how to pronounce it yourself, or how it can possibly be pronounced by any living person. The letters X Z N B, with an inverted W thrown in promiscuously, convey no notion of articulate sound to any non-Russian ear. Even assuming that the name of the householder is capable of pronunciation, the chances are another twenty to one that the name of the street in which he dwells is not; and against the double event the odds are something terrible. Thus, when you don't exactly know where you want to go, and you cannot explain to anybody what the name of the locality is of which

you are in search, and when, even supposing the persons you meet do understand you, you cannot understand their explanation—it is not easy to find your way. In any civilized country you can form some conception as to where you are going by reading the names written up at the street corners; but in Russia the letters are a series of cabalistic signs. You may call the Boulevard the Bully-ward, as I once heard a Briton do in Paris; but still, if you have eyes in your head, you can read the name, if you chance to see it, as fluently as a born Parisian. It is all very well to say that it must be easy to learn to read Russian, but there are six-and-thirty letters in the Muscovite alphabet, and all of them bear a sufficient, though delusive, resemblance to Greek and Roman letters to make the task of learning them doubly difficult. Under these circumstances, the obvious remedy is to take a droshki; but like many other simple discoveries, the one in question does not work well in practice. When you have caught your cabman you must tell him where to go. Now, I have never met a single driver who spoke one word of anything but Russian; and in this happy country, where only one half per cent. of the population can read or write, it is useless to hope that any cabman you meet with could spell out a written direction. Moreover, a Russian Isvostchik has a

perfectly sublime and childlike confidence. You may tell him to drive to the Great Sahara, or to Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, or to the Piazza San Marco at Venice, or to any locality in the known or unknown world, and he will grin a smile displaying knowledge of the route, shove you into his sledge, and drive off at full speed in the direction in which the horse's head happens to be turned. So, when your driver calls out "Karascho," or "All right"—(I shall exhaust my slender Russian vocabulary if, in order to give a local tone, I keep on thus sowing my few words broadcast)—you have no reason to presume that he has the remotest conception where you desire to be taken. The safest plan is to get the porter at your hotel to tell the driver where you wish to go, and if you have more places than one to visit, to return to your interpreter after each visit, and get him to furnish the man with fresh instructions. The process is somewhat humiliating to your sense of personal dignity. Moreover, as St. Petersburg is, for its size, the most rambling city I know, this mode of locomotion cannot be strictly considered expeditious. But, in the long run, you save more time thus than in any other mode. Commit to memory the name of the hotel you reside in—let it be, if possible, one easy to pronounce—and then you are safe against the risk of losing your

way hopelessly. But, without that precaution a stranger might, I believe honestly, wander about St. Petersburg for hours if he once got off the busy thoroughfares, without meeting any one who could understand where he wished to go.

At first there is a certain novelty in dwelling amongst a people with whom you can have very little of oral communication. There is something comic about not being able to make yourself intelligible; and the sensation of pride when you have mastered half-a-dozen words, and used them with effect, is gratifying to a newly-arrived stranger. But when the novelty of the sensation has worn away, the inconvenience of not being able to communicate freely with those about you becomes inconceivably and increasingly annoying. I should think that the bar to communication must be a serious drawback to the comfort of a prolonged abode here. Almost all the resident foreigners I have met with agree about the extreme difficulty of speaking Russian with any degree of fluency. They tell me in vague terms that they know enough to carry on a common conversation, and all that sort of thing. But from my own observation I should say that the comprehensive phrase of "that sort of thing" must be construed in a very restricted sense. Still, I perceive that most

foreigners who have settled here—I am speaking specially of Englishmen—seem to be fond of the place. Why they should be so it is not very easy to discover. To myself, I own, putting all other reasons aside, the climate would be a fatal objection.

I was told when I first came that I could not judge of St. Petersburg at all till I had seen it in its winter garb. Well, the winter has set in with a vengeance, and I cannot say that the place is to me at all more attractive. It is always snowing. With rare intervals of slush, it will probably snow and freeze from now till next April. The Neva is blocked up with almost unbroken sheets of ice. There were people walking on it to-day; and I suppose, if this weather goes on, sledges will cross it before another week is over. In fact, we have regular seasonable Russian weather. Snow always sounds pretty upon paper, and is a fertile subject of poetic metaphors; but in real practical life it is an unmitigated nuisance. Happily for us, we in London have so little of the infliction that we can hardly realize what it is to live in countries where snow is the order of the day. If you are to stop at home it does not much matter where you are, so long as you are warm; but if you want to go out, you seem to me to be as badly off in St. Petersburg as you could be in any

civilized community. Riding on horseback is out of the question, and walking for pleasure is very nearly so. If you have not heavy furs on you are frozen to death, nipped by the ice-cold wind, sent home to bed with toothache or rheumatism, or congestion of the lungs; if you muffle yourself up warmly, you are obliged to crawl along at a snail's pace, groaning beneath a load of wraps, one of the chief advantages of which is that it breaks your fall as often—and it happens very often—as you slide at full length upon the slippery pavement. In fact, if you wish to do anything more than cross the street, you must ride in a sledge; and sleighing, whatever may be its other advantages, most certainly does not supply the place of active exercise.

There is one arcade in St. Petersburg—a cross between the Lowther and the Burlington, and I think inferior to both—up and down which you can walk in three minutes; but literally there is no other place that I know of where you can walk in St. Petersburg during the winter months with any approach to comfort. Before I ever experienced a northern winter I used to imagine that skating must be a popular pursuit in countries where it froze invariably for months together. I own I entertain a private conviction that skating, like

hunting, or rowing in a boat race, was one of those pleasures which, to nine of its devotees out of ten, is greater in the anticipation or the retrospect than in the performance. Still I thought that skating was the natural pastime of ice-bound countries. Experience of northern winters has entirely dispelled the illusion. Here at St. Petersburg, for instance, skating was quite unknown till it was introduced a few years ago by some English residents. Since then it has become somewhat of a fashionable amusement with the Court and the high society of the capital. But the Russian public has never taken to it at all. Moreover, I should in fairness add that, though there are vast fields of ice within close reach of the capital, they are so caked over with frozen snow that it is difficult to skate over them for any distance. In fact, so far as I can see, persons whose evil destiny compels them to reside at St. Petersburg this winter have nothing in the way of outdoor exercise or amusement to look forward to for the next five months except a series of chilly drives up and down the Quays and the Newski Prospekt. The only breaks in their hibernal existence will be during those not unfrequent intervals when the cold becomes so intense that nothing short of necessity will take you out at all. It is cold enough now, but it has

not yet come to the period when passers-by dash handfuls of snow into your face to stop incipient mortification of the nose. I saw a gentleman rubbing a lady's face with snow in the streets the other evening, but then I am afraid they both were drunk and had no clear conception of what they were about. The bear, who, according to a popular belief, buries himself in a hole as soon as the snow sets in, and sucks his paws and sleeps from November to May, takes, I think, a more rational view of life than any other denizen of the Russian empire; but short of sucking his paws, morally if not literally, it is not very easy to say what a stranger can find to do in St. Petersburg, supposing him to grow tired of the solitude of his own room. Cafés there are none; there is not a reading-room which, so far as I know, is available to the general public; and the restaurants are wretched and comfortless. Altogether, a snowy day in St. Petersburg seems to me duller for a stranger—and in so saying I am saying a good deal—than a rainy day in London.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE BELOSELSKI BALL.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 25.

LAST night all St. Petersburg was collected at the Beloselski Palace. The import of the phrase "all St. Petersburg" is very different from that conveyed in the words "all London," or "all Paris." In either of those two capitals you would expect at such a gathering to meet celebrities of all kinds, men of note either by rank, fortune, or reputation, members of various circles of society, separate and yet not distinct from each other. But "all St. Petersburg" simply means everybody who has the right of entrée at the Court. Every guest invited to the grand ball, which was honoured by the presence of the Imperial family, was there by right of his connexion with the Court. I believe that, with the exception of myself and the correspondents of some French newspapers, there was no single person there not on the visiting list of the Palace.

Amongst the noble families of Russia, there are few which rank higher in name and fortune than that of Kuchabey. The young prince, to whom the estates and title belong, is a man of very simple tastes and habits, who leads a retired life in an out-of-the-way corner of his own huge palace; but his mother, the princess dowager, who has a large private fortune of her own, keeps up the traditions of state and grandeur which belong to her princely house. For some reason of etiquette, which I do not pretend to understand or explain, the palace bears the name of her second husband, Count Beloselski; but the lady herself is still styled the Princess Kuchabey. The house has long been famous in the annals of Russian hospitality, and it was a thing expected of the Kuchabeys that they should take the lead in the private festivities which are to be given in honour of the marriage of the Czarevitch. Certainly, if the Russians were anxious, as I believe they were, that their English visitors should see something of the way in which their great nobles hold court and state, they could have chosen no worthier representative of their order than the high-born lady on whom the honour devolved yesterday of receiving the Princess Dagmar as her guest. This, I should say, was the first occasion

since the marriage on which her Imperial Highness has visited the house of a subject.

