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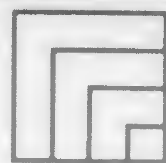

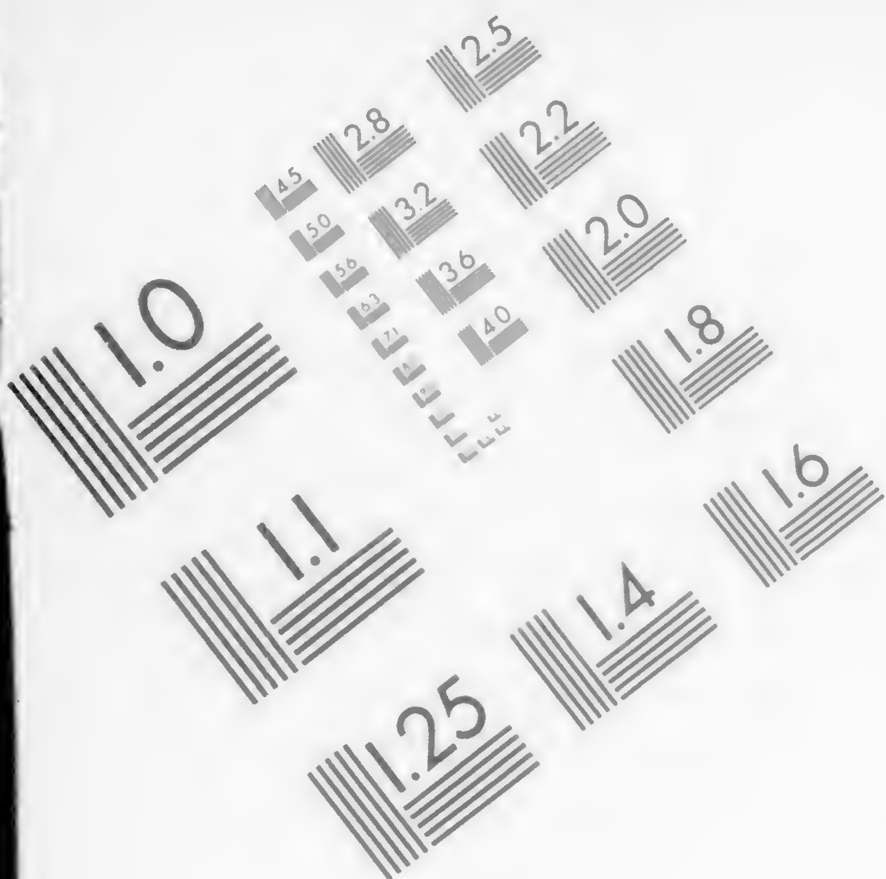

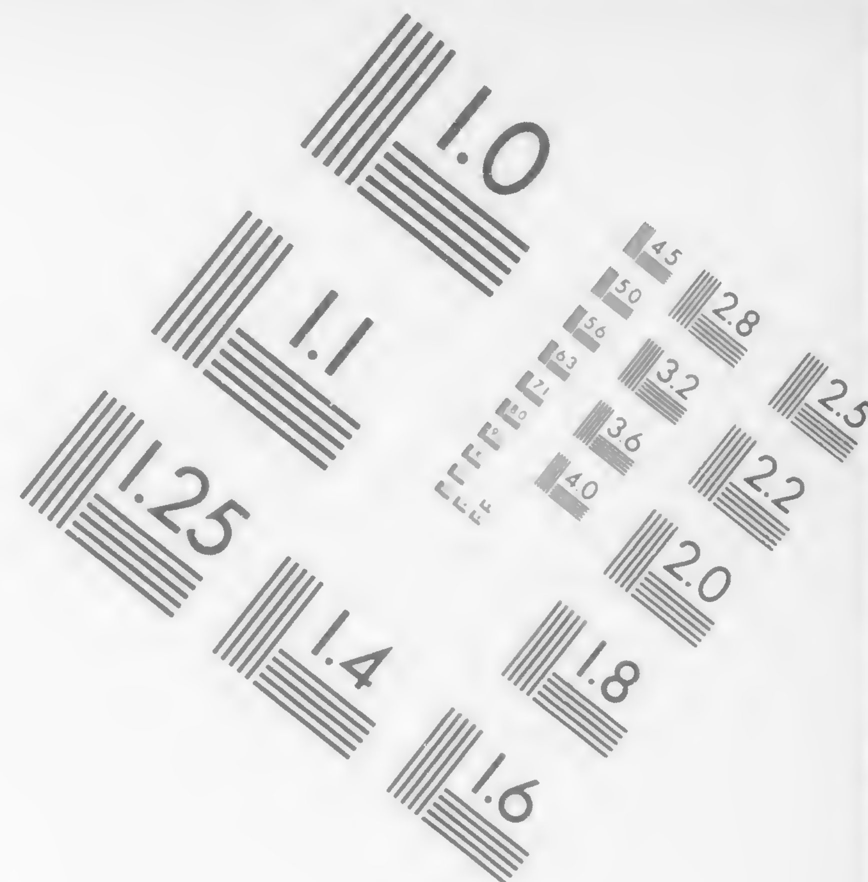

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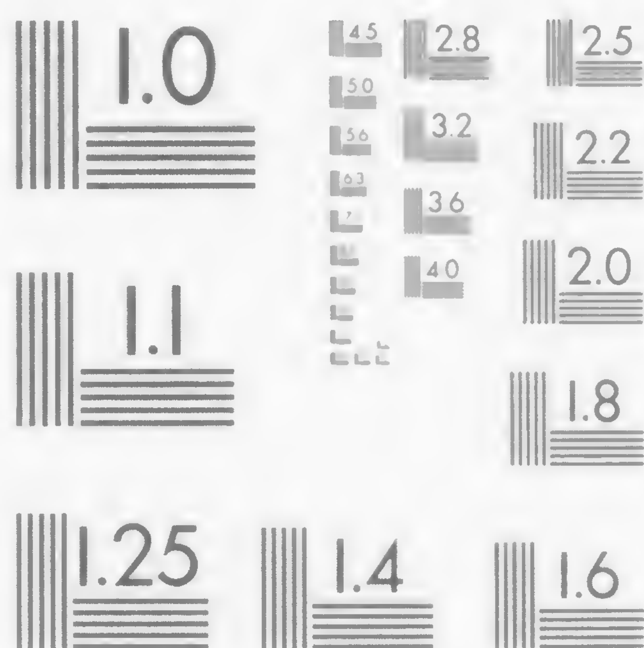

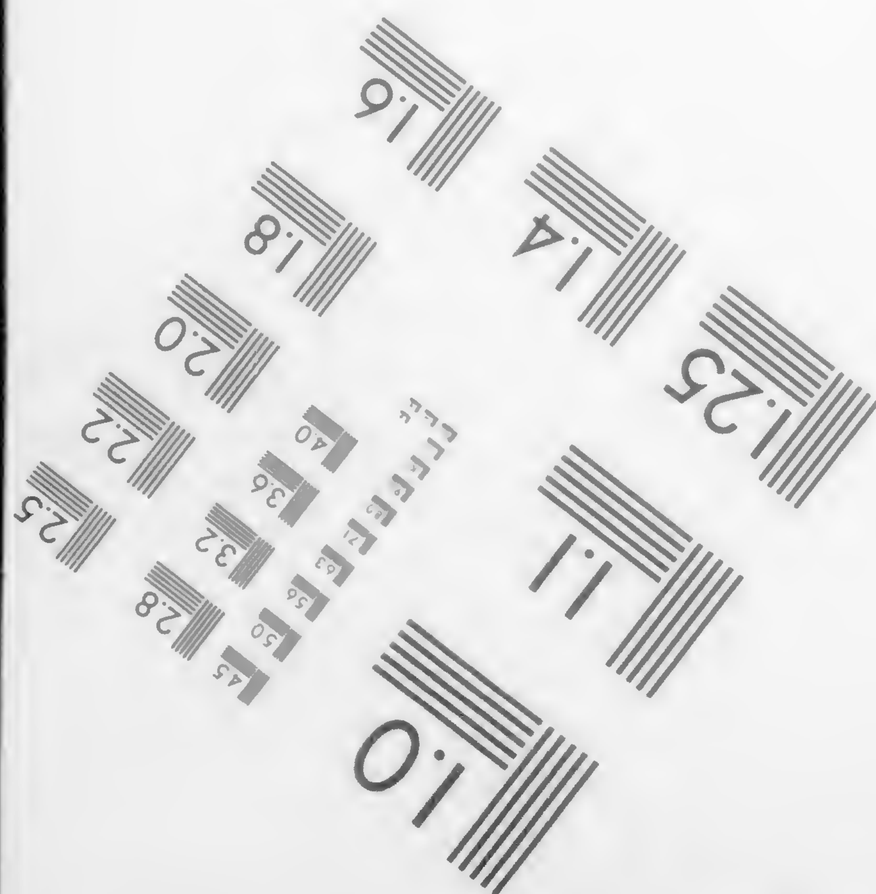

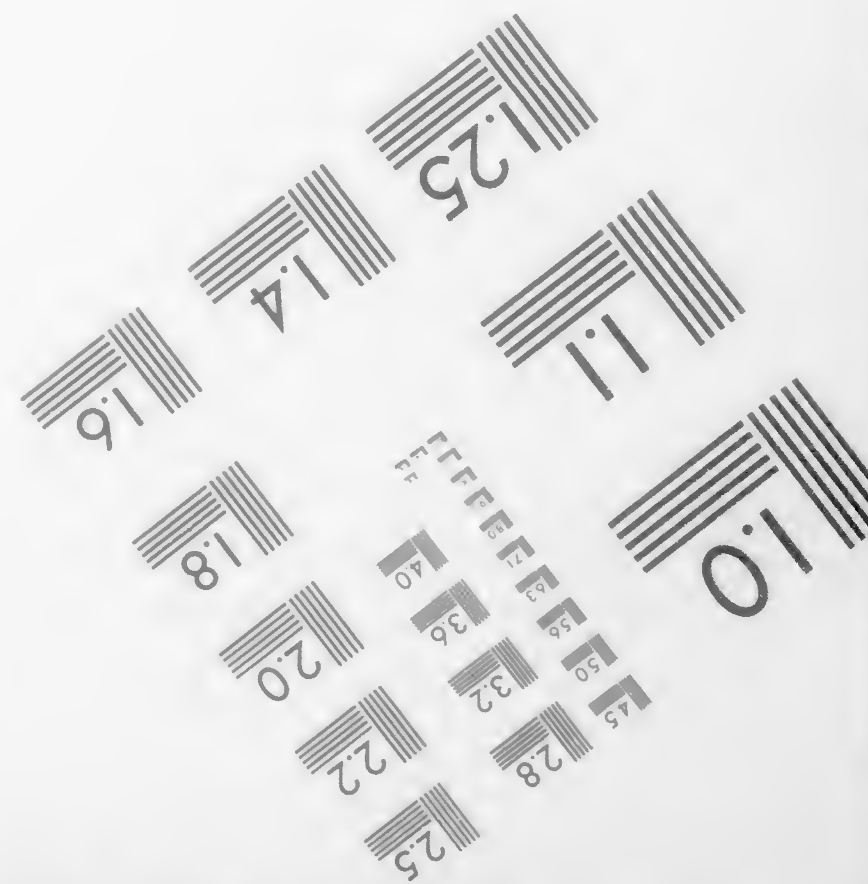

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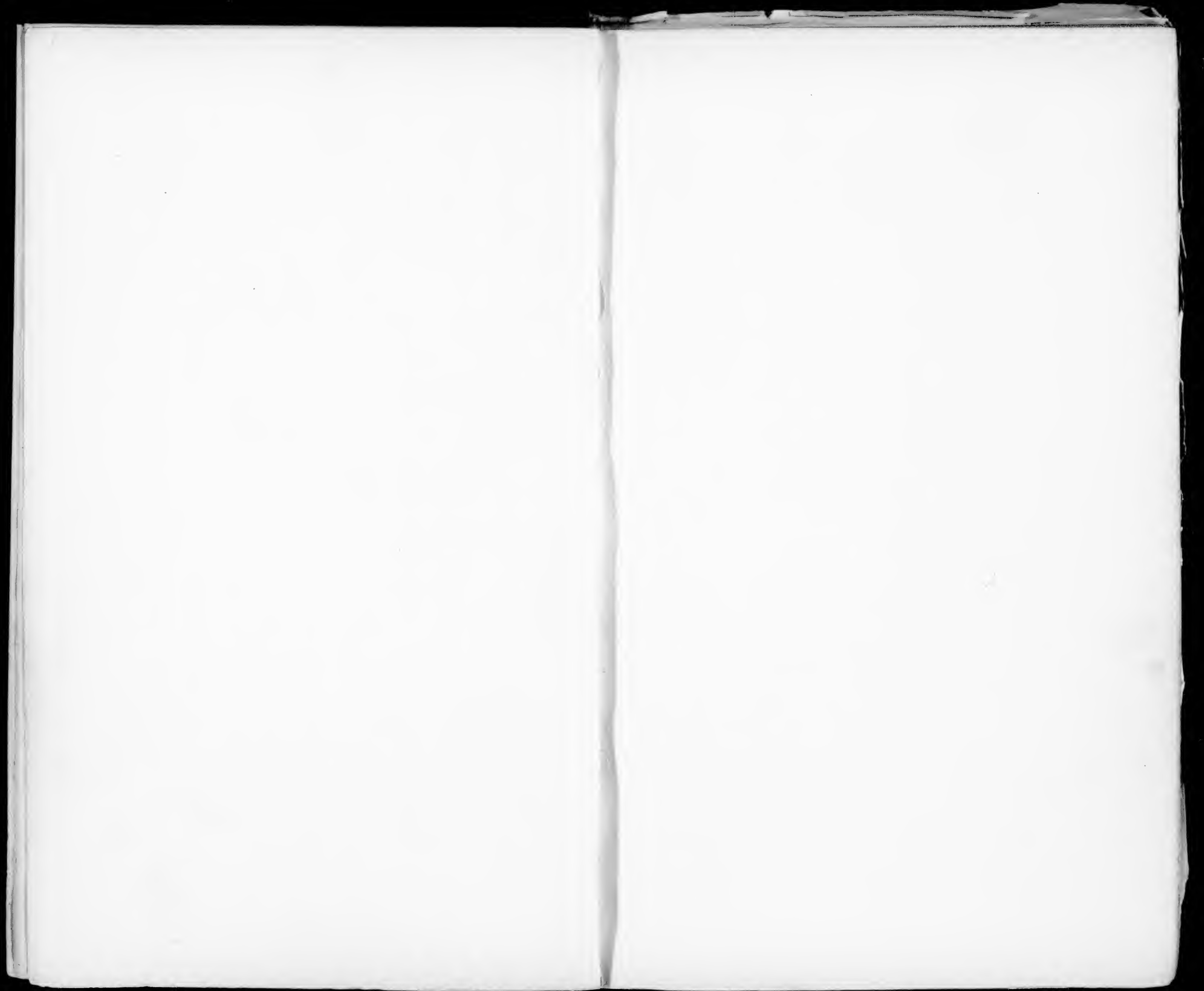

THE KREMLIN.

AROUND

THE KREMLIN;

OR,

PICTURES OF LIFE IN MOSCOW.

RUSSIAN HOUSE PORTER.

BY

G. T. LOWTH, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE WANDERER IN ARABIA," ETC.

LONDON:

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Charms of Moscow—Growth and Progress of the City—Hostile Invasions—Successful Defence of Moscow—St. Petersburg a Town of Yesterday—The Invasion of 1812—Impressions on entering the old Muscovite Capital—Its Position—The Moskwa—The Sparrow Hills—Parties of Pleasure—View of the City—The Battle of Borodino—Who were the Victors?—A Proud Moment for Napoleon—Wilna—Energy of the Russian Defence—Napoleon in the Palace of Peterhoff—Remarkable Contrast—Humiliation of the Invaders—Retreat of the French—Dispersion and Destruction of the Grand Army—Moscow Avenged 1

CHAPTER II.

Extent of Moscow—The Kremlin—The Kitai Gorod, or Chinese Town—Streets and Boulevards—Moscow contrasted with other Great Cities—A City of Cottages—House of a Russian Nobleman—The Peasant's Cottage—General Appearance of the City—Walk from the Palanka Square—Broad and Noisy Thoroughfare—Country Life in the City—Quiet Streets—Pleasant Houses and their Tenants—A Professional Musician—Russian Churches—Novel and Picturesque Appearance of the Streets—Scenes of Russian Life—Beautiful Little Church—Aristocratic Street—Change in Russian Society—New Quarter of the Noblesse 11

CHAPTER III.

The Kremlin—The External Wall and Towers—The Moskwa—Fine Esplanade, and View from it—An Historical Question—The Nicholsky Gate—Inscription by the Emperor Alexander—Russian Superstition—The Arsenal—New Law Courts and Government Offices—Trophies of the Campaign of 1812—Unnecessary Precaution—The "Tzar"—The Imperial Palace—The Sacred Gateway—The Towers and Bells of Ivan Veliki—The "Czar Kolokol"—Panoramic View of the City—Great Number of Churches and Cupolas—Old Residence of the Romanoffs—Ancient Palace of the Ruriks—National Pride of the Russians 24

CHAPTER IV.

The Present Emperor—The Emperor Nicholas—Entrance into Moscow by the St. Petersburg Road—The Emperor's Route—Chapel of the Virgin—Famous Picture of the Iberian Mother—Bonds of Sympathy between the Emperor and the People of Moscow—His Orthodox Piety—His Appreciation of Kalatsch—The Palace of the Empress—Devotion to the "Iberian Mother"—Daily Scenes at her Shrine—Sum annually collected by Voluntary Offerings—Visits of the Holy Mother—The Benefit of a Common Religious Sentiment—An Act of Sacrilege—The Criminal and her Punishment 36

CHAPTER V.

A Walk in Moscow and its Environs—Church of St. Sauveur—Curious Little Chapel—Cavalry Barracks—Inconvenient Position of the Horses in the Stables—Something like a Personal Affront—Cultivation of a small Gourd used by the Russians—Women at Work—A Russian Gardener and his Subordinates—The Devitchei Convent—The External Wall and Towers—The Church, Bell Tower, &c.—Burial Places—The Congregation and Service—The "Quêteuse"—Dispersion of the Congregation—"Une Affaire Ténébreuse"—The Papa 53

CHAPTER VI.

The Cow of Northern Russia—Cattle let out to Pasture—A Cow on its way Home—Climate and Productions of Little or Southern Russia—The Extent of Moscow—The Thief Market—The Police of Moscow—Robberies and Burglaries—Purchasers of Stolen Goods—Scenes of Real Life in Russia—Men of the Market—Speculating in Old Clothes—Ingenious Thieves and Ingenuous Victims—Sale of Stolen Goods—Not for the Market—Russian Character—A Hard-won Victory 69

CHAPTER VII.

Beds in Hotels—Rapid Improvement—Russian Noblemen on their Travels in Former Days—Change produced by Railways—M. Dusaux's Hotel and Cuisine—Interior of a Russian Hotel—View from my Window on the Boulevard—Carriages—The Public Rooms—Russian Waiters—Devotional Character of the People—Scene at Wilna—National Costume—Property held by Serfs—A Cossack Chief—Peasants on their way to Market—Riding and Driving—A Carriage of Primitive Construction—Adventure with a "Spider" 86

CHAPTER VIII.

The Foundling Hospital—Extent and Purpose of the Establishment—Crown Governesses—Russian Capacity for Governing—A Sunday Visit to the Hospital—The Buildings and Grounds—Internal Arrangements—Courtesy of an Official—The Chapel—The Pupils in Uniform—The Service—The Priest—The Responses—The Nurseries—Costume of the Nurses—The Superintendents—Messengers, Servants, and Attendants—The Nurses at Dinner—Number of Orphans received daily—Another Visit to the Chapel—The Choir—The Papa—Theatrical Manner of the Russo-Greek Priests—The Gallery of Paintings—The Play Room 105

CHAPTER IX.

Count L——His Proficiency in the English Language—Invited to visit his Estate—Journey in a Tarantass—Social Courtesy—Agriculture in Russia—Russian Villages—The Cottages of the Peasantry—Family Party—The Law of Inheritance—Large Families—The Subdivision of Property—Reduced Nobles—The Abolition of Serfdom—Russian Soldiers—Nobles and Serfs—Abuse of Power—Arrangement of the House—Grooms and Horses *v.* Wife and Children—South Downs—Horses and Cattle—Rotation of Crops—Extensive Gardens—Reminiscences of the Count—The Family Roof-tree—Impromptu Dinner in the Wood 129

CHAPTER X.

Return to Moscow—The Count's Tarantass and Three Mares—The Coachman—Effect of Freedom on the Russian Peasantry—Unsettled State of the Country—A Nobleman's Mansion—Appearance of the Country—High-roads—Free and Easy Bathing—A Russian Inn—Passion for Tea—Domestic Arrangements—The Great House Stove—"Gone to Bed"—Vodka—Curious Illustration of Russian Police Law—Law of Trover—Piety and Pilfering—The Difficulties of Driving—Safe on the *Pavé* 156

CHAPTER XI.

The Twerskaia—The Palace of Count Rostopchin—The Great Radiating Streets of Moscow—The St. Petersburg Gateway—The Promenade—The Carriage Drivers—The "West End" of Moscow—A Companion at my *al fresco* Luncheon—Russian Children of the Upper Classes—Life of Young Gentlemen—The Petrofski Palace—The Main Edifice and Detached Buildings—The Baffled Conqueror—An Officer and his Wife—Military Exercises—Russian Soldiers and Officers—The Moscow World in the Petrofski Park—Tea under the Elms 173

CHAPTER XII.

The Paving of Moscow—Trial of Wood and of Stone Flags—Ornamental Villas—Houses erected by Government—Road-making in Russia—The Agricultural College—The Officer appointed to conduct me over the Establishment—The Cow Stables—Dutch and Swiss Cattle—Steam Engines and Machinery—Farm Horses—The Farm—Museum, Library, and Lecture Rooms—How the Property was acquired by Government—An Apothecary who made a good job of it—Russian Employés—Church of the College—A Russian Refreshment—Restaurant on the Kitai Boulevard—Change in the Education of Young Nobles 193

CHAPTER XIII.

The Convent Simonoff—Extent and Wealth of the Establishment in Former Times—Day of St. Sergius, and Fair at the Convent—Superb Bell-tower—Varieties of Costume—Young Gamblers—Interior of the Simonoff—The Superior—His Reception by the Crowd—"Devoured with Kisses"—The Church—Earnest Devotion of a Youth—View from the Bell-tower—Disappearance of my "Murray"—Distribution of Beer—The Fête proper—Tea-drinking Booths—Sale of Melons and Honey—Beggars—Organ-Grinders—Female Shop-keepers of Moscow—Chorus-singing . . 210

CHAPTER XIV.

The Kitai Gorod—The Bazaars—Their Great Extent—The Shop-keepers—Playing at Draughts—Commerce in "the Rows"—Jewish Money-dealers—The Balance of Trade—Drain and Hoarding of the Precious Metals—Exhaustion produced by the Crimean War—Comparative Value of Silver and Paper Roubles—Prevalence of Forgery—Curiosities of Russian Finance—Objections to War on the Part of Russia—Madness of the War Party and Fanaticism of the Religious Party—Questionable Practices 231

CHAPTER XV.

Visit to Nijni Novgorod—Travelling in Russia in Old Times—Carriages

on Russian Railways—Persistent Smokers—The Passion for Tea—Convenient Arrangement—My First Impression of Nijni—Peculiarities of the Fair—Affluence of Foreign Merchants—The Chinese Row—Life of the Merchants during the Fair—Roads in Russia—Cossacks—Magnificent View from the Plateau—Vessels in the River—Former Importance of Nijni—Curious Story relating to the Sacred Bell of Nijni—*En Garçon* at the Fair—A Russian *recherché* Dinner—Visit to the Landlord's Fish-Wells—The Tea-Stores—Shops and Shopping—A Noble and his Wife—Decline of Nijni 245

CHAPTER XVI.

Profligacy of Russian Nobles—Extenuating Circumstances—Benevolence of the Higher Orders—The Galitzin and Foundling Hospitals—Visit to Hospital founded by the Sheremaytieff Family—The Building, Apartments, and Gardens—Noble Endowment—The Dining Hall—Inmates—The Sick, Maimed, and Blind—Friendless Old Men—The Women's Apartments—Anecdotes and Portraits—Apartments for the Sick—General Hospital—The Governor's Room—Distribution of Money to Pensioners—Conversation with the Governor—Sum annually expended by the Hospital—*Société Fraternelle*—Noble Side of the Russian Character 273

CHAPTER XVII.

Visit to the Convent of Troitsa—Its Foundation, Destruction, and Re-establishment—Historical Reminiscences connected with the Convent—Napoleon's Attempt to seize the Building and its Treasures—The Patriarch Philarete's First Railway Journey—The Town, the Valley, and the Convent—Agricultural Labour done by Women—The College and Churches of Vefania—Residence of the Metropolitan Platon—Old Church—Representation of the Mount of Olives—Valuable Paintings—The Tomb of Platon—The Church of Gethsemane—An Ecclesiastical Diversion or Feint—Appearance of the Metropolitan—A Singular Monastery—Fanaticism in the Russo-Greek Church—Recluses in Underground Cells—Religion and Usefulness . 293

CHAPTER XVIII.

A New Investment for the Money of Monks—The Walls of the Monastery—Spacious Promenade—Interesting Serving Monk—Interior of the Church—Gaudy Paintings—Restoration of Frescoes by an Enthusiastic Merchant—An Ill-advised Monk—Sale of Holy Water—The Day of St. Serge—The Baker's Shop—The Cathedral—Sale of Candles, Images, and Oil—Rich Display of Pictures, Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones—The Treasury—Dining Hall of the Monks—Primitive Hospitality—The Hospital—The Dying Monks—The Greek Monk—Differences in Monkish Life—The Bloodstained Tower—A Monk's Cell—Ecclesiastical Academy . . 313

CHAPTER XIX.

Administration of Justice—Bribery in some cases Discountenanced—The Bureaucracy—Causes of the Low Morale of Public Officials—Insufficient Salaries—No Public Opinion—Frequenters of the Hôtel Dusaux—A Sign of the Times—The Levelling Process—Language of the Upper Classes—Intolerance at the Opera—Native Literature—The Works of Lermontoff, Pouchkine, &c.—Growth of National Sentiment—Serfdom and Freedom—New State of Things—Rise of a National History, Drama, Fiction, and Music . . . 338

AROUND THE KREMLIN.

CHAPTER I.

Charms of Moscow—Growth and Progress of the City—Hostile Invasions—Successful Defence of Moscow—St. Petersburg a Town of Yesterday—The Invasion of 1812—Impressions on entering the old Muscovite Capital—Its Position—The Moskwa—The Sparrow Hills—Parties of Pleasure—View of the City—The Battle of Borodino—Who were the Victors?—A Proud Moment for Napoleon—Wilna—Energy of the Russian Defence—Napoleon in the Palace of Peterhoff—Remarkable Contrast—Humiliation of the Invaders—Retreat of the French—Dispersion and Destruction of the Grand Army—Moscow Avenged.

THERE is a charm peculiar to Moscow among the cities of the world. It is in itself the centre of the history of a people—a people one day fated to play a great part in the drama of the future. But at present the charm of Moscow is in its past story and in its present life. The interest of the past story of the city arises out of its peculiar position as the connecting link between the East and the West. In this its situation is something analogous to that of Constantinople, standing upon the confines of two divis-

ions of the earth, and thus it has had to bear the discords of different races and to be the scene of the conflicts of opposing peoples. Moscow grew up from a collection of small villages to a town in the midst of warring and half barbarous tribes; and thus, as it increased in concentration, and therefore in importance, it was sometimes attacked by Polish forces from the west, partly with the ambitious object of the sovereigns of Warsaw to extend their possessions eastward over the Muscovite plains, and partly out of fear of the threatening increase of strength of the populations accumulating on their exposed and eastern border. At other times the country round was invaded from the east, and Tartar hordes came up in overwhelming masses to the walls, and bursting over them devoted the unhappy place to sack and pillage. These latter were actuated by no motives such as those which led the Poles up to the gates of Moscow —motives of possession and increase of national strength. These were only lured from their tents and their wild plains on the Don by the hopes of plunder and the gratification of their instincts of destruction. But the hardy sons of Muscovy, though often beaten by the Poles, and frequently despoiled by the Tartar hordes, yet rose from their defeats in

renewed strength, as Antæus from his mother earth, until, becoming the nucleus of a nation, they were able to beat off their enemies both on the east and on the west, and, becoming the victors in the place of the vanquished, they threw back the armies of Poland on the one side and the horsemen of the Don on the other, and following the rule of the law of the strong and the weak they forced all their former enemies to submission. It is thus in and around Moscow that the story of Russia is to be read. St. Petersburg is but the modern town of yesterday. It is as yet but the port of Russia, an imperfect city, and bearing in all its accessories the marks of a new town. Even Peter could not make at once a capital city in all its completeness by even his iron and domineering will.

But Moscow, with all its ancient story, would have but a minor interest in our modern eyes and in our western Europe, and but a weak hold upon our regards, were it not for one great modern fact—the march of Napoleon in 1812, the burning of the city, and his retreat. This is the one event which gives Moscow its prominent place in our thoughts of to-day. You cannot separate yourself, as you look at and think of the city, from this grand and tragic circum-

stance. The grandeur of the enterprise, the amazing proportions of the undertaking, the consummate skill of the arrangement, the energy of the conduct of the plan, the sublimity of the defence, the tragic failure, and the heroism under ruin—all these are the features of the picture to which Moscow owes the renown and the glory stamped upon the modern mind.

You are at the entrance of Moscow, and accordingly, with your mind still full of the haunting story, the first thing you do is to unburthen your thoughts of that subject, to give them full swing, and to satisfy their demands by visiting at once the scenes of the drama, which are still to be distinctly recognised, before you give yourself up to the enjoyment of the place and its varied beauties. Moscow stands in the middle of a waving country, upon a succession of low hills, much the same in elevation as those on which London stands. The river Moskwa, about as broad as the Thames at Windsor, runs into it from the north-west, and forming a small loop flows out again in the direction of south-west. On this western side, at a distance of three miles from the barrier, rises a hill, or succession of hills, of no great height. These are the Sparrow Hills, and at their foot flows the Moskwa. There is a small village on the ridge, and

a few private houses of gentlemen stand on it on either side of the village and look down over the river towards the city. There are some small wooden buildings along the road-side in front of the village, and these are used by people from the city—parties of pleasure who come up to the Sparrow Hills to enjoy their tea or dine, and to look out from the verandahs over their sacred and glittering Moscow. The position, the broken and green and grassy slope with trees and shrubs at intervals, puts one in mind of Richmond Hill. The height from the water to the houses is about the same in both; but instead of running like the Thames in a straight line across the wide expanse of country below, the Moskwa comes up from the left hand with a circular sweep, passes along at the foot of the hill, and then descends again by a similar bend to the right, and continues in sight until it is concealed by the houses and bridges of the city at a distance of about three miles.

From this height the whole of Moscow lies spread out before you as a map. You can see every part of it to its extremities, can mark every rise and fall of the numerous hills, its endless pinnacles and cupolas glittering in the sun, its towers, its bright-coloured houses, and its universal gardens. With your back to

the west you look to the north, over the river to the race-course and to the plain where the white tents of the troops form a canvas town, and to the Peterhoff Palace,—over the Kremlin and its gilded towers right in front of you to the east, and over the fortress-like Convents of Simonoff and Novospaski, and the Sokolniki gardens and pine forests to the south. Behind you to the west is Borodino,—with your thoughts still full of the great tragedy of Moscow you cannot but think of Borodino. At about forty miles distance is that famous village near which Koutousoff, the Russian Commander, halted his army on a low and broken ridge of hills and fought the battle with Napoleon, in which 80,000 men are declared to have fallen on the two sides, and the result of which opened the way for the French Emperor to Moscow. It may be said here *en passant* that both sides claimed the victory. Napoleon, of course, did so, as he did on all occasions; and Segur relates in detail the circumstances of the battle from the French view of it. But Ker Porter and Koutousoff claim the complete victory for the Russians, stating that Napoleon retreated some miles from the ground after the battle of the 7th September and only advanced again after receiving his reinforcements, when Koutousoff, acting on a

preconcerted plan with Rostopchin, the Commandant of Moscow, again retreated, and thus left the city open.

However this may be, the French came on in a few days, and on the 15th September their leading files came up the slope from the west to the Sparrow Hills; and from this height they raised their shout of triumph and exultation, "Moscow! Moscow!" at the sight of that brilliant city, the end and apparent reward of all their labours, lying at their feet. As he stood there, surrounded by his generals and his troops, it must have been a proud moment for Napoleon, for no grander or more beautiful city exists anywhere on the earth than was this now before him. The diameter of it from north to south is about six miles, and from the Sparrow Hill the whole of this extent without a break was under his eye; and the possession of such a city, the capital of a great people, filled, as he could see, with almost unnumbered churches, and, as he would naturally suppose, with merchandize of the East and West and private possessions of the great Russian bankers and nobles, would appear to him to be a prize of almost incalculable wealth in money and money's worth, as well as a diadem of glory to France.

Standing there and gazing on that glorious scene

I could not but imagine for the moment the position and the pride of the great Emperor. And then I went back over the story of the advance, the sudden passage of the Niemen by Kowno—that fatal Rubicon—and the march to Wilna—pretty Wilna, lying in its hollow among picturesque and wooded hills—when all was bright before the French leader and his usual fortune smiled on him. Then, too, the Russians had not yet begun to burn their villages and towns and lay waste their country, as they did when he advanced to Witepsk and Smolensk, and showed to him with what fierce and relentless hatred they sacrificed everything to destruction in their magnificent energy of hostility to his invasion of their country.

At about a mile distance from the northern gate on my left there was visible, at the edge of the great military plain, the Palace of Peterhoff, to which Napoleon had gone after viewing the city from the Sparrow Hills, and where he remained for two days in vain expectation of the authorities of Moscow coming out to him, as usual in similar circumstances, with the keys of the town—a deputation of the conquered to the victor, to beg for clemency. But then how little he understood what the Russian people had resolved on! No deputation came; and with angry words

upon his lips and with sad presentiments of coming evil in his heart, he entered the city and the Kremlin; and then only he learned, by the fire bursting out almost simultaneously in many quarters, even in the Kremlin itself, under what totally new and savage circumstances his invasion was to be met by a united, and a devoted, and an infuriated nation.

As I descended the hill homewards I could not help thinking, so beautiful was the scene from that height, so peaceful in its repose and so bright and shining in the rays of the afternoon summer sun, how glad a contrast it was to that sublime but terrific spectacle on those days of September in 1812, when that same city was wrapped from end to end, here in sheets of flame, and there in rolling masses of suffocating smoke, sacrificed by its inhabitants that loved it on the altar of their country. And as I went on, I could think of nothing but the humiliation of the so lately jubilant conquerors, as they turned their backs for the last time, in their reluctant retreat, on those same Sparrow Hills, with their faces towards France, that France so dear to them, for which they had dared so much, and which so few of them were ever to see again. The devastated city was behind them, the cry of vengeance everywhere around them, while

maddened hosts on every side destroying the destroyer at every step with unsatisfied rage, until worse came upon the doomed victims, worse than the Russian swords, the icy hand of winter; and then regiments disbanded and dispersed to meet no more, and whole divisions, in their exhaustion and despair, surrendered themselves to their conquerors, with all their spoil,—and Moscow was avenged.

But now let us forget the icy march of death, and the shouts of the avenger, and go down from the hill into the lovely and laughing city.

CHAPTER II.

Extent of Moscow—The Kremlin—The Kitai Gorod, or Chinese Town—Streets and Boulevards—Moscow contrasted with other Great Cities—A City of Cottages—House of a Russian Nobleman—The Peasant's Cottage—General Appearance of the City—Walk from the Palanka Square—Broad and Noisy Thoroughfare—Country Life in the City—Quiet Streets—Pleasant Houses and their Tenants—A Professional Musician—Russian Churches—Novel and Picturesque Appearance of the Streets—Scenes of Russian Life—Beautiful Little Church—Aristocratic Street—Change in Russian Society—New Quarter of the Noblesse.

MOSCOW is said to have a circuit of twenty miles. The centre of this, or nearly so, is the Kremlin Hill, on the banks of the Moskwa. There is a broad open space all round the Kremlin wall, and no buildings approach its sacred precincts. On the east side of this hill, and beyond the great market-place, is a curious small block or collection of houses and streets called the Kitai Gorod, or Chinese town. This, too, is enclosed and separated from the great city by its own battlemented wall encircling it, and outside of it is a broad boulevard laid out with trees and walks.

Across this are market-places, large buildings, open spaces, the theatres, gardens, the Foundling Hospital, Hotels and Club Houses, bending round all the way from the river Moskwa on the one side of the Kremlin to the Moskwa again on the other. From this boulevard radiate many large streets to the barriers; but these streets are intersected at some little distance by other boulevards, running in a circular direction all through the city, also laid out with trees and walks; and again farther on by still another, a third, boulevard similar to the others. Thus the city is divided into circles by these open spaces, which admit air and light to all parts of it. But Moscow is a city unlike any other capital. In the great cities of the world the streets are throughout composed almost entirely of large houses, and one street resembles another in the general size and character of the buildings. One street may be a little broader than its neighbour, and the houses in the larger one may be of a more ornate style than those of the smaller, a great thoroughfare more imposing than the narrower cross street, but still there is a general resemblance. But this is not the case with Moscow. This may be almost termed a city of cottages. In fact the Russian house is a cottage, on a small or a large scale according to the rank and affluence of the owner, and these form the greater part of Moscow. The noble builds his house, in town or country, on a cottage plan. He raises a low wall of stone or brick of some four feet in height, and on this he builds a wooden house of one storey. It is long and wide, and a passage or hall intersects it from one extremity to the other, and the rooms on either hand open on to this and communicate with each other. Often, too, there is a small superstructure rising from the centre of this wide basement, but this is generally only a small addition—in fact, a small cottage built in the centre of the top of a large one. Sometimes, but rarely, that upper structure is as large as the lower one and forms a complete one-storeyed house. But beyond this no truly Russian house ever rises. A broad flight of steps in the centre of the front leads up to the level of the floor of the building at four feet from the ground, and a verandah, deep and shaded, runs all along this front, and sometimes this extends down the two sides to the back. As a rule, the whole building is of wood. In the villages the cottage of the peasant resembles in its essential features the house of the noble. It has the flight of steps, the verandah in front, and sometimes even the miniature structure rising from the centre. These noble cottages and peasant cottages form the greater part

of Moscow. You should imagine a circular city the centre of which are the Kremlin and the Kitai Gorod, and that from this centre radiate a certain number of broad thoroughfares running out to the different barriers. These main streets are all from forty to fifty feet in breadth in the central parts, but widen to sixty and seventy, and even more, as they approach the barriers. The buildings on either side of these are what are always by the natives called stone houses, but are in reality invariably brick, and they are all of only one storey, with very rare exceptions, such as in the case of some public buildings. Thus the houses being of very low elevation and the streets broad, there is great brightness through the city. But when you turn out of any one of these large thoroughfares into a cross street you find yourself at once among village cottages. These cross ways, which form a network in the large spaces between one great thoroughfare and another, are the prettiest and most quiet and retired little country retreats one can imagine. They are quite unique in their repose and neatness, and their entire absence of the noise and turmoil of the great city. For instance, let us walk from the Palanka Square in the centre of everything, close outside of the wall of the Kitai Gorod, and taking the street to the Post Office,

distant only about half a mile, we come on it, a large white building, standing far back from the thoroughfare, in a fine court-yard seventy or eighty yards in length and enclosed by a high iron railing with gilded spear-points. Here we cross the next boulevard, and immediately beyond it we turn out of the broad and noisy thoroughfare leading to the Red Gate and the Petersburg railway station, a thoroughfare always resounding with carts or droschkies or carriages, and we find ourselves in a quiet, pretty, retired street. A few yards farther on we turn down what might be a lane in a country village. On either hand are small cottages, the windows looking on the street, but there is no doorway. To each of them is a large gateway opening into a green and grassy court and garden. As we walk by, the gate being half open, perhaps, we look in, and witness a quiet scene of the country. There are trees, two or three small laburnums or acacias, and a flower-bed, and cocks and hens are walking about on the grass plot; there is perhaps a cow, and the stable and coach-house, and a man is pushing the rude tarantass into the coach-house. The women are seated on the verandah, or on the steps leading down into the garden, and the children are at play. It is a sunny spot,

fresh, and green, and bright, and quiet, as if fifty miles from Moscow. The whole thing is of wood, the house, the gateway, the garden palings, but nothing can look more neat or more home-like. Each, in fact, is a little village domain. In the windows, too, of some of them are flowers and books, and women sit in them at work. From end to end of this lane is a succession of these country residences, and in the far end one, of some little more pretension, lives some official. It is in one of this kind of pretty country houses that our British Consul lives, to whom I take this opportunity of making my acknowledgements for unvarying kindness and much valuable information. These quiet streets are all over Moscow, lying between the great thoroughfares.

It was pleasant to stroll about among these secluded ways and watch the daily life of the Muscovites. These cottages were all tenanted, and I was informed that it was by no means an easy thing to obtain one as a residence. They bear a very high rent; they are not shops, and are occupied many of them by the families of tradesmen who have saved up a little money and invested it in a Moscow cottage. Others are let to officials, clerks in offices, or in houses of bankers or merchants, of whom there is an extensive and

wealthy body in the town. The general air of them is good and bespeaks a tenancy of well-to-do people. There are some of these quiet lanes within almost a stone's throw of the Grand Opera House and of the Kitai Gorod, quite in the centre of the town, and in some of these the cottages are occupied evidently by families quite of the humbler class.

One day I wandered along the great Boulevard towards the river, and, attracted by the sound of music, I turned up one of these small lanes and found myself in a maze of pretty ornamented villas, all built in the cottage style. A gate of one being open I looked in, and from the open windows issued the sounds which I had heard. The instrument was a piano and the player a man. He was evidently a professional—perhaps of the Grand Opera. Sometimes he let his hands stray over the chords in that careless manner so indicative of the musician, wandering irregularly without order, and yet producing a wild and graceful harmony; then striking, as if accidentally, two or three notes of some well-known air of Mozart or Rossini he followed it up for a few bars, his voice bursting into the song with full, mellow, manly tones; and then as suddenly he ceased as he ran his fingers rapidly over a dozen notes with a flourish, and then

all was silent. I sat down upon a stone at the gateway, in the shade of a laburnum which hung over the garden paling, and listened. A turn in the winding lane shut out the noisy boulevard at a little distance, and surrounded by trees and gardens and cottages I could easily believe myself to be far away from a capital city, and in a country village. It was a hot August day, the smell of flowers came from the gardens, the shade of the laburnum fell over me, and then, at intervals, the musician got up from his seat by the piano. I could hear him walk along the floor humming some air, and then he would sit down again, as some thought or fancy struck him, and throw the fancy into music in his unstudied way, until it ran on into some remembered air, when again he would be unable to resist the temptation to pour out a line or two of the *Orphée aux Enfers* in his native Russ. At this time this fine opera of Gluck was being played at the Grand Opera House of Moscow by native performers, many of whom have fine voices.

Sauntering on, I came presently to a turn of the street, between a small church of rich ornamentation and some trees and palings, where was a sudden dip of the ground into a valley, or gorge, which ran down to the Moskwa on my right, and sloped up to the level

of the hill on my left. All this head of the valley, as well as its sides, was laid out in cottage villas. On the top of the ridge of hills rose up frequent churches, each church with its five green or gilded cupolas and its bell tower, tapering and graceful, the walls either brilliant white or delicate pink. All the houses being low, each in its garden, almost invariably with white walls and green or red roof, the effect was singularly bright and picturesque. The air of Moscow being light, and dry, and strong, whatever smoke there may rise from the chimneys, instead of hanging in mid air as with us in our damp climate, is dispersed at once, and the result is you see no smoke anywhere. In that bright atmosphere the houses and churches thus continue externally for a long time clean, and the people being fond of bright painting the general aspect of the city is as if the whole population had just completed a general painting of roofs, and walls, and chimneys. As you come suddenly on these interiors of the town from some hill top the effect is something exceedingly novel, and the first feeling is that Moscow is the most picturesque and the most attractive city you have ever seen.

As I stood there, leaning over a low paling by the side of the lane—for it was a village lane much more

than a city street, the hill-side was quite steep beyond the paling,—a peasant woman came out of a small rude wooden hut and called her chickens about her and fed them. These came hurrying at her call out of two or three little out-houses, flying over some tumble-down palings from the garden and wild grounds down the slope below the yard; and then the children came out from somewhere, dirty and healthy, and a small dog joined the company and stretched himself in the sun. From where I stood I had a bird's-eye view down into these rustic premises immediately under me. It was the very rudest country life in the midst of the city. Presently a noise behind me made me turn round, and across the lane on the steps up to the church door was an old man sprinkling fir branches, or rather ends and tips of fir branches, on the steps and into the doorway. Some ceremony was being prepared for. But what a contrast was the rich church with the rude cabin and garden across the lane! The church was of a square form outside. In the inside the arrangement was in the usual form of the Greek Cross. Five gilded cupolas rose from its roof, but the sides were elaborate with marbles and sculpture. It was an elegant little building, the windows high up, square and Italian,

marble pilasters projecting from the walls, and a narrow band of sculptured stone-work running round the whole church below the windows, and another similar one above them. The whole of it was fanciful and pretty. Inside, too, it was bright with much gilding, and was more like a pet private chapel in the country than here within almost a stone's throw of the Great Boulevard.

Skirting the church along the lane I came out on the hill, and keeping on towards the outskirts of the city I entered a long wide street, quite different from any I had seen. Here were a succession of Italian villas on both sides,—large imposing gateways, lofty walls, and white one-storeyed houses with large gardens and courts. In most of these a long line of windows looked on the street from the line of elevation of the top of the garden walls; and here on this first floor, the *bel piano*, were evidently the chief rooms of the family, for in almost all of the houses I passed there were ladies sitting by one or the other of these windows, either at work or reading. In some cases they were leaning out and talking. There were no shops; all were dwelling-houses. The street was broad, silent, clean, and brilliant with summer sun. Now and then its silence was broken by a droschky

passing, or a more imposing carriage of one of the dwellers in the street stopping at a gateway; and then the big doors opened into a court, and the carriage entered, the gates closed, and all was still again. The whole thing was rich, exclusive, aristocratic. I found, on inquiring, that this had once been one of the *noblesse* quarters, and these their houses; but in late years the nobles had, in their troubles, emigrated to another quarter, and now these Italian villas were occupied by the rich commercials of Moscow. This was a type of the change that is gradually going on in Russian society; as a Russian gentleman one day said to me, "We are going down, and our estates and houses are passing into the hands of the men of commerce."

Naturally, when the country estate is cut up and divided, or sold, the Moscow palace, or villa, goes too. In various parts of the city I subsequently saw extensive buildings, once the gorgeous palaces of nobles, now fallen from their high estate. One of them, a Sheremaytief Palace, which had lately held one hundred and fifty retainers of all kinds, a papa and a chapel forming part of the establishment, was now in the occupation of a commercial company, the grass growing rank in the back courts and the flower-garden running wild.

The present quarter of the *noblesse* is nearer the Kremlin, and the houses are pretty country villas in gardens, many of them consisting only of a raised ground-floor. They show that still the Russian gentleman retains all his old love for the native style of house. The streets of this new quarter of the *noblesse* are not broad, but as the houses are all low and stand in gardens away generally from the street-side, and as there is not much traffic along them, there is a freshness and a brightness of the air and a repose and soothing quiet which make a saunter along them particularly pleasing. Here and there children are about in the gardens, or domestics are lazily occupied in the stable-yards cleaning the harness by the stable door, or lounging about, enjoying the "*far niente*," while the noisy hum of the busy city is just audible beyond the precincts of the quarter. Pretty and quiet as it is, however, it has not the rich and imposing air of the old aristocratic quarter now taken possession of by the men of commerce.

CHAPTER III.

The Kremlin—The External Wall and Towers—The Moskwa—Fine Esplanade, and View from it—An Historical Question—The Nicholsky Gate—Inscription by the Emperor Alexander—Russian Superstition—The Arsenal—New Law Courts and Government Offices—Trophies of the Campaign of 1812—Unnecessary Precaution—The "Tzar"—The Imperial Palace—The Sacred Gateway—The Towers and Bells of Ivan Veliki—The "Czar Kolokol"—Panoramic View of the City—Great Number of Churches and Cupolas—Old Residence of the Romanoffs—Ancient Palace of the Ruriks—National Pride of the Russians.

BUT, of course, one of the first places you go to see is the Kremlin. It may be described as a solitary hill in the midst of the city, inclosed by a wall about a mile and a quarter in length. This wall stands up a little way on the slope, and is of irregular height. In some places it is perhaps seventy feet high, and in others not more than forty, according to the ground. It is of red brick, and is battlemented. There are eleven towers on it, four of which are above the gateways. All these four are of stone, lofty, many-storied, of open work, richly ornamented above, heavy and rude below, partly of Italian Gothic. The others are of red brick, of varied and fanciful character—some round, and roofed with shining green tiles, and others square, like a Saxon donjon keep, while one small one resembles an Oriental summer-house. This latter was used in the days of the early Czars as a look-out place on the gatherings of the people, on any occasion of moment, on the great public market-place beneath the wall. Altogether the Kremlin is a grand old mediæval fortress, once strong against Cossack lances and Polish spears, against bills and bows, but not of any use now against cannon. With its fine simple walls and its numerous and variously-shaped towers, it is a most picturesque relic of past times. The Moskwa river flows into the city from the west, strikes the foot of the Kremlin hill, runs along it from end to end of that front, and then, with a graceful bend, flows out of the city again to the south-west. The hill is cut away from the river-bank so as to allow a broad roadway along the base, and a steep pitch beyond rises to a fine esplanade on which stand the palace and other buildings and command the river to the west and south, the city and the country beyond towards the Sparrow Hills.

I asked various persons which was the gate by

which Napoleon had entered and left the Kremlin, but it was an odd thing, there seemed to be a doubt which of three gates was the right one. However, there was one circumstance which appeared to mark it—an inscription by the Emperor Alexander over the arch. This one is called the Nicholsky Gate, and it opens on to the broad market-place ; but it is not the principal entrance to the Kremlin. Over it rises a lofty tower in successive storeys of stone, a fine mediæval structure. The arch is pointed Gothic, and above the crown of the arch is a picture of St. Nicholas of Mojaisk, a small picture in a gilt frame, and beneath this is the inscription. This latter says that Napoleon, on his leaving Moscow, tried to blow up this gateway and tower, but that the Saint whose image is there protected and saved it. The consequence of this authoritative statement by the Czar is that no Russian, from the Emperor down to the peasant, passes in or out of that arch without uncovering to the picture, and most persons cross themselves three times and say a prayer. Thus all day long you may see, without cessation, people uncovering, or kneeling bare-headed, or crossing themselves energetically, at the entrance of the Nicholsky Gate.

This gateway is a long arched way of some twenty

yards in length, the ground rising rather steeply; and when you are through it you find yourself still on the slope of the hill, with a broad open space in your front which continues quite over the hill to the far side, to the terrace above the Moskwa. Immediately on your right is the Arsenal, an imposing structure of considerable extent, long and low ; while on your left is another great pile, in which are the new Law Courts, and other Government offices. What strikes the eye at first is the enormous number of cannon piled in compartments in an artistic way on a low raised platform in front of the whole length of the Arsenal. There are large guns, small guns, plain, ornamented, iron guns, brass guns. There are hundreds and hundreds—it is said twelve hundred is the number. These are the trophies of the famous campaign of 1812. Ker Porter and Segur both agree in this,—though they differ in so many other points,—that the French did not manage to carry one single gun over the Niemen on their quitting Russia—not one. Except those guns, then, that were blown to pieces purposely on the retreat, or thrown into rivers and lost, here are all of that mighty armament which the Emperor took with him on that fatal expedition. You cannot help regarding these silent witnesses of that terrible punishment

of overvaulting ambition without a certain degree of—well—deep sympathy—almost a kind of pain. What scenes of carnage—what scenes of horror—of scarcely human ferocity, of reckless courage, of brutal savagery, of wild despair, must these now sleeping engines of an unbridled violence have known and shared in! How eloquent, too, they are, as they lie there in their quiet order, of all that tale of death and ruin; and as you stand there and look at them, and touch them, the whole story seems to rise up and present itself fresh and tangible to your eyes. On a copper plate in the wall of the building is this inscription:—"Canons pris aux ennemis en 1812, sur le territoire Russe, par la victorieuse armée et la brave et fidèle nation Russe." I could not help thinking, as I read the words, that they tell the truth, but not the whole truth, as many another inscription does, and that if the words "et par le froid" had been added they would have supplied what was wanting.

Many of these guns were ornamented with devices, flowers, and figures, and many bore mottoes. On one was stamped a large "N" encircled with a coronal of leaves. On another was "La Tempête;" on others "Le Faucon," "L'Acharné," "L'Hercule." One bore the motto "Vigilate deo confidenti;" others "Nemini

cedo," "Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt," "Pro gloriâ et patriâ," "Strasburg le 26 Fructidor," and so on. What a satire were now these boasting titles! What a mockery of the vaunting words was their present humiliating position!

As I was examining some of these guns and copying the mottoes near an archway in the centre of the building, in which a sentinel was pacing up and down, an officer came out and said this was forbidden, and desired me to go away. Of course I obeyed, though ruminating and trying to calculate what would be the chances of danger to the Russian Empire from a simple traveller copying a motto or two of these captive and now harmless guns. It is true they were dug up more than half a century ago, some from, perhaps, some snow-drift at Krasnoé, where Ney lost his whole rear-guard,—or were captured near Smolensk, when the entire division of Davoust laid down its arms in despair,—or were fished from the waters of the Beresina, when Napoleon gave the terrible order to burn the bridge behind him, though crowded with the shrieking masses of his men, and when it sank with all its freight into the icy stream! These were facts, but still I failed to see in them and my copying the mottoes the combination of danger to Russia. However,

there were people who thought otherwise with a superior logic to mine, and so I gave in.

You go on, with nothing to stop you, along the open space beyond the Arsenal and the Law Courts, pass a convent on your left and a guard-house of soldiers and barrack on your right—in front of which latter stands the monster-piece of ordnance called the Tzar cannon, weighing nearly 40 tons,—past the Senate House and the Cathedral—which, in fact, is but a small church—until you come on the broad, smooth, extending esplanade or terrace, crowning all the south-west front of the Kremlin Hill—the royal terrace high above the river, and commanding the city.

It is a fine position for the palace, lofty, dominant, worthy of the imperial residence in the capital of a great country. As you turn round and lean on the low iron railing that runs all the way along the summit of the steep grassy slope above the wall and the towers and the Moskwa, you have all that broad level space—part of it more than a hundred yards wide—in front of you, and beyond this ranged the long line of the many and striking buildings so celebrated. On your extreme right is the lofty and tapering tower above the ponderous sacred gateway, through which no one passes—not even the Emperor—except uncovered. Just inside this is the white and fanciful small Gothic church in which lie the remains of so many of the females of the Imperial family. Next to this are the walls of a convent, where a number of elderly ladies of good families possess a church abounding in bright colours and gold and silver ornaments,—and contiguous to it is the long, low front of an old palace of the Czars, of moderate pretensions. Touching this, but a little retired, is another convent; and then succeed, in an irregular line, the famous towers of Ivan Veliki with their numerous and world-renowned bells; the Cathedral and the two other churches with their gilded and glittering cupolas; and then the long front of the new palace, a modern structure of yellow stone, with Arabesque windows, and containing three of the grandest halls in Europe. These comprise the remarkable front of the Kremlin, varied, broken, picturesque. Seen from the opposite bank of the river, with the castellated wall and the fanciful and varied towers of many colours below and the palace and temple-crowned height above, the long front terminating at either extremity in tall and graceful pinnacles of the gateway towers, the mass of building is unrivalled for beauty and position.

Of course you go to the top of the Ivan Veliki, two

hundred and seventy feet in height, built by the usurper Boris Godunoff, after his generally-believed murder of the youthful Czar Demetrius, and see the bells, among the wonders of Moscow. The largest weighs sixty-four tons, one hundred and twenty-eight thousand pounds—a noble bell. But imagine the "czar of bells," at the foot of the tower, nineteen feet three inches in height, sixty feet nine inches in circumference, and weighing four hundred and forty-four thousand pounds! This latter grand work of art is, however, broken, the tower in which it was suspended having been burnt, and the fall fracturing the "Tsar Kolokol"—the Emperor of bells.

From the Ivan Veliki you have a panoramic view of the city, and you look down into the thousand pretty gardens of the cottages and villas of which the city is principally composed. As these houses everywhere, great and small, have green or red roofs, but principally green, and the walls of them are almost all white, the brightness of the buildings is a wonderful sight. The green gardens and trees and the green roofs so blend on some of the slopes that at a certain distance there are spots which look like one mass of verdure dotted with white. How unlike a city! Then, as Moscow is declared to have some

four hundred churches, great and small, the number of cupolas and bell-towers is immense. I tried to count from the tower those of a section of the city—about one-sixth—between my hands, held so as to shut off all but about that proportion from sight, and I counted one hundred and sixty towers and cupolas within that space. Multiply this by six. The space so enclosed, when I examined and compared it afterwards with the rest of the town, was not particularly crowded with churches. It was only an average section of the whole. The waving of the ground, the brightness of the buildings, the infinity of graceful objects rising above the houses, here in clusters and there in single towers, the glittering river winding in and out, the long slopes to it undulating and covered with villas, the singular freshness and ornamentation of the whole, composed a picture quite unique.

The old dwelling-house of the Romanoff family is down in the Kitai Gorod, and though uninhabited since they became Emperors, it is still maintained by each succeeding Czar in all its original condition. It is a very small—indeed, diminutive, pretty, quaint building, which reminded me, in the size of its rooms and in its primitive arrangements, of some of the confined and cramped castles of the Rhine barons on the

banks of that river. The Romanoffs until 1613 were, while the Rurik family were on the throne, only Boyars, or rich and noble merchants. The residences of the highest were but small in those days; thus the palace of Jean the Terrible and of Demetrius in the Kremlin is also a diminutive building—a specimen of the Muscovite mansion of those days, with its pretty, low, small rooms, like a lady's boudoir of the present day. It is elegant in form, simple in construction, and rather gaudy with paint. It was in the matter of colour that the fondness for display showed itself in that age, whether among Muscovite chiefs, or in Gallic and Teuton and British nobles. Gorgeous dresses of both men and women ruled the hour, but in Muscovy paint in the houses was a passion; and this passion shows itself even now in the brilliant dressing of the peasants who can afford it on holidays, and the lavish painting of the churches inside and out, as well as of the walls and roofs of houses. Thus this little old palace of the Ruriks in the Kremlin—shut into a back court by the large new one—is painted inside and out from top to bottom, a bright and fanciful specimen of the taste of the olden time. It is built in the thoroughly Russian style, each storey a much smaller one than that below it, so that each tier of rooms has

a terrace in front of it, part of the roof of the apartments beneath. There are three storeys to this ancient edifice, each diminishing in size, so that the top one is composed of but a small room or two. From this upper terrace Napoleon looked out over his conquest—his conquest in vain—burning in defiance. Of course there are the usual accompaniments of the feudal château—the grand hall of reception, the large apartment for feasting, and the pretty, diminutive chapel. These are used even now on some very great state occasions—used in public as a kind of social duty to the memory of the old Muscovite Czars—a usage which is dear to the people, appeals to all their traditionary memories of the sacred past and touches their national pride in and affection for their Emperors, links the present with the ancient days, and preserves as a living fire the superstitious reverence of this devotional, and almost fanatical, people to their Ruler.

CHAPTER IV.

The Present Emperor—The Emperor Nicholas—Entrance into Moscow by the St. Petersburg Road—The Emperor's Route—Chapel of the Virgin—Famous Picture of the Iberian Mother—Bonds of Sympathy between the Emperor and the People of Moscow—His Orthodox Piety—His Appreciation of Kalatsch—The Palace of the Empress—Devotion to the "Iberian Mother"—Daily Scenes at her Shrine—Sum annually collected by Voluntary Offerings—Visits of the Holy Mother—The Benefit of a Common Religious Sentiment—An Act of Sacrilege—The Criminal and her Punishment.

THE present Emperor of Russia seems to study to keep alive the feeling of reverence and regard between himself and his people with better tact and more success than his father did. Perhaps he does not study to do this, but, what is better, does it without any effort or plan—solely from a natural impulse of good-will towards those over whom he is placed as a ruler. Whichever be the cause, tact or kindliness, kingcraft or amiability of disposition, the fact is generally acknowledged—he succeeds. The late Czar was, as all agree, a harsh man, and though a grand

figure in the eyes of his people, he was rather too far from them—too high and beyond their reach—a Jupiter Tonans on a towering Olympus. He was admired, wondered at, almost worshipped, but he was feared, and not loved. He believed more in fear than in love, a defect in the idiosyncrasy of a possessor of power. But the present Emperor is a man of a kindly nature, and he wins all the good-will of his people without any display or effort—wins it by that talisman of influence and attraction—cordiality. He goes often to Moscow, and when there he does various little acts which show a sympathy with the Muscovite character and Muscovite prejudice; and when he goes away, he leaves no cloud on the popular brow which tells of discontent—no memory of some harsh deed which wounds the national feeling.

Entering the city by the old St. Petersburg coach road and the Twerskaia—street of Twer—you approach the Kremlin through the Iversky Gate, a double gate, which leads on to the great market-place on the east front of that fortress. Although the railway from St. Petersburg now brings you into the city on the south-eastern side, and far away from the old gate from that capital on the north-west, yet the Emperor never omits to take a circuitous route along the Boulevard, and to enter

the Kremlin on his arrival through that Porta Sacra, the Iversky Gate. It is in this gateway, or rather on the outside of it, on its northern front, stands the little Chapel of the Virgin, here called the Iberian Mother of God. It is but a diminutive building, perhaps twelve feet square, of stone, plain and unpretending outside, and about the size of a small turnpike gate-house in England. From the centre of it there runs out a stone platform of perhaps twenty feet in length and having on three sides to the street a descent of four or five steps. The interior is highly decorated with gilding, and lamps, and glass, votive offerings in various metals, and an altar; and there is space inside the broad entrance-door for a few persons, and at the back of it, over the altar, is the famous picture of the Iberian Mother. Beside it always stand one or two Greek priests. The painting is Byzantine, and was brought here from Mount Athos in the reign of the Czar Alexis. An extraordinary respect, or it may be called veneration, is offered to this picture, much beyond that to any other in Moscow, for at all hours of the day there are persons to be seen bending low or kneeling in the interior of the chapel, or on the platform, or on the steps. It has done so many wonderful things in its time, it is said, that it has become

one of the most important existences in Moscow.

It is to pass through this gate on each arrival in this city that the Emperor goes out of his way from the railway-station to the Kremlin. On approaching the platform, his carriage stops; he gets out, uncovers his head, enters the little chapel, and kneels, the world of Moscow looking on, impressed by the act to the bottom of its devotional soul. He comes out, mounts his carriage, and proceeds. The effect is amazing. To be remiss on this point—to omit this act—would be a great political mistake. The proof it affords to all eyes of the religious mind of their Czar—the example it sets to each and all his subjects in high places not to be wanting in veneration to the Iberian Mother—and then, not the least in this catalogue of social advantages, the deference which he thus pays to the local prejudice and the strong feeling in this matter of the people of Moscow itself—all these combine to surround this act with a very serious and important sense. It is a bond of attachment between the Czar and the Russian mind of far deeper meaning and influence than any common tie of men's political connexion or liking.

There is another act, apparently trifling in itself, and yet having a peculiar significance, which goes

to show the kindly thought of the Emperor in his communication with the inhabitants of Moscow, and is a proof of how he has known to gain a hold on their affections. There is a small and fanciful form in which bread is made up at Moscow. It is not a loaf, it is not a roll, it is of a circular form, and is hollow, as some French bread is made, and is called a kalatsch. You may see a baker's boy in the street with twenty or thirty of these strung on a stick, or you may see fifty on a cord suspended in a shop. It is rather larger in diameter than a quoit, and the thickness of the bread is not much more than that of the iron. This kalatsch is the bread and the form peculiar to Moscow. The bread is light and sweet. When the Czar sits down to table in the Kremlin he asks for a kalatsch; and you may hear the common Russian repeat with pride—"the Czar always eats kalatsch at dinner in the Kremlin." The fact of the present Empress having a pretty country palace and estate—another "my own"—at a place called Ilyinsk, about thirty miles from Moscow, and which she likes to come to frequently, is another bond between the family and the Moscow world. One day, in one of the long passages of the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg, I saw a whole pile of boxes and trunks, apparently just off a journey, and a servant or two,

in the Imperial livery, very active about them. In reply to my question—a traveller asks all sorts of questions, of course—one of the men answered readily,

"These are from Ilyinsk—the Empress is just come up from there; she is very fond of going to Ilyinsk."

To return to the little Chapel of the Iberian Mother. It was a practice with me, on my return from any walk on that northern side of Moscow, to stop by this Iversky Gate, and sit down on a low railing by a little grassy inclosure, the ground sloping down and spreading wide and open to the boulevard in front of me. It was an airy and shady spot, a pleasant resting-place after a long walk, and, moreover, one of a curious attraction. Immediately by me was a long, low building by the grass, and which projected a little from a lofty white castellated edifice, some Government Offices. In this low spur or projection lived the ecclesiastics who had the care of the Iversky picture and chapel, and here they took care of the money constantly pouring into the coffers of the Iberian Mother close by. One day was like another. Arriving at my seat, I would find two or three women, sitting, too, on the low rail, resting themselves from their country walk, and watching the scene, or arranging their dress, and getting ready, from some

small treasury among their garments, the piece of money—a kopeck—for the Iberian Mother. From the wide open boulevard, from the Twerskaia, from the Alexander Gardens, from the Kremlin, would arrive all kinds of carriages converging at this point—the chapel and the gateway. Business men from the Law Courts, ladies and children from the aristocratic quarter in the Beloi Gorod, people from the country in quaint vehicles of the rudest Tarantass build, peasants on foot, officers in droschkies, men of commerce on their way from the debtors' prison, hard by on the boulevard, where they had been to see their victim and hear if any new chance of payment had turned up, and now on their way into the Kitai Gorod in money-making interest—all stopped at the platform. On my side the stream flowed steadily through the one gateway on to the market-place beyond, while on the other side it came out from the farther gateway on to the open boulevard. It could not but strike you what an able position the Iberian Mother had taken up—the most commanding one in the whole city. Nothing escaped her; it was all fish that came to her net. Why, the very best and cheapest dining-houses of the merchants were just across the broad boulevard within sight, and the straight road from their early dinner-

table to the exchange was through this gate. Here they drove up "pleni veteris Bacchi pinguisque ferinæ,"—dined on wild boar and sparkling champagne—and how should not their hearts be open to all warm influences, devotion to the Iberian Mother, and expenditure of roubles. So they all came up to the little platform.

One afternoon I sat there as usual,—and as usual the stream of devotees never ceased. Sometimes the whole platform and some of the steps were occupied by kneeling people; and then the whole would clear away, until only three or four persons would remain, sprinkled singly over the place on their knees, to be succeeded again by bareheaded and prostrate numbers. A great many gave nothing—that is, no money—there is a limit to giving, even to the Iberian Mother—they came up, kneeled down, said a prayer, crossed themselves three times, which seemed to be the recognised form or mark of veneration, and went on. Now an officer, big and important, with helmet and cloak over his uniform, dashed up in his neat private droschky, driven, of course, by his body coachman in blue dressing-gown and wide-brimmed hat, the horse a black Arab-looking animal, sleek and shining, of South Russian breed, a trotter—and the harness stud-

ded with silver. The droschky stopped, the coachman unwound his right hand from its rein—a Russian coachman drives with a rein in each hand, wound round it—and uncovered; the officer also uncovered and crossed himself, but sat still. At a word from behind him the driver let the horse go on at a foot's pace by the platform; the officer crossed himself again three times, the driver crossed himself, too, as often—they both covered their heads, and the droschky and the black Arab dashed through the archway, and were gone.