The Beloselski Palace is an immense square building, standing alone without houses adjoining it, in the most fashionable part of the Newski Prospekt. At a guess I should say it was about the size of Stafford House, and, except that it is plainer and more massive, not dissimilar to it in shape and aspect. The whole of the vast block belongs to the Kuchabeys, and, so far as it is occupied at all, is occupied by their household. Its great, folding, glass doors open directly on the street; and the crowd collected outside could gaze through them right up the broad staircase, where rows of powdered footmen in scarlet liveries stood posted. The hall alone seemed to me as large as that of the Athenæum Club, and the oak stairs were so broad that a dozen men might have walked up them abreast. On reaching the top of the staircase you entered a long suite of rooms which occupied the whole frontage of the palace. You passed through room after room, each one of which would be called a gallery, in cities where space is less plentiful. Everywhere there was that profusion of wealth and splendour of which in these letters I have had occasion to speak so often. There is a French word

much in use amongst the Russians, and for which I know no exact English equivalent. They are always telling you that something is "*grandiose;*" and this word is exactly what I should apply to the Beloselski Palace. Our great English mansions are grand enough in their way, but they look like what they are, places in which people dwell; whereas these vast Russian rooms looked like state apartments, where, except on rare occasions like the present, the curtains are drawn down, and covers are placed over everything. I doubt whether in any English nobleman's house you would see quite the same lavish display of gorgeous ornament. Silks and velvets, marble and ormolu, gilding and tapestry, plate and pictures, inlaid floorings and mosaic tables, were all literally scattered everywhere. If you were to find a fault, it would be that everything was so fresh and new. But indeed this is the case throughout St. Petersburg. The wealth is not the accumulated wealth of generations; the treasures, rich as they are, are not heirlooms or relics; few or no memories attach to the buildings. Just as the city looks as if it had been run up by contract, so the houses seem to have been decorated, furnished, and fitted by upholsterers ordered to produce a nobleman's mansion regardless of expense. The highest artistic

taste has doubtless been employed to bring about the desired result. It is not the fault either of owner or purveyor if the *tout-ensemble* still lacks the dignity and harmony which age alone can give.

Most of the rooms were quiet enough. In the ante-chambers there were buffets, where champagne and claret cups were always on hand; and large round tables, where tea and cakes and bonbons were laid out for those who liked them. Green baize card-tables were placed in every room; and if you liked, you might have seen a score of rubbers played, in which every player was a grand duke, or prince, or minister at the least. But the company collected for the most part in the great hall, where the dancing went on. Amidst the crowd which stood looking on at the dancers there were any number of high and mighty personages. The Czar walked about the room talking to everybody whom he chanced to meet. The only notice taken of his presence was that people sitting down rose up as he passed near them; but the rule was by no means rigidly observed, and a stranger might very easily have not been aware that any difference was made between the Emperor and the other guests. In fact, except that a certain number of people were made way for with a little more ceremony than is usual

in crowded ball-rooms, there was little to show that half the guests were members of Royal or Imperial families.

The dancing was carried on with a vigour we are hardly accustomed to in London ball-rooms. In the third figure of the quadrille, for instance, the gentlemen joined hands in the circle, and danced round and round the group of ladies as fast as they could turn. There was a good deal, too, of shouting to mark the time, and the dances were very long to look at; what they must have been to the performers is a question I cannot hope to answer. The cotillon, I am certain, lasted for an hour, and most of those who took part in it never sat down above a minute or two at a time. In that most republican of dances the whole company is mixed together. The Prince of Wales must have waltzed, I think, in turn with nearly every lady in the large circle seated round the space where the cotillon was performed. The Crown Prince of Denmark could not keep up with his Royal Highness, and gave in before the dance was over. The Princess Dagmar was indefatigable, and, as it struck me, waltzed better and longer than any lady in the room. It is no very high compliment to her to say that she was also the prettiest woman there. She looked better than I have yet seen her

look in St. Petersburg. The heavy diamond chaplet was replaced to great advantage by a wreath of roses. She wore—so a lady told me—a white tulle dress, with a rich green silk pelisse, half covering her shoulders; round her neck was a triple diamond necklace, of great size and weight. She was apparently in high spirits, and, with her cheeks flushed by dancing, she had a freshness of look very rare in Russia. I should think it would be difficult in any other country to collect in one room so many ladies of high rank and fortune so few of whom had much pretensions to personal beauty. I have no wish to be unjust in my criticisms, and I admit there were also very few to whom the word ugly could be fairly applied. Good figures were not uncommon, but of beauty, such as you see in any gathering of English ladies, there was absolutely none. The lower part of the face is always the weak point in these Russian countenances. But, on the other hand, if fine feathers really make fine birds, the lack of beauty must have been more than compensated for by the brilliancy of the costumes and jewellery. If you were to make a complaint, it would be that the ladies were over-dressed. Princesses and grand duchesses and serene highnesses seemed to have studied their costumes from those toilets that

with us you see worn by the *grandes dames* of the stage, and seldom elsewhere.

However, every country has its own notions of taste and beauty, and I have no doubt the Russians think their women the handsomest in the world; at any rate, I hope so. That they are very bright, very intelligent, and very pleasant to talk to, no candid foreigner will deny.

When at last the cotillon ended, it was followed by a short galop; and then the folding-doors of the banqueting-rooms were thrown open, and the company passed in to supper, no particular order being observed except that the Emperor led the way. Nor, so far as I could see, were any places especially reserved for the Imperial party. Naturally, everybody made way for them, so that they all got together; but in theory, and to a very great extent in practice, all present took their seats exactly where they liked. There were, I should guess, about four hundred guests; and for every one of them there were chairs provided at the tables with which the different supper rooms were crowded. The *menu* was such as to make you regret that you had not foregone your dinner. It is not long, so I give it to you herewith:

MENU DU SOUPER DU 12 NOVEMBRE.—Consommé de volailles au fumé de gibier. Crême d'orge. Mayonnaise de homard à la gelée.

Gratin de cailles financier. Asperges en branches, sauce naturelle. Faisans, poulardes, et gelinottes. Salades. Pains d'abricots garnis. Glaces.

The Russian wild pheasants are excellent. Asparagus in November is tasteless, but then you have the satisfaction of knowing it is immensely dear. Everything was good, and the display of plate was something extraordinary. Accidentally I got separated from my party in entering the room, and had to take my seat amongst a number of Russians who were perfect strangers to me as I was to them. The moment, however, that they perceived I was a foreigner, they apologized for speaking Russian, and did everything they could to make the supper pleasant to me. I only mention this as an instance of the good breeding which appears to me so characteristic of the higher Russians. The supper ended about half-past two, and then I believe dancing recommenced, but the rooms were beginning to thin. Pushing my way through the crowd of Moujiks collected about the doors, I wandered hopelessly in the snow through a labyrinth of carriages, shouting for a driver, about whose name I could only recollect that it ended in "off." Finally, I had to forego dignity for the sake of comfort, and ride home in a common droshki.

I think I mentioned before that the Prince went

out hunting with the Emperor on Friday. The party drove down in large sledges, at a speed which astonished the Royal visitors, to a hunting box near Aristochopvna, close to the Finnish frontier. The Prince of Wales and the Emperor drove together in a sledge with four horses abreast, doing twenty-four versts in one hour, with only one change of horses. Thence they were all conveyed through the forest in small sledges, each just large enough to hold one, to the place where the battue had been arranged. Three elks of very large size were driven into the open space about which the hunters were collected. It so happened, however, that the deer did not come near the spots where the Czar and the Prince of Wales were stationed, and the honour of killing them fell to the Danish visitors and the Czarevitch. The elks, as one of the party assured me, were larger than carriage horses; they had just shed their horns, so that their antlers were not available as mementoes of the day.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SAINT DAYS IN RUSSIA.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 26.

TO-DAY is a holiday at St. Petersburg. The Exchange is closed; no newspapers are published; no letters are delivered; many of the shops are shut. In honour of what particular saint the day is kept sacred I do not pretend to know. The name of his saintship is unpronounceable; every country has its own saints, and east of the Dnieper you come within the domain of a hagiocracy of which Western Europe knows nothing. It is, too, by no means certain that the holy martyr in homage to whose memory I have been this day deprived of my letters, was a man of any particular note even in the Greek Church. There are fifty worthies, unknown to the rest of the Christian world, who have the same honour paid to them throughout the year. On their memorial days all public, and to a great extent all private, business is suspended. The other day I saw, in a speech delivered by a Moscow

protectionist manufacturer, a statement that Free Trade could never be introduced into this country, because, in comparison with the foreign mechanic, the Russian labourer worked at a disadvantage in consequence of the immense number of Church holidays, during which work was completely interrupted. The argument may not have been sound, but the facts on which it was based were, I believe, correctly stated. The Southern nations have a perpetual series of holidays, for the one simple and satisfactory reason that they do not want to work. In the happy lands which lie southwards of the Alps, on the shores of the Mediterranean, to bask in the hot sunshine is in itself a pleasure which, unlike most enjoyments in this bad world, endures for ever and costs nothing. No sensible person will think of blaming Italians or Spaniards because they strike work on every possible occasion. But it is hard to see why the denizens of this cheerless, snow-bound land should have any exorbitant desire for holidays. The only possible way of keeping yourself warm is by exercise, and if you are to take exercise you may as well be paid for your exertion. The *dolce far niente* is impossible in a climate where to sit still is to have your fingers numbed and your toes frost-bitten. As a matter of fact, the Russians are not at all an idle people; all employers of labour

agree that they work hard and vigilantly enough, with the exception of periodical intervals of drunkenness, which occur without much relation to the festivals of the Church. The reason why all work is stopped on the endless feasts, one of which occurs to-day, is, that the peasantry entertain convictions on the subject similar to those which Scotchmen hold about Sunday. One set of observances may be more reasonable than the other, but both are based upon the same strong popular instincts. The truth is that the Russians are exceedingly devout, after their own fashion. You may call their devotion religion or superstition, as you please; but you cannot question its existence. Years ago a French Ultramontane who had lived long in Russia declared to me his conviction that Europe was destined to be overrun and conquered by the Cossacks, because they alone could replace the element of faith which had died out in Western Europe. Absurd as the statement is, it does, I think, so far represent a truth, that the Russian people do possess a sort of childlike faith. Like the woman in "Bleak House," who sat under the ministrations of Mr. Chadband, they are always "flopping." Before the street shrines you constantly see people kneeling on the hard, cold snow, and praying fervently. If you go into the churches, you will find, at all hours of the day, numbers of

men and women—not only peasants, but handsomely-dressed persons—prostrating themselves before the altars, making genuflexions enough to gratify the heart of a St. Alban's curate, and repeatedly touching the floor with their foreheads in the fervour of their zeal. The lowest and most degraded classes of the community will not eat or drink without crossing themselves repeatedly. The droshki drivers, who have the worst of reputations, will not pass a picture of the Virgin without uncovering their heads, no matter how fast the snow may be falling. Whether they are morally much the better for all their bowing and crossing is a question into which I need not enter. Unless they are much ill-treated by common repute, the lower orders in Russia are lacking in many elementary virtues, which, according to our Western views, are more important than the habit of reverence. But nobody can stop here any time and make use of his eyes without seeing that religion of a certain kind has a greater hold upon the popular mind in Russia than it has in our more civilized world. Whatever may be the spiritual advantages of such a state of things, it is an obstacle in the way of any Government, like the present one, which endeavours to raise the condition of the people. Secular reforms are paralysed by the passive resistance of popular religious feeling. And

on matters such as the observance of holidays, in which religious feeling is involved, the force of public opinion is irresistible. The Czar can do anything except interfere with the customs ordained by the creed of his people. In connexion with this subject it is curious to remark how very little you see or hear, as a stranger, of the Russian priesthood. The churches and convents are endowed with great wealth, but the priests appear to have no social position or standing of any kind. With the exception of a very few of the highest ecclesiastics, they stand, so far as I can learn, quite below the rank of Russian society. Chosen from a low class, they seldom rise above it, and are no higher in education or character than the average of their peasant parishioners.