Then arrived a party of peasant women and men on foot, ten or twelve—the men in white woollen coats, sewn at the seams with red, and the women with red and black shawls. Some kneeled on the platform, and some on the steps. After many self-crossings there came the moment of departure, and with it the question of money. Some had clearly by their manner no kopecks to spare, but with others there was a consulting together. One man was for going away without giving anything, but a woman touched his arm and whispered to him, and then three or four heads went together. "How much shall we give?" "What have you got?" "Will that be enough?" These were evidently the matters in debate. The pockets were dived into, kopecks

came forth from the male garments under female pressure, and at last two of the women agreed to go into the chapel for the party and make the united humble offering. By this time many others had arrived, and much ado the women had to get through the kneeling crowd. A lady or two in silken attire had placed themselves on their knees precisely in the opening, and there was no way of getting into the chapel except over their voluminous dresses. Of course the poor women could not do this, so they waited patiently till "the quality" had prayed and entered the shrine with their offerings, and then the women got in. Presently they returned with satisfied countenances, for they had seen the Iberian Mother, and had laid before her a little something out of the home treasury, and a bit of their hearts besides. So they joined their companions, all waiting uncovered and with bent heads on the steps, and all went off together through the archway—happy.

Then arrived a hired droschky, and a tall, middle-aged man with a white face got down. He was well-dressed, in a dark frock-coat and grey trowsers, and scrupulously bright boots. By his dress he might have been a member of our House of Commons, or an M.D. I made a guess that he was a lawyer, and had just come from some client in the debtors' prison round the cor-

ner of the boulevard. He stepped gravely from his little carriage, walked up the steps, uncovered, and made his way carefully and slowly among the kneeling women, disturbing no one. How politely and unoffendingly he advanced, his manner so thoroughly that of the man who deals daily with courteous and silvery phrases wrapping up very unpleasant truths, gilding bitter pills legally or medically compounded. He kneeled down with an air of the deepest humility close to the door of the shrine, bent his head for a minute or two over his folded hands, then rose and went in and made his offering. On coming out he repeated his act of abasement, and then going down the steps with the same careful, gliding movement, he got into his droschky, the white face unmoved, and was gone.

A party of well-dressed children came rapidly up with a couple of nurses in a well-built and well-turned-out Tarantass. I was curious to see how this young party would conduct their devotions under nursery guidance. But to my disappointment they did not stop. The coachman uncovered, and walked his well-bred horses by the platform, the women made the boys take off their neat little caps—all bowed their heads and crossed themselves, nurses and children; but they went on,

and in a moment were dashing through the arch.

Then a stout young man, dandily dressed and with face rather flushed, drove up, or rather was driven up, as a Russian gentleman very rarely drives himself. He looked as though just risen from partaking of the "pinguis ferina" on the boulevard and the Falernian. He jumped jauntily down from his silver-mounted droschky, took off his hat, hurried in a bustling manner up the steps and along the platform, in and out among the prayer-absorbed figures, dropped on one knee for a moment at the entrance, went in, returned quickly, down the steps and into his carriage, and was gone in an instant.

And so it went on, this living, moving panorama of real life. Some peasant man would kneel only on the bottom step, languid and careworn in manner and appearance, as if he had a hard life, and not much hope of making it softer by any act of his, not even with the aid of a little offering in that chapel, and so he made none. Two poor women, too, came and kneeled down on the lower steps, and then leaned their foreheads on the step above them. The attitude and expression of the figures denoted the deepest devotion, and a real sorrow which weighed them down. There they knelt for some minutes, their heads pressed against

the stones, as if telling out all the sad tale of their life to the Iberian Mother, no doubt with a faith that she could hear it all, and, if she would, could alleviate the pain. Ah! well! it is a thing not to be laughed away, a prop to lean on—to be able to feel in this world an undoubting faith in something, whatever it is.

It is declared that this little shrine collects in the course of the year a sum equal to ten thousand English pounds sterling from these daily and other offerings. It is also said that a large portion of this sum is used to pay the stipend of the Metropolitan of Moscow. It is moreover whispered, under the rose, that the Iberian Mother possesses a little treasury of her own, and that when a thousand pounds or so are wanted in the city for secular purposes the governing bodies do not make application at the shrine in vain.

There is a method very peculiar to the Mother of adding to her treasure. She makes visits. So fervent is the devotion of the Muscovite mind to this "lady of Mount Athos," and so profound the belief in her good deeds, that much of her time is taken up in going about in her carriage to various houses. Thus a carriage and four horses are kept for her use. If a new house is built by a true Russian of Moscow a request is made by the owner that, before he and his

family occupy it, the Mother may come and give it a blessing. Accordingly the picture goes in state. A person is seriously ill, and the picture is requested, as a means of cure. Another is dying, and the picture is entreated to come, as a last blessing. A couple are going to be married, and the picture must form a part of the ceremony or the bride will have fears for her future life. Thus sums such as ten roubles, twenty roubles, a hundred roubles—sums up to twenty pounds—are paid readily to the Mother for conferring these distinguished favours and lasting benefits, according to the rank or wealth of the petitioner. There is, I was assured, a constant demand for the picture, and this sometimes so often in a day that a refusal is sent, thus—"The Mother is fatigued to-day, and cannot come."

It must be expected that there will be abuse of a feeling of this kind. But, after all, is it not a happiness, and something more—a necessity, that there should exist a sentiment in which a nation can join, can combine? Here is an immense country, Russia, spreading over a wide expanse, inhabited by peoples of various blood and race. Is it not an important thing that there should be a bond—some one bond—by which all these differing bodies of peoples may be

united, so as to give the whole a cohesion and a force? Many of these scattered populations, lying far away from all the highways of the civilised world, immersed in ignorance, and living the life of serfs till lately—practically slaves, as a general rule—what should act on these for the good of any one? What should give them one elevating thought? Is there anything binds so strongly as a religious sentiment?—anything so universal in its action? Even a personal sentiment towards a sovereign, strong and combining as it is, is less so, less stirring and less cohesive, than the sentiment which can be roused on occasion to fanaticism and self-immolation. Politics require education, some little knowledge, some reasoning and argument; but a sentiment requires no reason and no argument—nothing but a heart. The greater the amount of ignorance, too, in the brain, the greater the influence that can be exerted on the heart. Thus the Russian populations, buried in the depths of the great Continent, on the confines of savage Europe, and still more savage Asia, grovelling in the lowest humanity and in the rudest ways of life, what a blessing to them to have offered to their affections—not politics, not reasoning, not education, with its impossibilities to many—but a sentiment.

There is a story related of this little chapel at the Iversky Gate. There was a large diamond in the dress of the Iberian Mother, and one day it disappeared. Of course there was a tremendous commotion in Moscow. The Mother had been robbed. What a sacrilege! After a time the jewel was traced to the hands of a Russian lady, a member of one of the princely families. She had coveted this diamond, and while in the act of devotion had managed to extract it with her teeth from its setting. Every effort was made by her family to save her from heavy punishment, but in vain. Had it been a mere robbery of a diamond from one Russian lady by another the whole thing would have been treated as a trifle; but from a shrine, and more especially from the Iberian Mother, this was too much. All the people of Moscow, and beyond it, were concerned in the matter—one which touched their dearest affections, their devotion, the one deep and pervading sentiment. The princess was condemned to Siberia, and she was sent there for life.

The passionate sentiment of a people is too grand and too useful an engine of power as a bond of society to be neglected or wounded with impunity. A tyrant fears it, but a statesman uses it. I do not be-

lieve that in any other spot in Europe such a scene can be witnessed as is enacted daily at that little chapel by the Iversky Gate in Moscow.

CHAPTER V.

A Walk in Moscow and its Environs—Church of St. Sauveur—Curious Little Chapel—Cavalry Barracks—Inconvenient Position of the Horses in the Stables—Something like a Personal Affront—Cultivation of a small Gourd used by the Russians—Women at Work—A Russian Gardener and his Subordinates—The Devitchei Convent—The External Wall and Towers—The Church, Bell Tower, &c.—Burial Places—The Congregation and Service—The "Quêteuse"—Dispersion of the Congregation—"Une Affaire Ténébreuse"—The Papa.

IF you walk down the public garden—the Alexander Garden—running under the lofty wall on the north side of the Kremlin, you arrive at the road on the bank of the river. You turn to the right along the road until you come to the stone bridge, but instead of going over it you keep on by the St. Sauveur Church. It is the most splendid in Moscow, built to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon. Two or three hundred yards from the church you are beyond the shops and the higher buildings, and you find yourself in a broad open street with houses on either hand of

the cottage character. They stand back from the public way in gardens—pretty villas, here of one storey elevation and there of only the raised ground-floor, with the usual verandah. As you go on the cross streets are of the same style. By degrees almost all sound of carriages ceases. A solitary private droschky is seen only rarely standing at some gate; the doors are all open, and the servants are lounging about in conversation with their friends of the neighbouring villas. In many cases the railings in front are of open work, and you can see through them the children at play and the ladies sitting at tables at work under the shade of trees. You are in the great capital, but it is as quiet and as bright as if you were miles away from it. After a mile or so of this you see the open country in front of you. There is no gate or barrier. A church stands at the extremity of the buildings—a curious and elaborate specimen of the Russian ecclesiastical edifice. It is a small thing, and it stands on its little elevated rise of ground with a flight of steps up to the door, and a few clipped lime-trees are on the slope of the bank. Of course there are the five cupolas. Looking at it, you hardly know whether to smile or be serious. It is a church, and so you should be the latter; but it is a diminu-

tive, heavy, quaint, fanciful structure, rather crushed by its five cupolas, and these and its walls and tower are all glaring in masses of colour. Deep blue walls, green roof, and red cupolas, and all these are in broad masses of strong deep colours. You are getting accustomed to all kinds of singular buildings as churches with the strangest ornamentation; but this is an outrageous instance of the kind—a flagrant sin against taste in colouring. Probably the papa was addicted to painting, and when the day of painting came round backed his own fancy in the mingling of colours against the artist world of Moscow. However, artistic taste in painting is yet allowed to be rather in its infancy in Russia.

A broad grass track, in the middle of which was a rough country road, led me on, and presently I came to an immense building, white, of brick plastered. It was a cavalry barrack, and empty. Only a few women and children were about, and men inside were whitewashing the interior. Through the low open windows I could see the endless lines of stalls. It is a rule in Russia to build the stables with the windows very low down, and then to have the rack and manger frequently in the very window. The horse must stand all day long with the strong glare of the light,

and if on the south side, of the sun, right in his eyes. I suggested to various Russians that this must be very fatiguing to the horses, and bad, too, for the eyes, but, as Charles Matthews says, "they did not see it." When I asked them—If you yourself come in tired, do you not find a corner away from the sun refreshing?—you are unwell, do you not like a shaded room? Do you not find a glare in your eyes at any time dazzling? Here are your horses tied up in the very blaze of light, and cannot get away from it. But "they did not see it"—the horses were accustomed to it. These cavalry barracks were built in this way.

On beyond the barrack were gardens with occasional small houses scatttered about among them. Some of these were only gardeners' cottages, of wood, but others were evidently the residences of families, enclosed in two or three acres of orchard and pasture and belt of trees. A rude kind of grass track led among these. One of them pretended to ponds and a summer-house and water carried along in a winding ornamental way, through some coppice wood, with a rustic bridge over it. A young woman with two children, a boy and a girl, came out from one of the houses, with a small dog, the boy dressed, of course, in his red cotton tunic

and long black boots—the little gentry of the place with their servant. They all came up the path gaily, till the dog saw me sitting on a rail in the shade of the coppice, and then he sniffed at me timidly with his nose in the air from twenty yards distance, and not then liking the look of matters, or something that told his nose I was not of his country, and therefore an enemy seeking the lives of dogs in general and his own in particular, he turned tail, and fled without a word into the shelter of the domain, careless of all appearances. The maiden regarding this as a warning of some very serious danger threatening the young heir in boots, and the little girl, and also her own precious person, caught up the little girl, and fled from me in dismay. Considering how very near we were to the capital I thought it was a strange proceeding, reflecting on my personal appearance. Did I look like a garotter?

Going on, I found a wide plain of gardens stretching away to the river, a dead flat of a mile or more, at the foot of the line of the Sparrow Hills. People were at work in all directions. Small gardeners' huts were scattered about everywhere on the open plains. Soon I came up to an immense field of the small gourd which the Russians eat with almost every-

thing. There were acres of this small vegetable. It is of a green and yellow colour when ripe, about three to four inches in length, and has the taste of a mild cucumber. The common people almost live on it. Here were parties of women picking them in baskets, with one man to each line of eight or ten women, perhaps to overlook them. The vegetable grew in long regular rows and the women were marshalled in line between the rows. They were all decently dressed, except that none wore shoes or stockings. Those are commonly superfluities in Russia with the peasant women in the summer time. As I approached, their heads all bent down at their work, occasionally a voice would strike out three or four words of some song, and then, after a pause and a little broken talk, another would do the same. A hundred yards before them was a small house, and there was the gardener with two or three men, horses in their harness hitched up to the out-houses, and two or three carts, and heaps of the gourds lying about on the ground by them. They were packing them for the Moscow market the next morning. The whole scene carried me back at once to the early days when I lived by the Thames, not far from Kew Bridge, where in the neighbourhood the gardens flourish which send their supplies, as here,

to the market of the Capital. I was too far off to distinguish the features of the women, though when one discovered me and told her companions, of course they all struck work and had a good long stare at the stranger. But they did not consider me a garotter and fly. However, remembering the women in the Chiswick Gardens, and that beauty was a rare plant among the human part of those precincts, and knowing, likewise, that this same plant is not as common in harsh complexion-destroying Russia as in soft and skin-cultivating England, I did not make any effort to approach nearer to the shoeless females. Somehow a woman without shoes and stockings, whether in the fields of Germany, or in the market-gardens of Moscow, is not quite attractive. The men were, as usual, stalwart fellows, the chief in his long coat, and the subordinates in their pink knickerbockers and loose cotton tunics, and all in the general high black boots, which give such a fine finish of strength and substance to the man of Russia. There was a sound, well-to-do look about the house; flowers were in a small inclosed space by the wooden walls, and the rude out-buildings, the carts and the harness, the horses and the men, and the piles of gourds as high as the carts, gave an appearance of rich plenty to the scene of labour.

After a few words with the head man, and some pantomime in my limited Russian, and inquiring my way to the Devitchei Convent, I went on. Narrow pathways among the acres of gourds, and then of cabbage and other garden produce, and occasionally a rude cart track for a short distance, led me on to the convent, now visible behind some trees.

What a grand fortress-like building is the Devitchei Convent! This is the famous retreat for highly-born ladies. Imagine a lofty wall battlemented, of red brick, some thirty feet high, inclosing a square of three or four acres. The noble wall stretched in a straight line along in front of me for three hundred yards, with small towers on it at intervals; and fine buildings of red brick and stone-work rose up, lofty and imposing, beyond it.

In the centre of the wall was a fanciful stone gateway with a tower over it, and the gates being open I went in. Nothing could be neater than the interior. At the porter's lodge there was no one, so I sat down on a stone seat by the archway. All in front was a large space open down to the church at a hundred yards distance. This was a very rich and handsome edifice, with its gilt cupolas and broad flights of steps, over which projected a roof supported by light pillars

up to the arcade running round the church. To the right were low cottage buildings, and the same on the left, standing separate. To the right of the church was another rich edifice, either another church, or perhaps a grand hall or library. To the left of the main building was the bell tower. Anything more graceful you cannot see. It was of red brick, of square substantial strength, not ornamented, up to about seventy feet, and then for another seventy feet it was of open work, tier upon tier of light arches and pillars, the whole tapering to a delicate point. In the open arches were hung the bells. I had heard the bells as I came through the gardens, the silvery musical bells calling the nuns to the afternoon service.

Now, as I sat I heard the swell of voices in the church, so I walked down towards it. There was not a person visible anywhere. What a charming repose and beauty there was in the place! Perhaps it was not a prison to some of the inmates, but a happy retreat from the cares of the world. Anyhow, it was an attractive one to a stranger, judging merely by the outside. Narrow raised and paved pathways ran across and down the large space, preparations against the long winter snows and flooding thaws. At the foot of the flight of stairs on either hand were small

inclosed burial-places. Stopping to read the inscriptions in these, I saw not only the names of noble ladies, but of noblemen and general officers, on some of the tombs and head-stones. Members of old families connected with the convent like their bones to rest within the sacred precincts, and pay highly for the privilege. Here in this confined but picturesque cemetery, of a few yards square, lay the remains of some of the most distinguished sons of Russia.

On mounting the stairs I came upon the long, broad, and shaded arcade running to the right and left. Here were women in black standing about, with the air of dependents of the convent. The door being open in front of me I went in, and in a moment I found myself in front of a body of young ladies, of small delicate figures and pale faces, all in black, the pale faces made more pale by the setting of the close-fitting black cap tied under the chin. This covers all the hair, but it rises and terminates in a peak which comes up from behind in the form rather of the Phrygian cap of the Naples peasantry. It is not becoming, but a pretty delicate face is a pretty delicate face under any disguise. The enormous pillars which support the cupolas and occupy so much of every Greek church—twelve feet square very often—break the congregation

into parties. So it was here. On my right was a body of the lady nuns; in my front between the pillars was another body; beyond them another. I was staggered; and all was so orderly and so arranged and occupied that I felt my coming in was very much like an intrusion. I was hesitating about backing out from the face of these small regiments of young ladies in sober black, when fortunately I saw on the left, not a further body of sombre ladies, but four or five women in ordinary attire. So I took courage and my position by these. Everybody was standing—there were no seats. One of the enormous pillars was close to me, and in front of this, and between it and the low raised dais or enclosed space in front of the Ikonostas, was another body of the lady nuns in a high-sided pew. Only their heads and shoulders were above this. All along their front and beyond the pillar and out of my sight ran the Ikonostas, which was, as usual, richly adorned with pictures with gilded settings, up to the roof, and among them the heads of the Virgin and Saviour surrounded with precious stones. The flooring was covered with the usual rope carpeting in compartments. Everything was extremely handsome and in good order, clean and cared for. Just as I entered the singing ceased, and then a man came in through a

gilt door from behind the Ikonostas, as usual with long flowing hair and full beard, in a long silk brown dress. This was the papa of the convent. He was the only man in the church besides myself. He came in with that usual easy and rather irreverential air of the Greek priest, and passing along to the centre of the Ikonostas he commenced a litany. He sang in a deep manly voice the prayer, and then one single female voice sang the response. There is said to be something melancholy and affecting in the Greek service, and this was the case with this litany. There was a mournful cadence in the tones of the nun that sounded like a wail of sorrow. Each response was plaintive beyond expression, and it terminated in rather a high-pitched note of the most touching appeal. It was a young, fresh voice, clear, soothing, and yet so pathetic it would make you weep to listen to it if you had a weak joint in the harness of your nervous system. I tried to crane forward decently to see the singer, but the enormous pillar and the high pew of the nuns prevented all chance, as she was somewhere further on. In the middle of this a slight movement behind me made me turn, and there was a small fragile nun at my side holding up a little velvet bag and peering at me with tender eyes. The features were delicate and the cheeks

colourless. Poor little subdued lady! This gentle creature thus mutely begging, and the plaintive voice in my ears from the unseen singer, were irresistible. As I looked into her pretty soft brown eyes and dropped my coin into her bag I refrained—and only refrained—from whispering "Sweet sister" to the pensive little being before me. As I stood there a wandering eye from the high pew discovered the stranger, and in the course of a few minutes nearly every face in turn stole round to look with Eve-like curiosity. I regret that as a rule the young ladies were decidedly plain. To be sure that black cap is not becoming, and it requires a considerable amount of good looks to balance the evil. Of course I had no business to think of such things in such a place, but still there were extenuating circumstances. I did not know a word of the litany, the whole scene was picturesque in the extreme and affected the various contradicting parts of one's nature; and the result was, as my senses were more immediately appealed to, the senses did not refuse to reply to the demand on them.

On leaving the church I seated myself again on the stone seat by the entrance gateway. The little nuns came out in irregular bodies and dispersed all over

the pathways, and by flights of stairs to the several courts, to the cottage buildings and to the cloisters. Lastly came the elders and the superiors, two staid ladies of more than middle age, up the central path to a handsome building on the other side of the entrance gate. They were in animated talk, and between the steps of the church and the archway near me they settled a good many matters, for persons, women and men, too, cap in hand, came from various quarters, received directions, and departed rapidly. But there was some one knotty subject in hand. They stopped midway. Two men, servants evidently, came and were questioned, and then turned away with subdued looks, to be called up again and reproached, evidently. The papa at last came up the path, and was taken into council. Then they all advanced further up, and the whole thing was very serious. Gradually the papa got into the matter, and offered suggestions seemingly, but without avail. Perhaps, methought, some little nun has misbehaved, and must be punished; but the servants would not be consulted. Perhaps it is a finance matter, and some tenant of the convent has been wanting in his dues. The principal lady became very serious, moved her hands up and

down with decision, raised her voice, stopped in her walk, was clearly working herself up to something like violent action in some direction. All the bystanders looked on the ground, impressed. Now arrived the moment for the papa. He took up his parable. He spoke for two or three minutes in a quiet, measured tone, gradually warming; people's features relaxed; the sternness faded from the elder's face; she gave a consenting motion of her head to some position the papa took up; he took advantage of it, threw in a rapid observation or two with a courtly bow to her, added something evidently conciliatory and pleasing, and finished with a little story, as it appeared, which was eminently attractive. The elder smiled, the other lady laughed, the papa made a grimace, the servants turned away relieved, and there were peace again and kind thoughts in the sacred precincts. Clever and persuasive papa! After some very cheery conversation on other subjects for a few minutes, he took his leave; and as he passed me on his way out we exchanged a polite greeting. He had won his little combat, and had left good will and merciful intentions behind him; and as I went out and watched him hastening away at an easy and rapid pace over the grassy plain outside

the convent wall towards some houses, where he probably lived, I could not help sending after him mentally the words, "Peace be with thee, papa; there are many worse men in the world than thou."

CHAPTER VI.

The Cow of Northern Russia—Cattle let out to Pasture—A Cow on its way Home—Climate and Productions of Little or Southern Russia—The Extent of Moscow—The Thief Market—The Police of Moscow—Robberies and Burglaries—Purchasers of Stolen Goods—Scenes of Real Life in Russia—Men of the Market—Speculating in Old Clothes—Ingenious Thieves and Ingenuous Victims—Sale of Stolen Goods—Not for the Market—Russian Character—A Hard-won Victory.

IF a traveller desires to see a city and mark its ways and peculiarities he must go about it on foot. One morning I emerged early from my hotel, all the world still in bed, and on turning up the first street I met a solitary cow. She was coming leisurely down the raised footway unattended. Not another moving thing was in sight. As I stood to watch her she walked on at a good pace, without looking round, and much as if she had an object in view and was not at all at a loss as to her direction to it. After a time she turned a corner, and I lost sight of her. Presently I met another, and after a time a third, each alone.

Then one came out of a gateway in front of me, and went on down the broad street I was following. The gate was closed when I reached it. It must be acknowledged that, having a liking for cows, and also a certain bucolic discrimination as to form and colour and breed, I found these cows very ugly. In fact, the Russian cow of the North is but a plain beast. She is usually black and white with a rugged, ungainly shape. The marking, too, of the colours is displeasing to the eye. She is, however, by no means small.

But now the proceedings of these cows in the early morning in the heart of the city, wandering alone, was a mystery. On inquiring I was told that throughout Moscow various families possess, among their worldly goods, a cow. Vast numbers of the larger houses have considerable spaces enclosed in the rear of their dwellings—gardens, courts, grassy places. Likewise the innumerable cottages in the by-streets have within their gates green plots and outhouses. In very many of these there is a cow. During the summer time, when there is pasture, the first duty to be observed in all these dwellings is to open the gates and let out the cow. If there is delay in this performance a loud warning from the outhouse or the court awakes the servant to it. The cow let out, he may go to bed again.

She knows her way by certain streets towards a certain barrier of the city. As she goes other cows join her from other cottages or houses, and by the time they all arrive near the barrier they are a considerable body. Here they find a man blowing a horn, whose business it is to conduct them to some pasture outside the town, to take care of them during the day, to collect them by his horn in the afternoon, and to bring them back to the barrier at a given time. When he has done this his business is over. Each cow knows her way home, and finds it unmolested up to the very heart of the city, the Kremlin. What a simple and convenient method for insuring good and pure and fresh milk to the family! Each *mater-familias* can water it according to her wants or tastes, and she can omit the chalk—a blessed privilege!

On another afternoon I was loitering about the Palanka Square, just outside the Kitai Gorod, when through one of the Kitai gates, and from among the crowd of passengers, came a solitary cow. As she passed near me I could not but mark her fine form and full eye and glossy neck. There was no one with her to take care of her. I remarked this to a Swiss who was my companion.

"Is she quite alone?" said I.

"Of course," he replied; "she knows her way home."

"Well, but she has just come through the Kitai, at its very busiest time, when its streets are crowded with drojkis and carts and people; would not boys interrupt her?"

My thoughts went off to what our London *gamins* would do under similar circumstances.

"There is no man or boy in all Moscow would venture to touch or interfere with that cow," said the Swiss; "it would be as much as his life is worth; at any hour of the day she is safe everywhere, and you see everybody gets out of her way to let her go home. Everyone is interested in every cow carrying her milk home to the family, and so she is under the protection of everybody."

To test this, I watched the animal for some distance along the busy and bustling market-place, and then along the Boulevard; and she held steadily on her way, taking her path by the gutter as long as it was unimpeded, and then threading her way among the little carts and stalls, jostling no one, and getting back to her line when possible, till she reached her turning-point, and then making it without any hesitation.

But this cow was different from any I had seen, and I applied to my Swiss.

"Ah! yes," he said, "there is a breed in Southern Russia which is very fine, as large and as handsome as we have in Switzerland, and this is one of them."

This Southern Russia, or Little Russia, seems by all accounts to be a country of many excellencies. If you remark a fine horse—one of those black trotters, with an Arab look about him—you are told, "That is of a breed in Southern Russia." So it is with the corn. Little Russia, as it is the source of the inspiration of Russian poets who sing of "the heavenly climate and the fair fields of Little Russia," so it is the mother of all good things—corn and wine, and horses and cows. This cow life of Moscow reminded me of the account given by the amusing author of "Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau," as to the habits and ways of life of the pigs of Schlangenbad. There a pig-man generally led the animals of the place out to their breakfast and dinner beyond the town, collecting them in the same way as the men of Moscow do their cows. I will only add that there is this difference between the cases of Schlangenbad and Moscow, that whereas the former is but a diminutive place where it is but a few minutes' walk from the centre to the fields, Moscow is a

huge city. From my hotel, which was as near the centre as possible, I calculated that the distance was full three miles to any barrier. I walked from it by almost all of the great radiating thoroughfares to the several barriers, and I found that it cost me a fair hour of walking easily, at about a pace of three miles per hour. This would make the diameter of the city about six miles. It is declared to be twenty miles in circumference, and this my calculation would be in agreement with the general statement, because there is one point in the circle where there is a considerable projection, on the south-east, and this loop or projection would account for the extra two miles. Thus the Moscow cows in many instances must walk three miles out in the morning for their food, and the same distance back again in the afternoon to their homes. My Southern Russian beauty must have done this, for she was close to my hotel when I saw her. A cow of this Southern breed is worth forty roubles—about six pounds; but the commoner animal of the North is worth only about ten or twelve to twenty roubles.

While standing on the Palanka Square, watching the cow, I observed a crowd of men and women at the corner of it, spreading across the Boulevard walk and into the arch of one of the gateways of the Kitai

Wall. Some of these had pairs of boots in their hands, others had coats hanging over their arms; others again were carrying waistcoats, while many women were carrying women's dresses as well as the garments of men. Some sat on the low railing of the Boulevard pathway, all waiting, all talking. What was this? I had observed this same collection of people more than once before at this same place when passing through the Palanka Square.

My Swiss informant told me that just inside the gateway was a market, and that this crowd outside was only the outflow of it. Some called this the Thief Market; others gave it the attractive name of the Louse Market. It received the latter appellation from the fact that as it was attended by all the commonest and lowest and dirtiest part of the population of the city, there was also a very large population of another kind with them, and that if you went into the market the chances were that you would bring out with you in your clothes more life than you carried in. The reason of the other name was, that all the articles one saw in the hands or on the arms of the men and women were considered to be the produce of robberies.

"But," said I, "what do the police in such a case?

I see some of them standing about in their uniforms."

"The police do nothing," he replied—"that is, they only do what suits them."

The police of Moscow, it appeared, are a very peculiar body of men. Their business, of course, is to search into all acts of robbery, and to discover, if they can, the robbers; but then their next business is to make all the money they can out of the case for themselves. They are badly paid by the Government, and when they have discovered the thief they keep the discovery close. It is a valuable piece of knowledge, and not to be parted with but for a consideration. Now the Government have already paid their share of the premium, but if the robber will pay something handsome more than the Government, then the interest of the police is on the side of the higher premium—the robber. Thus there are continual robberies and burglaries, one nearly every night, in Moscow. Every man and householder must take care of himself and his goods. The police are, if anything, rather against him. The robbers are a mine of wealth to them. This is a very curious state of things in this beautiful and highly-civilized city, the capital of a great country. Here was an open market, under the nose of the police, for stolen goods

—the police in a manner in league with the thieves and profiting by the plunder.

These people who were selling were not the actual thieves, but were the purchasers at low prices of the stolen goods. It was difficult to believe that such a known and understood system could go on; but then Russia is a country which is in a transition state between one social condition and another. I made some remark about the police, and this market offering a premium on robbery, when my companion observed, "It is a premium on ingenuity. No one in the world is more ingenious than a Russian about money," and he related the following circumstances connected with this market:—

"One day lately a man brought a watch here for sale, and sold it. Another watched the sale, marked the buyer, and followed him. Passing through one of the Kitai gates, he, the follower, met a soldier, to whom he said a few words, giving him a rouble. They both came up to the purchaser of the watch. Said the man, addressing the purchaser, 'Friend, you have bought a watch in the market—it is mine; it was stolen from me last night.' 'How do I know that?' replied the other; 'what was your watch like?' The man described the watch, adding, 'Here, show it

to my friend, this soldier; he knows it well.' Of course, on seeing it, the soldier swore fiercely to it as his friend's watch. 'Now,' said the man, 'you give me up my watch, or I follow you till we meet a policeman, and I tell him all about it.' The man gave up the watch, and the other went back into the market and sold it."

A second case the Swiss related:—

"A rich fur cloak was sold in this market. Two men marked the buyer go and pawn it. These men in the evening disguised themselves as police, and going to the pawnbroker, a Jew, they said, 'You have a fur cloak'—describing it—'pawned to you to-day. We are in search of that cloak; it was stolen some days since.' 'Well,' said the Jew, 'there it is. I lent forty roubles on it; if you pay me that sum, there is the cloak.' 'Pay you forty roubles! The Government does not pay for the recovery of stolen goods. If you do not give it up, you must come before the authorities, and you may lose your licence.' So the Jew, being frightened, gave up the cloak, which the men, their disguise thrown off, brought and sold in the Thief Market the next day.

I walked on with my companion along the Boulevard outside the Kitai wall, down the hill to the round

tower at the corner, where the wall strikes on the Moskwa. Near the tower, and on the road by the river, I observed three or four ill-dressed, scampish men hanging about, scattered, but evidently of one party. It is rather a lonely corner. There are no houses, as on the opposite side of the Boulevard is the long low wall of the garden of the large Foundling Hospital, which stands at a considerable distance from the corner. Presently a lad came along the road by the Hospital wall, and turned up the Boulevard. He had a rather bulky bundle under one arm. In a moment one of the men made a dash at the boy, and caught hold of the bundle. The others hurried up, and the boy was surrounded. "Men of the Market," said my companion. The boy pushed on up the pathway of the Boulevard, the men all eager in manner and animated in gesture, evidently bent on learning what was in the bundle. As the boy passed the round tower which abuts on the pathway the men got quite round him, and partly by persuasive offers to buy, and partly by a certain good-natured violence, they forced him into a recess of the Kitai wall and the tower. I strolled back to see the result. In the recess the bundle was opened, the contents spread on the ground —apparently various articles of men's clothing—all

the men kneeling round and examining them closely, the boy seated. It was his little shop; and the men in turn were chattering, gesticulating, making offers for the goods with eager depreciation. Now and then one got up and pretended to come away in utter disgust at the price demanded, and then went back again, as if for one last effort. After a time the boy got up and left them, went round the tower with a quick step and a satisfied countenance, but without his bundle; and as he walked along under the Hospital wall by the river he was counting something in his two hands very earnestly.

"He got his money," said the Swiss, with a laugh. "Now they will go to the market."

The men emerged from the recess, one of them with the bundle under his arm. He went on his way up the Boulevard under the Kitai wall towards the Thief Market, and the other three turned again towards the river. The goods were stolen, and the man had bought them on speculation.

Scarcely was the boy out of sight when a man appeared walking along the road by the Hospital. He was neatly dressed, and had the look of a servant. He, too, had a bundle under his arm. The men watched his approach, and the moment he turned the

corner of the wall to go up the Boulevard instead of going on by the river, they hurried across after him, and one, going up to his side, put out his hand and tapped the bundle. The man merely looked over his shoulder, nodded and laughed, saying in a cheery way, "No, no, not for the market," and went on. The two returned leisurely to their companion, who had continued lounging by the low river wall and looking down at the water, and who now called out to them with a laugh, "I told you so." He was priding himself on his better perception that this neatly-dressed man was not a customer for the market. This corner of the Kitai wall, by the Boulevard and the Hospital, was evidently a little manor on which these sporting gentlemen took their daily diversion. Here they lay in wait and watched for their game. Here, by that quiet river road up to this solitary corner the game was sure to come; and here they brought it down and bagged it, their weapons being their wits and a few roubles. Just up the hill was their sure market. How quickly they turned over their little floating capital!

One day, standing by a window in my hotel on the Boulevard, watching the endless novelty of figures passing along the pathway in front, I witnessed a new

scene of "The Market." I think it must be allowed to the Russians as a people that they are by no means an ill-tempered or a quarrelsome race. During all the time of my stay in Russia I never once saw two men fight, or even have a violent contention beyond a few passionate words. They appeared to be a singularly easy and kindly-tempered people. You may witness more rudeness and roughness between man and man in gesture and voice in one hour in Paris than you will see in Moscow in a month. This scene by the Kitai wall before the hotel was redolent of "The Market." A middle-aged man, apparently a Jew by his dress, was walking quietly along the pathway with a bundle under his arm. A man and woman of the small shopkeeper class met him, and something induced the woman to turn round after passing the Jew and look after him. The two parties had not recognised each other. Now the woman went up behind the Jew and peered at the bundle, and then she snatched at it. The Jew turned short round and caught the bundle with his other hand, and then there began an altercation. The woman gesticulated violently, pointing with one hand to the bundle, which she grasped with the other. The man, her companion, came up and looked on. The woman appealed to

him, and the Jew appealed to him. The passers-by stopped; and the Jew and the woman so pulled and tugged at the poor bundle, that, of course, it burst open, and then a woman's dress appeared. Now the man seemed to recognise this, and he too entered the lists against the Jew. I must say the Hebrew bore all this outrageous conduct of these two strangers with much patience. It had the look of a highway robbery with violence in broad day. The Jew was the injured person, and all he did was to hold on to his property and call out something continually in a piteous tone, which I could not distinguish. Still he held on pertinaciously, as any man would under the circumstances, and more especially a tenacious man of the proverbial tribes. All this unseemly squabble arose out of that odious mother of corrupt ingenuity, "The Market," just up the hill in the Kitai gateway. On inquiring, it appeared that the Jew had purchased a woman's dress in the market, "quite promiscuous," as Mrs. Gamp would say, and was carrying it home, when, by ill-luck, the owner—for it had been stolen, of course—caught a glimpse of a corner of it peeping out of the wrapping kerchief under the Hebrew's arm as he passed. The woman's wits were all alive, for she was with her husband on her way to the market

on the chance of finding the missing dress there on sale. When the kerchief was pulled off, and the whole of the lost treasure of her heart, in all its beauty and loveliness, was exposed to view, naturally she was excited to madness, as any woman would be. For a full quarter of an hour the struggle went on, the Jew holding on by the dress by the middle, while the woman held one end of it, and the husband the other. Nobody interfered, but a little crowd stopped to watch the result. The three pulled and pushed each other all over the broad footway, from the low railing on one side to the low railing on the other, now under the low lime-trees, and now in the open. No policeman appeared; and so the tussle went on uninterrupted. The Jew never attempted to pull away the dress, but only to hold on to it with his little wiry arms locked round it, sometimes forced one way by the superior strength of the man, and then the other by the passionate violence of the woman, and sometimes staggering under a united rush of the two. At last he was nearly down on his back, when, in his efforts to save himself from falling, the dress slipped from his grasp, and he stood a dishevelled and discomfited man. And then began a parley, which lasted another ten minutes, over the garment. Clearly

there was matter for negotiation, as is the case with greater powers after a campaign fought and won. They all went up the pathway, and getting over the low rail on to the grass went together to a recess in the wall of the Kitai. There it appeared the woman was induced to part with her dress for a consideration, for, the parley ended, the Hebrew rolled up his prize in his kerchief, and walked down the Boulevard till he came to a bench just opposite my window. Here, under one of the dwarf limes, he sat down to recover himself after his long battle. It was a dearly-bought victory, as I daresay he confessed to himself, for he had suffered in his person, and, worse than that, he had had to pay money a second time from his purse for his prize.

CHAPTER VII.

Beds in Hotels—Rapid Improvement—Russian Noblemen on their Travels in Former Days—Change produced by Railways—M. Dusaux's Hotel and Cuisine—Interior of a Russian Hotel—View from my Window on the Boulevard—Carriages—The Public Rooms—Russian Waiters—Devotional Character of the People—Scene at Wilna—National Costume—Property held by Serfs—A Cossack Chief—Peasants on their way to Market—Riding and Driving—A Carriage of Primitive Construction—Adventure with a "Spider."

AN amusing writer of some letters on Russia, and more particularly on Moscow, in the year of the coronation of the present Czar, in 1856, is eloquent on the subject of the beds in the hotels. A bedstead and a mattress, he tells us, were provided in his day for the traveller, but anything like bedding, such as pillows and blankets and sheets, the stranger must himself provide, or do without. But it is surprising with what rapid stride alterations and improvements advance into hitherto benighted corners of the social world in these latter years. It is not many lustres

ago that any Russian nobleman, on his journey into France or Germany in his huge family vehicle—which was always as much more capacious than the travelling-carriage of any great man of either of these two countries as Russia is larger than Gaul or Teutonia—having ordered beds at an inn for the night for his family, gave no thought of beds for his many retainers. These latter passed their nights in the roomy carriages, or on mattresses in open corridors. Out of those capacious vehicles what piles of pillows and bedding the eyes of wondering onlookers saw emerge. These were not only useful on the journey over the lengthening Russian wastes by day, but were indispensable at the inns by night. But, *tempora mutantur*, the railroads have altered all this for the better. Now in the towns of Russia where the railway brings its civilizing influences, the traveller finds his bedroom furnished with goods from Paris or Berlin *viâ* St. Petersburg.

At Moscow there is a house kept by Monsieur Dusaux, a Frenchman, well situated on the Boulevard outside the Kitai wall. This house was my habitation while at Moscow. Monsieur Dusaux is a pattern landlord—courteous, unassuming, obliging, attentive to his guests. It is true that having been for some

years *chef* in the establishment of an ambassador of his own country, and his affections and habits being still in the cuisine, he looks after that department of his own hotel with a never-failing solicitude and leaves the general management of the house to an active and intelligent German intendant. But I found this an admirable division of labour, inasmuch as M. Dusaux's cuisine was, in consequence of his careful supervision and skilful hand, worthy of Paris in all respects. The German intendant spoke English fluently, knew everything in Moscow, and was worth his weight in roubles in the matter of making bargains for the stranger with that bargain-loving race, the Moscow shopkeepers.

The entrance of a Russian hotel is modest. It is not a grand gateway, with an interior court, as in France or Germany, but is a simple doorway, as in England. The hotel of Monsieur Dusaux was a long and low house. Immediately inside the entrance door was a broad flight of stairs to the first floor, and on my arrival on reaching this I found a wide platform with a door on my left opening into a suite of handsome public rooms, and on my right a spacious corridor leading to the private apartments. The German superintendent appeared at once, and guessing

in an instant my country, without a question led me along the corridor to its extremity, and into a handsome well-furnished bright room adapted for a bedroom and sitting-room for a single man. I felt at home in a moment. If I had had a choice of all Paris or London I could not have taken up my abode in one more to my liking. There were sofa, tables, chairs, mirrors; while an ornamental screen shut off the sleeping part of the room. Across the short gap of time since 1856 and the amusing letters from Moscow what a leap—from barbarism into refinement!

My room was at a commanding corner of the house, two windows in front "giving," as the French say, on the Boulevard, and other two looking up the said Boulevard to the Palanka Square, or market-place, as well as into another broad street. In my front, and beyond the Boulevard and a promenade planted with dwarf lime-trees, stretched away to the right and left the white and picturesque and battlemented wall of the Kitai Gorod with its round towers or bastions at intervals. Precisely opposite to my windows was a small arch pierced in the wall, a flight of steps leading up to it, a passage for pedestrians into the Kitai. It was a sunny day in the beginning of August, and my windows looked south and west.

The Boulevard was all alive with carriages of strange construction: droschky, tarantass, spider-carriage, country waggons, all on four wheels; one on two wheels being a rare object—I scarcely saw a vehicle on two wheels of any kind during all my stay in Russia,—while foot-passengers in every kind of costume, except our accustomed one of the West, filled the promenade, hurrying on business, or strolling at their ease, or sitting on benches beneath the shade of the limes. I felt at once launched into the very centre of everything—close to theatres, markets, the Kitai, and the Kremlin.

In an hour from my arrival I had shaken off the effects of my night journey from St. Petersburg, an affair of twenty hours, and was sitting on a divan in one of the public rooms by a window looking on the novel and moving panorama of the Boulevard, and deeply concerned in a dish from M. Dusaux's own skilful hand. These public rooms were charming. Imagine three handsome and lofty apartments *en suite* to the front and a pretty cabinet beyond, the first room furnished in green velvet hangings and similar covering of chairs and divans, the second in crimson and grey silk moreen, the third in blue velvet, and the little cabinet in blue and white. Small round

tables stood in front of the divans, and comfortable large arm-chairs were everywhere; mirrors covered the walls at intervals from the ceiling to the divans, and gas lamps with four or five burners were suspended in the centres; the doors were fitted with rich, heavy *portières*, as defences against the cold in winter. Nothing could be more scrupulously clean and fresh than were these rooms at any hour of the day or night, and nothing could be more pleasing to the eye, or more gratifying to one's sense of luxurious surrounding, than their taste and order and good keeping. Four men in black, with white neckcloths—the costume *de rigueur* of all waiters in Russia at hotels or stations under the new railway reign—were in attendance on these rooms, and greater civility or readiness or more noiseless waiting no one could desire. These men were all Tartars. They were of dark complexion, rather high cheek bones, mild countenances, pleasing voices, and had all that peculiar look of the men of the East—the jet-black hair, the colourless skin, the full lip and the veiled eye. Each morning of my stay on entering the middle room I found a certain table by one of the divans, commanding a window to the Boulevard, prepared for me with all the freshness and brightness of a Paris

salon, the beautiful Moscow porcelain fanciful in colour and novel and graceful in form, the room cool with shading blinds; and often either my attentive landlord or the intelligent intendant paid me a visit during breakfast to offer any information on Moscow and the Muscovites I might desire.

Every day I witnessed scenes very curious to the eye of a stranger, in front of my windows, in connection with the small arch for foot passengers through the Kitai wall. Above the arch was fixed a small picture of the Virgin in a gilt frame, and scarcely did a pedestrian, unless he was a foreigner, ever go up these steps, or come down them, or pass in front of the arch up or down the promenade, without a reverence to the picture. How often from my window I remarked the general devotion of this people! The greater number would kneel down, uncover their heads, and cross themselves three times, while many did this to the number of three times three. And as it was with people on foot, so it was with people in carriages; as these went by, droschkies, telegas, tarantasses, strings of the common telegas laden with country produce, the drivers of all these various vehicles, almost without exception, would salute that little picture some twenty yards off above the arch, and cross

themselves, bare-headed, three times. I thought I could distinguish that the lower the man or woman in the social scale the more earnest was the devotion —the more vigorous the crossing. Officers in their droschkies saluted it, ladies in their carriages did the same, but without stopping; whereas in numerous instances country people would dismount from their telegas and kneel in mid-roadway. Frequently persons coming down the cross street at my corner would stop at the angle, and kneel uncovered on the foot pavement. I could not hear that that little image had ever been credited with any high spiritual act to account for all this veneration; but it was the Virgin, and this seemed to be sufficient. To a Protestant, who lives in an undemonstrative society such as that of England or Germany, this warmth of feeling, or, at least, outward expression of it, is a surprise. He sees so little of it even in France or Italy, in Roman Catholic countries even where such externals are encouraged, that he is quite unprepared for the general and persistent exhibition of it in any country. In passing through Prussia, on my way into Russia, I of course saw nothing of this kind anywhere, not even in the Roman Catholic parts of it, whereas I had hardly crossed the frontier and entered the first town, Wil-

na, before I found knots of people on their knees, uncovered, in the middle of one of the streets—soldiers, peasants, gentry, offering their devotion to an unseen figure of the Virgin. There was an archway across the street, and above this was built a diminutive chapel, and over the altar, and concealed by a green curtain, was the picture to which all these people in Wilna were bowing down. What a radical difference in mind and thought within the distance of a few miles! So now, in front of my window on the Boulevard, was a repetition of the Wilna scene.

The query to myself then and since still is—is this a really devout people, in whom there is a stronger sense of religion than in other races, and in whom this sense will last, and be a perpetual bond, to unite them and aid them to work out a grand fate in the history of the world? Or is it only the result of their present social condition—one of much seclusion from the active and stirring world—one of limited knowledge and of a forced subjection to conventional habits—a forced submission to the strong hand of domestic power and ecclesiastical schooling? Anyhow, there is the expression now. But, then, will this continue in its present vigour and earnestness?—continue, now that freedom has come to the serf, and

railways are bringing the depths of Russia into contact with the outer world, with education and all its doubts and all its demands on men to throw off the shackles of custom and thought and to trust to their own powers of reason—education, with all its science, and all its astounding novelties, and its defiance and overthrow of old-established ways? Anyhow my window on the Boulevard offered me a fresh page in life.

As a rule every man in Russia wears a long coat, one which reaches nearly to his heels. At first sight you think that every man is wearing his great-coat, even on a hot summer day. But it is not so. This long heavy garment, and the high black boots reaching to the knee on the outside of all kinds of pantaloons, are the distinguishing points of the dress of a Russian. All other parts of his dress may vary, but these two articles, the coat and the boots, they belong to the man. They have a good effect, too, independent of their substantial usefulness, as they impart to the wearer an air of size and weight and strength which is manly. Now among the men passing continually along the promenade, of course wearing the unfailing coat and boots, there were some of a certain character of dress which was striking. Sometimes these were four or five in company, some-

times one alone, but the dress was almost always the same. Let me describe it. Below were the indispensable boots, very neatly made, with a considerable attention to cut. The feet were often finely and delicately formed. The boots reached to the knee, to which descended a full knickerbocker of black cloth, often of black velvet. A scarlet cotton tunic reached to the middle of the thigh, and over the upper part of this tunic was a black velvet waistcoat with ornamental metal buttons, closed up to the neck. The large flowing dark coat and a small dark cloth cap on the head completed the attire. It was singularly handsome and manly. On inquiring who these men were of whom I saw such numbers, I was told "They are peasants; the other day they were serfs—now they are free." This, it appeared, is the dress of those peasants who are well-to-do—men who have saved money. I then saw that there were numbers of other men who wore this same dress—that is, the fashion of it—only that all the material was coarser and commoner, ruder and dirtier, and that in fact this was the national peasant costume. The difference was that these well-dressed men were the dandies of their class—the upper crust—and all the material being richer and brighter in colour, the effect was enhanced. This is, in fact, the national dress of the Russian.

Vast numbers throughout the empire of this class had been allowed by their masters to enter into trade and commerce in the cities, where many of them were successful, saved money, and bought plots of land in the country, or a cottage in Moscow, or a house. Some of these men are even wealthy, have become owners of parts of the villages in which they were originally serfs, and even of mills and manufactories on the properties of their former masters. While the state of serfdom continued, with all the power of coercion by the master, and its bonds on the liberty of action of the peasant, these facts were kept out of sight as much as possible, for fear of results of which the machinery was legally in the masters' hands; but when serfdom ceased the use of concealment ceased, and then appeared the fact so remarkable of an immense body of serfs possessing property in house and land.

Among the passengers along the Boulevard was frequently a fine tall elderly man, dressed in a light grey coat of a coarse material, Cossack boots, and a round grey cap with a wide border of dark fur all round it, forming in a manner a heavy projecting

brim. He was a grand figure, erect and rather corpulent. The features were fine, the eyes grey and still bright, and the whole countenance mild and noble. He appeared to be always sauntering about at his ease and leisure. I admired him so much that we struck up a kind of acquaintance. We could not converse, but we always made a kind of shew of talk. I would say good morning to him in Russian and inquire for his health, and he would reply something in Cossack. This man had once been a Cossack chief, but his tribe subdued, his occupation gone of burning villages and capturing spoil, he lived at Moscow. Some said he had a small allowance from Government, and would wish that it were so and the old chief not quite thrown on the world; but his principal means of living were declared to be vicarious charity. He certainly begged of me always with his large cap in his hand. It was a humiliating position for the fine old man; but our muttered talk always ended in one way—mutual smiles and partial kopecks. He always took them with an air as though we had been two chiefs. Thus—"My friend, let me offer you this gold drinking-cup, a spoil from the slaughtered enemy, as a proof of a tried and enduring friendship.—My friend, I accept willingly the goblet, and will do as

much for you on occasion when our steeds trample on the throats of the vanquished." This was the sentiment of our occasional meeting on the promenade. This old chieftain always reminded me of the prominent figure in one of the Cossack tales of Gogol, the Russian writer, Tarass Boolba. Here were the grand form, the Eastern face, the dark complexion, the air of the chieftain in figure and countenance. He looked like a man of lineage, one who had swayed the council in the Zaporoghian Ssiecha, and was now but a temporary sojourner in the streets of Moscow.

The Russian is a patient man. The Boulevard ran up with a rather considerable rise from the hotel to the Palanka Square; and in the mornings when the peasantry were arriving for the market on that square, their creaking and frail-looking telegas heavily laden with country produce, not to mention the wife and old mother and two or three children piled on the top—these telegas would come by in a string of twenty at a time—there was very often a hard fight of the little horse to get up that last hill. These peasant horses were generally but undersized and weakly things, worth about ten roubles—twenty-five shillings. What a number of jibbers I used to watch. Not even the vigorous crossings and earnest prayers to the lit-

tle picture of the Virgin above the arch in the Kitai wall just opposite and looking out on the fatal pitch of the hill, were of any avail in many cases. It would seem as if the Virgin only ventured as a reply to all the entreaties for help the cold-blooded advice, "Aide-toi et le ciel t'aidera."

There stood the little horses jibbing in spite of prayers and advice. But the Russian never beat his horse or became angry. He seemed to be gifted with an unlimited patience. The family would continue piled up on the top of the load as if they had no concern in the matter. If the horse could manage in the course of the morning to get them all up to the Palanka, well and good,—but if he could not, then they must stay there and bear it. Getting down as a measure of help in the question did not seem to occur to the comfortable dames. The poor little horse would struggle about half-way up the pitch, just above my corner, and then, utterly spent, he would give it up as a bad job and let the whole thing go back sideways into the gutter. Another little party just behind would go through much the same performance, the gutter being the ultimate result of both. Then would begin an affair of talk. Passengers stopped to look on and give advice. After resting a bit the little horse

would be roused by a shower of goading reproaches to an effort; but he evidently knew that he was better off in the gutter, for a time, at all events, and so he would shake his head in reply to the abuse, make a sudden spasmodic rush, pretend to fall down on his knees, and then let the whole thing roll back again. The peasant would blow him up savagely, and threaten to do the cruellest things with his whip, but he never struck him. This kind of performance was of daily occurrence. At last it always terminated in a loose horse being brought down from the Palanka by a friend, and the goods and the imperturbable women all arriving in the market in their dignified position. It is claimed for the Russian, by those who have lived some years in that country, that he is by no means of a hard or cruel nature, but, on the contrary, that he is of a mild and patient disposition. Certainly this treatment of the jibbing horses on the Boulevard was a testimony to the truth of this account.

Among their exercises of skill, I should not say that driving horses was the distinguishing excellence of the men of the upper ten thousand. They have little practice of this when young, as it is the universal custom to be driven and not to drive. The boys of a family, even where there is a stable of horses, as a

rule neither ride nor drive. I never saw any man of that class on horseback, or with the reins in his hand, except here and there a cavalry officer,—with one exception. There is a small, fanciful carriage on which young officers, ambitious of the art of driving, now and then try their inexperienced hands to pilot it through the streets. This is the smallest and the lightest, and indeed the most absurd of vehicles. It consists of one narrow plank connecting two pairs of wheels of a diameter of about three feet. Suspended from the plank by leather straps are two shoes, like those of a lady's saddle, for the driver's feet. There are no springs.

Anything more thoroughly primitive, but more thoroughly uncomfortable, than one of these spider carriages cannot well be imagined. One day a young Russian gentleman drove one of these up the boulevard under my window, and pulled up at the door of a shop on the slope of the hill. Having no servant with him he gave the long reins a turn or two round one of the line of low stone posts which border and support the raised footway, by the shop door. The horse was a remarkably neat grey of the South Russian breed, Arab-looking, light, young, and rather awkward in his going, and his driver struck me as essentially raw. The

whole thing, indeed, appeared new and strange to both horse and driver. The carriage was a toy, bright and shining, the boxes of the wheels silvered, and the harness elaborate and silver-mounted. I looked on the hitching the horse to the stone post with a doubt.

The young man went into the shop and remained some time. The horse thus left to himself began to chafe on his bit, and then he moved from side to side, now getting away till he was stopped by the rein round the post, and then half falling down as he yawed back again to the raised pathway and stumbled up on to it. Becoming impatient, and the young man not returning, the horse went forward a pace or two till the rein pulled him up, and then after a shake or two of his head went backwards. This did very well for a time; but by degrees he backed so far that he passed the post, and the rein began to pull on him backwards. The more he went back, the more the rein pulled him back. But it acted unequally, the outer or off rein shortening and the near one slacking. Thus his head was gagged and pulled round over his back; and so he stumbled up the footway, lost his footing, and tumbled over on his back on the pitch of the pathway, and slipped down between the shafts, all his four feet in the air. Just at that moment the

young man came out of the shop and found his horse and carriage in this awkward predicament. He commenced running up and down the pathway, not knowing where to begin to set matters to rights. Luckily the horse after a struggle or two lay quiet, gagged as he was. Two or three men ran up, more accustomed to horses than the owner; and having set the head of the animal free, they put on a good many hands, and by main force hauling on the head and the tail, they fairly pulled him out of the gutter and over the shaft, and set the little Arab on his legs again—none the worse. The young gentleman seemed to consider the whole matter a very serious one, and that driving the spider might have results not altogether consistent with safety or pleasure; so after hesitating for a time whether he should or should not mount again on that thin plank, he eventually decided against it; and so handing over the smart little turn-out to one of the men who had hauled on the Arab's tail, with many directions, he went away ingloriously, "Equo non bene relicto," on foot.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Foundling Hospital—Extent and Purpose of the Establishment—Crown Governesses—Russian Capacity for Governing—A Sunday Visit to the Hospital—The Buildings and Grounds—Internal Arrangements—Courtesy of an Official—The Chapel—The Pupils in Uniform—The Service—The Priest—The Responses—The Nurseries—Costume of the Nurses—The Superintendents—Messengers, Servants, and Attendants—The Nurses at Dinner—Number of Orphans received Daily—Another Visit to the Chapel—The Choir—The Papa—Theatrical Manner of the Russo-Greek Priests—The Gallery of Paintings—The Play Room.

EVERY stranger pays a visit to the Institution called the Foundling Hospital. This is not merely a place for the reception and treatment of little unfortunates, but is likewise a school for a large number of girls, orphans, who are daughters of indigent servants of the Crown. There are about seven hundred of these young persons at one time in the building, and these receive a liberal education in the Institution, while on leaving it they are provided with an outfit and enjoy small salaries according to the certificates which they have gained in their examination.

For six years after leaving, these young persons are bound to devote themselves to the Crown as governesses or school teachers in the Empire, except in cases of marriage, when they are free from this obligation, and also lose their salaries.

Of the foundlings there are about twelve thousand received here in each year. They only remain in the building for a few weeks, and then are sent off into the villages where they are taken charge of by nurses at a regular charge. As the boys grow up they are taught trades, and the girls are instructed in suitable employments, many of them returning to the hospital as nurses and attendants, and even as superiors in the separate departments, according to their capacity or character. It is a noble establishment in all its detail, in its double purpose of a charity and a school.

It is claimed for the Russian that he possesses the capacity for governing men, a power which involves a fine sense of order and a talent for detail. This is declared to be the foundation of his superiority over the more highly-educated and more refined Pole on the west, and the more numerous and more warlike nations on his eastern borders. It is impossible to go through the Foundling Hospital without being struck with the admirable order and completeness of detail,

the brilliant cleanliness and the attention to health, which reign throughout all the departments of this magnificent establishment. There is nothing superior to it in any country in all the substantial richness of material employed and the intelligent knowledge displayed in carrying out the object in view. It is a specimen of Russian ability to manage an institution on a large scale, and a witness to the claim put forward for them of a capacity for governing. There are those who blame this institution on the ground of encouraging immorality; but on this I offer no opinion.

I shall not offer here the statistics of the Foundling Hospital—these are in print in many books already; but I shall merely state what pleased me in a cursory visit. On inquiry as to the best time to see this famous establishment, I was asked, "Why do you not go on Sunday morning and hear the singing?—all the young ladies sing in the chapel." Accordingly, on the next Sunday morning at ten o'clock I walked by the Palanka Market along the Boulevard. It was a hot August day, and in August Moscow becomes something more than dusty. Turning off the dusty Boulevard by a gateway I found myself within the premises, cool, shaded, quiet, clean. A road bordered by trees on

either side ran along by a great garden wall and penetrated into the interior of the grounds at the back of the fine extensive pile, the front of which faced the river. Here, away from the glare and noise and dust, everything was scrupulously neat and in order—the roadway, the trees, the outer detached buildings, where resided some of the officers of the establishment, the circular plot of grass and flower-garden, in which was a small ornamental pavilion and around which some nurses were sitting and some children at play. As there is no smoke in Moscow everything was as fresh as if twenty miles separated this garden from the great city, instead of its being in the very middle of it. Going up to the great entrance I found in the hall a porter in the same Imperial livery for porters in the Kremlin—a scarlet great-coat with a cape reaching from his chin to his feet. On inquiring for the chapel I was at once directed to a broad flight of stone stairs, and on reaching a corridor at the top I was led inside an ante-room and desired to wait. While standing here I could hear the echo of many female voices singing in chorus at a distance. Presently an officer in a green uniform, a man of forty years of age with an agreeable countenance approached from another corridor, and coming up to

me with a smile, held out his hand with a frank, cordial manner, and asked me in French what I required. When I said I wished, if that could be permitted, to hear the singing in the chapel, he at once drew me along by the hand into the corridor by which he had come, and along it in the direction of the voices. This corridor was broad and lofty, like that of a palace, lit by large deep embayed windows, and floored with a fine polished parquet. Men in livery, and women in a peculiar style of coloured cap and apron, were standing about in knots in the windows and recesses. Beyond these the corridor opened at once into the chapel. Here were the whole seven hundred young persons in three divisions, and I found myself in a moment face to face with this imposing body, all standing up and fronting the altar, from behind which the officer and I had entered. The effect was rather startling. However, the officer led me to one of the usual large pillars near the screen or Ikonostas, and then, slipping away to his own place by another, left me standing in this most prominent situation, where I certainly could hear and see everything, but where every movement on my part during the service was open to the criticism of so many hundred young eyes. Happily in

these foreign churches all that a stranger is expected to do is to stand quite still.

The chapel was arranged in the usual form of the Greek Church with its four immense pillars; but as in this case these were only here for the sake of carrying out the conventional architecture, and not for the support of any cupolas—of which there were none—these pillars were of moderate size, only six feet square. The centre of the chapel was occupied by a large body of the young ladies, about two hundred, in a compact mass; and then in what may be called the two aisles, but which were, in fact, two square rooms, were the rest of the seven hundred. All were dressed in a neat uniform of grey and white body and skirts, and small white caps. Here and there at intervals among them were women with the air each of a directress of her party of pupils. The girls in the centre were the most advanced in age—about fifteen or sixteen years old. Nothing could look more neat and orderly. There was one main difference between this chapel and the churches of the city which was novel and particularly pleasing. This was clean and bright, with shining polished floor and scagliola pillars, and the Ikonostas, or screen, on the raised dais was a specimen of picturesque detail with its

golden doors and carpet-covered platform, all looking fresh as if of yesterday's completion; whereas the churches of the town, and especially the two principal ones in the Kremlin, in which reposes the dust of so many Czars, are the very reverse of all this—marvels of gaudiness and dirt and faded grandeur.

But the service was proceeding. The priest was a fine tall dark man, with long flowing hair, a moustache and a beard, and in his dress of white silk, with gold Greek crosses all over it, he was an imposing figure. He had a rich deep voice, and when he chanted the solo parts of the service, and the girls in a body made the responses, the effect was exceedingly musical, and even affecting. The contrast of the manly, deep-toned volume of voice of the one, and then the clear young ringing notes of the other, with a tender melancholy plaint underlying them, had to a stranger ear a soothing and touching charm.

When the service was over the young people went off in detachments at the back of the chapel, and the officer came to me, and we walked away together. On my expressing my thanks to him for his courtesy, and my gratification in the young people's singing, he said,

"Ah! but you should come to-morrow—our sing-

ing to-day was only pretty well; but to-morrow, if you will come, I can promise you something worth your hearing."

Of course I accepted this invitation. Then he said, "Would you like to walk through the house with me now? My time is at your service."

So we went. First he took me to the top storey of the building, where we went through a succession of enormous apartments, each about one hundred feet long by thirty in breadth, all vaulted, as a defence against the heat of summer and the cold of winter; all very light, very airy, and clean in all the detail as the apartments of any imperial palace. All the material, too, of everything looked rich and expensive. These were the nurseries of the foundlings. In each of these vaulted apartments the beds, or cribs, specimens of neatness, were ranged in rows, and nurses, in a costume, were scattered all over them, each with her child, either walking about, or sitting on the crib, attending to her little charge. The costume of the nurses was a cotton gown of a red and white pattern, and on the head a coloured cap apparently of a fine stuff. In one apartment the cap was blue, in another pink, in another red, in another green, and so on. The dress was the same throughout, but the caps

marked the different rooms. All these nurses were stout, strong women, healthy, clean, robust, fine specimens of a peasantry. Most of them were of a fair complexion, and some few were moderately good-looking; but beauty is a rare flower in the peasant gardens of Russia. In each apartment there was seated a woman at a little table. She always rose at the entrance of the officer, and remained standing. This was the superintendent. On her table were a book or two and pens and ink and paper. She kept an account of all that went on in her room, slept in it, and lived there, every day going out for a stipulated time for air and exercise. All these were of a higher class, being of those who were brought up in the institution as orphans, daughters of decayed officers and employés of the Government, and who, having returned to the hospital as their home, find a congenial occupation in these large nurseries. As a proof of the care and attention and absence of all stint in the management of these little children all the cribs were fitted with mosquito curtains during the heat of summer. To my surprise, too, there was a pervading quiet and repose through all these rooms. You rarely heard a cry, a proof methought of the healthiness of the air and

the place, and the skilful and kindly ways of the nurses with the children. The superintendents were all, I observed, cheerful people with pleasing countenances, and many of them wore the unmistakable mark of good birth in face and manner. They seemed most attentive in their calling, for more than once, when a child did set up its loud complaint and persisted, the superintendent would set off down the long apartment with swift and noiseless step to it and its nurse, and inspect the small thing herself as to the cause, and make suggestions, remaining till peace was restored.

From here we went downstairs. As we passed along the broad corridors, so light, so lofty, on so grand a scale, we met various women. Some looked like ladies, some like governesses, all neat in their dress, of grey, or black, or violet, rather small in person, with a certain refinement. My companion had a little something kindly to say to every one of them, as he had had to the superintendent in the nurseries above—either a suggestion in some detail of management, or a question respecting some young person, or only a simple word or two of pleasant salutation. All these, the officer said, were women who had been originally foundlings, had been well brought up in the

villages, and had come back to the Hospital in various employments according to their abilities. Those we met were principally messengers, servants, and attendants on the departments of the young orphans on the first floor and the foundlings above, each room having its own number of them.

Now we came to a hall in the centre of the building where some thirty or forty little people were at dinner. These belonged to neither of the large bodies of the Institution. They were a small separate party, an excrescence of charity on the grander foundation. They were here for their health—a limited number—from the city, temporarily. What a change, and what an aid to health for these little folks to be removed for a time from the confined places of their humble homes and bad air and the unwholesome food of gourds, to these lofty apartments and their reviving air and the nourishing sustenance of meat, and the able treatment of the best medical men of Moscow. They looked bright, and clean, and happy.

Descending to the basement we came into a long hall where the nurses were at dinner. What a scene! There were two immense tables, and on either side of these sat a hundred nurses—four hundred women. In their bright red and white dresses, and their blue,

and red, and green caps, now all intermingled, and their fresh, healthy faces, they were a remarkable sight. You only heard a general whispering. At one end a lady, the superintendent, overlooked the distribution of the dinner in portions to each. The dinner consisted of a native soup called schic—a composition of meat and vegetables—buckwheat stewed, and kvas, a native beer. Of course I accepted the invitation of the lady-superintendent to taste of these native products, and though I cannot say with truth that I should prefer to share the nurse's repast to a dinner at M. Dusaux's Hotel, yet it was by no means unpalatable, and the kvas of Russia is a pleasant and refreshing drink on a hot day. Immense quantities of buckwheat are consumed by the Russian people, as it is sweet to the taste and very nourishing and invigorating. A *galette* of buckwheat, with salt and pepper, is by no means to be despised.

I asked the officer to show me the room in which the foundlings are first received in the hospital. He took me to a vaulted apartment on the ground-floor, having a private staircase to itself which led to a small outer doorway opening into a large court. In this was a lady-superintendent sitting at her table with a body of nurses standing around, all in the con-

ventional costume. Of these latter only five had children in their arms—the rest, twenty and more, were waiting for arrivals. The lady rose at our entrance from her little table and her book of entries spread out on it, with rather a concerned countenance.

"How many have you to-day?" said the officer, going up to her with a smiling face.

"Look," she exclaimed, pointing to her book, "only five!"

"That is but a few indeed," he observed.

"Very few, very few," repeated the lady, quite with a tone of distress; "and it's getting late. To-day, I am afraid, is going to be a bad day."

"Oh!" said the officer, "it is not very late, there is time enough yet for more."

Thus he afforded her consolation. It was rather a a surprise to me that the lady selected for this especial post of conferring with the bringers-in of the small unfortunates was the prettiest person I had seen in the whole establishment. She was not more than twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age apparently, she had good features, a fresh and blooming complexion, so unlike the generality of Russian women, a fine figure, and a laughing countenance, beaming with good

humour. And now she put on an air of concern because there were so few children come in.

"How many nurses do you have ready in the room generally?" said I.