Another thing which strikes a traveller is the comparative absence of soldiers about St. Petersburg. There are immense barracks scattered over all this rambling city, and a very large force is stationed here; but you see very few soldiers about the street compared with the numbers visible in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, or the capital of any continental country which keeps up a great standing army. Moreover, the common soldiers and the civilian public obviously fraternize together to an extent which is not common elsewhere. The maintenance of public order—in St. Petersburg,

at any rate—is intrusted to a police force lately established on the model of our own. The system works well enough, except for one defect, which is characteristic of Russia. The members of the force are almost all retired soldiers. Now, one of the duties most strongly inculcated upon the Russian private is the necessity of saluting his superiors with the utmost respect. The new functionaries cannot forget the lesson thus learnt. While they are upon duty in the performance of their functions as policemen, they are always on the look-out to see if an officer is not coming their way. It is military etiquette that a private must continue his salute till the person saluted has moved away; accordingly, whenever an officer chances to stop by the place where they are stationed, these policemen will stand so long as he remains in sight erect and motionless; and since the number of persons holding military rank in this country is well-nigh equal to the number of well-to-do grown-up men, the efficiency of the police is seriously impeded by the obligation they consider themselves to be under of saluting every officer whose path they come across. As to interfering with an officer in person, no matter what breach of civil law he may be committing, it is an act of audacity at which the soul of the Russian policeman stands aghast. He is

strictly enjoined to keep order in the streets, and to arrest everybody who disturbs it, no matter what may be his rank or position; but the police have an unalterable conviction that it is not safe or wise to meddle with military offenders—and very likely they are right. The evil arising from this deference to the uniform is all the greater, because the lower rank of Russian officers is not at all above the class of offences which comes under the supervision of the common police. The pay of the officers is miserably small; and, unless they are possessed of private fortunes, they have to eke out their livelihood by means which may be honourable or otherwise, according to the character of the individual, but which would appear to us strangely inconsistent with military dignity. Our officers sometimes get into street rows, and are not unfrequently guilty of grave moral offences, but their delinquencies are very rarely of a kind to place them if detected in the felon's dock. Any English reader would be struck with astonishment if he read by chance in the papers that the gang of housebreakers who had lately infested the city of —— had been happily broken up, and that on their arrest the chief of the gang had stated his name to be Lieutenant ——, of the —— Regiment, quartered in that town. Yet such a paragraph has appeared lately in the Russian papers about

the city of Kazan, and has not excited the slightest surprise. It would be absurd to argue from this fact that housebreakers were commonly to be found amidst commissioned officers, but the fact that such an incident as I have mentioned could occur without being a nine days' wonder does speak a good deal as to the social repute of the body to which the offender belonged. Moreover, you cannot talk with Russians on such subjects without seeing that they believe all public functionaries, military as well as civilian, to be amenable to corrupt influences. There are, they will admit, if you press them on the point, functionaries who will not take a bribe; but, as a rule, they will tell you it is always better to offer a fee if you wish to get your business attended to. For very obvious reasons, I do not like to mention particular instances of corruption which have come within my own knowledge during the short period I have resided here; but I have seen enough to know, that if you offer palm-money, even to persons highly placed, you run a very small chance of being kicked out of the room, and perhaps even a smaller chance of having it refused. A gentleman, who has had much experience in dealing with Government officials in Russia, told me that he had learnt to adopt the following plan:—When he had stated his business, whatever it

might be, he pulled out his cigar-case, and offered it to his interlocutor, telling him to help himself. In one side there were cigarettes, in the other the sum of paper roubles he intended to offer; and it was very seldom he found the notes still left in the cigar-case when it was returned to him. On the other hand, he declared that the persons thus bribed were almost always honest in the transaction—that is, they performed the service which they took money to do; and, also, that because an official took a bribe from one side, it by no means invariably followed he would take a higher bribe from the other. In fact, these bribes are rather retaining fees to secure extra activity than the price of corrupt services. Be this as it may, the Government feels so strongly the evils of such a system in the administration of justice, that it has recently appointed a number of well-paid local judges, who, according to all accounts, administer the law very fairly and efficiently.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## THE CRONSTADT HOSPITAL.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 25.

THAT enough is as good as a feast is a truth which seems hardly to be recognised in Russia. A fortnight has now passed since the wedding of the Czarevitch, and yet the festivities in honour of the occasion show no sign of ending. Happily for English chroniclers of these festivities, their duty is likely to terminate shortly, as the Prince of Wales is not expected to stop beyond the middle of next week at the latest. One ball is very like another in every part of the world, and the details would hardly interest non-Russian readers. Even the most enthusiastic student of Court literature would hardly care to learn that a duchess, whose name nobody in England ever heard, was especially remarkable for the brilliancy of her diamonds or the elegance of her dress; that a prince with an unpronounce-

able name attracted much attention by the grace with which his white silk-tights adhered to his noble calves; that Don Somebody or other, of the Argentine Legation, paid great attention to the young and lovely heiress of the Carabas estates; and that Count Bacaroff is reported to have lost a hundred thousand roubles at *écarté* between ten o'clock and supper-time. After all, some personal knowledge is required to give an interest to personal events. Nobody can feel deeply concerned to learn that A. B.'s character is considered doubtful, or M. N.'s fortunes have been impaired, or P. Q.'s heart is supposed to be lost or won, if he knows nothing about the personages concerned, and never knew anybody who was likely to know anything. Domestic dramas are said to be the most interesting of any, but then, in order that the spectator should appreciate their interest, he must be more or less acquainted with the circle in which the actors move.

I suspect the Prince of Wales would probably have enjoyed his visit to Russia more if there had not been quite so many balls and festivities and State ceremonials. However, amidst the many advantages of being heir to a Royal throne, it is one of the accompanying drawbacks that wherever you go you never can leave balls and banquets behind you; and it is

only fair to say that the Russians speak highly of the good nature with which his Royal Highness has entered into all the entertainments provided for him. He has had several shooting expeditions; he has driven about in sledges; he has skated on the ice of the Neva; and has enjoyed himself as well as could be expected, considering that, according to the veracious accounts published by some English newspapers, he ought by this time to be dead—if not buried.

Amongst the reminiscences of his sojourn at St. Petersburg, I trust not the least enduring will be one connected with the support of a most excellent institution. At the request of several gentlemen who have borne an active part in promoting the undertaking, his Royal Highness has consented to become the patron of the British Seamen's Hospital at Cronstadt, and has promised a subscription of a hundred guineas in aid of the funds required to carry out the scheme. The object which has thus received the sanction of Royal patronage is one, I think, eminently deserving of English support. There are few beings whose plight is more forlorn and pitiable than that of a British sailor who falls sick in a foreign port. Jack ashore is always getting into trouble, and will, I suppose, go on doing so till the end of the chapter. Let anybody

at all acquainted with seaport life fancy to himself what must be the position of a common English sailor, stranded penniless in a country where everything is strange to him; where the language is utterly unintelligible; where in winter the cold is extreme; where warm clothing, good food, and safe shelter are indispensable to keep body and soul together; where all these articles are costly; and where the one cheap thing is brandy of indifferent quality. Even without illness, our sea-going folk fare but badly in Russia. You have only to drop into any of our consulates at this time of year to hear tale after tale of distressed seamen. Within the last few days, while happening to call at the British Consul's house, I have heard half-a-dozen such cases. The other day, for instance, an English vessel was frozen up at Archangel; the crew, some six in number, were sent off to St. Petersburg in open sleighs. They were a fortnight making the journey, and had to make it without furs or wraps of any kind. To keep themselves warm they had drunk "wodka" freely, and had fought with each other along the road. Their story was that the man who had contracted to convey them failed to provide the furs he had promised, and knocked them down when they remonstrated. You may not believe the story—its truth may be problematical; but there is no

doubt, when the poor fellows arrived here, they were half-frozen, half-starved, and wretched. Another man I met who had made his way, somehow or other, from Odessa, and came to the consulate, without a sixpence in the world, to beg assistance to get him to some open port whence he could work his passage home. Two other men I saw were about to start for England with no luggage except a pocket-handkerchief, and not a warm wrap between them. I might add any number of similar cases. I only refer to these to show the sort of hardships to which, even under ordinary circumstances, our sailors are subject in this wintry climate. When sickness comes on, the condition of these poor fellows, far away from their friends, strangers in a strange land, castaways in a country where there is no provision made except for the very rich or the abjectly poor, is often one of extreme misery. Our consuls do what little they can to afford help in the cases that become known to them, and the British residents are liberal enough in the cause of charity; but still there is often fearful suffering amongst the British workmen and sailors, who find, or rather lose, their way to this vast Northern Empire.