"Thirty-five is our number," replied the officer; "we rarely find that we exceed that amount."

"Thirty-five per day!" I exclaimed with a natural and, I hope, a pardonable surprise at this daily crop of young fruit in this field of humanity.

"Oh! yes; sometimes we go over that—we do indeed!" the lady broke in with an eagerness and an air of pleasure as she seemed to remember the triumphant fact. It was evident that she took a pride in her office, and considered that the days of over thirty-five were her gala days—days of honour and glory—when she could meet her enemies in the gate, with her quiver full, and could lie down in her bed at night with a quiet conscience. In spirit she was a Spartan matron, deserving of high reward.

I suggested to the officer that perhaps, now that serfdom was banished from the villages, people were becoming very good and moral and a zeal for marrying was growing up. He shook his head and laughed, and so did the pretty superintendent, but with a comical air as if she deprecated that view of the matter

altogether, as one in a manner injurious to herself and her office. It was clear that this engaging person looked at the credit of the establishment first, and that this consisted in numbers. Her pride was in hosts, as a preacher would feel a pride in a crowded congregation, or a general in added legions. Any check upon the maintenance of the lady's legions in the shape of matrimony or morality she would hold to be an invasion of her domain. The superintendent was a true official. The officer and I took our leave of her with a kindly wish on the part of both that things might mend in the afternoon; but she shook her head, as if she was hurt at our finding her with more than twenty empty-handed nurses. On her bonny face was the expression one sees on that of a suffering man on the bank of a noted trout-stream. In reply to the inquiry of a passer-by: Have you had any sport? he points to a poor little creel of five.

As we went down the short flight of steps to the side-door a woman passed us with a bundle in her arms.

"There is some comfort for our friend upstairs," said the officer.

I asked him how it happened that the prettiest and most smiling young woman in the place had been

selected for this peculiar office, and suggested that a more staid and older person would have been more appropriate. He did not appear to see any force in my view of the matter, but only laughed, and said the place had become vacant and she had applied for it, and was a most excellent and energetic person. She was one of the lady orphans brought up in the institution. I debated in myself as I walked home if this daily living in this peculiar atmosphere might not affect this engaging person's ideas about matrimony.

On the following morning I found myself, as by appointment, at the hour named by the officer, in the corridor leading to the chapel. He was already there, and then taking me by a different way he said,

"You will hear the singing much better upstairs in the gallery, so I will put you in a good place."

Accordingly he led me up a flight of stairs outside the chapel. There were but few persons in the galleries, which were ample spaces spreading out over the two side aisles, and forming part of the centre of the building—level spaces without benches or seats of any kind. In fact there are no seats in a Greek church, with the exception of a bench here and there in recesses, or against the outer wall. The congrega-

tion kneel or stand. A thin line of people, principally ladies, stood leaning on the low baluster which ran all round the gallery, and looking down into the body of the chapel. The officer placed me in front of the centre gallery, between two ladies, immediately opposite the Ikonostas. Thus I commanded the entire interior. Immediately below me was the principal body of the young ladies in front of the screen, which on its raised dais with its gilded gates in the middle, and its smaller equally gilded doors on either side, and its platform in front covered with a small carpet, had a brilliant effect. To the right and left below were the other two bodies of orphans, while up in the galleries, scattered along the back by the windows, were a number of young women in white caps and neatly dressed. The officer having placed me to his satisfaction went down again to his official position at a pillar by the Ikonostas.

To-day the priest was in a different dress. On the day previous this had been a white dress with gold Greek crosses; to-day it was of claret colour with gold crosses all over it, the last by far the most effective. There was a small desk or lectern on the platform, the only object there, in front of the golden gates. Presently the priest came out through one of

the side doors, and stood by the lectern with his back to the people, and chanted a long prayer in a fine deep rich voice, and after this the girls sang. The principal singers were immediately below me, and had the written music in their hands. Many of the young folks seemed to be more given up to the manner of the performance rather than to the matter, for there was a deal of nudging, and whispering, and correcting each other. However, the swell of the body of voice and the melancholy of the cadences at times filled the church with their peculiar charm. Here and there a voice would distinguish itself from the mass of sound, and rise clear and full and tender above the others, and prolong the note, and pervade the place with an indescribably plaintive melody. You felt sorry when it sank into the general chorus, and watched and listened for it again. After the priest had chanted his part, and the female voices rose once more into the swelling strain, you were disappointed if the voice did not come, till it gradually seemed to steal out from the body of sound, and again surround you with its touching tenderness. Nothing could more feelingly express the sentiment of the religious heart appealing to the mercy of the pitying Creator. This plaintiveness is much cultivated in

the Greek church. Here and there one of these young ladies would remain on her knees the entire time, while the others rose up and stood and were a little occupied with putting their dress to rights, their white aprons, or their banded hair, as is the way with young ladies in all lands even in serious moments. I could not help connecting the plaintive singer with one of these persistent devotees on her knees, her head bent over her folded hands, and regardless of her apron and her hair.

But there is one thing which strikes a stranger in the papa's performance of the service in all the Greek churches, and this is the irreverent and careless and, in many, the theatrical air of the man. These men everywhere, whether at Jerusalem or at Moscow, and at all times, are got up immensely for effect, with their long curling and flowing hair, their full and glossy beards, their carefully-managed moustaches, and their long silken dress and spreading Spanish hat. In the church and clothed in gorgeous robes they are grand and effective specimens of men. Now this papa of the hospital, in his splendid costume, was perpetually coming out from the Holy of Holies behind the closed and gilded central gates, coming out by one of the side doors on to the platform, chanting a sentence

or two, and then going away and disappearing by the other little gilt side-door. When he came out, he did so with a free and easy air, swinging his hands and arms, his fine head erect, his body a little thrown back instead of forward, a happy assurance in his gait and movement, and then he went off in the same fashion. You would then hear a low deep tone or two issuing from somewhere behind the screen in a muffled way, as a kind of echo, and then in a moment out he came again with a hurried step in a jaunty sort of fashion. This is the manner rather affected by these men, one would suppose, from its frequent use. I was glad when this man's part was over, for I could not help thinking of Jack-in-a-box all the while; and when the sweet voices of the girls rose and swelled, as one might imagine of the angelic choir, in a body of sound, melodious and tender, floating up through the galleries, it seemed as an incense of praise and thanksgiving to God for what he had induced kindly hearts to do for them in this noble institution, an incense from fresh and innocent hearts.

The young persons standing about by the walls and the windows at the back of the galleries were either lady-superintendents from the vaulted apartments of the foundlings above—I looked for, but could not see

my engaging acquaintance from the reception-room on the ground-floor—or they were foundlings themselves who had become the servants and attendants of the establishment. The former were dressed rather handsomely in silk, the latter neatly. On all the faces that I could see near enough to observe them was an expression of quiet contentment. They were amiable and pleasing—indeed, one could scarcely suppose that persons whose dispositions were otherwise would find a life of any satisfaction in this establishment for care of children under a very strict and attentive supervision. But even here there seemed to be one exception—so at least it appeared to me. Now and then my eye would wander from the papa and the young ladies to the galleries, and somehow it was attracted by a young fair person—once a foundling—in the farthest corner by a window. She was in a light-coloured dress, and her toilette seemed to occupy her attention a good deal; in fact, her time was taken up between this and looking out of window. No one had books. Standing next to her was a young woman who seemed to devote much of her time to keeping her neighbour to some little observance of the service. When the moment would come for all to kneel this one was deep in some arrange-

ment of her hair, and her companion had to pull her down by her dress. But then she did not arrive at her kneeling till her apron was properly smoothed and in its precise place, and the pockets to her satisfaction. When the time came to stand up again, and her companion removed her hands from before her eyes, she found an elaborate toilette going on—the neck-tie was all wrong and had been untied. Between the getting up and the righting of the neck-tie there was a great deal of trouble, the friend showing much distress in her attempts to cover all this delay in getting up, and this irreverent conduct of the neck-tie. All this righted, something attracted the young eyes out of the window, and the friend found her neighbour turning her back nearly in the direction of the gorgeous papa in her anxiety about the outer world;—and so it went on to the end whenever I chanced to look in that direction.

Poor young thing, methought, this is not your place. How come you here, when your heart and your thoughts are not in this Sinai, but far away in Egypt with the pleasant jewels of gold and jewels of silver and bright raiment? That good little Ruth by your side may do all she can to impart to you some of her simple and loving nature, but in vain. She may try to

conceal from other eyes by her pretty care your heedless ways, but some day you will probably burst out from what is to you only a splendid cage, and go off into the sunny but slippery world of Moscow.

After the service the officer joined me, and invited me to see the gallery of paintings—portraits of the benefactors of the institution. These were in a fine broad corridor. Here was the Empress Katherine the Second, under whom the establishment commenced—Katherine, with her handsome face and smiling eyes, scarcely virtuous, but still a generous and benevolent and high-hearted woman, and a grand administrator. Here was Betski, the philanthropist, a good but eccentric man, in a most eccentric costume, but who had much to do with the foundation of this magnificent charity;—and here was Demidoff, then a merchant, and ennobled by Katherine for his splendid share by gifts of money in the maintenance of this hospital, besides many other Russian notables. Of course among them were frowning and superb Nicholas and amiable Alexander. Beyond this gallery was a fine apartment, broad and long and lofty. This was the play-room of the young lady orphans. By the officer's account here were rare games of romps daily in winter and in bad weather, besides little festas. It

was pleasant to imagine the young orphan folks throwing off for the nonce dry history and the use of the globes, and with music and songs, and blind man's buff, and puss in the corner, catching childish folly as it flies. The officer and I met various knots of these young ladies as we strolled along the noble corridors; and it struck me, if one might judge by the number of pairs of interlacing arms and clasping hands, and encircling embracings, and immensely earnest and whispering, of course confidential, conversation in corners, that this institution was, in this part of it, a grand manufactory of eternal and undying female friendships.

CHAPTER IX.

Count L—— —His Proficiency in the English Language—Invited to visit his Estate—Journey in a Tarantass—Social Courtesy—Agriculture in Russia—Russian Villages—The Cottages of the Peasantry—Family Party—The Law of Inheritance—Large Families—The Subdivision of Property—Reduced Nobles—The Abolition of Serfdom—Russian Soldiers—Nobles and Serfs—Abuse of Power—Arrangement of the House—Grooms and Horses *v.* Wife and Children—South Downs—Horses and Cattle—Rotation of Crops—Extensive Gardens—Reminiscences of the Count—The Family Roof-tree—Impromptu Dinner in the Wood.

ONE morning I was sitting in the shaded breakfast-room when the landlord entered.

"M Dusaux," said I "is there any farm near the town that you could help me to see and walk over?"

"There is one belonging to one of my friends," he replied, "a few wersts away, which he would be happy to show you over, I am sure; I have my butter and cream from him. But," he went on, "there is a gentleman very often in this house who is very fond

of farming, Count L——, who lives a few wersts from Moscow, and he sends me his farm produce too; he will show you everything. When he comes into Moscow he always lives in my house, and I am expecting him to-morrow. I will tell him you are here, if you like."

This appeared to be a happy chance, so I at once accepted this proposal.

Accordingly, on the following morning, I was, as usual, in my shaded corner, when a Russian gentleman, in a military undress uniform, entered the room. He was of middle age, a tall, fine-looking man, with a dark complexion and sparkling eyes, and a bright, intelligent countenance. Coming up to my table with a frank and cordial manner, he held out his hand, made me an easy bow, and announced himself in capital English. This was very engaging, and so, in the course of a few minutes, we were in a flow of talk, as if we were old acquaintances of years. On my asking him where he had learnt to speak my language so well, for his English was good, free, and idiomatic, he replied,

"I learned it when I was a boy, of an English tutor in our family; and then I had English horses and English grooms in my stable for many years: they are

all gone now; but this of course kept it up a little. But now I have so little opportunity of speaking it that I have forgotten it a good deal."

It did not appear to me to be at all forgotten. He then said he had heard from M. Dusaux of my wish to see his farm; and our interview ended in his inviting me to come down and see his cows and sheep and so on.

"Not that I have much cattle," he added; "but what I have I shall be very pleased to show you." So it was arranged.

It appeared that the estate of Count L—— was about twenty-four English miles to the north of Moscow. The famous convent of Troitsa—holy Troitsa—was on that side, and the railway to it stopped at a station called Pouskino, fourteen miles from the village where the L—— House was situated. So, a few mornings after my meeting the Count, I set off early to the Troitsa railway station. Arriving at the Pouskino station, I found a number of small pony-carriages of the country, tarantass build, drawn by two ponies. The tarantass has no springs. It runs on four wheels and carries four persons—two in front and two behind; in fact, a small light waggon. The seats were of sacks stuffed with hay. My driver was

a small man, with a red beard, and the ponies were strong and bony, about twelve hands high, but lamentably bare of flesh. We were soon trotting along at a good pace on a grassy track which I supposed would soon lead us to a road. We entered a fir wood, but there was only a track which we followed in and out between the stumps of the trees which had been cut off, and sometimes over them, the stems partly left. It was evident that the railway station had, in a manner, dropped down into the edge of this wood without any preparation for it or any immediate connexion with any road or village. As we went on mile after mile across the open country, now and then skirting some houses, and then launching out again into the wild, I began to suspect there were no roads at all, in the British sense of the word—at least that there was none from Pouskino to L—— House. And yet when I had got out at that station, and had only mentioned this name to the five or six tarantass applicants for my person every driver of them seemed to know it well. Now as I drove along and found nothing but tracks, crossing each other at intervals, I could not but suspect that as there was no road, but only a rude track, for the fourteen miles from Pouskino to L—— House, there must be few houses

of this character in this part of the country. So it proved.

However the day was a fine warm August day, the country waving, cultivated, and wooded, and the ponies jogged along at a good pace with their rough little carriage, picking their way cleverly among stumps and roots of trees, or along the edge of deep marshy ground, or in and out of holes and hollows between banks where a broken axle or an upset appeared to be quite as probable as not. But the intelligence of the ponies was superior to all this. They seemed to know exactly when to creep, and exactly when to trot along at a good pace. We met other tarantasses continually. Some of a better finish or superior material, but still all built on the same principle—a light waggon without springs. There was here in the country, as well as there was in Moscow, an immense deal of social courtesy, all people taking off their hats or caps on meeting; the drivers to each other as well as the driven, whether gentry or peasants. Certainly this small change of social currency is less common in England than elsewhere. With us it is the exception; with Russians, and, indeed, with most other Continental peoples, it is the rule. Here we all saluted each other as we passed.

There were no fences to the separate fields, of course, neither is there in most parts of Germany; and yet there is in the latter country a certain distinctness of boundary, a narrow strip of grass of a foot's breadth, or a two-foot ditch—something to mark the division—and the ground cultivated carefully up to the limits. But this was not so in Russia. There was a carelessness and rudeness in the detail of cultivation. The crops were poor, the fields quite indistinctly marked, much ground apparently half tilled, and thus wasted, on either side of the boundary. But the villages were remarkable. There appeared to be in the Russian peasant mind an absence of the idea of a garden or enclosure as connected with a cottage. For instance, as we drove up to a village of considerable pretensions there was a broad green grass track right through it from end to end. The cottages, all of wood and unpainted, each of only one storey with a raised and covered verandah along the front, all stood out on the grass, sometimes singly, sometimes two or more in a line, but not one had a bit of garden or enclosure of any kind adjoining it. They all had the look of wooden sheds erected on an open grass field for a temporary purpose, to be removed any day—card-houses-dropped there by chance.

There was a bare and utterly comfortless air about the whole village, and this is the usual appearance of the Russian villages. The roofs, too, are of straw thatch, and this instead of being worked into a firm compact mass, capable of resisting wind and weather, as is our English thatch, is altogether loose and is only held in its place by long poles crossing it all over at right angles and fastened imperfectly, the ends of the poles sticking out above and below the roof in ragged disorder. The wind and snow derange these loose roofs, and so it is the usual thing in a village to see large rents in the roofs of six-tenths of the cottages. These remain uncared for during the summer and are only mended under necessity at the last moment, when the winter cold begins again. There is another cause of the disorderly air of these villages. No house scarcely is in a horizontal position as to its roof; and few cottages are perpendicular as to their sides, for the uprights at one end or the other have sunk, and so the house heels over. In one village you may see but a few tipsy buildings, in the next the whole collection is thoroughly drunk.

It being early I came upon some villagers *en deshabille.* The child population were out on the grass track in their night-dresses; at least they had on each

but one solitary and short garment, while the smaller boys were even without this. It was glorious summer, and the urchins seemed to enjoy their liberty to the full. Throughout the whole drive of fourteen miles I saw only four country houses of the upper classes, two of these on a wooded hill, though here and there the well-known lofty, many-windowed buildings with a tall chimney near at hand, so familiar to the eye in the British isles, were conspicuous.

At the end of two hours the driver pointed to a large house in our front by some trees, and exclaimed, "We are arrived;" and as we drove up the Count L—— was in the verandah of the ground-floor, and gave me a cheery welcome. In a few minutes we went upstairs to the first floor, and out upon a broad and long balcony, some forty feet long by fifteen broad, roofed over. Here were sofas and chairs, and the breakfast-table with an enormous family silver samovar steaming and bubbling in its centre, coffee, too, and various dishes.

Here the little family party was assembled, the Count L——, his wife, two young boys, their sons, and a Russian gentleman of middle age, an old friend of the family, Monsieur B——. The Countess was much younger than her husband, rather small, pretty, and

evidently descended from a Sclavonian family by the peculiar colour of the eyes and skin and the formation of the face. Nothing could be more thoroughly courteous and friendly than the manner of my reception. Our conversation met on the common ground of the French language, and at once we were in the midst of talk alternately about our two countries, now about England and now about Russia. The Count, though he spoke my language admirably, yet had never been in England, in fact, to my surprise, never out of Russia. He had more than once been on the point of starting for England, but something had always prevented him.

From the balcony you looked out all over the country, a wide landscape of rather level ground, but with one wooded ridge of hills bounding it at one side. A river of about twenty yards in breadth ran through the ground near the house, dividing some fine meadows from it.

Could there be any more charming combination of circumstances to a traveller than this—a fine August morning, a sunny landscape of waving plain and wooded hills, a shaded balcony furnished as a large room, and a family party full of conversation and of easy and unaffected manners. On the coffee-cups,

which were of a Parisian form and richly painted, making one think of Sèvres artists, I observed a crown; and on subsequent inquiry of Monsieur B——, the friend of the family, as to the meaning of this crown, he said that the cups had come to the Count from his mother, who was of the old Rurik race, the old royal blood of Russia before the Romanoff family. On my observing to the Countess that they appeared to have some good neighbours, alluding to the two large and handsome white houses on the wooded ridge in sight, she answered, with an expression of sadness,

"No, indeed, I have not any neighbours now. Things are very much altered within these few years in all parts of Russia, and particularly round here. Those two houses belong now to persons we do not know, lately come there; but," she added, "I do not now much feel the want. If I wish for them I go to Moscow and stay a few days there and see my friends, and here I am very happy at home with my husband and my children."

It appeared that these were men of the mercantile class, who had made fortunes in mills and trade speculations, and had bought these estates.

"But," said I, "how came these estates for sale at

all? Was there no son to inherit in either case—no elder son?"

"Oh!" said the Count, "we have no inheritance now of that kind in Russia, no advantage of primogeniture. When a proprietor dies his estate is divided among his children, sons and daughters."

I was not aware that this was the law in its full extent, and said so.

"It is unfortunately true," said the Count. "Peter the Great foresaw the downfall of the great families one day under this law of division, and he introduced a law of inheritance for the eldest son; but this was opposed to all the old customs and traditions of the country, and it created so much discontent that it was abolished in a few years, somewhere about the middle of the last century. The consequence is that the large fortunes of the Russian nobles are diminishing rapidly."

"This is the case with us," observed Monsieur B——. "My father had a good estate; we were a very large family, sixteen children; every daughter takes, by law, a fourteenth share, and I had a number of sisters; so there was not much left for the sons. Of course the estate was sold. My eldest brother had his share, and now he has eight daughters, and so far as one can judge he is likely to have eight more."

He said all this with a comic gravity, and finished it with a groan which made us all laugh.

"In which case it is to be hoped he will have no sons," said the Countess. "Or what would they do?"

"What indeed!" he replied. "They must do the new thing—go into trade."

"Your families are as large as our British ones, by your account," said I. "I have always observed in different parts of the Continent, at German Baths, and at Paris and elsewhere, that whenever I met with a large family of children, if they were not English they were sure to be Russians."

"It is quite true," said the Count; "twelve and fourteen children are a common number with us, and you may imagine how this cuts up and destroys a property by subdivision. Our landed nobility are going out very fast."

"This, in fact," said Mons. B——, "is one of the causes of the abolition of serfdom. It had become a common thing in the subdivision of land for the son of a noble to be the owner of a cottage in the village and an acre or two of land and a couple of serfs. Could anything be more absurd for a noble? Then he was so poor that he was obliged to work for his living; he could not afford to be idle, so he worked

with his serfs on the bit of land; and there you might see the noble and his two serfs at work together, all dressed alike. The whole thing was ridiculous."

"Or the ruined noble went into the army and let out his two or three serfs to somebody else," said the Count; "the state of things was utterly rotten, and all sympathy with the noble on the part of the people had ceased."

"Quite time it was all changed," said Mons. B——. "The old law declared a noble could not sell his serfs apart from the land, but nobody cared about observing this. The nobles were the persons to enforce the law, if broken, for they were the persons with power in their hands; and, of course, they did not enforce any law against themselves. They did as they liked, bought and sold and gambled their serfs, just as suited them. Who could punish them when they had all the power, by one means and another, and played into each other's hands; the old law was nil."

As my two companions talked it seemed as if they were speaking of matters in the South American states and their slavery system, with nominal laws for the protection of the slaves, and practical independence of all law on the part of the owners.

"There were terrible abuses," said the Count, "and

I, for one, am glad of the end of it, though it does tie one's hands a little."

I said I had heard, when at St. Petersburg, of complaints made by the officers of the army of the great difficulty now with the soldiers in maintaining discipline, and that they said, "The officers are nothing now, and the men everything."

"True," the Count replied, "it is the case; we cannot use the stick now as we did, but I am not sorry for this—it was a coarse and brutal system. Our common men are of a good disposition generally, and if we treat them well they will behave well, as in your country."

I said I had heard that already the men were different, better than they had been in some respects, showing a gayer spirit and more pride in doing their duty, more cheerfulness in their work, and less doggedness and stupidity.

"There are no better men or better soldiers than are ours in the world," said the Count, with all the warmth of the "moustache" in his profession.

"There were some curious things came out," observed Mons. B——, "when the serfs were freed. It turned out that many of the men employed by the nobles over their estates, men among their own serfs,

were very clever fellows, and that these men had become rich by saving and trading under the rose, and had lent large sums of money to their own masters—had, in fact, heavy mortgages on their land; while others had actually bought the lands in other people's names. Now they are the possessors. What an impossible state of things to continue! The one was the master in law, the other the master in fact. There is one case I know of where the noble was supposed to be the owner of three mills, manufacturing establishments, on his estate; when the serfs became free it appeared that all the three mills were the properties of three of his own serfs on that very estate!"

I said I had heard a curious story of a noble, who had complained to the manager of his estate that his serfs did not increase as they ought, and as other nobles' serfs did, and he inquired if there were many marriages among his own people. The manager, acknowledging that there were fewer than he could wish, the noble appointed a day when he would be at his principal village, and expected all his serfs, old and young, to be there to meet him. He came, and then ordered all the young unmarried men to be arranged in a line on one side, and all the girls on the

other, outside the village; and then, having walked down the line and satisfied himself which were old enough for matrimony, he ordered them all to be married at once, two and two; that some of the girls refusing, he had these all marked down in a book, with an order against them that they were never to be allowed to be married at all. The Countess exclaimed loudly at such a terrible abuse of power, but Mons. B—— allowed that such things were only very extreme cases, adding—"It is these shocking abuses by men practically irresponsible, and the false situation in which people were placed with their serfs, that obliged a change. The serfs were, in fact, slaves, however people might wish to explain it away by saying there were laws to protect the serf. Practically, these were of no force whatever. Among some of the nobles there was a kind of understanding that if a serf amassed property this should not be touched by the noble, although he legally had full power over it—what was his serf's was his; but there was, in fact, much abuse even in this. The nobles were gamblers, and when they lost large sums at play at Moscow in the long winters they got money how they could, by fair means or foul. When their estates became embarrassed, which, of course,

they did immensely, the rich serfs paid large sums, for fear of worse."

After breakfast, which, by the way, lasted for about two hours in varied conversation, "de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis," about everything and something besides, of which the above is but a short summary, the Count proposed to show me over his farm; so we went out. The arrangement of the house was thoroughly Russian. The verandah below ran all along the front, as usual, and from this you entered a hall in the centre. Rooms opened into this on either hand, and a handsome flight of stairs led up from the centre of the hall to the upper floor. Here again were rooms to the right and left opening on the landing. These communicated with each other, and opened at the extremities on the large balcony above the verandah. This latter seemed to be the principal living-place of the family, as the rooms above were built rather back from those below, so as to allow of the balcony being much deeper than the verandah under it. The house, of course, was only of one storey. In going through one of the upper rooms to the balcony I observed that the walls all round were covered almost from floor to ceiling with portraits of race-horses—English horses. Here they were, from

the celebrities of long-past years up to the horses of to-day. Here were "Marsk," and "Flying Childers," and "Moses," and "Old Port," and "Château Margeaux," and so on through the many years down to "Plenipotentiary" and "Mameluke," to "Crucifix" and "West Australian." I observed this to my host, that he was a lover of horses.

"Ah! yes," he said, "I was so once, and so I am now, but I have done with that kind of horse now. I used to keep a few for racing, and had an English trainer here and English grooms; but now I have a wife and children, and so the horses are gone, and I look after my sheep and cows instead."

How exactly this resembled the course of things in many houses in England!—wife and children *versus* horses—nursery *versus* stable. As we walked out to the stable-yard, my host said—

"It was all the fault of those English grooms that I never was in England. I went up from here to St. Petersburg one summer with the intention of going there to pay a visit to an English gentleman, and just as I was ready to start came a letter from my trainer here to say that he had a quarrel with two of the grooms, and requested me to come down to set things to rights or they would leave. So I was obliged to

come here, and thus the opportunity of a journey was gone for that year; and then something always prevented it afterwards. Your men are, I think, more quarrelsome than ours."

"Very likely," said I; "training is everything in horses and in men. Wait a bit. When your people have been trained a little to liberty they will show more individuality of character, and then will come more difficulty of managing them."

"That is very possible," said he; "for instance, there is my coachman; I brought him up as a serf, a boy in my stable; if he did not drive as I liked I just took up my stick and gave him a sharp cut over his shoulder, and he bore it and said nothing; but now I can't do that; I must be civil, and tell him to mind what he's at, or he would quarrel with me."

So we reached the open pasture ground. Here was a flock of sheep. They were of two very distinct breeds; some of them of a thin-legged and weedy shape, and others of a fine stout build. On my observing the latter, the Count said,

"Ah! those are from your country—those are South Downs!"

"South Downs!"

It was quite true. Here were the thick full bodies,

the short black legs, the black faces—all the distinctive marks of my old friends of the Hampshire and Dorset Downs. The Count, true to his British likings, had always a small flock of these. On my inquiring if they did well in Russia, he said they were very hardy and bore the climate well. It may be added here that my host was in the habit of now and then sending a whole carcase up to M. Dusaux at the hotel at Moscow, and in a day or two after this visit one arrived at the hotel; and as long as it lasted I indulged in some portion of the "South Down" every day, a most satisfactory daily memento of the old country.

Russia is much more a country for beef than for mutton. Few sheep are grown there, and the Russians are not a mutton-eating race. They have large herds of cattle, but I only rarely saw a flock of sheep anywhere. The Count had a small herd, natives, and all of them without horns, and talked of having over some short horns from England, the only thing which stopped him then being the cattle-plague. There were some young horses too, colts and fillies. Most of them had English blood in them crossed with Russian—a cross which, he said, made a good, hardy, active, working animal. There was no park, in the

English sense of the word, but fine meadows stretched away on both sides of the river, on which the hay was made and in cock and being carried. Some of this was already gathered into extensive barns which surrounded the courtyards, fodder for the sheep and cattle during the long Russian winter. It was remarkably sweet and good hay. In Russian farming there are no green crops, no clover, no grasses, no turnips; and their usual rotation is—wheat, oats, buckwheat, and then they lay up the land for a year. They do not grow barley, and the peasants grow rye; this and buckwheat are the main dependence of the peasantry.

In the stables were the carriage horses, shewing the cross of good English blood in their heads and legs, and also some farm horses—small stout natives. From the stables a door led into extensive airy outhouses, warm and substantial, with thick walls and strong roofs. These were the winter houses of the sheep and cattle when the ground was covered with snow and ice. At one end of these was a door communicating with a further spacious outbuilding, roofed over, but on one side of which was left a large long vacuum between the wall and roof: this was to admit air. The animals were driven from the inner barn

into this outer and half covered place for a time every day for air. Beyond these were immense barns for the store of hay, of which some of them were already half full.

The Count seemed to be very fond of all his animals, and to interest himself in all matters that concerned their care and comfort. In the various yards, too, there was plenty of other life—turkeys, poultry, Muscovy ducks; while in the farm buildings there was steam machinery at work, and the golden grain pouring out in heaps upon the floor. The gardens were remarkable. It appeared that the father of the Count had had a passion for gardens, and had spent much money on them. One long lofty substantial wall ran through the centre of what we should call the kitchen-garden, a walled enclosure; and this wall was closed on both sides. Against one side were built all the various offices and rough sheds of the garden, such as the gardener's dwelling house, stoves, tool-house, &c.; while on the other side of it was the winter garden, a glass roof for the whole extent projecting to a low wall at ten or twelve feet from the other wall. In this were all kinds of fruits grown—strawberries, currants, apricots, peaches, and others. Beyond this was the cherry-garden, a space of ground entirely roofed in for

the winter temporarily with fir poles and straw, and warmed with air from a stove. Adjoining these gardens were the shrubberies and pleasaunces. Here were shaded walks and fine trees by the banks of three ponds or small lakes, all in a natural valley, the lakes formed by artificial dams across from side to side, a small stream at the head of the valley forming the lakes, and falling from one into the other. The lowest and largest of these was of some acres in extent, and on it was a pleasure-boat. A few single pine-trees stood on the banks, and some extraordinarily large birch, full ten feet in girth, of rugged stems and high branching heads. Not far from this latter piece of water we came on wide heaps of broken bricks, considerable ruins of some large buildings.

"Ah," said my companion, "subdivision of property does not make the son as rich as his father. This was the old family house in which my father and mother lived. It was a wooden house, as ours generally are, built on a stone foundation—not that it was of real stone, as we have none, but in this country we call bricks stones—and a capital house it was, a large roomy comfortable place; but when my father died and the property was divided, it was a question with me if I should live in this big house or in a smaller

one, the stone house we are in now. Very often in this country we have a second house near, for convenience of offices and stables, and so on; and so I chose the second house, and pulled down the big one, and this is the ruin of it."

"You must have regretted the old house where you grew up," said I.

"That I did," said he, as he pointed to the ruins; "rare jolly days we have had there. Many a time have I been in that lake when I was a boy. My father kept all this up in capital style; and those gardens—the winter garden and all—were his doing; but I can't keep it all up as he did—I must look after the farm, the corn and the cattle, and what will pay. When we were boys," he went on presently, "my father and mother, who were very fond of having foreigners here, used to have English and Americans here for months together. I picked up a good deal of my English in this way. My father was very fond of books and history, and the conversation of foreigners. I am afraid I rather took to horses, and went into the army."

What a charming frankness and simplicity there was about all this. How could one help feeling a warm sympathy with the man talking in this resigned but

cheerful spirit over the ruins of the family roof-tree, recalling in this hearty manner the happy days of his youth, and yet with a tone of sorrow in his voice as he told how here his fathers had lived a life which the laws of his country prevented him from doing. Methought, as we walked along the path which led us towards his present house, through a pretty shrubbery and wood, it is better, however, that the law of one's country should do this—better that a kind of hard necessity should have obliged a change than that one's own father should have squandered the fortune, and so have thrown a worse pang into the loss.

As we reached the house which stood at the edge of the shrubbery and wood, only a roadway separating them, we found the Countess superintending a preparation for an early dinner for us all out in the wood under the flickering shades of the trees. My host entered heartily into the proposal. The boys were in ecstasies at being employed to carry things across from the house into the wood. The table was being laid, and men were going backwards and forwards with baskets of knives, forks, plates, bottles, and all material for the feast. The Countess was on the balcony above, superintending, as she commanded from thence the whole position; while Monsieur B——,

the friend, was seated below in the shaded verandah, with his cigar, thoroughly enjoying himself in that acme of all contentment to a rather corpulent middle-aged man—looking on at busy people engaged in providing for him what will conduce to his pleasure and gratification. In due time we had a capital dinner, principally of Russian dishes, of course, but not omitting some cutlets from one of the South-downs—for the Englishman. Nothing could be more cheerful than this impromptu dinner in the wood—the boys of course dining with us. The Countess was full of easy unaffected conversation, though often in the rather serious tone of her remarks she seemed to feel the want of social neighbours in the country, although she had in the morning denied the fact. The Count was gay and convivial, with all a soldier's frankness of manner, and all the polish of a man of the higher society of the world. Monsieur B—— was at all times ready either to add to the passing jest with some quaint remark, or to throw in a few words of useful information in reply to some question of inquiry from the stranger. The two boys were not the least happy of the party. The Count evidently rather spoiled them, particularly the second of six years old, who was evidently a pickle. He was always saying or

doing something comical, or wicked, as his mother declared with a frown for the young marauder on forbidden territory, not always effective. As I looked at the dark sparkling eyes of the little man sitting opposite to me at dinner and perpetually at war with custom and order, methought here was some of the old Rurik blood, hot and reckless, perhaps fermenting in his young veins, and not likely to fertilize the old property to its advantage when he would come into his share of the fields and the meadows and woods around us.

CHAPTER X.

Return to Moscow—The Count's Tarantass and Three Mares—The Coachman—Effect of Freedom on the Russian Peasantry—Unsettled State of the Country—A Nobleman's Mansion—Appearance of the Country—High-roads—Free and Easy Bathing—A Russian Inn—Passion for Tea—Domestic Arrangements—The Great House Stove—"Gone to Bed"—Vodka—Curious Illustration of Russian Police Law—Law of Trover—Piety and Pilfering—The Difficulties of Driving—Safe on the *Pavé*.

THE dinner being over, the Count's tarantass came to the door, and Monsieur B—— and I mounting into the body of the carriage, and the Count getting on the box by his coachman, we took leave of the Countess and started for Moscow—twenty-four miles. It was five o'clock, and the Count declared his horses always did the distance in two hours and a half. This tarantass was a kind of high phaeton without springs, and the three horses were harnessed abreast. The centre one was in a pair of shafts, and the two outsiders were hooked on to the two ends of the splinter-bar. The centre horse was a roan, and the

two others were a black and a dun—all three of them mares, the middle one a trotter.

We started at a rattling pace, and soon our road merged into a mere track across fields. A large bell was suspended above the middle horse in the usual circular hoop, and this one always trotted whatever pace we went, while the other two cantered. A collar of small bells was fastened under the necks of the dun and the black. This is considered by a Russian as the right thing.

As we went along the Count turned round and said,

"All these are half English, and all mares. The Russian people have a prejudice against mares, and a gentleman never drives one; they think they cannot do work, but I know better. Besides this, they are cheaper, and this suits me too. I don't care about fashion, but these three mares will beat most horses anywhere."

We went along at a tremendous pace, the roan mare never once breaking from her trot, though the others were put out to a fair hand-gallop. The driver was the former groom whom his master could not now improve on occasion with a stick. He talked to his horses perpetually.

" They all know him," said the Count, "you see by their ears that they each know which he is talking to."

He had no whip, according to the custom with Russian coachmen—*i.e.*, no visible whip, his two hands being held out in front of him with the reins twisted round them, and these held tight, their bits being plain large bridoons. Whenever he was dissatisfied with either horse, so that it required a correction beyond talking, he raised a hand sharply and brought the rein down on the offending horse's quarter with a stinging blow, a small, heavy, smooth piece of metal being worked round the rein exactly at the appropriate place for the blow. The horses wore no blinkers, and so they could see every movement of the driver, and thus sometimes the raising of the hand, without the threatened blow, was enough to make the offender start forward as if he had felt the metal. However, though there was no visible whip, I found that each coachman carried a small short knotted stick under his legs, and now and then, on great occasions, he would gather all his reins into the left hand, and stooping for the stick he would hit the offender a tremendous cut on the hinder part of the leg above the hock. It is a small but a savage instrument of torture, and, as used, much more severe than any whip.

Seeing some men cutting corn, I asked how their peasants now behaved in these parts.

" Very badly," said the Count. "It is difficult to get them to work."

I said I had heard of nobles paying so heavily for getting it cut and carried that there was no profit, and that some were living on the produce of their forests, cutting them down and selling them.

" Very probable," said Mons. B——. "Now that the peasants are free they labour as little as they can ; but some parts of the country are worse than others, and some villages worse than others."

I said I had heard of a noble making a bargain with his village to cut his corn at so much a head, men and women, to begin on the morrow, and that on coming two days after to see how the job was going on he found not a hand at work; on remonstrating, he was told they had found they could not do the job at the price, and demanded more,—that he consented to this farther demand, and that the new bargain was made and broken just as the former one, and that in the end he only had his corn cut for more than double the wages at first agreed on.

"That is likely enough to be true, for there are complaints of the kind everywhere," said the Count: "the truth is that at present things are all without any regularity; no one knows just what wages ought to be, how much or how little, and so these people get all they can; and if you agree to give their own sum they think they have asked too little and can get more, and so they ask more, and refuse to work unless they get it. All this will settle itself one day."

I asked how things were on the Crown lands with the Crown peasants.

"From what I hear," said the Count, "things are rather worse there than with us."

We passed through a village rather more neat than usual.

"This is one of my villages," said the Count; "but a precious set of rascals they are. Here was a capital wood I had, you can see only a part of it now. These fellows used to steal such quantities of it, cut it down, and carry it off at night, that I was losing it all piecemeal, so I sold it all as it stood, to save it."

"Could you not catch one of your thieves," said I, "and punish him severely, as an example and a warning?"

"All that would have been more trouble than it

was worth," he replied; "the nearest magistrate lives twenty wersts off; and then there are such delays in our new laws, and long processes, and perhaps not much punishment after all that these men would care about, and in the meanwhile my wood would have been stolen all the same. All our law matters are new, and not much understood yet. In a few years we shall do better; but at present all our affairs are in a bad way—law and money."

Near another village was a large house, now shut up. It was an extensive building, with a long handsome front, and standing back from the roadway in some pretty grounds with shrubberies and tall trees. It was as usual a one storey house of wood, on a low brick foundation. There were three or four other smaller buildings in the grounds by the shrubberies, and a couple of large imposing pillars, a gateway, marked the entrance from the village into the place. This was a nobleman's mansion with the outbuildings for his various people, steward and secretary and so on. Now the whole place was falling to ruin. It appeared that the owner had died, and then came trouble about division of property and mortgages; and then followed the liberation of the serfs, and so the family mansion was abandoned. Large gaps were

appearing in the roofs and sides of the various buildings, all paint faded and windows gaping, and the two pillars of the gateway, of Italian form, unconnected with anything and falling to pieces, were as ghosts of departed grandeur—a type of many of the ruined nobility of Russia.

The country we passed through was a wavy ground, not quite flat, not to be called hilly. There was but little wood, and the land was generally under tillage intermixed with pasture; but it all wore the look of carelessly cultivated land, poor crops, ill-defined divisions of fields, and rugged, marshy ground at intervals. Here and there was a more careful management evidently, better buildings, of course of wood, and herds of cattle.

After about ten or twelve miles of rapid going along these country tracks we came to a high-road—a broad handsome highway. I was congratulating myself on our reaching this, but on our swinging out on to it from the field I found our pace was soon checked by large dips and holes. On my remarking this to the friend, he said, "This is one of our high-roads, but it is in a bad state."

"The Government does not take much care of it, apparently," said I.

"Government!" he exclaimed, "the Government does not take care of the roads, it only takes care of a few of the great high-roads, and all the others are left to take care of themselves; and as it is nobody's particular business, nobody does it. We have no roads in Russia."

True enough, here were only tracks, and even this large highway to Jaroslav and Kostroma, one of the great trade thoroughfares of the Empire, was a mere rough track. Sometimes we went along at the rate of twelve or fourteen miles an hour, the roan mare in the centre never breaking her trot, and the big bell over her head giving out its fine musical note with her regular stroke, while the dun and the black on either side rushed along at a gallop; and then after half a mile of this pace the driver, by a word or two, would check them all, that he might change his ground and avoid some impossible dip, green with morass of mud and weeds, or steer carefully along a ledge between the outer field and a pool of water; and then having passed this, he would spring his horses again at a word up to the next difficulty. Now and then he could see no hard ground all across the sixty feet from side to side, and then he charged the morass

gallantly. Down we went into it, and all three horses plunging gamely through it we were up the other slope and away along the track with a little additional rush in the pace after the adventure, the Count looking round with a pleased smile and the little driver chuckling to his horses in approval. But at times even this became impossible, the road was so full of holes and deep ruts like ditches, and so, at times, we went at a foot's pace.

We passed many villages, and long lines of telegas on their way from the country to the capital, laden with timber for building, or with bricks, or apples, or barrels of tallow, or the products of the cloth and other mills.

Near one village a man walked out of the back of a solitary house in a state of nature across a strip of grass towards a narrow river.

"That man," said the Count, "is taking his bath. In that house is the hot bath, and now he is on his way to a plunge into the cold water, and then he will come back and have another hot bath. Our peasants are very fond of this."

What a free-and-easy little bathing establishment by the high-road.

At the end of an hour and a half, having done six-

teen miles in spite of all impediments, we drove up to a wayside inn. Here the Count said he often stopped on his way to Moscow to have a glass of vodka and a talk with the landlord. In the outer room, the bar, a large apartment, was a long dresser, and on shelves on the wall behind it were glasses, bottles, and tea-cups *ad infinitum*. Here were the landlord and landlady, a comely pair, past the middle age. In a room beyond, visible through a wide doorway, were a number of small round tables, and sitting round these were peasants, men and women, in little sociable parties, and on all the tables were teapots, tea-cups and saucers, small, and of pretty and various patterns. All these people were drinking their tea, and on no one table were there bottles or glasses. None of the young men were drinking vodka or kvas, nothing but tea. It is a passion among these people. At all hours of the day, in the *cabarets* of Moscow as in those of the country, if you look in on passing, you will see these people, big working men, drivers of droschkies, women and children—there they are drinking tea, tea *veniente die*, tea *decedente*—"from morn till dewy eve!" In a French *cabaret* they would all be tippling red wine; in a German *Gasthaus* all soaking beer. If you ask the Russians they will tell you that the only

drinks they care for are vodka (brandy) and tea. Wine and beer are too cold.

The Count saying that I ought to see the interior of the house, the landlady first led me and Monsieur B—— into the back premises. We went across the yard into the great barn. This was the summer bed-room of the landlord and his wife, in one corner of it being a large old-fashioned four-poster. This was an airy apartment certainly. The interior of the house seemed to be principally arranged with reference to the great house-stove. This was a huge affair, large and broad and high, occupying the central position in the wall of four rooms and so projecting a great angle into each. Thus it warmed four rooms at once, the mouth of it being in the kitchen. An iron door closes it. This is about three feet from the ground, and a brick platform built up to that height in front of it resembles a French hot-plate; on this the cooking is done. If it is wished to use the fire without the big stove being heated, then the iron door is closed. The chimney rises from above the fireplace. The stove is also the oven and is easily heated from the fireplace. This big stove is a luxurious piece of furniture in the bed-rooms. The broad deep angle offers a tempting sleeping-place, and in the cold weather, if anyone finds his bed chilly, he places a mattress upon the stove-angle, climbs up, and has a warm sleeping-place.

As Monsieur B—— and I came out of one room I observed a white figure upon the angle of the big stove, and I raised the candle to examine, for it was getting dusk.

"That is my daughter," said the landlady—"she had a headache, and is gone to bed."

The said young person had in her simple night-dress—for that was her only covering—laid herself upon a mattress on the stove, and was "gone to bed." What a thoroughly inartificial arrangement for a young person!

Going back to the bar we found the Count and the landlord deep in discussion of local matters, as also vodka, and we took our share of the latter. Vodka is by no means bad to the taste, and rather reminded me of Schnapps in the country inns round Dresden on partridge-shooting mornings. We mounted into the tarantass again for Moscow.

We had stayed so long at the wayside public that it was getting dark as we started, and the road becoming, if anything, worse than before from its being more used by traffic nearer to the capital, and more

cut up, we were forced to travel more slowly. The large bell suspended to the hoop over the roan mare's withers told us by the quicker or slower stroke exactly what we were doing in the way of pace; for now it would ring out a clear sharp peal for a time as the mare laid herself out for a couple of hundred yards, and then it stopped suddenly with a jerk as she found herself at the brink of a dark, deep hole, round which she skirted, letting the dun and the black make their way as they could through the morass and the tarantass to take a sidelong plunge into it. The Count held on convulsively to his box-seat on these occasions, and the little driver stuck to his place with the balance of custom, ready for any event, like a sailor with his sea legs on board ship in a cross sea. While passing a large piece of water a curious story was told by the friend in exemplification of the ways and customs of Russia and police law in the country. I had mentioned a circumstance related to me by the British Consul in Moscow. A lady had fallen down in the street as he was passing in his carriage, and she lay on the pavement unassisted by any of the passers-by, as it was against the law for anyone to help her up or aid her, as he might be charged by the police with attempting to rob her.

The Consul stopped his carriage, got out, lifted her up, had her put into his carriage by his servant, and took her to her home. The Count's remark was—

"The British Consul might do that with impunity, but no Russian would have ventured to do it for fear of the penalty. If a person is drowned no one can venture to aid in restoring life, or touch the body, until the police are present."

Monsieur B—— then related the following:—

"A gentleman was with a party of friends at his estate in the country, and one day, while they were at dinner, a servant came in to say that one of his serfs had fallen into the lake in front of the windows, and was drowning. There was a rush of the master and his friends to save the man, and they succeeded after much trouble in getting him out on the bank; but once he was there they could do no more—they could not have him removed to the house till the police should arrive. The family of the man came hurrying from the village, but neither were they able to take him away home for the same reason—the police were not present. Of course the man died. The police were sent for, but the nearest station was twelve wersts off, and, for some reason or other, no one came though repeatedly sent for during four

days. During all this time the body lay on the bank of the lake within sight of the house, and no one dared to touch it."

The ground-work of all this curious law was that the man might have come unfairly by his death, and some one, in pretending to aid in removing the body, might steal something from it. What a suspicious people!

On my relating this to an English acquaintance at Moscow his observation was—

"The police! why, the police themselves would be exactly the people to take anything they could find on the body, if they were unobserved." And he went on to say in proof of this: "One day I sent my servant with ten roubles to the market to buy some things for me. He returned presently in great alarm to say that he had dropped his purse with the roubles in it in the street. I sent him at once to the nearest police station. On his way there, and near the station, a droschky driver saw him searching about, and hearing he had lost his purse the driver said, 'I saw a policeman of that station,' pointing to it, 'pick it up.' The servant taxed the policeman with having the purse; but he denied it; but the driver coming up repeated his assertion—'I saw him pick it up.' The policeman being

threatened with exposure, at last produced the purse, and then claimed the reward of trover,—one-third of the property found. The driver and the policeman quarreled over the matter, and then it appeared that both of them had seen the servant drop the purse, and the policeman had refused to go shares with the driver in the contents, and hence his denouncing the former. 'This is not a case of trover at all,' said my servant, 'but a robbery, for you saw me drop the purse.' However, the policeman took his three roubles as trover, and returned the rest. If the policeman had but consented to share the contents with the driver, it is probable," added my acquaintance, "that the latter would have gone off to a church, and on his knees have thanked the Virgin for her goodness in letting my servant drop his purse and for thus sending him five roubles."

"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" Who shall guard the guardians?

We did not reach the barrier of Moscow till long after dark, the road was so bad. On arriving at this the coachman got down and unhooked the big bell from the hoop over the roan mare.

"We are not allowed to enter Moscow with that big bell, only with the little ones round the horses'

necks," said the Count—"another police law."

But it was a remarkable thing that for full a mile after we were inside the barrier the roadway was actually more dangerous than it had been outside. It became pitch dark, there were no lights except here and there from candles in an occasional cottage window, which only made the darkness more puzzling; and every now and then we met men and telegas, who warned us against great holes in the roadway. At one spot we had to wait for some minutes while a string of some twenty telegas passed by in a meandering fashion across the roadway in front of us, because there was a deep gulf of a place extending half across the way. I suggested that these careful police might put up a light, or a board, or a warning of some sort at this spot, to prevent horses and carriages from going down into this gulf in the dark.

"We are not on the *pavé* yet," said Mons. B——, "they take care of nothing beyond the *pavé*, and no one takes care of the roads beyond it."

In this matter of roads the Russians may still be considered to be a young people. It was rather a relief to feel the rattle of the wheels on the *pavé*, bad as that is, and with the high road with its gulfs and morasses behind us.

CHAPTER XI.

The Twerskaia—The Palace of Count Rostopchin—The Great Radiating Streets of Moscow—The St. Petersburg Gateway—The Promenade—The Carriage Drivers—The "West End" of Moscow—A Companion at my *al fresco* Luncheon—Russian Children of the Upper Classes—Life of Young Gentlemen—The Petrofski Palace—The Main Edifice and Detached Buildings—The Baffled Conqueror—An Officer and his Wife—Military Exercises—Russian Soldiers and Officers—The Moscow World in the Petrofski Park—Tea under the Elms.

THE Twerskaia may be considered the principal street in Moscow. At one termination of it is the fine arched gateway called the St. Petersburg Gate—the principal entrance to the city from the Twer and St. Petersburg high-road; and at the other end is the broad Boulevard in front of the famous little chapel of the Iberian Mother of God by the Kremlin Wall and the Alexander Gardens. This street contains many of the largest shops, some of the finest buildings, palaces of the nobles, as well as the principal club-houses. It passes through one of the chief squares, in which is the residence of the Governor of

Moscow. The palace which Count Rostopchin, the patriotic governor at the time of the French invasion, occupied is a much smaller mansion near the Palanka market-place, and is now in the possession of a well-to-do manufacturer. One almost feels as if there were a desecration in the exposure of articles of metal ware in the outbuildings of such a house—that walls which had listened to the highest resolves of the patriot for the salvation of his country should now only hear calculations of profits and the prices of raw material. As I looked at it the thought arose—This house belongs to the history of Russia, and should be sacred.

From the Kremlin Wall to the St. Petersburg Gate the length of the Twerskaia is about three miles. At two-thirds of this distance one of the great Boulevards crosses it, and from this point its whole character changes, as is much the case in other parts of the city. The street becomes wider, the buildings are of a lower elevation, the houses and churches partly cease, and the Russian cottages appear. But what is remarkable is, that although this may be called the principal street, leading as it does to the St. Petersburg road, to the race-course, to the review-ground for the troops, as well as to the Hyde Park of Moscow, and to the Petrofski Palace of the Emperor at the edge of the

Park, yet in spite of all this the Twerskaia from the boulevard to the gate is the most common and least picturesque exit from the city. In other of the great radiating streets there are good houses at intervals, fanciful buildings, pretty villas, or neat superior cottages, up to the very barrier, fresh with paint and pleasing to the eye, with Eastern detail of ornament. But here is only an immensely wide roadway of infamously rough *pavé*, bordered on either hand by small insignificant shops for the sale of common country articles, low plain houses without ornament or character.

The St. Petersburg gateway is a handsome and lofty arched gate in Italian style, and is in a degree imposing; but it is only of brick coated with plaster, and coloured dark to look like bronze; and its position, supported only by lines of low small mean houses, seems incongruous. It gives one the idea of an intention begun, but never carried out.

Immediately outside the gate, however, the scene changes. Here the intention is realized in a degree. There is a large open space with roadways branching from it. From the centre commences a noble carriage-drive—a double drive—and a promenade with avenues of trees between them, all of it showing care

and taste and attention, and bespeaking the approach to the Imperial Palace and the Hyde Park. This extends for a mile or two.

One day walking in this direction I passed the gate and came out on the Promenade. It was a hot day in August, and the broad level walk, shaded with dwarf limes, and having seats at intervals, was most inviting. It was all kept with as much care as if at a German Bath, or at the world-famous "Corner" of Rotten Row. All along on either side ran the carriage drives, one of these leading, after a mile or so, out on to the review ground, a wide, grassy plain, the other to the palace and the park. Beyond these on either hand were numerous villas in gardens. This was clearly intended to be the West End of Moscow. What spoiled it was the common and ill-built and ill-tenanted mile of street between the Boulevard and the St. Petersburg Gate. If the nobles of Moscow had but selected this as their quarter, it would have made all the arrangement of the town complete; but they did not do this. The Moscow nobles had their sunny south quarter and their Sokolniki drive and park before the days of Peter and his city in the north, and the Muscovites had no leaning at any time in the direction of St. Petersburg.

Finding a shaded bench, I sat down under the limes. There was nothing particular going on to bring people in that direction more than usual, but there was plenty of life and movement. A few people were on the Promenade, scattered along it, from the villas, and passengers from the town and country were frequent. Carriages were continually coming out from the great gate, some taking the drive towards the review ground, and some on the other side the Promenade to the Park. There was a military camp formed on the far side of the plain, a large force under canvas, and now and then an officer, in his shining helmet and grey overcoat, sitting erect in his smart droschky, dashed out of the gate, and went in the direction of the camp at the best pace of his black trotting Arab-looking horse, his fat body coachman in the conventional blue dressing-gown holding his arms straight out before him and steering the black trotter to a hair's breadth with the tightened rein and the large bridoon. Then a more ambitious officer, seated in a tarantass drawn by a pair of slashing greys, trotters too, would emerge from the gate and hurry along in the same direction, and, of course, the coachman of the two greys did his best to out-trot the single black over the plain. The peculiar

attitude of these Russian drivers always gives me the idea of their being engaged in a race, spurning behind them the *pulverem Olympicum*. The charioteers of Diomed and Ulysses at Troy must have worked their horses over the yellow sands by the Simois and Scamander by the same methods and with similar bits as these Russian drivers, the only difference being that the former stood instead of sitting. More than once a young gentleman would drive himself—unusual sight—from the direction of the plain in a spider carriage with one horse, a smart stepper, with silver-mounted trappings, the youthful whip seated on his bare plank with his feet in stirrup-irons. On his fragile vehicle he did not try his skill against the rushing Greeks over the plain, but confined himself to ornamental ambling.

As I sat there a man came by with fruit, gooseberries and raspberries, ripe and seducing on this hot morning; they were just fresh from the country, so I bought some. Presently a poor woman came up, very tired and heated from her evidently long walk in that burning sun, dusty, too, from the dried-up roads. She sat down on the bench too, and the gooseberries lying on it between us I invited her to share them with me. How pretty and engaging are

the natural manners of women—of simple countrywomen! This woman was taken by surprise by my offer, for she had sat down at the far end of the bench with a rather deprecating air. Now she thought my offer was scarcely a real one, and declined it with a modest, timid mien, rather frightened. She was full forty years of age, and scarcely good-looking, for Russian peasant women are rarely so, as I had a good opportunity of judging at the Foundling Hospital with its more than four hundred nurses. But ripe fruit on a sultry day, after a dusty walk and in a shady place, is a thing not to be declined twice when offered with the manner that means—"Come now; they will refresh you—there are enough in that bag for you and me—I cannot eat them all." So the woman, after making many pretty half-objections, consented, and we shared the gooseberries. But she required to be continually invited to continue her share of the luncheon, and each time consented with the same deprecating manner, and she mumbled always something beyond my comprehension, but which, anyhow, had the sound and air of meaning—"What, another!—how kind you are!—well, they *are* good after my walk." All this time there came snatches of song over a hedge beyond the road leading to the

park behind me. Adjoining one of the villas was a large market-garden, and these scraps of song came from garden-women at work, a line of them as I had seen in the cucumber grounds by the Devitchi convent near the Moskwa. In this garden, however, there was something besides gourds; there was variety—carrots, cabbages, onions, beetroot, celery, and other plants, as I ascertained by a visit after my luncheon; and as I sat there the pleasant perfume of the vegetables came on the air across the road.

Presently, my luncheon companion having departed with her simple courtesies into the city, a little party came out of one of the villas across the road, consisting of a nurse and three children and a man-servant in livery. The man carried one of the children, the younger boy, in his arms, and when they reached the Promenade the servants seated themselves in the shade on a bench not far from mine, and the three children amused themselves. The boys were both in white linen knickerbockers, black velvet jackets, and high black boots, with a rim of red leather round the top. They were small, slight, pale things. It is rather remarkable that almost all the children of the Russian upper class are delicate and fragile. On inquiry I was told that they are, as a rule,

brought up in close and heated apartments during the long winters, and in the summers they have no games or out-of-door amusements to attract them into the air and keep them there in healthful exercise; they are not taught to ride ponies, and sporting is not a habit among Russians, and thus the boys grow up as house plants, weakly. As young men they lead an indoor, indolent life, gambling and eating forming much of their occupation; while reading French and English books, and dressing, form the principal part of that of the younger women. It is not therefore difficult to understand what was declared to me one day by a party of Russian gentlemen as a thing to be deplored, that anything more vicious and more thoroughly profligate than the young Russians, sons of the rich and noble families, it would be impossible to find in any country calling itself civilized.

As I went on down the Promenade, I met various other little parties of well-dressed children, with their attendants, from the villas, but they all had the same characteristics—they were invariably pale and slight things. How different are these, methought, from the big-limbed and ruddy-cheeked boys, and the rosy, active, and tomboy girls—ready for cricket and riding to hounds—of merry England of this class. As

I went on the great plain opened out on my left, and stretched away for miles, the Promenade continuing as its boundary, and so I arrived at the front of the Petrofski Palace on my right. It was a building unlike any I had ever seen. It was of red brick and stone, but it was a fanciful edifice, made up of all kinds of architectural conceits, as indeed are many of the public buildings of Russia. But though this was almost entirely of red brick, and was but a fancy, it was a proof of how very ornamental a building can be made out of this common material, and in spite of a violation of all rules of Art. The principal edifice stood away back from the road and the Promenade, at the further side of a considerable court of a circular form, perhaps sixty yards from the avenue of dwarf limes. This court was inclosed by two encircling lofty walls, thirty feet high, and on them were built many towers of all kinds of quaint shapes and sizes. Here was a Saxon tower of circular form, its bulk projecting into the court; then came a square one; next to this one with an Italian Church front, such as Bramante might have modelled. All the detail was of delicate Italian work, but in red brick. The windows of these, as well as of the Palace beyond, were set in fine stone work. Two of these, of rather more

pretension, stood on either side of a broad entrance to the court, and formed a handsome finish to the sweep of the encircling wall. All these detached buildings appeared to be inhabited, as though they were occupied by officials of the Palace. The main edifice was as singular as any of the adjuncts. There was a double flight of steps up to a broad landing, with a portico above supported by Egyptian pillars. From this you entered a fine central hall, circular and very lofty; and this in fact formed the principal interior. From it opened various apartments. There was nothing above this but a garret, the windows being in shape like our common garret or dormer window in the roof, on a large scale. However it carried out in one respect the cottage design proper to Russia—it was a big cottage, with a raised ground floor, and a garret above.

There was one interest attached to these rooms. It was in them that Napoleon had, on his first arrival at Moscow, awaited the coming of the notables of the capital to tender submission to the Conqueror and the city keys, and had awaited them in vain. No notables came bending to him, no keys arrived—nothing but the news that no person of importance was in the town—it was deserted. How disappointing,

and how irritating, and how defiant! And it was to these rooms that he had retreated when further stay in the city was dangerous, and it had become a necessity to vacate it. What must he have felt when he entered them the second time, his grand prize too evidently wrested from his grasp? Perhaps in these rooms that evil genius of war for the first time in his life became sensible of a doubt of his own power in dealing with nations and sovereigns as pieces on a chess-board. I could not help thinking how terrible a blow these walls must have witnessed—what a blow to a man hitherto living in a proud conviction that what he willed that he could do. It was on that wide plain to the West, in the front of these rooms, that Napoleon, when he decided at last, every scheme to remain frustrated, to start for France once more, must have begun that awful retreat. Sacked and ruined Moscow was on his left, only the open plain between him and his smouldering victim, and in his front, due west, was the only road of safety from utter destruction, and this by the devastated fields of Wiazma and Smolensk. I could not help imagining the Conqueror, the proud and gratified man, as he rode into that gateway on his arrival,—and the same man as he rode out of it for the last time, angry and

baffled, every triumph tarnished, every effort defeated, every boast turned into emptiness, his genius at fault.

While sitting on the low rail of the Promenade I saw an officer and a lady come out from one of the quaint towers into the court, and so through the entrance gate-way out towards the plain. The officer was in uniform, the lady in a pretty morning dress, her head without any hat or bonnet. As they passed me they were talking French, and were arranging for their dinner in the evening. There was to be an inspection or review of troops on the plain, and he was going out to this. The important domestic matter settled, the lady tripped back again into the court, and into her pretty tower. By their manner to each other, and their happy familiarity of conversation, they were man and wife, both tall and young, and the officer, it must be said, the better-looking of the two. She was very fair, with a German cast of face, and the officer was a Russ, with the dark blood of the East in his veins.

And now I observed that officers were walking or riding up from various directions over the plain to a common centre, nearly in front of the Petrofski Palace. Far away to the west the plain stretched for miles, an unbroken level, till it dipped, and the ground

rose beyond in low hills. In the distance I could just make out the tops of the tents of the troops, a long array. Watching these, as I sat, I at last discovered a dark low extending line on the ground between me and the tents, and that this was slowly approaching, moving across from the right to the left. When it came within about a mile or so I saw an occasional flash of light from its front. Bayonets, methought,—here come the troops. And now, as this dark low line crept gradually more into sight, another similar dark body appeared beyond it, and then another, and then another—more and more continually. It appeared as if each regiment as it formed by the tents moved off, each advancing and taking the same direction, from the right to the left. So they came on, each with that peculiar swing and flow of motion of a large body of men on the march. From some of the regiments there flashed out the occasional sparkle of steel in the rays of the afternoon sun, and some swung along a dull heavy mass without any flash at all. Some carried their bayonets and firelocks, and some were without arms. The body of officers remained stationary about half a mile off out on the plain, and the regiments marched in turn past them, and took up their ground all along the line of the road and the

Promenade, a long line extending from nearly opposite the Palace in the direction of Moscow. I heard afterwards that there were twenty thousand men on the ground. All those regiments that had marched up with their muskets were massed in squares on the end of the line towards the town, and those without arms were similarly drawn up at my end, towards the Palace. After the body of officers, all on foot, had walked down the line from end to end, they took up a position in front of one of the unarmed regiments, and then commenced the exercise. Each regiment was made to advance from the line about a hundred yards to the front, towards the officers. At the word of command, the three or four front ranks advanced at a quick step, breaking at another word into a run, and going on close up to the officers, when they divided to the right and left, and dashed along the front. Then, turning at the angle, they held on at the same pace till they gained the rear of their regiment, when they turned behind it, and formed up again in their places; the next ranks doing the same, till the whole regiment was exercised. When this was done, the body of officers moved on to the front of the next regiment, and the same performance was repeated. Of course there were some checks—

some of the files going through this exercise badly, and having to do it over again. This appeared to be the object of the inspection—that a superior officer, who was very busy all the while talking and making remarks with a great deal of animation, in the front of the body of officers, should witness a new movement. Altogether he appeared to be very much pleased, and to approve of what he saw; and one regiment being apparently better exercised in it than the others, he had the movement repeated, and then gave it unqualified praise.

I could not help thinking that this new exercise was a leaf out of the Zouave and the Chasseur de Vincennes book at Paris, to be put into the Russian book for future use. After it was over I walked out on the plain and among the men to look at them closely. They were all dressed in short dark green tunics, white linen or canvas trousers, and the usual strong Russian boots. Now these trousers were tucked into the top of the boots. They were all large men, and evidently a picked body, very even in point of height, broad-shouldered, large-limbed, and powerful. I never saw a finer body. Their stride and freedom of action, too, when running, struck me—once, in my own opinion, and in younger days, a professor in the art—as light, free, muscular, and in excellent mechanical form. The Russians are declared, by those who know them well, to possess a very imitative genius, and this new exercise seemed to be a proof of it. The officers I did not think at all equal in personal appearance, either in frame or muscle, to the men. How should the small delicate pale boys I saw on the Promenade, and in carriages everywhere—hot-house plants—grow up into athletes? How should the do-nothings be as the hardy men of the villages, labouring in the fields from boyhood, and defying all weather? I could not help in my mind comparing them with our own officers—men from the training of football and cricket—of the oar and the gun—of the road and the hunting-field—of the rod by the meadow stream, and the glacier on the mountain top—athletes, and sons of athletes.

The officer went back to his fair-haired wife in the Palace to dinner; and I went round behind it into the Park. Here I found the Moscow world, driving, and walking, and drinking tea. As the principal world was out of town, it being summer time, there were few carriages of any mark now to be seen. Here and there a very gorgeous turn-out passed by, a lady and her children in it, pale little people, the boys

in red velvet tunics, the girls in white, of course. There were a few spider carriages, each with its well-bred Arab-looking animal; but the greater number were in droschkies.

However, the Petrofski Park has its merits. It consists principally of a number of villas, gardens, and winding roads among these, public gardens and shaded ways. The latter of these I enjoyed the most. Just at the rear of the Palace were some fine elm-trees, by the side of the public drive. Among these, and in their shade, were some quiet bosquets and bushy pleasaunces; and here it was the habit of the smaller gentry of Moscow, with their wives and children, the well-to-do easy classes, to come and sit in the shadow of the big trees, and drink the unfailing tea, and see the world go by. So here I found a number of tables spread with clean white linen cloths, and on them the burnished samovar, the Russian urn, and pretty tea-service of Moscow porcelain, some in blue, others in yellow, in green, in pink, in harlequin pattern, and in every kind of fancy shape. How tempting it all looked! Parties of people were sitting round some of these, while children ran races among the bosquets, and enjoyed themselves generally. Other parties were lounging idly in the shade, and looking

on at the passing carriages. Of course I soon found myself at an unoccupied table, a diminutive table, laid with diminutive tea-cups in purple and gold. In a moment a woman appeared from somewhere bearing a steaming samovar, the charcoal all alight in its interior. She knew instinctively that I was a foreigner, and asked if I would have cream. "Yes, I would have cream." She disappeared round a bush, and in a minute or two she returned laden with a huge jar of cream—two or three pints, at least—of the richest and purest cream. Considerate creature! I could have embraced her, as she did the jar, but for the publicity of the situation. How I revelled in the tea from Nijni and the cream from the Hebe of the bosquet! After a hot day, and some hours of walking, what could be more grateful than to sit thus in the shade of those noble elms, as the sun was sinking over that great military plain, and thus enjoy "Hyde Park" in a novel way? The only thing wanting to me was a companion; and I do believe if the woman of the morning on the Promenade—she who had shared my repast of gooseberries—had but come by at that moment on her return from the city into the country, I should have invited her to tea. How strong is the demand in our nature for companionship!

In our extremity it is now a mouse, and now a flower, and now a peasant woman of Muscovy. However, she did not come; and so I contented myself with the moving scene of carriages and horses, the voices of children at play among the trees, and perfumed tea from Nijni and abounding cream, till dusk—when I strolled back to Moscow.

CHAPTER XII.

The Paving of Moscow—Trial of Wood and of Stone Flags—Ornamental Villas—Houses erected by Government—Road-making in Russia—The Agricultural College—The Officer appointed to conduct me over the Establishment—The Cow Stables—Dutch and Swiss Cattle—Steam Engines and Machinery—Farm Horses—The Farm—Museum, Library, and Lecture Rooms—How the Property was acquired by Government—An Apothecary who made a good job of it—Russian Employés—Church of the College—A Russian Refreshment—Restaurant on the Kitai Boulevard—Change in the Education of Young Nobles.