At Cronstadt itself, where our English sailors chiefly congregate, there has been established for the

last seven years a hospital for British seamen. Being for the most part healthy, able-bodied men, their diseases are chiefly of an acute kind, in which medical care and attendance are invaluable. During these seven years, about a thousand sailors have been nursed at this establishment. According to the original scheme, the hospital funds, provided by subscriptions and a voluntary impost on the English vessels which entered Cronstadt, were handed over to a resident medical man, who contracted to provide the sick with necessary medicines and nursing. There is no need for me to discuss the truth of the complaints which were raised by the British residents as to the manner in which the contract was carried out. It was obviously one of a most undesirable character which could only work well under exceptional circumstances; and great credit is due to Mr. Michell, the Consul at St. Petersburg, for the energy and determination with which he has insisted on a radical reform of the system on which the hospital was conducted. The committee appointed to inquire into the matter, of which the above gentleman is the chairman, have decided on obtaining a building to be appropriated to the hospital, and on securing the services of a resident medical officer at a fixed salary. They have also, I understand, obtained leave

to levy a small compulsory rate on all English vessels which enter the port, and the proceeds of this rate will suffice to pay the annual expenses of the institution. In order, however, to purchase a house, and to fit it up so as to be suitable for a hospital, an outlay will be required of about 25,000 roubles, or between 3,000*l.* and 4,000*l.* This is a large sum to raise in a place like this, where the number of wealthy British residents is extremely small, and where the majority of the English firms engaged in the Russian trade are represented by agents. It is hoped that the guarantee as to the usefulness of the institution, which is afforded by the Prince of Wales's consent to become its patron, may lead Englishmen at home who are interested in Russia, to come forward and assist in making up the deficit. If they do so, they will, I think, have the satisfaction of knowing that their money has been spent in a work of real charity.

As I am writing to-day of English matters, I may perhaps quote an article which has just been published in the *Northern Post*, on the relations between England and Russia. It derives additional interest from the fact that, as I understand, it is avowedly written by the Minister of the Interior. The chief passages of the article are the following:—

"Our readers have doubtless read with much pleasure the address presented to the Prince of Wales by the English residents at St. Petersburg, and also the reply given by his Royal Highness. The memorialists have joined the expression of their feelings to the joyous sentiments of the Russian people on the marriage of the Czarevitch to the august choice of his heart. And his Royal Highness, after testifying his warm sympathy with the wishes of his countrymen for the happiness of the Imperial family, and for the prosperity of the Russian nation, gladly accepted their congratulations on the ties of relationship that now unite the Royal houses of England and Russia in the persons of the Princess of Wales and the bride of the Czarevitch. Like the British residents, Prince Albert Edward sees in the family event which has brought his Royal Highness to Russia a means of strengthening the friendly relations of the two countries. We are convinced that every Russian who understands the interests of his own country, and also every unprejudiced Englishman, will earnestly hope that the words of the Prince may be realized in fact, and that the friendship of the two nations may from day to day become closer, and more sincere and established, in an association not only of mutual interests, but of mutual respect.

"In supporting the ideas expressed in the address, the Prince of Wales acknowledged that a community of material interests exercises a beneficial influence on the relations of the two countries. This statement is supported by facts, and is all the more forcible to Englishmen, since their commercial activity, being so much more developed than that of other countries, promotes so thoroughly the prosperity of Great Britain. But we may be allowed to add an observation which, if made known in England, will assuredly be received with satisfaction.

"It is not a community of material interests only that connects Russia with England. Ever since education began to spread more rapidly over Russia, our best men saw in the social institutions of England, in the manners and customs, in the intellectual life of her people, and in her literature and poetry, objects of study, imitation, and emulation. As the latest comers in the field of European civilization, we may, without loss of dignity, confess that our ideas and convictions have become clearer and more solid since we began to set less value on the glitter of that cosmopolitan civilization by which we were at first attracted. And, since we have directed our attention to the study of the subjects which constitute the pride of the English people, our literature—that

mission of a nation—has become richer and more independent.

"After the great creations of England had been transported to our own soil, our most gifted poets and writers began to vie with the immortal genius of England and of Germany. Our Karamsin, the best type of a Russian writer, owes, to a great extent, the influence which he exercises over Russian society, to his acquaintance with English literature. Among the numerous great works left by our Jankovsky is a translation of the 'Prisoner of Chillon,' which is worthy of being classed with his original productions. Pouschkine's novels, so full of imagination, so varied and original, are founded on Byron's creations. Translations from Shakespeare have given some of our writers more notoriety than they ever would have gained by original works. Some of the best dramas of the great English bard, such as 'Hamlet,' have almost become naturalized on our stage. They have always attracted, and still attract, crowded audiences; and the reproduction of the great characters of Shakespeare has principally contributed to educate the most marked of our actors. Moore, Walter Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray, if not so popular in Russia as in their own country, are no less appreciated by our educated classes. We feel quite sure, if English-

men would as willingly and conscientiously apply themselves to the study of our country, the bond between us would grow closer, and be supported not only by material interests, but also by the more powerful ties of intellect."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### LOW LIFE IN ST. PETERSBURG.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 26.

LAST night I set out on an expedition "to see life" in St. Petersburg. I have always looked upon the desire to know what "life" is as one of the calamities entailed upon us by the original sin of our first parents, when they tasted of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. It would be so much more satisfactory and comfortable if we could live on without wishing to peep behind the curtain, to see below the surface. But, somehow or other, when men have once become aware that under a fair outside there is always something lurking which is not meant to meet the eye, they can never be content till they have scraped the gilt off the gingerbread and seen the result. I have known enough of different cities and countries to be sure that there must be a dark side to the splendour of St. Petersburg. By the inevitable law of compensation there must be hovels, some-

where, corresponding to the gorgeous palaces with which it is crowded; somebody must wear rags, if only as an equivalent for the diamonds which are worn in such reckless profusion. In one form or other there must be misery to counterpoise the luxury which characterises the capital of All the Russias. Everything is doubtless for the best in the best possible of worlds. I am simply stating facts, not propounding theories. Knowing that this must be so, I could not be content unless I saw something of the reverse of the medal. I had seen how the nobles lived; I wished to learn how the people lived. Let me try and tell you faithfully what it was I saw.

In company, then, with a friend, I chartered the services of a German commissionnaire, who had lived most of his life in St. Petersburg, and instructed him to take us to the different haunts of the city frequented by the true Russian populace. Under his guidance we went the rounds. At no time, I should think, did we go a quarter of a mile from the Newski Prospekt. In our wanderings we passed continually by brilliantly lit palaces. In fact, poverty and luxury, want and wealth, live side by side in St. Petersburg to an extent which, I suppose, can scarcely be equalled in any other capital. Let me say here, at starting, that I do not assert that the working population of the city

spend their evenings, as a class, in the low resorts I visited. All I can say is, that I told my guide to take me to every popular place of entertainment, respectable or otherwise, where I could see something of the life of the lower classes; and that the places he took me to were such as I seek to describe them. It is possible we may have been unfortunate in our selection of the places we visited. Our conductor assured us, however, that all the establishments frequented by the Russian working classes were similar in kind to those we were taken to see.

Our first visit was to a Russian music-hall. We entered through a long damp passage; went up a staircase foul with every sort of noxious odour; passed through a wicket where we paid about sixpence entrance fee, and found ourselves in a long vaulted room. The walls were bare and whitewashed, streaked over with broad stripes of coarse blue paint. A number of deal tables were arranged about the place, which was feebly lit by a few gas-jets. At these tables there were seated groups of men more or less decently dressed, and all drinking spirits of some sort or other. The company seemed to be composed—as I was told it actually was—of upper-class mechanics. A Moujik in the national dress was not to be seen amongst them. With the exception that most of the

spectators had fur caps and high boots, I don't know that their aspect differed much from that of ordinary European mechanics. There was very little smoking in the room. The visitors were engaged in drinking, and for the most part drinking silently. Some few were drunk already, although the hour was still early; but even the drunken men were neither noisy nor quarrelsome. Every now and then there was a beginning of dispute between two topers, but it always ended speedily in a mutual kiss and embrace. A few of the men had women with them, who from their dress and look might have been respectable. About the rooms were a dozen girls or so, who had apparently the run of the place. As to their character there could be no manner of doubt. Still, for what they were, they were not ill-behaved; they walked up and down the room in pairs, exchanging words with the bystanders, and drinking with anybody who offered to treat them; but they made no attempt when I was there to force themselves upon people who did not seek their company; nor, except in the freedom of their manners when addressed by any one, was there much in their behaviour to indicate the class to which they belonged. At the end of the room there was a low raised platform, on which a score or so of men, dressed in long braided coats, were

stationed. All were dirty, greasy, and sallow-looking. Every five minutes these men arranged themselves in a semicircle. One of the band came forward in the centre and acted as conductor. Beating time with his arm, he led a sort of choral melody, in which everybody sang at once, and everybody's object appeared to be to sing as loud and break off as suddenly as possible. After the song had meandered on for some time in fits and starts, two little Jew boys, dressed in black velvet tunics, crept into the midst of the singers and began dancing to the music. They spun round and round like teetotums, threw out their arms and legs, contorted their bodies into every possible shape, and whirled faster and faster as the men shrieked and shouted, till at last they dropped half exhausted, as the music ceased, with a strange unearthly yell. The words may have been different in each successive song, but to all appearance the same performance was repeated time after time.