THERE is something more to be said about the Tverskaia. I had heard mention of a model farm of the Emperor somewhere in the neighbourhood of Moscow; and one day I named this to the British Consul, Mr. R——. He at once said, "If you would like to see the model farm I can take you there—the governor of it is one of my friends." Of course I closed with this proposal.

As we drove along the Tverskaia, I observed to my companion what a singularly ill-paved city it was

generally, and this, its principal street, in particular, adding,

"Is it the case with the inside of the town as with the outside, that it is nobody's business to keep the pavement in good condition?"

"On the contrary," said Mr. R——; "as you observe, the pavement of Moscow is infamous—enough to ruin all horses and carriages; but you have no idea what trouble we have about it. For instance, some few years since our authorities were advised to try wood. You in London were trying wood pavement, so we tried it in a few streets to test it. But in the first thaw after the winter so many horses fell down on the slippery wood up and down our hills, and so many broke their legs, that we were obliged to take it all up again. Then there came a German, and he proposed to pave the town with big flags as at Florence, and we were to have our streets like a bowling-green. Accordingly this was done in a street or two, as with the wood; but wood is cheap and stone is expensive, as we do not get stone easily here, and the big flags were costly. At first it was admirable, and everybody was pleased. At last we were to have a delightful *pavé* for our trotters, and the German was pronounced to be a blessed man—during the summer.

But the winter came. It is the frost and snow that ruin our streets. After the winter of course the thaw arrived, and then the streets all burst up as usual, and the big flags were so terrible, their points standing up like jagged rocks, and such holes between them, that the road was impassable both for horses and wheels; and so there was the end of the bowling-green, and we returned to our own wretched pavement. You see the street always breaks up after the winter; but we knock these smaller stones down again as well as we can and make the road passable, and that is all that can be done."

So we trotted on over the jagged Tverskaia, and through the St. Petersburg gate to the park at the back of the Petrofski Palace. The model farm lay two or three miles beyond this, and the whole road was through pretty woodland scenery on level ground. As we went on we passed from time to time ornamental villas standing in enclosed gardens full of flowers and shrubs. The Consul pointed them out as we passed.

"There lives Mr. A——, a wealthy merchant of Moscow; and that is the villa of Mr. B——, a great manufacturer; this is the house of the Prussian Consul; and that is the villa of Prince G——."

All these were pretty houses built on the Russian plan—a raised ground-floor with verandah and a garret above— a style of building thoroughly suitable to a summer residence. It is a house and cottage combined, and the verandah being often a broad projection from the building, the family live principally on it, commanding as it often does a view over the inclosing fence to the country beyond, as well as an easy descent into the garden by the flight of steps. The house of the Prussian Consul was the prettiest of them all, its front covered with creepers and roses. Many of these villas were rented only for the summer months by Moscow residents.

Leaving these we passed some pine woods, and here at intervals, in the edge of the woodland, were many small separate houses in various stages of erection. My companion said that all this was ground belonging to the Government, and that these houses in course of erection, and others completed, were a project of the Government. In some cases the authorities had built the house and let it at a low rent; while in other cases they let the plot of ground at a small ground-rent on a long lease, thirty or forty roubles a year, the lessee building his own house. Various of these Government houses were occupied,

their gardens of considerable size and gay with flowers, and the voices of children resounded with laughter and merriment from the enclosures. There was one thing observable and eminently Russian. Except the road on which we were driving, there was no pretence of any other—nothing beyond a grass track in the direction of any of these villas. The cross ways leading to their entrance gates were left as chance left them—tracks in the soil, only marked with the wheels of the timber and brick carts during the building. Road-making is certainly not a passion of the Russian nature, and the Muscovite Macadam has yet to be born who shall regenerate both the city and the country. But the houses were pretty and exceedingly picturesque, showing that there is much taste for architecture native to the Russian mind, though it is at present not very pure, but slightly *bizarre*.

We arrived at the end of the wood at a considerable collection of buildings. This was the Agricultural College. It consisted of a handsome central mansion, in which were the museum, lecture-rooms, library, council-chamber, and other apartments. This stood apart, and near it were the dormitories of the students, two long lines of building forming a half-circle with a gap in the centre, and facing to the

museum. Beyond these was the Governor's residence, and then again the farm-buildings, barns, stables, yards, cart-houses, granaries. On the far side of the dormitories was the church, and at the back-front of the museum a large flower-garden with bosquets and summer-houses, and fountains and basins, and pretty avenues of trees. It was all in the most perfect order, rich-looking, clean, and substantial.

Calling on the Governor, we found to our disappointment that he was in Moscow, but an officer of the establishment was at once directed by the secretary to show us everything. It appeared that the college was now empty, the students, who numbered two hundred, all away on vacation, it being the summer holiday. So all the professors, seventeen in number, were away too. I confess that in my heart I was thankful the seventeen professors were in the bosoms of their several families, or acquiring knowledge far from the academic shades. The idea of seventeen learned men was an oppression to a simple traveller, and the thought that I could walk about the whole place at my ease and see for myself was an inestimable blessing.

The Consul had quietly informed me on our way that agriculture was not much in his line, and the

officer who was deputed to show us over the college, at once, on my first question, admitted frankly that he was utterly ignorant of all matters connected with sheep, cattle, and corn. Evidently one thing was quite certain, that I should not leave the college that day oppressed with a plethora of knowledge of scientific farming. The officer led us first into the cow stables. Nothing could be cleaner or in better order; but the cows—well, they were all away at some pastures at a few versts distance, thirty in number, and all of them were of Swiss or of Dutch breed. These were preferred to English breeds as better milkers. The bulls were in the next stables, four from Switzerland and two from Holland, the latter appearing the finer blood, but they were all small. The Swiss had fine broad foreheads, but were heavy in the heads as well as in the shoulders, with hollow backs, while the Dutch had straight backs, more classical heads, and were finer in their limbs. They were well cared for and kindly treated, as the polished woodwork of the stalls, and the sweet-smelling hay and fresh litter, and glistening chains round their sleek necks, and bright eyes and coats, and their docile ways, all testified. There was a boiling-house for the food, and a tramway for this all through the stables. There was ma-

chinery for threshing corn, and for cutting it and grass. There were various steam-engines for threshing, but those by "Woods" they considered the best. In the yards were heaps of straw, and ranges of sacks of corn were in the barns; while horses were everywhere—in stables, or in the yards, some harnessed to old-fashioned telegas, and others to newly-fashioned farm vehicles considered more convenient. The farm horses were rather small, some from Belgium, others of a native race, but all showing bone. There was a general eye to character in the selection. Inquiring for the sheep, in the hope that, like Count L——, there might be here a fancy for the black faces from the South-downs, I heard that the flock was of Russian breed, and was at some distance off. The farm consisted of about two hundred acres of wood, and about one hundred more of arable and pasture. It was altogether a busy and pleasant scene, and thoroughly enjoyable, for it seemed like being suddenly transported by a magic power from all foreign and strange objects away into the midst of home sights and sounds, with the charm of accustomed habits and the perfume of associations grateful to the senses.

From the farmyard we went to the museum and

library. The whole building was fitted up in the usual way of similar places of study. There were various lecture-rooms, and separate museums for the different subjects attached to the several rooms for lectures. The library, a long, handsome apartment, was well furnished with works arranged in separate cases, according to subjects. Here were works on agriculture, on animals, on soils, on manures, on anatomy, on electricity, on chemistry, on forests, and in various languages—French, English, German, Russian. This room is open to the students daily from ten in the morning till one, and again from three till six in the afternoon, and every convenience is provided for them of tables and writing materials. The establishment in all its parts was in the best order, neat and well cared for, and yet the lecture-rooms and library showed marks of being constantly used.

Going out into the garden, I observed to my companion that none of the buildings had a Russian look, but rather Italian, the large central mansion being, in fact, a very ornate Italian house on a large scale.

"It is Italian," he replied, "and its history is this: This property round here all belonged to a noble of this country, Prince G——, and he, after living in Italy for some time, returned here, and built this

house, and all the others for offices—that in which the Governor lives, and those used as the students' dormitories, and the stables too, except that those have all been enlarged and added to lately by the Government for the college. But this principal house is the same as it was first built. The Prince died, and his widow lived here for some time; but being extravagant, her property got into debt. She borrowed money on it, the lender being an apothecary in Moscow. There is a curious story about it, though nobody ever quite knew how the thing was managed; but anyhow, in the end the widow of the Prince G—— parted with the whole estate for something absurdly under its value. It is declared that she only had forty thousand silver roubles for it, about six thousand pounds. The apothecary at once sold it to the Government, which paid much more than its value, the sum given being two hundred and fifty thousand roubles, rather more than thirty-six thousand pounds; so the apothecary made a good job of that."

"People do say," said I, "that a purchase by the Russian Government goes through so many hands, all of which take a toll as it passes, that in the end the sum paid is long beyond the value of the article bought."

My companion laughed.

"How are the *employés* with their low salaries to live if they do not make a little money by their wits?" And then, as we stood by the fountain in the midst of the garden, as it threw its jets of water into the air, sparkling in the afternoon sun, and falling with its musical murmur splashing into the basin, he related to me the following:—

"One of my acquaintances here at Moscow, a commercial man, wished lately for a special *permit* connected with his business. He applied to a Russian as to what he should do. Petition the governor, said the Russian, and take it yourself to him. So he drew up his petition and called at the governor's palace. He was shown in to the secretary, who received the paper and heard the case. The secretary, in the most polite and urbane manner, made light of the matter—it would be granted immediately. He waited for a fortnight, and then hearing nothing from the governor he called again. Again he saw the secretary, and again he was promised an immediate compliance with his petition,—the governor, said the polite official, had been a good deal engaged lately with important matters. Another fortnight passed, and no answer came from the governor. So then he spoke to his Russian

friend about the singular delay. 'Can there be any real objection?' said he. The Russian gentleman merely asked this question,—'How many roubles did you offer the secretary?' My friend was shocked. 'Why, the secretary is a gentleman, how could I venture to do such a thing?' 'Gentlemen!' replied the Russian; 'of course he is, but he is an official. How do you think he manages to keep house, and wife, and horses, and all that, on his paltry salary? Offer him some roubles, or you will get no *permit* in twelve months.' So they came to an understanding as to the number of roubles grateful to the secretary, and my friend presented himself again at the governor's house. After the usual polite speeches on both sides, my friend took out his ten rouble note, and laid it with a certain misgiving on the table by which they were sitting. The secretary pulled open towards himself a long drawer of the table, and putting out his hand, with a smiling face and a most courteous gesture to my friend, he drew the note across the table, and dropped it into the drawer. In the drawer were a quantity of rouble notes. Then the secretary rose with a most cordial manner and animated gesture. "A thousand apologies, my dear sir, for this delay in replying to your petition. The governor has been much occupied,

but it shall be attended to instantly—without an hour's delay.' On the very next day the petition was granted. How many officers and secretaries," added the Consul smiling, "did this purchase of this estate pass through between the apothecary and the Government?"

"Then the apothecary did not get quite all the two hundred and fifty thousand roubles?" said I.

"Good lack!" said the Consul, "no—that would have been too unjust; of course there was a fair division of toll between the various parties, several toll-bars to be paid between the two principals, the apothecary and the Government."

At the edge of the garden stood the church of the college. It was a specimen of compound architecture, and nothing could be more fanciful than its detail. A broad flight of steps beneath a canopy led up to a covered landing and the entrance, the pillars supporting the canopy being of Byzantine form, twisted. The body of the church was of course the Greek cross, the usual cupolas surmounting the roof. Then there was a Saxon rounded arch to the doorway, while more than one of the lower windows terminated in the pointed style. In the upper part were small windows with Moorish fretwork, and pretty small

Moorish pillars. When you add to all this that some of the pillars were painted red and some blue, and that the whole church was bright as a freshly painted picture, you could not help looking at it all as a pretty plaything, a toy rather than a church. I did not go inside. No doubt that was a bright reflection of the shell. This had been the private chapel of the Russian Prince G——.

After a luncheon at a traktir in the neighbourhood, where my companion and I indulged in the thoroughly Russian refreshment of caviare and cheese and brandy, we drove back to Moscow to the famous restaurant on the Kitai Boulevard, where we had a Russian dinner. Here we sat on white sofas, our windows shaded with white blinds, our table covered with snowy white linen, while the men who waited on us were Tartars, clothed entirely in white, jacket and trousers, the whole air of the large apartment being that of a room in a sultry Oriental city.

As we drove back from the farm through the park, I asked my companion what was the general status of the students of the college.

"They are of various grades," he replied; "some of them of course are poor, sons of small nobles, or men who have saved a little money in trade; but as

the payment is small, and they can live cheap, they manage to attend the college; then there are sons of lawyers and doctors, and of commercial men, of whom there is a large body in Moscow."

"Are any of them high nobles?" said I.

"It is a remarkable thing," he replied, "what a change there is going on in that class. Formerly no noble of the higher class put his sons into anything but the Army. They did not like the Navy—in Russia that is thought low and not fashionable; the young men went through a course of reading in the universities; they learnt a little of everything, very superficially, of course, and not very usefully—science, art, history, languages, and military tactics; when they came out of the universities they were placed in certain cadet corps, preparatory for the regular army. But now, since the liberation of the serfs, the nobles find it necessary to have their estates, which are much curtailed, better looked after. The consequence of this is that some of the principal nobles in the country are educating one of their sons, not for the Army, as before, but to be an agent over the family estates. Some of these young men are here at the college, and are receiving an education in agriculture for this purpose."

"This freeing of the serfs," said I, "seems to be the beginning of a very considerable change in the country."

"It is an immense change," said my companion; "of course the nobles as a body do not like it, because it has in some cases deprived them of property, and in others it has exposed the rottenness of the old system. Many who were thought to be rich proprietors, turned out to be poor and in debt to their own agents and serfs. So this is not a popular act of the Emperor, that is, not among the nobles; but there are even many of them think it a very useful measure for the country; and the people, as a mass, are enthusiastic about it, and declare that now for the first time there is a Russian people. There is no doubt," he went on, "but that the position of the nobles had become a very false one: some were rich and oppressive to their people, and others were poorer than their own serfs."

I mentioned to him what Count L—— had told me.

"It is quite true," said the Consul; "and, moreover, they were almost universally gamblers. The quantity of money they played away in the winters here in Moscow was monstrous; and when they had lost heavily, and sent down to their estates to their

agents for more, the agents were their own serfs very often and lent them their own money. Now the nobles cannot any longer play deep in this way, and so the commercial men in Moscow are taking their places. These men play even more heavily than the nobles did. At the Club you may see a thousand roubles on a card. However, these men by their losses do not do so much mischief as the nobles did. When these millionaires and others lose their money it goes to any other mill-owner, and the mill goes on; but if a noble damaged his estates, his people suffered, his land, his villages, his tradesmen, his children, everyone. Now the nobles are becoming more sensible, and the next generation will be different men."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Convent Simonoff—Extent and Wealth of the Establishment in Former Times—Day of St. Sergius, and Fair at the Convent—Superb Bell-tower—Varieties of Costume—Young Gamblers—Interior of the Simonoff—The Superior—His Reception by the Crowd—"Devoured with Kisses"—The Church—Earnest Devotion of a Youth—View from the Bell-tower—Disappearance of my "Murray"—Distribution of Beer—The Fête proper—Tea-drinking Booths—Sale of Melons and Honey—Beggars—Organ-Grinders—Female Shop-keepers of Moscow—Chorus-singing—Well-to-do Peasants.

THE Moskwa, after flowing into the city from the Sparrow Hills, and washing the walls of the Kremlin, makes a sudden bend, and flows out again almost in the same direction by which it entered. At the point where the river leaves the city there are high precipitous banks a little withdrawn from the water. A meadow is between the stream and the high ground. On one of these heights stands the Convent Simonoff, an extensive collection of buildings contained within a lofty, embattled, ponderous wall, dotted at intervals with imposing towers. This

is of red brick, and is more than half a mile in circuit. The convent is, in fact, a small fortress, and in the days of bows and arrows, and spears and clubs, and battering-rams and Tartar horsemen, it stood a good siege or two successfully, the monks beating off their assailants. The day came when new powers of warfare were in use, and then it was taken by the Poles and sacked. As it was once the most important monastery in Russia, and had been enriched by numerous princely private gifts of great value, besides the treasures which it had collected as owner of large estates, the capture was an immense prize to the invading Pole. Imagine this convent possessing at one time numerous villages and twelve thousand serfs! What able diplomats must have been St. Sergius and his successors among religious devotees to amass such a property as this! Clearly the Greek papas did not think lightly of temporal power any more than does our neighbour, the Papa of Rome. However, the day of reverse arrived, and now the Simonoff possesses neither village nor serf. But still it retains its hold on the affections and the devotions of the Russian people, and flourishes in a quiet, sensible, unostentatious way, keeping its fine buildings in good order, maintaining a few monks, and supporting

its services in its various and highly-ornamental churches. There are six churches—once not too many for its numerous monks and ecclesiastical display in its palmy days—now, in its hour of shrunk proportions, too like a mockery of grandeur!

Hearing one day that there was to be a fair held at the Simonoff Convent, I thought it a good opportunity to pay it a visit. A fair at a convent sounded like a novelty. So I drove up there in a droschky, the distance being between three and four miles from my hotel. On my way along the river bank round the bend of the Moskwa in the town, I passed numerous knots of people, the women all in holiday costume, and the men in their best, all on the way to the Simonoff. At length the houses ceased, and we came out on a sandy slope, an open space, our droschky reduced to a walk through the deep track. Other droschkies and carriages, as well as telegas and tarantasses were on all sides toiling up the slope, and people on foot all cheery and laughing, all going to the fair—a general holiday. It was the day of St Sergius, the saint and founder of the convent. Reaching the top of the sandy slope, we found the vallum or boundary bank and ditch of the city running right and left, and over this parties of country people were clambering to join

the town throng. Passing a small wood or plantation of fir-trees, in the shade of which were reposing numerous little family circles, with their baskets of provisions, just arrived across the neighbouring vallum from their villages, we came out on a smooth broad space of turf. On this stood the Simonoff, its fine and lofty and ancient walls extending right across from near the vallum to within a few feet of the precipitous hill towards the river and the meadow. Over these towered up the cupolas and minarets of the various churches within, while near the angle by the pitch of the hill stood the superb bell-tower, rising storey over storey above the grand gateway, to a height of more than three hundred feet. This bell-tower is said to command a really better view of Moscow than either the Ivan Veliki tower in the Kremlin or the height of the Sparrow Hills.

The large open space of turf was now covered with some two or three hundred carriages, while the people on foot might be counted by thousands. It was a grand day at the Simonoff.

I had with me an Italian as an interpreter, and so leaving our droschky on the grass, we tried to gain an entrance to the interior by the great gate beneath the bell tower. But this was locked for this day, and we

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I had with me an Italian as an interpreter, and so leaving our droschky on the grass, we tried to gain an entrance to the interior by the great gate beneath the bell tower. But this was locked for this day, and we

were directed to a gate elsewhere. Falling into the stream of people round the angle of the wall on the pitch of the hill, we found a narrow roadway under the ponderous battlemented inclosure for two or three hundred yards, and then we came to another gateway with a fine tower above it. This was the one permitted entrance to the courts within on this day, and here the different streams of people meeting from opposing sides along the wall, as well as another surging up the the hill at this point from a footpath across the meadow, there was a gathering. Not being in a hurry, I got out of the crowd and climbed a bank between the road and the pitch, and so could look on in peace at the moving panorama. There were no gentry in this mass, but all were rural folk or town populace. All were well dressed, and there was every kind of costume from different parts of the country.

Amongst all people that I have seen, with the exception of the Poles in the villages, who have a ghastly taste for being clothed entirely in white, and the Bohemians, who have a funereal fondness for a general suit of black, the usual costume has a strong admixture of red. The passion colour of Russia is decidedly red. Now in this crowd almost every woman wore some article of this colour, either her cap on her head,

or a kerchief on her neck, or her dress was red, or her bodice, or her stockings,—while the favourite wear of the men of the peasant class was a red shirt worn as a tunic with a crimson belt. One of the common articles of dress of the women was a Scotch woollen shawl of a red and black check. This Scotch shawl is a grand discovery for them, as it is light and warm, and is of the darling hue—red.

Certainly the Russian people are a good-tempered, easy race. Here was a mass of persons all huddled together at this one gate, and yet I saw no pushing, no crushing, no quarrelling; and yet there was plenty of occasion for it. There were big burly men with their wives and children, heated and dusty from a long country walk, the women having borne the burden and heat of the day, which means having carried a thumping child; and here were numbers of young peasant lads in rough canvas dresses,—all having one object, the gateway, and yet all were patient and good-tempered, chatting, laughing, happy.

There was another use being made of the day of St. Sergius on the meadow under the hill. Just in front of me the stream of people from the river bank came up the pitch; but immediately below me out on the grass by the pathway were several knots of young men

and lads standing about a little apart. These lads were all gambling. They stood in circles of eight and ten, and each lad of a circle took it in turn to toss a coin into the air and let it fall on the ground. I asked my guide what the game was. It appeared to be gambling pure—a variety of the good old game of "heads and tails." Each man of a circle was called on to declare that "he stood a kopeck" on the toss. Then the player having ascertained that all had declared, tossed, crying as he tossed "heads" or "tails." If it came up heads, then he received all round; and if tails, then he paid all round, or *vice versa*, as he cried on tossing. There were five or six of these groups. Some of them played high, and some played low. We could hear their challenges. One young fellow was very excited. Before he tossed the coin he cried out "two kopecks" to his circle. This group was playing high. "Two kopecks." There were some little hesitations, but presently they all declared, the young fellow saying little irritating things—tantamount to "Now then—who's afraid?—only two kopecks—never say die—make your fortune—only two—all declared? —up she goes! Heads!" The fair at the convent evidently had a side which was not religious and devoted to the Virgin and St. Sergius.

The interior of the Simonoff consists of a number of large and small buildings irregularly placed all round near the wall—with the exception of the principal church—the centre being left open for grass lawns and shady avenues of dwarf limes, and pathways paved with flags, leading in various directions to the several churches. This interior is very pretty. On ordinary days it is a quiet retreat, inviting to study—a shady, orderly spot, like a college garden; a place of religious repose with an atmosphere of peace. But on this day of the fête it was a stirring scene of lay life, an invasion of the sacred precincts by the mundane, gaiety-loving outer world. People were lying on the grass in parties, or sitting on the benches under the avenues, or strolling along the many pathways in knots. There was one of these—a wood-paved way—leading across the grass from the gateway by which we had entered to the great church, and on this was collected all the way along a number of people. My guide said that the principal of the convent would pass along this path from his rooms by the gateway to the church, and the people were waiting for him. So I sat down on a seat at the edge of the path near the flight of steps up to the church, and waited too.

It was a pleasant scene, the quiet—for there was no noise beyond the low hum of the people—the shade, the grass, the cool paved way, the pretty dresses of the village folk, the many children on the turf, not romping about, but orderly and seated with their parents; and here and there a few of the better classes from the city, apart and in knots of twos and threes in the avenue, in silk or muslin, with fashionable bonnets. There were strawberries too going about in little white basins, and these were the centres of small happy groups on the turf. As I sat, a peasant woman with her red cap and blue dress came and stood near to wait for the papa, and with her was an engaging small girl of ten years of age. Her delicate face and fair hair tied up with a slip of pink silk, and her pretty brown eyes, were very attractive. Although I could not understand a word of her village talk, nor she of my efforts at classic Russ, we were soon in deep converse on the matter of a pink sash round her white dress, and ribbons of the same colour in her sleeves, and some white glittering beads in her jaunty cap; and we were in the middle of a marked flirtation, and I was meditating an advance into strawberries, when suddenly there was a stir among the people, and an arranging of themselves into two lines

on either side the pathway. The Superior was coming. Presently I saw the lines of people surging backwards and forwards, the quiet order rapidly broken, people rushing about, women and children hurrying over the grass, and then there was an increased hum of voices. The disturbance approached steadily and slowly, and at last it gained those before me. And now I saw that the cause of this was a slight and venerable man, in a priest's dress, with a small black cap on his head, of cloth, full and hanging down behind, and ornamented in front with a bit of crimson velvet, and whose hands every person was determined to kiss as he advanced up the pathway. Four or five at a time, men and women, would make a dart at his left hand, and having gained possession of it, would kiss it eagerly, fiercely, while others from the other side of the pathway got in front of him and fought for his right hand—they would have it. The old man stopped till the devotees had had their way. When they had kissed it they fell back contented, out of the way, and the patriarch advanced a step or two, till arrested again by the same furious devotion. He appeared to try to get on and to avoid some of this expression of love, and his old thin face turned from side to side wearily as he muttered a few words at

times. When he had both his hands free for a moment then he raised them and crossed himself hurriedly and uttered a blessing; but in an instant they were dashed at and pulled down again, and, as may be said, "devoured with kisses." So he got on, up to the steps at the entrance of the church. But here the struggle became worse than ever. The whole flight was a mass of people, so was the platform, and so was a long covered raised arcade which ran round the sacred edifice. The old man mounted the steps at last, and passed into the arcade, and so into the church, thoroughly hustled by the ardent and resolute hand-kissing crowd. How glad he must be, methought, to be inside and at his ease once more, poor old gentleman. But there is perhaps a certain gratification to the spirit of man even in this obtrusive and enormously demonstrative regard. Going into the arcade soon after, and following its course round the interior fane, I found various small grated openings from the one to the other, so that people in the outer arcade were able to see and hear all that went forward in the interior. The church was more than ordinarily rich in gilding and painting, as became what was once the principal convent in Russia. But it was singularly small, so much of the interior being taken

up with the usual pillars and the surrounding corridor. Walking along this I found various small bodies of devotees, and in one corner a peasant lad in grey white canvas prostrate on the stones. After a time he got up, crossed himself with much earnestness, and then bowed down his head on to the stones again, and prostrated himself at length. He continued this succession of devotional movements for some time, and appeared to be quite wrapped in his offering of prayer and expression of humiliation. At last he picked up his cap and walked away slowly, with a certain sadness in his countenance and manner. I certainly never saw in any country a youth of this class so devout and apparently so impressed with what he was doing.

From this I went to the famous tower. The staircase was crowded with men and boys, also with pigeons, which disputed with us the possession of their customary dwelling. From the height of three hundred feet added to that of the hill on which the tower stands, the scene is truly grand. You are nearer to the city than when on the Sparrow Hills, and at a much higher elevation than when on the Ivan Veliki in the Kremlin. It was a sunny, still day, and the whole city fairly sparkled with its white

houses and green roofs and its gardens, and its hundreds of gilded and glittering cupolas and belfries. Then there was the river flowing through it with its living and shining and graceful sweep of water, while on the meadow below the tower, and up the sandy slope, were the streams of people coming out to the convent. On the grassy table-land were the scattered masses of carriages, and in the courts of the convent were the crowds of gaily-dressed folk—a general festivity. From here too I discovered that the chief part of the fête was going on beyond the walls on the eastern side towards the vallum, beneath a grove of fine elm trees.

While I was admiring the remarkable scene from the topmost chamber of the tower, two or three young peasants, dressed in grey-white canvas—lads similar to the devout youth in the arcade of the church—were very anxious to make my acquaintance, continually following me from one window or opening to another, and pressing on me with a smiling familiarity, and addressing me in Russian. Through my companion I had some simple talk with these men as to their ideas of the fair, of the view of the city, of their village life. I must say that most of the notions I gained from them consisted of whatever may be found

in broad grins. However I may as well here add that some little time afterwards, on descending the lower stairs, I found my pocket lighter by a "Murray" which had been reposing therein, and which my companion told me I should perhaps find in the "Thief Market," near my hotel, for sale. But I never saw it again, or my young friends in grey white canvas, or the youthful devotee.

Leaving the tower I followed a crowd up some steps to a large building, and found we were on our way to the kitchen. Here in an ante-room were two monks, the cook and his assistant. They were in long black dresses, and were in an extremity of heat, and, I may say, of dirt. They were engaged in serving out kvas—a native beer—to all comers gratis on this day. However they were very courteous and civil men, and were anxious that I should not drink out of the enormous copper can which one of them held up for the peasants and others to take a good "pull" at the kvas. But I took my turn with my big and bearded and canvas-habited neighbours, the ponderous copper can and the gratuitous beer and the burly monk having about them a smack of ancient time and custom which recommended them much to my fancy. The kitchen was closed, perhaps prudently on a day of such doings.

So I went out to the fête proper. This was the fair. Here were rows of booths stretching along under two rows of fine spreading trees, three or four lines of tents, and broad walks of grass between them. Here were some thousands of people in every variety of garb, many well dressed and merely walking up and down in the shade, while others kept up a continual shouting of their several wares for sale. One long line of booths was entirely occupied by tea-drinkers. These were neat small square places, some thirty or forty in number, built of white linen, strained over a slight wooden frame, and capable each of holding a table and seats all round for six or eight persons. There were white curtains to the entrance, and every one all down the line was occupied by a little party of men and women. The samovar was steaming on every table, and cups and saucers and various breads, or honey, or melons, or cakes, were on the white table-cloth. I found one of these at last vacant, and took possession, so that while drinking tea I could watch the humours of the place. First, a man would pass with a pile of melons, yellow and green, rich and gorgeous, on a tray on his head, offering them at a fabulously low price—ten kopecks a-piece—about three pence. Melons on a hot day in

the shade after a dusty walk seemed to be in great demand. In the centre of the broad way a seller of honey, with a stand, stopped just opposite my tea-room and offered his goods, large combs floating in broad pans of liquid honey. This seemed to be a favourite object of taste. Strapping young peasants stopped and bargained for it—so many kopecks for a cut of comb in a basin; and then they ate it, standing there and cutting off large mouthfuls with the honey-merchant's knife. They threw back their shock heads and let huge lumps all reeking with the liquid fall into their capacious jaws. Sometimes when a man had finished one basin he hung about the stand, and then bargained eagerly for a second, and devoured it with gusto. It gave one the idea of a grand vigorous physique to look at these ample-bearded and big-bodied men tossing off these basins of honey, rich and luscious, and then sauntering off at their ease, perhaps to the next honey stall, for another basin. Then men passed up and down with capacious trays of bread on their heads, the national kalatch forming always the greater part of the store. People in the tea-rooms bought them freely. Beggars perseveringly paid visits to every tea-room in turn, a woman and two children being the favourite arrange-

ment in this line of business. When they had collected a fair meal, such as the leavings of a tea-pot of some just vacated chamber poured out into a can carried for this purpose, scraps of honey-comb, broken kalatches, sundry lollypops, or some melon rind, they sat down and discussed all this cheerily, and expended much jollity on the lollypops. When refreshed they went at once into business at the very next booth, resuming their little drama of deep sorrow, and bitter want, and general utter weariness of life. All this time there were the usual and universal barrel-organs going up and down the broad way. There were a number of these—the street music of Moscow as of London. A man always carried the instrument, and a woman invariably followed close behind. To judge by appearances of the state of the organ world one would say that in London almost every organ-grinder was a bachelor, while in Moscow every one indulged in the sweets of wedded life. They are travelled men. These were French or Italian. I spoke to one, and his acknowledgment for my kopecks was in good English, "Thank you, sir—much obliged," a pleasant surprise. The man knew London, and he played me two or three of the old accustomed airs; and I shut my eyes and fancied

myself for the moment, while listening, far away in the wonted haunts of the city on the Thames. There were many well-dressed women walking about, and my companion explained the different status of the wearers. Two women would pass dressed in rich dark silk, deep brown, or dark green, or such like, and wearing on the head a close-fitting black silk cap, the whole style quite plain and without ornament. There was no shawl, and only a small simple kerchief round the neck. These were the upper class of shopkeepers, the women of the first Moscow houses. As a rule these were of large stout frame and of dark complexion. Then would come two—they were all in pairs—equally richly dressed, only that the colour was a little brighter, and the head-dress was a dark kerchief neatly bound round it. These were of the second class of shops. And then there were others, also in silken robe, but the colours stronger, and on the head was a dark kerchief, having long ends of brown or pink. These were of a third class. The Sclave type seemed to be strongly marked in most of them. To judge of their business by their size, one would say shopkeeping was a flourishing way of life in Moscow, and that good eating and drinking formed a considerable part of trade.

Beyond the grove of trees and the booths there was a broad meadow of soft and brilliantly green grass, and here were groups of people scattered over it in all directions. But the Simonoff Fair was deficient in many things which constitute the glories of a British festa of this kind. The Simonoff Fair was limited in its gaieties, and its revels were subdued, as a convent festa should be. There were no caravans of wild beasts from Africa, or farthest Ind,—no theatre for the Thespians, no stage for Shakespeare's heroes to strut their little hour, no circus for horses of genius, no Aunt Sally, no giant from China. People on the meadow seemed to be engaged principally in doing nothing particular. The only amusement appeared to be an occasional circle of perhaps twenty persons seated on the grass, in the centre of which was a man with some instrument of music, a tambourine or a kind of drum, and he led a song, the circle joining in chorus. The man was dressed in a costume of pink knickerbockers and vest, and a cap with feathers cocked jauntily on his head, and bright stockings and slippers. This seemed a kind of musical uniform. The men had good manly voices, and the chorus was thoroughly energetic. The scene rather reminded me of the Nile boat singer and his encirling chorus, for the song appeared to be a kind of impromptu, the man saying what suited him, to amuse his auditory. People clustered round these circles and seemed to enjoy the sallies of the singer and his music. Men in red came about with refreshments, trays of cakes and various breads, and others with huge glass decanter-shaped bottles of a dark red liquid, cherry-water. Among the groups were a number of peasant families, father, mother, and children, strolling about at their ease, well-dressed and happy, the older men in dark cloth, the women in bright-coloured dresses, shawls, and caps. But the most remarkable figures of all were the men of the well-to-do peasant class, men from thirty to fifty years of age, in the national costume. These were the dandies of the fair. I observed one man with greyish hair more than usually got up. This man's long boots were of fine polished leather, and were wrinkled from the calf to the ankle, quite in the style of the Hessian boot of our younger days. His knickerbockers were of black velvet, and the red tunic was spotless. The buttons of his dark vest were red, and the cord round his waist was of silk, with neat tassels. A gorgeous brooch was in his black neck-tie, and the small cap on his short grey hair was of black velvet. His

face was clean shaven, and his countenance bright and full of intelligence, the figure tall, and slight, and graceful, while the never-failing dark great-coat over all gave to the whole man a look of strength and substance. But the women with him were of the real peasant class, in brightest of colours.