Our next visit was to a genuine Russian Traktir. Outside, the place, which stood in one of the main streets, looked like a very respectable second-class eating-house; as, indeed, I believe it is. Entering by a clean staircase enough, you again paid a few kopecks at a wooden wicket, where you might leave your furs if you chose, and passed into a low well-lit room. At

one corner there was a bar, with caviar, salmon, sandwiches, sardines, pickled herrings, and glasses of tea. Behind was a goodly array of bottles of all sorts and sizes. Tables were placed about the room, and at the end of it there was a small theatre, almost level with the floor. Opening out of this entrance-hall there were half-a-dozen dining-rooms, with sofas and curtains, all shabby, soiled, and tawdry, but not without a pretence at elegance. In the centre one stood a great barrel organ, which kept on all day and night grinding out its scanty *répertoire* of operatic tunes. All about the place there were parties of men and women, or rather boys and girls, seated drinking. The class and condition of the former were more doubtful, of the latter less so, than in the music-halls. Some of the men had the aspect of respectable tradesmen, some of common Moujiks; but the majority were young workmen who had got a little money together, and were come here to spend it in a sort of sottish, stupid dissipation. At the different supper tables tea and beer were being drunk in some instances, but wodka was the article most in request. The women, who were admitted free of payment, moved about from table to table romping in a rough kind of play with anybody who aspired to the pleasure of their acquaintance, but chiefly engaged in stimulating the consumption of

strong liquids. The ugliest part of the business was the extreme youth of these poor creatures. None of them looked over twenty; many were little, unformed chits of girls, who scarcely appeared to be more than twelve or thirteen. In every room there was the never-failing picture of the Saviour or the Virgin encased in gilt; and I observed that both men and women always crossed themselves when they rose from table after eating. The amusements provided for the entertainment of the company were not very varied. Every now and then the curtain rose, and we were favoured with a comic recitation. A gentleman, with the crushed white hat and the traditional red nose, which in all parts of the world I have visited seem to be considered essential for the performance of comic melodies, came forward to the footlights with the standard reeling walk, crushed his hat down on the back of his head, and gave a recitation interspersed with snatches of songs. It sounded very dismal, as I could not understand a word of it; possibly, judging from comic songs I have heard in languages I can speak, I should have deemed it still more dismal if I had understood every word of it. However, the audience cheered, and demanded the song over and over again. My guide told me it was coarse, but humorous. I am inclined to think his judgment was

more likely to be correct upon the first than upon the second of its reputed attributes. Then, when the audience had grown tired of listening, or rather when the hoarse, spirit-cracked voice of the singer had become so worn out as to be hardly audible, a company of musicians took their places on the stage, and began playing quadrille music with an utter disregard for time or harmony. As soon as the strains of the music were heard, the company came flocking into the room from the different apartments, and the women began dancing, while the men looked on and drank. In a clumsy way, some of the female performers imitated the *cancan;* but, to do them justice, the dancing was, for the place, decent enough. The men hardly smoked at all. Very few of the women were without cigarettes in their mouths. There was not much noise, and no violent quarrelling. My guide declared that, before the place closed, which might be at any hour in the morning, everybody would be drunk. While I was there I saw numbers of persons the worse for liquor, but I observed no cases of violent intoxication. All the Traktirs I visited had the same family features. In each of them were found the organ, the decked-out painted women, the long rows of tables, covered with full glasses and empty bottles, the cracked brazen instrumental music, and the pictures of the Madonna

and her Son. One was the counterpart of the other, a little less gaudy perhaps, or somewhat cleaner, but the same in all essential points. The merriment was nowhere wild or furious, and I believe there are few capitals in the world where, if you chose to search for them, you might not find scenes of dissipation and debauch infinitely worse than anything presented at these St. Petersburg sing-songs. What struck me most about them, indeed, was their comparative respectability. They were all obviously the resorts of decent working people, of small tradesmen—of a class, in fact, very much above the lowest. They were the places in which these people pass their evenings; and yet one and all had the same stamp of vice upon them—not, indeed, very gross or flagrant, but still palpable enough.

It was growing late, and our guide told us that the public spirit-cellars would be getting full. In a street by no means very disreputable in appearance we walked down a few steps leading from the pavement, pushed open the folding-doors at the bottom, and were in a Russian spirit store. I have seen low drinking shops in St. Giles's; I have been into pretty-waiter-girls' saloons in the Bowery, New York; I have seen whisky stores in the wynds of Glasgow; but I have never seen anything, bad as these are, approaching to

the squalor and degraded misery of these Russian wodka shops. The cellar was damp, and reeking with a hot, fetid air; the walls were bare, and slimy with wet; furniture there was none; around the walls there were wooden settles, on which men and women sat huddled together, stupid with drink. Every face was bleared, blotched, and blurred by intoxication. None of the company were talking, or even quarrelling. Wrapped in their sheepskins and soiled furs, they sat there silently. There is nothing sociable about the drinking of the common Russians; when they get liquor, they gulp it down, and will go on gulping till their supply is gone or they are dead drunk. The only ornaments of the room were a rude coloured engraving of the Holy Family, pasted against the wall, and a plain wooden bar, behind which there was an array of white glass bottles, holding, I should think, about a quart. Our conductor ordered a bottle to pay our footing, and said something to the host, a tall, powerful man, who stood behind the counter. He thereupon poured the liquor into two tumblers, holding, I should think, full half a pint, and called out to two men dozing on the bench opposite. Lazily the poor wretches rose up, half stupefied with drink, lurched over to the bar, swallowed the whole contents of the glasses without taking a breath, wiped their

mouths with the back of their hands, crawled away to their seats and dozed off again. The less favoured occupants of the benches woke up at the spectacle, and offered to do the same feat if we would provide the liquor; but the spectacle was too disgusting, and I was glad to get out of the squalid den. Through the window panes I looked into numbers of these stores. They were all the same—all bare, all filthy, all crowded with men and women besotted with liquor.

And then I had a hideous vision of a public tavern, where a hundred men, sunk to the level of brutes, and unsexed women all in rags, all far past the stage of feeling the slightest care for their personal appearance, all filthy, most of them with black eyes and broken heads, sat boozing together at long deal tables, literally black with dirt. Neither the men nor the women looked like human beings. There was no rioting, no singing, no entertainment of any kind; and from the wall the picture of Christ looked down upon this wallowing mass of creatures made after God's own image. I had seen life enough, and I went home wiser perhaps, sadder certainly.

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## HIGH LIFE IN ST. PETERSBURG.

ST. PETERSBURG, *November* 27.

YESTERDAY night Sir Andrew Buchanan had the honour of entertaining the Prince of Wales and the Imperial Family at the British Embassy. The tickets of invitation were issued for nine o'clock, and soon after that hour the *salons* of the Embassy were filled to overflowing. Every available room in the whole building had been cleared out for the purposes of the ball, and in consequence the ambassador was able to stow away his guests in a suite of apartments which, if not spacious, were still sufficiently roomy for the occasion. Shortly before ten the Prince of Wales arrived, and was received on the staircase by the ambassador and his attachés. In honour of his host his Royal Highness wore the Highland costume as Colonel of the Sutherland Volunteers, which I think suits him better than the Hussar uniform he has hitherto worn at State ceremonials. Every-

body, including the secretaries of legation, wore some sort of uniform, and, as in most of the festivities I have been present at, the number of persons in plain evening dress might have been counted on the fingers of one hand. The guests formed in two lines along the rooms, between which the Prince and his suite passed up and down. They had hardly made their entry before the Emperor was announced. His Majesty was received at the head of the staircase by the Prince of Wales, who, in his character of an English Prince, was held to be in his own house at the British Embassy. The same ceremony was observed on the arrival of the Czarevitch and the Crown Prince of Denmark. The Princess Dagmar, or as I ought to call her now, the Grand Duchess Maria Federowna, was led into the ball-room by his Royal Highness. It was, by the way, the Grand Duchess's birthday, and on that morning the Cossacks of the Don, who belonged to her husband's regiment, had paid her their respects; presenting her, in memory of the day, with a picture of the Virgin, framed and ornamented, at the expense of the soldiers.

Immediately on the entry of the Royal guests into the ball-room, a quadrille was danced, in which all the high and mighty personages assembled, including

the Emperor and the British Ambassador, took part. After this ceremony had been performed, the elder and graver members of the company considered themselves released from all further obligations of a similar character, and the dancing was left to the Princes and Princesses and their respective suites. Whist tables were arranged in the adjoining rooms, and the Czar, according to his wont, played for a couple of hours, with Prince Lieven for his partner. Politeness, to say nothing of etiquette, is opposed to a stranger's going and looking over an Emperor's hand while he is playing; I cannot therefore pretend to give you any opinion as to the merits or demerits of the Czar as a whist-player. I have often thought that, when men are intent on cards, their countenances show far more of their real characters than when they engaged in conversation. Looking at the Emperor Alexander, as I did from time to time while he was studying his hand, it appeared to me very strange that I should have often heard his countenance spoken of as being weak in expression. All readers of Thackeray must remember the passage in Brown's letter where the uncle takes his nephew to the club whist-room, shows him the regular whist-players, and asks him, if he plays, which one of those gentlemen he expects to win money from. I am quite certain that, however

innocent young Brown may have been, he would never —supposing the Czar to have been amongst the players—have picked him out of any ordinary company as the one from whom he thought he might earn his money. Kindly the Emperor Alexander's face is most certainly; it may possibly be that of an indolent man, though I doubt the fact; but most assuredly it is not that of a weak or irresolute man.

In the side rooms tea and cakes and champagne were served all the evening long, after the Russian fashion; and it struck an English observer as curious to see Princesses and Grand Duchesses sitting down at the tables, and making regular, and by no means slender, meals of the delicacies provided for them. However, it should fairly be added that the Czar and most of the Imperial personages departed long before one o'clock, when the supper commenced. The Prince of Wales danced almost without intermission; and after supper was over, dancing was renewed, and it was past four before he quitted the Embassy.

*November* 28.

To-night has witnessed the close of the long series of festivities which have celebrated at one and the same time the marriage of the Czarevitch and the visit of the Prince of Wales. The wedding gaieties will

continue for many a day to come. There are all sorts of balls, receptions, and soirées still to be given by the grandees of the empire in honour of the Imperial marriage; and the Czarevitch and his bride will have to return the hospitality thus offered by throwing open the doors of their new palace. But with the departure of the heir to the throne of England these rejoicings will lose the almost international character which has hitherto belonged to them. The visit of the Prince of Wales has already been prolonged far beyond the limits originally assigned to it; and indeed the New Year would be well on before his Royal Highness departed, if he were to stop here in order to accept the numerous invitations which have been pressed upon him. To-day was fixed for the termination of the Royal visit; but the departure was adjourned for one day more, in order that the Prince might be present at a grand reception given by the Grand Duke Constantine within the famous Marble Palace. No entertainment could well have been a more fitting *finale* for the succession of gorgeous pageants which it has been my good fortune to witness—my ill fortune to describe in language that must necessarily represent a tame and meagre picture of their exceeding brilliancy.

The Winter Palace, as I believe I have said before,

stretches in blocks—some connected by vaulted archways, like the Bridge of Sighs in Venice, others separated by narrow gaps—for a distance along the Neva, which I should calculate as being nearer half than a quarter of a mile. At the extreme end of this long range of palaces stands the marble-covered mansion in which the second son of the late Emperor has his abode. Outwardly it differs little from its sister palaces, except that the façade is of marble instead of stucco. Within, it differs only in being, if possible, more complete and perfect in its appointments. To-night the whole of the palace was decked out for company, and thrown open to the hundreds, if not thousands of guests who were granted the privilege of presenting themselves at the grand ducal reception. I use the word "whole" advisedly. This palace, like all the other great Russian mansions I have visited, consists of only two principal stories. The ground-floor is taken up by the numerous staircases and the spacious halls out of which they rise: the basement, I suppose, is occupied by the kitchens and servants' apartments. The family resides entirely upon the first floor; above this there may be attics or bedrooms in the roof, but they are not visible from the outside. Now to-night the guests were allowed to wander at their pleasure all about the dwelling floor

of the Marble Palace. Every room of the long suite which leads round the square block was opened to the public. In other countries, so far as I have seen and heard of the interior of palaces, even the most favoured guests seldom penetrate beyond the State rooms. It is only the immediate associates of Royal personages who visit the apartments where the illustrious inmates actually live and dwell; but here the doors of every room, public or private, were set wide open, just as if the guests had been a company of auctioneers about to bid for the trappings and furniture of the palace. The custom does not, perhaps, tally altogether with our English notions of privacy, but it certainly enhanced the splendour of the reception. Instead of being cooped up in half-a-dozen halls, the tide of guests ebbed to and fro through the endless rows of rooms leading one into another. It seemed to me as if the long procession would never end. Out of halls blazing with light and colour you passed into low galleries; then into bedchambers hung with rich tapestries; then into alcoves surrounded with gorgeous flowers; then into corridors where fountains sparkled brightly; and then again into new ranges of halls, each more splendid than the last which you had traversed.

I have no doubt the space passed over was really very considerable; but it seemed even greater than it

was, to persons, like myself, wandering from room to room, as the fancy took us, without any clear notion of the direction in which we were going or the path we followed. And, as land-marks and sign-posts, there were stalls erected at every turn and corner, where champagne bottles were opened constantly for the refreshment of travellers wearied by their wanderings. I cannot give you a detailed catalogue of the treasures and riches displayed in that long labyrinth of chambers, to which there seemed—when you had once entered it—to be neither end nor beginning; even if I could, I doubt whether I should convey by so doing any idea of what it was like. I can only say that everything looked in harmony with the gold-covered uniforms and diamond-bedecked dresses of the goodly company, who kept gliding noiselessly over the rich carpets and inlaid floors. The old nursery rhyme, "Upstairs and downstairs, and in my lady's chamber," ran in my head as we moved about the palace, going where and how we pleased. The very bedroom of the Grand Duchess was not kept sacred from invasion. Except that everything was in order, and all the scent bottles and toilette ornaments were arranged symmetrically side by side, it looked like—what I believe it was—a room that had just been occupied by its owner, and would

in a few hours be occupied again. Even more curious was the Grand Duke's own study—the room where he writes and reads. Fitted up in the old Russian style, with wooden panels and Dutch tiles, it bore all the traces of a snuggery in constant use. Papers, letters, and telegrams lay unopened on the study tables; there were models of ships stuck about the walls, charts of different countries, photographs of private friends. English books stood upon the book-shelves, and English newspapers were left open on the stands; and, unless I am much mistaken on a point of which I have some experience, the aroma of strong, fragrant tobacco pervaded the apartment.

People who are intimate with the Grand Duke say that he prefers this homely study to any of the splendid rooms with which his palace abounds. When I had the honour to be presented to him as a stranger, during the course of the evening, his first question was whether I had seen the room in the palace which he had had arranged in the old Russian style. Though priding himself on representing what, I suppose, one ought to call Muscovite Toryism, the Grand Duke Constantine is, I should gather, more English in his tastes and likings than the more Liberal members of the Imperial family. He asked me several questions which showed a very intimate

acquaintance with England, and told me, I recollect, amongst other things, that he had never felt so proud in his life as when he saw a game of chess he had played published as a model in an English newspaper. Less tall and stately than any of his brothers, he has inherited more of the keen Russian look than has fallen to their share, and has, moreover, an air of restless energy which is wanting to their softer features. Amongst a nation certainly not remarkable for good looks, the Princes of the House of Romanoff are conspicuous for their stature and kingly appearance; and if the Russian people had to choose a Czar on the same system as the children of Israel chose Saul, there are not, I think, many families in the empire who would stand a better chance of election than the descendants of Rurik.

Of the company of Court gallants and ladies who filled the rooms, what need I say, except that it was such as I have seen on every State occasion here. There is little or no variety in the *personnel* of the Russian Court chorus. A few hundreds, more or less, of brilliantly dressed assistants may be introduced, according to the comparative grandeur of the performance; but in substance it remains the same Already, short as my stay has been in St. Petersburg, I seem to be getting to know most of the members of

this charmed circle by sight. I suppose all Courts must have much of the like sameness in their "entourage." If so, I can feel more charitably towards the s s of Royalty. Only think what it must be to pass your life amid the same set of people, always dressed in the same brilliant attire, always wearing the same set smile, always addressing each other with the same grand courtesy! Possibly, in this particular instance, the sense of monotony may be augmented, so far as I am concerned, by the fact that to me almost all the personages present are but lay figures. I have been told the names of many of them and have straightway forgotten them, being none the wiser for the knowledge even during the short interval I possessed it.

But amongst that crowd of unknown celebrities there was one pointed out to me of whom most of the world has heard. That small, timid-looking lad, who is standing in a corner, is the famous Komissaroff —the man who saved the life of the Czar. A few months ago he was a mere peasant. Now he is a nobleman, and wears a brilliant uniform, and has lots of orders on his breast. Last season he was the hero of the day; he was embraced in public by any number of Grand Dukes and Duchesses; his portraits were in every shop-window; his brother nobles were

about to buy him a palace by private subscription. A deputation sent from the great Transatlantic Republic, on purpose to congratulate the Czar, insisted on being presented to the saviour of a life so dear to America and All the Russias. But now his lion-hood —if I may coin the word—is lost. The subscription has never come to anything; the felicitations of the American delegates, however gratifying, did not take a substantial form; and, I am told, that on his last public appearance, when he stood in a tent on the Newski, at the occasion of the Czarevitch's marriage, he, in stage parlance, had ceased to "draw." Already candid friends are beginning to declare that he only shoved the assassin's arm by mistake, and that he ran away the moment he heard the pistol go off; but I distrust these stories, as human nature all the world over delights in proving that a dead lion never deserved to wear the lion's skin at all. Anyhow, Komissaroff is "played out." I suppose I was nearly the only person in that crowded room who had any curiosity whatever to look at him. Before he is quite forgotten he had better cross the Atlantic, and there; in the hands of P. T. Barnum, at five cents' admission, with a fat woman, a talking fish, and Washington's nurse thrown into the exhibition, he might possibly earn a genteel competence.

There was a farewell dinner at the Winter Palace, and the Prince of Wales had various visits to receive on the eve of his departure. So it was late before the Imperial party made their appearance at the Grand Duke Constantine's. There was no dancing, and, in consequence, no supper; and when I left, soon after midnight, the guests were dispersing rapidly. How the Russian ladies, wrapped up as they are, survive the coming out at night from those heated reception rooms into the numbing cold, I cannot understand. The last night of the Prince's stay was the coldest we have had. Even the Russians admitted it was cold, for the first time. The thermometer, I was assured, was twenty odd degrees Fahrenheit below freezing-point. To judge from my own sensations, it might be two hundred and twenty.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### HOMEWARD BOUND.

EYDTKUHNEN (PRUSSIAN FRONTIER), *November* 30.

WITHIN a stone's throw of the room in which I am writing there runs a narrow stream coated over with thick ice. Sentries are stationed along its eastern banks to hinder fugitives from jumping over it, and thus getting beyond the clutches of the Black Eagle. The frost is still intense. There are sledges about everywhere. The whole country wears the deep shroud of white glittering snow, which it has worn on the whole dreary way from St. Petersburg to this frontier station. But we have got already into a different moral atmosphere. I am no very ardent admirer of Prussia or Prussians, but still I own I am glad to find myself once more on Prussian soil. The German I hear spoken about me is harsh and hard after the soft sound of the Russian tongue; but I can understand what is spoken to me, and the people I speak to answer me, not with the obsequious politeness of the

lower Russians, but with a frankness which, somewhat curt as it may be, is that of free citizens of a free country. I feel that I have got back into Western civilization, and personally I prefer civilized to semi-civilized communities. There are no palaces in view, but for the first time since I left Germany I see a village with clean, well-built, weather-tight brick dwellings. After all you can say against the Prussian Government—and you may say a great deal if so inclined—you must admit that none of the people I see about me are liable to be sent off to Siberia, or beaten at the option of officials, or arrested without trial at the sole will and pleasure of the King. If by any chance I get into trouble now, I shall, I know, be treated with scant courtesy, and shall only make my plight much worse if I use the expedient I should adopt at once across the frontier, of slipping a few thalers into the hands of the officials to whose mercies I am committed. Still, in a rough, clumsy way, I shall have justice done me, and may be assured that the law, such as it is, will be administered fairly; and, upon the whole, I like the consciousness of being under the protection of the law. It may be a foolish prejudice, but I plead guilty to it.

I have received so much courtesy in Russia that it seems ungrateful to take the first moment I have got

out of the dominions of the Czar to say things that are not altogether pleasant, but then you must fairly make allowance for the satisfaction of knowing that for the first time for some four weeks I can speak and write what I like. Whether my letters were opened or not I cannot tell. If they were, I suspect that, for reasons which compositors will appreciate, nobody was very much the wiser. But I was warned by every resident I met to be careful in what I wrote, because my epistles were liable to be perused. Nothing that I could have written with the slightest regard for truth would have been likely to entail personal annoyance upon myself; but if I had reported everything I heard or saw as to the way in which matters are administered in Russia, I might have been the unwilling cause of bringing other people into trouble. Whatever may be the advantages of a benevolent despotism, the power of speaking your mind freely upon paper is one an Englishman is exceedingly reluctant to forego. At any rate, grateful or ungrateful, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying now that I would not for a good deal live in Russia. I own I should feel entirely out of my element there. I have not the slightest wish to dwell in palaces, and I have the strongest objection to residing in hovels. I have no desire for the friendship of princes, and I have still less wish for the intimacy

of peasants. In fact, I feel equally unfitted by taste and inclination for either of the two fields into which the Russian world is divided. The metaphor may be homely, but as a staple drink I prefer pale ale to champagne on the one hand, and to potato brandy on the other. I have seen the little that I have seen of Russian society during my short sojourn under very exceptional, and probably very favourable circumstances. Nothing could be more brilliant than the exterior; and yet I saw enough to convince me that the interior was by no means of corresponding splendour. The Russians I was thrown into contact with were polished, well educated, high bred, to an almost exaggerated degree. But I could never shake off the impression that they had got on their company manners for the occasion. Moreover, in my case, this impression was heightened by the fact that I had once seen the Russians under a different aspect. Three years ago I was in Poland during the insurrection. I am myself by no means a Philo-Pole. From what I have seen of both nations, I should say Poles and Russians were very much alike, especially the Poles. Of the two races, I prefer the Muscovite, which, I believe, will ultimately absorb the other. But nobody who ever saw Warsaw as I did, during Mouravieff's reign of terror, could avoid the feeling that the Rus-

sians of real life are extremely different to what they appear in the artificial world of Court gaieties. You hear very little about Poland now, but to the present day the provinces of the ancient kingdom are ruled by martial law. It is a punishable offence to speak Polish in the streets of Wilna; the road to Siberia is still traversed constantly by gangs of Polish exiles. Curiously enough, my last glimpse of St. Petersburg brought back to me the recollection of my Polish experiences. As I was driving over the hard snow to the station, looking at the long, low rows of whitewashed houses which straggle out towards the suburbs, I saw a little crowd of people moving along the road. The procession was a short one. In front was a Russian soldier; behind, there followed two more soldiers, with fixed bayonets, and between these shambled along a lad of some twenty years old, with the pale face, dark hair, and straight features which distinguish the Pole from the Russian. He was heavily chained, and the bright links of his chain clanked against his legs as he stumbled on, with an ugly grating sound. The soldiers were marching rapidly, and the poor lad had hard work to get along, and looked footsore and half-starved. Except that he was a Pole, probably starting on his long journey to Siberia, I could learn nothing of him. His plight was

common enough; for the sight of a man in irons, being driven like a sheep through the streets, is not so unusual in St. Petersburg as to attract much notice. As I drove by, the *cortége* passed one of the open-air bread-stalls which are so common in the lower parts of the town. As the lad went by he glanced wistfully at the loaves displayed upon the bench. The salesman —who looked like a common Moujik, as I suppose he was—caught the glance, seized a loaf, and shoved it into the prisoner's hand. With a clutch like that of a wild beast it was snatched up by the boy, and stowed out of sight within the folds of his cloak. Whether the soldiers did not see the act, or declined to notice it, I cannot tell. My carriage drove on, and I lost sight of the crowd which had for a moment stopped my progress.

I was glad that this, the last I saw of the Russian peasant folk, should have been an act of kindness. Everybody I spoke to, who had any opportunity of knowing, gave me the same account of the Russian people. They are ignorant, superstitious, besotted if you like, but they are not unkindly in their nature, and they repay kindness, if not with very zealous service, yet with a sort of childlike affection. No stranger can fail to be struck with their politeness towards each other. They are not quarrelsome or

rude even in their cups. Courtesy seems instinctive with the Russians; in the poorest shops it is the custom to remove your cap on entering. The droshki drivers are civil to their customers, and treat their horses kindly; indeed, you hardly ever see a whip used in the streets of St. Petersburg. An English gentleman who resides in the interior told me that in the commonest Moujik's tent, where black bread and water are the staple of the meals provided, the peasants are as polite in helping each other first as if they were seated at a duke's table. The character I heard given everywhere of the peasants seems to me the most hopeful symptom for the future of this great empire. Its true civilization, like that of every other country, must commence, I think, from below, not from above. The mere fact that a certain number of wealthy nobles have picked up European manners, can speak Western languages with facility, and live surrounded by every luxury of France or England, does not suffice to make Russia a civilized country. It is to the credit of the present Czar that he has perceived this truth, and has devoted all his efforts to raise the Russian people, instead of exerting himself, like former Emperors, to make St. Petersburg a more or less successful imitation of Paris and Vienna. I fancy, too—though this is a point on which I can only speak

with hesitation—that the education of the Russian nobles has taught them to recognise the wisdom of this policy. Though the Russian proprietors I have spoken to complain much of the hardness of the terms on which the serfs were emancipated, I have not met one who did not declare that the emancipation was a good thing for the country. The change from compulsory to free labour has been accomplished without difficulty. Happily, here there is no difference of race, or colour, or nationality, to create any fundamental obstacle between the employers and the employed. The nobles and their ex-serfs have the same faith, language, and national character, and are probably as like each other as great proprietors and labourers are in any portion of Europe. If ever the scheme of the Czar should be accomplished, and the Russian peasantry should be raised to the level of similar classes in Western lands, what a power Russia will be!

Happily for the peace of mind of Russo-phobists, many generations must elapse, many great changes must come to pass, before this end can be accomplished. Meanwhile it is difficult to see how an administration so fundamentally corrupt as that of Russia can successfully build up a new framework of society. I think, if the subscribers to the new loan

had heard half the stories a mere traveller hears on every side as to the absolute impecuniosity of the Imperial Government, they would have stood out for higher terms. The resources of the country are, no doubt, immense; but they are made unavailable by the absence of the means of transport and communication from one part of the country to another. Corn, wool, wood, hay, and hides may be had in the interior at rates which would realize enormous profits at St. Petersburg or Moscow, simply because there is no possibility of transporting the goods purchased. Railroads would quadruple the wealth of the country, but the materials for constructing them cannot be purchased without money, and so the works are at a standstill for want of the necessary funds. Nowhere, I suppose, can money be made more easily than in Russia; but as everybody conspires to cheat the Government, the Imperial Exchequer is penniless. At the railway stations the porters, of course with the connivance of the officials, offer to understate the weight of your luggage, in order to release you from the payment of the duty. You save a couple of roubles or so, give the porters a handful of kopecks, which they divide among themselves, and the treasury of the railway bears the loss. This practice is characteristic of the whole system of administration. The stamp

duties, for instance, are extravagant; every contract has to bear a stamp proportionate to its value, and in order to secure payment the contract must be signed in presence of a licensed broker, who has a right to claim a large percentage on the amount. But if you are a trader in Russia, and have to procure the ratification of a document involving rightly some thousands of roubles' worth of stamps, you go to a broker and bargain with him how many hundred roubles he shall have for his own share if he puts a one rouble stamp upon the contract. You make it worth his while to do so, and save the difference between his price and the amount you ought to have paid to the exchequer. Of course the Government are aware of this well-nigh universal system of corruption. There needs no knowledge of the country to be assured that officials cannot live in Russia upon the salaries allowed to them; but, in order to place them in a position where they could be honest, their salaries must be raised, and to do so requires ready money, exactly the article of which the Government is most wofully in want.

But the train which is bringing the Prince of Wales from St. Petersburg is signalled at the frontier, and so for the present I must bid farewell to Russia, not altogether with regret.

BERLIN, *December* 1.

On Thursday, at two o'clock, the Prince of Wales quitted St. Petersburg. He was escorted to the station by several members of the Imperial family, and was loudly cheered on his departure by the crowd which had collected to see him off. Whether this Royal visit is likely to have any permanent effect on the relations between Russia and England is a question on which it is not my province to dwell, but I can honestly express my belief that it will leave a friendly feeling in the hearts both of the Royal guests and of their Imperial hosts. Everybody at the Russian Court is loud in his praises of the illustrious traveller. Courtiers alone can appreciate the luxury of having a Prince to amuse who, unlike the French monarch, is willing to be amused. The zest with which his Royal Highness entered into the entertainments provided for him, the readiness with which he made acquaintance with his entertainers, and the good humour with which he made himself at home everywhere won the hearts of the Russians. On the other hand, even the heir to the throne of England could not but feel flattered by the extraordinary care and trouble which were taken to render his visit as pleasant as possible; and I understand that his Royal Highness lost no oppor-

tunity of expressing his appreciation not only of the princely hospitality which he received, but of the warmth of the welcome which gave it an additional value. The members of the Prince's suite cordially acknowledged the anxiety displayed by every personage at the Court, from the Czar downwards, to make their recollections of St. Petersburg lasting and pleasant. As the only member of the English press who was present from the beginning to the end of the Prince's visit, I should be ungrateful if I omitted this opportunity of expressing my thanks for the uniform courtesy with which I was treated by every official at the Palace, and for the trouble which was repeatedly taken to enable me to see everything that was to be seen in the pleasantest manner possible.

## CHAPTER XX.

### FAREWELL REFLECTIONS.

PARIS, *December* 7.

THIS morning, at five o'clock, the Prince of Wales left Paris by special train. His visit here was entirely private, and of it, as of his short sojourn at Berlin and Darmstadt, there is nothing beyond the fact of its occurrence which even a Court chronicler would deem worth recording. So the Royal visit to Russia is now a thing of the past, and it only remains to say a word or two with respect to its possible political significance. I think I deserve credit for my self-denial in not having troubled you before with profound disclosures as to the secret designs, schemes, and intentions of the Russian Government. It is true I know nothing whatever about them; but, for all that, I might have explained their character and purport; I might have furnished you with intricate and erudite information as to the political factions in Moldavo-Wallachia. I confess that I thus lost an opportunity which it is now

too late to recover. Somehow, in my own pretty large experience as a newspaper correspondent, I do not find that, immediately on my arrival in a strange country, I am furnished with exclusive information as to the private ends of the powers that be, or the hidden intrigues of parties aspiring for office. Other people may be more favoured. I have heard of a shrewd old manufacturer, who, whenever a new bagman wrote from a strange town, to state that immediately on his arrival he had instituted inquiries of a searching character into the solvency of local traders, used to remark, "It's the old game again; he has been talking to the Boots:" and in much the same way, when I read in the letters of a newly-arrived correspondent that, "from reliable private sources of information, he is enabled to state," I have a conviction he has been talking to a *valet de place*. Perhaps it is unwise of me to throw the slightest doubt on the infallibility of newspaper correspondence; but I fancy, in the long run, the newspaper-reading public is a good deal shrewder than many of the purveyors for its sustenance appear to imagine.

So the few speculations which I have to offer you are of a very commonplace and ordinary character. Though I have been in Russia, I have not the remotest

conception what is the present state of the relations between the Courts of St. Petersburg and Teheran; and though I have been entertained at the Winter Palace, I was not allowed to peruse the famous will of Peter the Great. All I can offer you are certain very obvious reflections which were forced upon me by what I observed during my stay in Russia. In the first place, then, I do think, without being a disciple of Mr. David Urquhart, that the reception given to the Prince of Wales had something of a political signification. I have no doubt that the omniscient prophets of the Russo-phobist school know exactly the terms of the private and unholy compact entered into between his Royal Highness and the Czar; I am sure they can tell the precise number of roubles which were stuffed into the pockets of the different members of the suite as the price of their guilty connivance. For my own part, however, in my real or pretended ignorance, I believe that the Prince of Wales went to Russia simply because he was asked to be present at his sister-in-law's wedding; and, if I am to confess further, I must state my conviction that the first and primary object of the cordial and brilliant welcome given to his Royal Highness was a perfectly natural and straightforward one. The Russians are accustomed to a sort of princely hospitality, only possible in countries where society

is practically divided into "grand seigneurs" and peasants. Moreover, they are fond of display, and are nervously anxious about the impression which strangers receive from their country. They know that the Western world considers them half savages, and they are naturally desirous, when they do get hold of an illustrious foreigner, to show him that life in St. Petersburg is as luxurious as in Paris or London. I believe, if the Russian Court possessed the gift of divination, and had known beforehand that the civilities shown to the heir to the English throne would not be productive of the slightest political result of any kind, the reception given would still have been as courteous and gorgeous as ever. Yet at the same time, I imagine, the Russians *do* hope that the visit will not be entirely unproductive of ulterior results. Their statesmen are far too well acquainted with the practical working of our English institutions to believe that the foreign policy of our country would be regulated by the private predilections or antipathies of our Royal family; they know that our Government is ultimately decided by the verdict of popular opinion; but they imagine, rightly or wrongly, that public opinion in England is likely to be influenced in some measure by the hospitality shown to our English Prince, and the display of wealth and power with which it was accom-

panied. It was impossible for a person placed in my position not to note the almost exaggerated eagerness of the Court officials that the impression left upon the minds of all who could in any way exercise an influence on the English public should be a favourable and pleasant one. The *mot d'ordre* had obviously been passed through St. Petersburg society to show every attention to the English visitors; and though I honestly believe the courtesy was in the main dictated by genuine goodwill, yet a desire that Russia and Russians might be more favourably spoken of hereafter in England was not, I think, altogether foreign to the politeness manifested.

So far as I could gather, the Crimean war has left behind it very little rancour against England in Russia; that is, in the higher classes of society. What may be the feelings of the empire on this point I had no means of ascertaining. But I feel pretty sure, however this may be, that the result of the war, unsatisfactory as we may deem it ourselves, was to leave upon Russia a very deep impression of the power of England. From whatever cause the wish proceeds, I cannot doubt that the Russians for the present are extremely desirous to remain on good terms with England, or, at any rate, to secure her neutrality in the event of war.

If anybody is sanguine enough to suppose that the capture of Sebastopol has materially changed the policy of Russia, he has only to live for a very short time among Russians to lose the delusion. Whether the Russian Government is preparing for war, is intriguing in the Principalities, or forming alliances with Prussia, I know as little as any of my readers; but of this I am sure, that the Russians look forward to the ultimate possession of the Bosphorus as a matter of certainty. That it is the "manifest destiny" of Russia to supplant Turkey in Europe is assumed with the same sort of certainty as Frenchmen hold that Belgium will one day make part of France, or as Americans believe that the Stars and Stripes will eventually float over Mexico and Cuba. And I think, though this is a surmise rather than a conviction on my part, that Russian statesmen fancy the day of the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire is very near at hand. I don't know that they wish to hasten the sick man's death; on the contrary, I think they would prefer his life to be prolonged for a few years more, till Russia has repaired her finances and developed her internal resources; but they are aware that any day may force upon them the necessity for immediate action, and against that contingency they wish to be prepared.

Hitherto Austria has stood as a sort of bulwark

between Turkey and Russia. Whether justly or not, all Russian public men appear to hold the belief that Königgrätz dealt Austria her deathblow, and that the South German monarchy must soon fall to pieces. At any rate, the issue of the late campaign has certainly been to expedite the probable solution of the Eastern question. Whenever that long-deferred period arrives, the position of Russia will be almost unassailable, if she can provide against a repetition of the Anglo-French alliance. Prussia is not likely to go to war for a cause in which she has little personal interest; France would not hazard war alone, even if she might not be induced to share in the division of the Turkish monarchy; and England is the only Power whose active opposition might seriously embarrass Russia in her advance southwards. I am not in the least discussing now what England would do in the event of an attack on Turkey; still less, what policy she ought to adopt. I am only pointing out how very natural it is that Russia should be anxious to do anything which may increase the chances of England's remaining inactive under certain contingencies, of which the occurrence is regarded as a matter of absolute certainty at a date more or less distant. Now anything which tends to promote a kindly feeling between England and Russia

serves, so far as it goes, to diminish the probability of England's entering on a second crusade for Turkey; and therefore, to this extent, I believe there was some sort of political motive for the brilliant festivities which it has been my duty to describe.

Moreover, this view of Russian policy explains to a considerable extent that *entente cordiale* between Russia and America, which has given rise to so much profound speculation. To anybody who knows both countries, the idea of there being any natural intimacy or friendship between them is utterly absurd. To the ordinary uneducated Russian, America is a name which conveys no intelligible meaning. Emigration is almost unknown amongst the Muscovite peasantry; and the educated Russians, so far as they have any political opinions at all, hold theories of government entirely different from, if not adverse to, those which prevail across the Atlantic. A society in which rank rules supreme, and which is passionately fond of display, is not likely to be enamoured of "republican simplicity." The fact of its being considered a grievance at St. Petersburg that England is not represented there by a nobleman of high rank, shows how very little natural sympathy there is likely to be between the ruling class in Russia and the Congress at Washington. The principles on which Russian

society is based are the very reverse of those which constitute the foundation of the American social system; and if you talk either to Russians or to Americans who have resided in Russia, they will laugh at the notion of there being any international friendship between their respective countries. Yet it is an indisputable fact that the Russians are most desirous to conciliate the goodwill of the American people, and to create the impression that the two nations are allied together by the ties of friendship and mutual interest. The explanation of this policy on the part of Russia is, I think, obvious enough. A war with Russia would be a far more serious affair for England if it involved a contest with America, or if Russia could rely upon the same sort of indirect support from America which the late Confederacy received from certain parties in England. To say the least, it would be an important element in the consideration, whether we should go to war with Russia, if we knew that Alabamas and Rappahannocks would forthwith be launched from New York to prey upon British commerce under the Russian flag. Thus, unless I am mistaken, the real reason why Russia attaches such importance to her friendship with America is because this connexion would undoubtedly strengthen her in the event of a war with any maritime power.

Such, then, I take to be the general upshot of Russian policy at the present day,—namely, to render England adverse to the idea of a second Crimean war, either by encouraging friendly relations between Russia and Great Britain, or by holding out before our eyes the possibility of an Americo-Russian coalition. But, at the same time, I believe this policy to be the effect rather of permanent influences than of any actual deliberate expectation of an approaching contest. As I have before stated, I do not profess to be in the secrets of Muscovite diplomacy. The Czar, for anything I know to the contrary, may be preparing to send Prince Menschikoff once more to Constantinople; his armies may be about to recross the Pruth to-morrow. Of all this I know as little as I or anybody else knows about the Ruthenians or the Latinizing movement within the Greek communion. All I know is the little I have gathered from conversing with Russians,—namely, that they consider their progress southwards to have been only checked, not stopped, by the Crimean campaign; that they look forward to a day not far distant when the work accomplished by the Anglo-French alliance shall be undone. The Czar himself, everybody agrees, is personally averse to the idea of war; but I doubt whether the personal predilections of one Czar or

another have much to do with deciding the destiny of Russia. Even a very short residence in the country suffices to show you that, whether for good or bad, the Russians are a great people, with a great future before them yet. Now that, as a matter of policy as well as feeling, they wish to stand well with England more than with any other Power, I cannot doubt; but beyond this single fact, I saw nothing to make me imagine that any deep Machiavellian policy lay hid beneath the courtesy shown to the English Prince during the visit which is now ended.

THE END.


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