"These people were serfs the other day," said my companion, in reply to my question, "all of those you see, with a few exceptions; now they are all free. That man," pointing to the "dandy" with grey hair, "and those dressed like him, had probably been permitted by their masters to trade, and they made a good thing of it."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Kitai Gorod—The Bazaars—Their Great Extent—The Shop-keepers—Playing at Draughts—Commerce in "the Rows"—Jewish Money-dealers—The Balance of Trade—Drain and Hoarding of the Precious Metals—Exhaustion produced by the Crimean War—Comparative Value of Silver and Paper Roubles—Prevalence of Forgery—Curiosities of Russian Finance—Objections to War on the Part of Russia—Madness of the War Party and Fanaticism of the Religious Party—Questionable Practices—Russia and her Roman Catholic Subjects.

IMMEDIATELY in front of the windows at the Hotel Dusaux was, as I have said before, across the Boulevard a flight of steps and an archway in the Kitai wall by which foot-people were continually passing at all hours into and out of the Kitai Gorod. This was my way too, for it was a resource and an amusement, when too hot for much walking, to cross the sunny Boulevard, and plunge at once into the narrow and shady streets of the Kitai. At the far side of this, and near the Kremlin, were the bazaars of Moscow. The natives called these the Rows, being

long lines of narrow straight covered ways. How luxurious it was on these sultry and glaring days of August or September to get away from the house and the dusty Boulevard and the blazing sunshine into the bazaars! From the hot street, where droschky horses stood about in pink linen to shade them from the burning rays and teazing flies, it was more than a solace to turn suddenly from the glare, which made your eyes ache, into the gloom of the bazaar. How cool and refreshing and soothing it was! Behind you was the street, looking like a lighted caldron, or the burning fiery furnace into which Shadrach and his companions were cast; and before you, extending far on and on, the extremity invisible or only glimmering as a small point of light, was the long, dim, cool, silent passage or row. These always reminded me of the straight street at Damascus, or the street of the cotton and linen merchants at Cairo—so quiet, so grateful to every sense, were they in their dim light and their repose. There was this difference, however, that in the Syrian and Egyptian bazaars there were donkeys with ladies on them, as in the days of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, making their purchases of the pale and handsome Eastern merchants, as they sat among their goods in the shop front, or, maybe, carrying on a little quiet love affair under the screen of muslins; while here, in the Moscow bazaars, were no four-footed animals bearing closely-veiled Sultanas, or British ladies, engaged in either love or shopping. Here all were on foot. These rows were never crowded, for they were of such extent—miles, indeed, of them—that although there was more trade carried on in them than in all the rest of Moscow put together, yet such was their extent, that the numbers of buyers were too scattered to produce any crowd at any point. This absence of many people at any one point aided to give an air of idleness to the place. Their breadth varied. Sometimes they were fourteen or fifteen feet across from shop to shop, and sometimes only ten or twelve; while at some angles, where were cross bazaars, the breadth might be nearer twenty feet. All were paved with large smooth flags, and were roofed in at some fourteen or fifteen feet from the ground, the shaded light let in by small side windows in the roofs. As you strolled leisurely along, the owners of the shops, all well-dressed men, in the unfailing large loose Russian coat, would be sitting or lounging on their counters, or on the shop front in conversation, or often enough seated on low chairs outside the shops on the pave-

ment with a small table or stool between them on which was a draught-board.

Two often would be playing at draughts, while others looked on. How often as I strolled along by these men thus engaged at their ease, I was reminded of the Damascus men occupied in the same way, but at chess instead of draughts! Had these Moscow sybarites been playing at chess I could never have resisted the temptation to stop and watch them, or even to sit down and play a game. The place and the scene, the quiet and the ease, were so inviting. If I had won the game, how natural it would have been to buy something of the loser, and only beat him down about one third of the price asked for the article, instead of half; and if I had lost, to fix on something good in the shop, and try to balance the matter of loss and gain by a laughing doggedness of will to pay much less than half the price, and carry it off. But the Muscovites did not play chess, though I wandered all through the bazaars in search of a chess-player. They all played draughts, but no chess—and draughts and I have no friendship.

It was a custom, as well as a constant amusement, to make purchases of these men. Nothing could be more courteous than their manner of inviting your

custom as you stopped a moment and looked at their goods. If you declined and passed on, they thanked you—for the courtesy of stopping. If you singled out any article, or inquired for one, there was an anxiety to offer it, and the most studied eagerness to please you—and then began the combat of courtesy and gain. As a rule, you always met the price asked with a shake of the head—a mild objection; and then this being the first blow, others followed; until perhaps after ten minutes of conflict, you holding on steadily to your offer, and the man abating and hesitating till he had reached the point below which he would not descend, another man, perhaps the shop-owner, would come forward from somewhere, put on a hard look, and carry the article away to the back of the shop, as if to put it away. The matter was finished, the struggle was over—he could not sell it at such a flagrant loss—his credit was concerned in not letting it go. Then you would put on a hard look too, and walk away. But as you went with one ear listening backwards, you would hear a call, "You shall have it;" and then all the assumed sullenness was fled, and smiles were in its place, and you secured your prize—and perhaps commenced another little similar joust. This was the way and custom of

commerce in "the Rows." Even when I gained my prize for less than half the original demand, I was always told by the experienced at the hotel that I had "paid dear for my whistle." There are a great number of small ornaments of native Moscow manufacture, and every day that I went into the Rows there was always something fresh to tempt the roubles from my purse; but the fault of this system pursued in buying and selling is that you never know if you are paying the fair value of any article.

One day strolling through these shady ways as usual, I saw two or three men with piles of gold and silver coins as their stock in trade. Here were gold pieces of ten roubles and five roubles, and silver ones of a rouble, half a rouble, a quarter, and so on. On asking my companion, an Italian, where these men had these coins from, as there were none in general circulation, he said in a laconic way, as if that were a complete and satisfactory reply to any question on money, "These men are all Jews." More than this my companion knew nothing.

On applying to an Englishman resident in Moscow, a day or two afterwards, on this subject of gold and silver, and observing on the singularity of a great country such as Russia having no gold or silver in common use, but only factitious copper and depreciated paper, he said—"Our money condition is a lamentable one here; the balance of trade with the foreigner is heavily against us, and so, what with the hoarding by the natives of all silver they can manage to obtain and keep, and the consumption of the precious metals in payment to the foreigner of the interest of our debt, and the further payment of the foreigner for articles of import beyond what our exports balance, there is not much silver or gold left for general use in the country. You see," he went on, "the greater part of Russian export is of bulky articles, raw produce, and the greater part of our import consists of manufactured goods. One ship-load of the latter coming here requires a good many ship-loads of the former going abroad to pay for it, and as the Russian wants to have the enjoyment of all the articles of civilized life—all the most expensive things—he finds in the end that he has not enough of cheap raw produce to pay for the dear articles of finished skill, without paying away his gold and silver besides. This, and the interest of the national loans to Rothschild, and Hope, and so on—some of the heavy cost of the Crimean War—which, of course, must be paid in metals, and not in worthless paper, and the hoarding by the people, utterly exhaust them, or

nearly so. In fact, if we did not issue paper we should not go on at all. We are like the Americans with their greenbacks. We go on with our greenbacks here, but it is an utterly fictitious condition of things."*

* Since the return of the author to England the following communication has been made to him in writing by a gentleman in London well acquainted with the subject:—

"The facts stated respecting the present condition of Russian trade and currency are undoubtedly correct, but the causes that have led up to this condition of Russian finances are, I think, only partially so. It is true enough no doubt that for years past Russia has imported foreign goods very largely in excess of the value of her exports, and the balance of trade thus arising has in the usual course of things been paid by specie remittances. I hardly think, however, that this drain on her specie resources can account altogether for the total disappearance of the precious metals that seems to have taken place. I believe that the greatest cause is the Crimean War, which so completely and utterly exhausted Russia in her resources of men and money that she has never been able to recover herself; and it is, I think, the opinion of those who are most intimately acquainted with such subjects, that it will still take years for the country to right itself in its finances. Russia has, however, boundless resources, and if she can only keep at peace, and also modify her late extravagant expenditure in unproductive Government works, there can, I think, be no doubt that the development of her foreign trade will gradually put her on her legs again. The Russians no doubt have a habit of hoarding coinage whenever they can, and this fact, together with that of the Government making no fresh issues, accounts for the circulating medium being so entirely paper. The Government have the power of increasing this to any extent they please, and a too abundant issue of notes of course sufficiently accounts for the depreciation of this medium."

It would appear from the above that there is scarcely an appreciable difference in the opinions held at Moscow and in London as to the condition of the finances of Russia and of the causes of this, while the views of well informed persons in both cities as to the disastrous effects on her financial prospects of a foreign war are identical.

I observed that on purchasing a silver rouble in the bazaar, as a test of the relative value of the silver and the paper, I had been obliged to pay a paper rouble and seven-pence English besides as the price of a silver rouble—a heavy depreciation of the Government paper, equal to more than one-sixth; for if you take the silver rouble to represent three shillings, the paper rouble thus represents rather less than half a crown.

"And this," said my companion, "does not tell the whole malady. We have forgery to a great extent, a constant forgery of the Government paper; and this is almost winked at by the Government."

"Winked at by the Government!" said I, in astonishment, and for a moment the idea ran through my mind of England in the condition of having no sovereigns or shillings or half crowns in general circulation, but only paper and halfpence, and our five-pound notes depreciated, and passing at about four pounds five shillings each; and these only in Great Britain, and worth much less at Paris and refused in payment except as a favour.

"I will tell you a story," said my companion, "and you shall judge for yourself. There is a large Government office, or bank, here in Moscow, where

money is paid out to the officials, and where the taxes are paid in. An acquaintance assured me only the other day that he had occasion to receive a sum of money from the Government, and accordingly he went to this office and presented his written demand for the sum due. He received it in paper roubles, of course. As he had to pay in some taxes he went to another department in the same building, and offered in payment some of the paper he had that moment received from the Government cashier. The receiver of taxes examined all the rouble notes carefully, and among them, to the astonishment of my friend, he objected to receiving one, as it was a forgery. 'But,' said my friend, 'that cannot be, because I have only this instant received these roubles at the cashier's office in this building.' Still the man objected. 'The note is forged, and I cannot receive it; I know nothing of where you obtained it.' My friend paid his taxes, and then returned to the cashier from whom he had received the forged note. Presenting it to him, he said, 'This is a forged note which you gave me just now, please to give me another.' 'What do I know about forged notes?' replied the cashier; 'we have no forged notes here.' But my friend insisted—'You paid me those notes half an hour since,

and when I offered them to the receiver of taxes in the next corridor, he refused this one as a forgery. Of course it is a mistake on your part.' 'I know nothing of forged notes,' said the cashier; 'we make no mistakes. You must have made the mistake and got it from some one else.' And so the cashier closed the door of his *caisse*, and the discussion."

"And what," said I, "did your friend do with his forged note? For what sum was it?"

"It was a fifty rouble note. Well, he took it to his own banker, and told his story. 'What can I do with it?' said he to the banker. The reply was very curious. The banker called up one of his senior clerks and showed him the note. 'What is it worth?' said he to his clerk. 'It is worth forty-five roubles,' said the clerk; and so my friend parted with his forged note at a loss of five roubles."

"But," said I, "how could the banker afford to pay so much for the note, and how could it serve him to purchase it at all?"

My acquaintance laughed.

"There are very curious things take place," said he, "in money matters in this country. The banker's clerk has told me since that he would much rather have anyone bring forged notes to him as a matter of

business, than good ones, because there is more money to be made of these in disposing of them than there is in the usual way of money business."

Certainly, when one considers these two little facts connected with the Government bank at Moscow and the private bankers, my companion might well smile and say, "There are very curious things done in money matters in Moscow."

In connection with the subject of money I may relate the following:—A party of gentlemen one day had been talking of the financial condition of Russia, and the conversation turned on the rumours of her again urging on Turkey reforms in respect of the Christians in the East, even to the extent of threats. "War!" exclaimed one gentleman, "what have we to do with war now? We want peace—that is what we want, to carry out our internal changes, and get the country into some kind of order. We are all *à tort et à travers*—at sixes and sevens—about our money matters, our law, our regulations about land and wages, and all this requires peace. Why, we have no money for war." I observed that it appeared to foreigners they had plenty of work at home to occupy the Government in arranging all these internal matters without a foreign war. "We do not want

war, and we cannot afford war now," was the reply. "How can we go into an expensive war without money? Look at our financial condition—look at our circulation, mere paper, bad paper, and copper—no gold and no silver, and everything in a state of political change in the country. It would be like madness to go into a war." I observed that they always had a little war going on to keep their hands in towards India in the far East. "Ah! that is quite another thing," was the rejoinder; "it does not cost so much to keep up a few troops out there, and beat those half-barbarian peoples, and make them pay as we go on for being beaten—that is one thing, but it is another to enter upon an immense war with the great powers of Europe, who have enormous armies and navies and unlimited wealth in money and resources, while we are impoverished, and have not half recovered from the last war. No, no; we have a war-party, of course, who look at everything through that medium, but who are bad politicians; and we have a fanatical party in religion, who are worse than the others, and who are madmen in politics. No, no; let us have peace, and get things into order at home, and not break treaties and set all the world against us, and make another failure into the bargain."

It need only be added that we have lately seen the war party and the religious party push on the Russian Government to the very verge of war with the Turks, and then, when the Government found itself in the presence of resisting Turkey and of disapproving France and England and Austria, stop short of the last resort, and listen to the voice of prudence of her best political friends at home, and mark the threatening state of her finances, and make a rather undignified retreat from her menacing position behind angry demands and pompous advice. It is scarcely worthy of a great power like Russia to resort to such questionable practices as those in Greece and Crete. What would she say to any Roman Catholic power which should act towards her own subjects of that faith in Poland and Russia on account of religion as she does not hesitate to do towards Turkey in regard of the subjects of that power of the Greek faith on account of their religion? So long as Russia treats her own Roman Catholic subjects with such intolerance, Christians as they are, she can hardly expect much credit in the eyes of the world for religious and Christian objects in her conduct towards Turkey.

CHAPTER XV.

Visit to Nijni Novgorod—Travelling in Russia in Old Times—Carriages on Russian Railways—Persistent Smokers—The Passion for Tea—Convenient Arrangement—My First Impression of Nijni—Peculiarities of the Fair—Affluence of Foreign Merchants—The Chinese Row—Life of the Merchants during the Fair—Roads in Russia—Cossacks—Magnificent View from the Plateau—Vessels in the River—Former Importance of Nijni—Curious Story relating to the Sacred Bell of Nijni—*En Garçon* at the Fair—A Russian *recherché* Dinner—Visit to the Landlord's Fish-Wells—The Tea-Stores—Shops and Shopping—A Young Noble and his Wife—Decline of Nijni.

ANY one going to Moscow would be considered as leaving a prime part of his Russian visit unpaid if he omitted Nijni Novgorod. In the old days, however—which means only thirty years since—a visit to Nijni was a very serious matter.

All travelling in Russia required something more than a mere fancy to see any given place; it required a strong desire in the making of the preparations, and a strong will to carry them to a conclusion. Two or three hundred miles of journeying on roads which

were only tracks, in carriages without springs, and, when stopping for what should be rest, finding inns where was an unfurnished room and a hard bedstead for the weary man, but no bedding beyond what he took with him; all these were troubles which a man did not face without an effort.

Thus the journey from Moscow to Nijni was a matter not lightly to be undertaken. The getting there was one thing, and then the getting back again was another. It was very easy to say, "Go to Nijni," but the going was not easy at all. But now the day of these things is past and gone. My acquaintances frequently put to me this question, "Of course you will go to Nijni? There is a railway—it takes only twelve hours."

Besides this, our consul was kind enough to aid my visit to Nijni by an offer to give me a letter of introduction to an English gentleman there, a merchant. This was an incentive the more, so one night I put myself on the railway for the celebrated place of Eastern trade.

The Consul had, moreover, given me this opinion: "If you have no particular object of inquiry to make at Nijni—one which will occupy some days; if you are only going there to see the fair, for a cursory

visit, the best plan is to start from here by the night train, which is the best—all the merchants go by it—you will be at Nijni in the morning. Pass the day there, and return by the night train. You will save yourself much discomfort and a bad bed by this arrangement."

At ten o'clock one night I started for Nijni. Nothing could be better than the carriage, fitted up as the Russian carriages are with arm-chairs arranged singly or in pairs about its long extent. There were seventeen armchairs. The entrances are at the two extremities of the long car, which is much warmer by this arrangement. There is an anteroom, too, at each end, which adds to the warmth, a necessary thing in the winters of that severe climate. The country appeared to be of the same character as that round Moscow, waving, and with woods scattered all over it. The only objectionable circumstance of the journey was that some of my companions—the car was about half full—smoked at intervals all through the night. A gentleman and lady occupied chairs at my end, and these two lit their cigars (the lady a cigarette, of course) at once. After smoking one or two each, they arranged themselves with pillows for the night, and went to sleep.

I have no very great objection to a cigar in a railway carriage, though not now a smoker myself; but still there is a limitation to this negative liking. At about one in the morning the lady—she was a small person of the Sclave type of prettiness, white skin, dark sleepy eyes, rather full lips, high cheek bones, and a soft undulating figure—she awoke, and rousing herself from a combination of white pillow and red woollen shawl and coquettish red and black close-fitting cap and a framework to her face of white cambric, to my surprise she applied to her gentleman for a cigarette. He was a German, to judge by his looks, young and with a well-bred manner. They had a cigar in company, and then slept again. At dawn the same thing happened. After an early cup of tea at a station they smoked steadily all the way to Nijni, which we reached at ten. I thought this pretty fair work for a young lady.

As a specimen of the passion for tea in Russia, one of my fellow-travellers performed a considerable feat in the consumption of this article. Inside each window of the railway carriage there is a small arrangement which is very convenient. This is a flap of wood in the form of a half circle which plays on hinges. When unused and let down it lies flat against the side of the carriage, and

when wanted it is raised and forms a small table. On this ladies place their work, or a book. My opposite neighbour, a middle-aged gentleman, at one station ordered tea. This was put in through the window, a small tray with cup and saucer, a small porcelain teapot filled with odoriferous tea, and a large one holding, perhaps, three pints of boiling water. This was placed on the small table between him and me, with many expressions of courtesy on his part and wishes that I might not be inconvenienced thereby. "Of course I was not incommoded." The train started and my neighbour began his tea. He soon emptied the teapot, and then he replenished it from the large pot of water, for hardly did he finish off one cup before he poured out another. I never saw a man so happy and so jealous of his tea. No old cottager in the dear old country parish of my boyhood—and there were some very severe performers in that line in our parish—and no middle-aged or youthful dame ravenous for her tea at five in the afternoon—that new and beautiful institution of the present age—ever was more intent on her cup as the dark stained liquid rose higher and higher in the small pink and green porcelain bowl, or more greedy of every drop of it, than was my neighbour as he watched the flow of the perfumed stream

from the small spout. And then how he held back his head and drained it to the dregs! By degrees the large pot naturally became light, the teapot did the same, and as we drew up to another station, so vigorously had the gentleman applied himself to his work, that nothing remained but emptiness; and my neighbour dismissed the whole little apparatus through the window, and then betook himself to his slumbers with something like four pints of tea under his waistcoat.

We reached Nijni at ten on the following morning. There I found a considerable station supplied with all requisites either for breakfast or dinner. Having discussed the former I put myself into the hands of a droschky driver with the address of the English merchant. "Mr. P—" said he, as I named the gentleman in question; "I know him, he lives in the Chinese Row." So we started for the Chinese Row.

It had been rainy weather for the last few days, so we drove through much mud and by various streets of water to the Chinese Row. Nijni under the circumstances was not prepossessing. From meagre accounts I had imagined the fair at Nijni to be in a degree like other fairs; a succession of streets of booths and covered arcades extending over a large space of ground at the edge of the town. But I found none of these

things. There is a small town of Nijni lying along the south bank of the Volga, partly along the level shore and partly climbing up the steep bank or hill beyond it, and surrounded by the Castle, Citadel, and Cathedral, and other large buildings. Opposite this, across the river, is another town, the Nijni of the fair. The first is an ordinary old Russian town of permanent brick and stone habitations. The second is a place consisting of bazaars and endless rows of low wooden one-storey buildings of all sorts and kinds of architecture, Muscovite, Armenian, Turkish, Chinese, Tartar, occupied for the time of the fair, and for that only, by the people of the different countries, each bazaar by its own people. By these means whatever kind of merchandise a merchant may want, he knows exactly where to go in search of it. This town of bazaars is only alive during the period of the fair, about two months, when it is filled to overflowing with a mass of people from the four quarters of the earth, varying from three to four hundred thousand persons. The fair over, the whole of them depart; the rows are locked up, the mosque and church are closed, the houses are swept clear of all furniture, bare walls alone remain, the folks of Nijni go back over the river, and the place is dead and shut up. Then it is a place of

silence and loneliness for nine or ten months, during the long winter and spring, until the summer and the fair arriving together wake it again into a temporary and spasmodic life.

Mr. P——, the English merchant from Moscow, had his temporary residence in the Chinese Row. These rows are wide open streets, bordered by low houses, with a covered area running along the whole length of the street on either side. By this arrangement people walk about the place under shelter from sun or rain, by no means a superfluous protection, considering that we were then under the malign influence of much rain and high winds. This row of houses was built in a Chinese style, with deep projecting roofs, and the corners of these turned up and ornamented each with a yellow bell—small, low, substantial houses.

Entering a kind of warehouse where much active packing of goods was going on, I was directed to a flight of newly-built wooden stairs in a corner, and on mounting these to an upper open warehouse, I was directed to a door. Within this were two small rooms or closets, the sanctum and dwelling of Mr. P——, the rich merchant, during the fair. This is the custom of the place. A merchant rents for the two months

one of these houses, bare walls below and bare rooms above. Here he comes *en garçon*, brings with him a few articles of furniture, fits up his two closets for the nonce, transacts his business, sleeps in this domicile, and, as he is allowed to light no fire in these wooden buildings, lives at some eating-house with the merchant world. It is a life thoroughly commercial, undomestic, and republican.

Nothing could be neater or fresher than the small apartment of Mr. P——, with its sofa, its tables, its easy-chairs, and its inner dormitory belongings. All these had come down from Moscow. Mr. P—— at once in the most obliging manner placed himself and his time at my disposal. He had arrived but the day before at Nijni, and this first day he would devote to me and idleness. What could be more gracefully polite? First he led me through some of the rows, of the Armenians, of Persians, and the men of the Caucasus. Nothing could be neater or more orderly. A covered way or verandah ran along the whole side of the row or street, and in their several door-ways, in twos and threes, sat or lounged the men from the distant East, men with the sharp pale face of the Armenian, the dark rich complexion of the Persian, the bronzed and high features of the Cau-

casian, the two former in their long blue cloth robes, and the latter always in grey. All these arcades were neatly paved with brick. Street after street we passed in this way, each arcade alive with moving figures of men and women, and each row showing us fresh costumes and different goods. Nothing could be more picturesque or more neatly arranged, save and except that the roadway of forty or fifty feet breadth was but a muddy track from one line of arcades across to the other. Russia has no care for roads, even up to the gates of Moscow; how then should she care for them at a temporary place like the fair of Nijni? Droschkies and carriages, telegas and tarantasses, drove along these tracks, getting through the soft deep soil as well as they could. Occasionally a small party of Cossacks, five or six, in loose order, in their long grey coats and peaked caps, and mounted aloft on their high saddles far above their low wiry horses, went by. Their enormously long lances, with bare steel polished pike-heads, had a most truculent and business-like look. They were small men, fair, and with sharp features. These were the police of the fair. As I looked at them, the first I had seen, there rose up before the mind's eye scenes in which these little men had played a fierce and unrelenting part with that fatal

lance—scenes in which the unhappy French, on their retreat from Moscow, had learned to look on them as wolves of the forest, as men who gave no quarter to their crippled foe—and then other scenes, in which Gogol paints them, in "Tarass Boulba," coming up from their Vetch on the Dnieper in thousands, spreading as a destroying spirit of evil over the land, and burning and devastating village and farm as they advanced, leaving but a desert behind them. Now these wolves of the forest were subdued, and trained to act as police at a fair.

We got into a droschky and crossed the river by a wooden floating bridge, supported on barges moored in the stream. What a grand stream it is! The bridge seemed to be nearly half a mile in length, and the breadth was immense to allow of the unceasing and multitudinous traffic on it. For full half-way across there appeared to be endless establishments on spacious floating houses on the below bridge side, stretching away far down the stream. Many of these were the tenements of the fishmongers, who kept in deep capacious wells the royal sturgeon and the luscious sterlet, princes among fish, for the luxurious gourmands among the merchants at the fair.

Driving over the bridge, my companion and I found

ourselves in an ordinary, ill-paved, dirty town. We soon left the street and mounted the hill, a long steep winding road, to the citadel, and passing this came out on a plateau commanding a noble bit of scenery. The hill sloped down rapidly with an unbroken incline to the river. The position is singularly fine, for the town stands at the extremity of a river-encircled tongue or tract of lofty table-land coming up from the south; and the citadel on the summit looks over a wide extent of lower country waving or level to the north and east and west beyond the stream. From the plateau the course of the Volga and its junction with the Ocka, and all the far champaign dotted with villages and churches, lay beneath the eye. The plateau was prettily laid out with shaded walks and bosquets, and there were pavilions and restaurants with creature comforts for the practical man.

Lying off the town both above and below the bridge were a countless number of vessels of all kinds, from the common boat of the native and the huge unwieldy craft laden high with hay and wood, the Russian colours at the mast-head, to the various barges of primitive construction of the dwellers on the banks who had sent their goods on board to the

fair, and the neat long flat-sided screw steamers of the many steamboat companies which trade between Nijni and Astracan, the union jack flying at the stern. Here in this far country how companionable and hearty looked the universal flag! Across the bridge and on the tongue of land which is formed by the junction of the Ocka and the Volga, was the fair, its long low lines of bazaars extending far and wide over the intervening space.

In the earlier times of Russia, in the fourteenth century, Nijni was the capital of a section of the country, and its fine position on a lofty hill over the Volga must have given it a considerable strength and influence. Situated at the junction of two large rivers it ruled over the people on their banks for a wide distance, and its sovereign held in his hands the traffic of the mighty stream.

As we stood there enjoying the fine scenery, the bells from the church tower in the citadel, near the wall of which we were standing, rang out their musical peal.

"There is a curious story connected with that church," said my companion. "There is one bell in the tower which is the sacred bell of Nijni. It happened one day that I came up here with two English gentlemen to see the citadel. After we had

seen the other buildings we went into the church and up into the bell-tower. Now here was an ancient wooden clock of curious construction, and one of the gentlemen wishing to examine the works the keeper of the tower set off down the turret to get the key of the clock. While he was gone one of the gentlemen began to move the clapper of the big bell—the sacred bell, saying, 'I should like to hear the tone of the Nijni bell.' By dint of swinging the great clapper at last he struck the side with it, and one immense deep clang boomed out. Mr. P—— said he had not been attending to what his friends were doing, but hearing the stroke he dashed at the rope just in time to prevent the counter swing of the clapper. But the mischief was done. In a minute the tower-keeper rushed up in haste and exclaimed, 'Who rung the bell?' Mr. P—— told him how it had happened. 'It is a misfortune,' said the man—'a great misfortune.' Then suddenly the papa appeared breathless in the belfry, all pale and alarmed—'Who rung the bell?—who dared to ring it?' Mr. P—— explained how it had occurred. 'Get down quickly,' he exclaimed, 'all of you, as fast as you can. It is a great crime you have committed—the people will be here in a few minutes, and if they find you here you will be in

danger of your lives—quick! quick!' As they ran down he explained, 'That bell is never rung—never, except to warn the town that the church is on fire, or that help is wanted in the citadel for something political or serious.' So down they hurried, found the carriage at the door and jumped in. At first there was no one in sight, and they drove down the hill rapidly; but presently they saw people in twos and threes hurrying up; and then they went slowly to avoid suspicion. As they met the people they were all in a high state of excitement. 'What has happened?' they demanded—'Who rung the bell?' Mr. P—— and his companions pretended they had not heard the bell. 'What bell?' they asked, and the people hurried on. As they descended they met crowds, all in a state of agitation, running, talking, men and women, all highly excited, all hastening up the hill. Very lucky," said Mr. P——, "that we got away in time; and I was uncommonly glad when we were in the town and could rattle along without creating suspicion. We were soon over the bridge and out of harm's way; but I do believe if they had caught us and known we had rung the bell, they would have done us a mischief for daring to touch their holy bell. These people are made fanatic in

their religion, and when they are roused are blind in their rage."

This accounts, methought, for the Iberian Mother getting such a lot of money at the Iversky Gate in Moscow, and also for the unsparing demand for banishment to Siberia of the princess who bit the diamond out of her shoe. No wonder that the Emperor thinks it good policy to fall in with this fanaticism and direct it. This is the force that backs him in his treatment of the Sultan—in his protection of the Christians in the East.

On our return to the fair Mr. P—— proposed that we and a young friend, a Russian of good family, who was learning his business as a merchant under him, should go and dine at the grand restaurant of the place. So we went, Mr. P——, in the spirit of the millionnaire Russian merchant, claiming to be our host. Driving through much mud we reached a block of low long buildings beyond the precincts of the bazaars. At the door of one of these were numbers of well-dressed men, standing about, or going in and out in groups, as at the entrance of one of our Pall Mall Clubs in June about dinner time. It was four o'clock, the fashionable hour of the fair. The greetings of Mr. P—— and his friends were innumerable, and all so hearty and cordial; such clappings on the shoulder, such holdings of hands, such laughing nods and waving of arms.

"You here, P——," says one; "when did you come down?" "Oh! only yesterday." "That's right,—here we all are—so jolly!" "What, P——!" exclaimed another, "all right—delighted. You are coming to dinner?" "B—— gives a great spread," says a third; "you are one of us?" "No," says Mr. P——, "I can't to-day—friends."

So we entered, I feeling all the time that I was in the way of Mr. P——'s enjoying a treat with his jovial friends from Moscow. In the corridor and on the staircase was an endless stream of gentlemen hurrying in various directions, all talking, all in high spirits. No wonder: they were all *en garçon* at the fair—their wives were left at Moscow, and it was dinner time,—what a combination!

We struggled upstairs, and entered a long room, where were small tables laid for dinner in rows, most of them already occupied by parties of gentlemen, threes and fours, and all deep in dinner. Mr. P—— went off to see the master of the house, and to order a particular and *recherché* dinner. In about twenty minutes he returned.

"Ah," said he, as he sank into his chair, "I have done a foolish thing—I have spoilt my dinner."

"What has happened?" said I.

"Why, there is B—— giving a great spread downstairs in the long room—Tyrolean singers and all the rest of it. I just looked in—when he saw me and shouted out my name and made me come in—wanted me to dine—old B—— jovial as ever. When I said I had friends to dine and couldn't come, he exclaimed, 'Friends—bring them—bring them all—we've not half done. We'll have the dinner all on the table again. Here—waiter—here's Mr. P—— and his friends coming to dine—have a fresh dinner directly.' However, I thought you would not like such an uproarious affair, and so I declined and got away; but not without drinking a whole tumbler of champagne, which B—— insisted on my taking—and now this confounded champagne has quite spoiled my appetite."

I felt quite a regret that Mr. P—— should have lost all this joviality, and spoilt his dinner too, on my account.

"No, no, I want to show you one or two things in the fair, and we should never have got away from the party downstairs; and besides, we are quieter here; and here comes the sterlet soup."

So by the aid of various little Russian *whets*, such as anchovies and lemon, and pickles, and so on, we spurred up our appetites, and Mr. P—— even recovered his under this little discipline, and we all did justice to a Russian *recherché* dinner. The sterlet soup was admirable—sterlet, that diamond of the Volga, cynosure of gourmand eyes—declared to be only eaten in its highest flavour and condition on the banks of its native water. Also there was a game bird something resembling a partridge in flavour. Various were the dishes, each creditable to Russia, but not remarkable as casting into shade either Felippe, or Francatelli, or the redoubted "Frères," and of course champagne and hock played their fair part. From a distance at intervals came up to us the notes of the Tyrolean singers, and the shouts of the guests of "that jolly old B—— going it."

The dinner over, we sallied forth. In the middle of dinner a portly man, his face beaming with good-humour, had come up to inquire of our well-doing. This was the host, from Moscow for the nonce, a large genial man. Each year he made a little fortune at Nijni. Now he was told that I wished to see where he kept his sturgeon and sterlet in the river. These were kept under lock and key out on the

bridge. Presently he returned with the keys and directions, and confided the guardians of his treasures to Mr. P—— with many injunctions; and so we drove off to the great bridge. Arrived at about a third of the way over, we got down from our droschky, and found stairs leading out to what was a floating town. On what a scale it all was! Here were wooden erections, so extensive and so substantial, one might suppose they had been there for a century, and were intended to last another century or two—living rooms and covered decks, passages and galleries, small wells for delicate fish, and large wells for the royal sturgeon and princely sterlet. In various parts of the decks were the sacred cavities, the wells, fastened with massive iron locks and bars. One of the keys of the Moscow landlord opened a monster padlock, and a wide dark pool yawned beneath the spreading roof-like cover. A man with bare legs and short white linen brogues, with red beard and bare neck, came with a net six feet square, in a frame with a long handle, and plunged this into the pool. Then there was a mighty turmoil below of huge monsters rushing about in the wide space, the water surging up all round, and now a great head half appearing above it, and now a tail fin, the splendid fish lashing in its descent the boiling water. At last the skilful workman secured one in a corner and bore him to the surface—a hundred pounder—a sturgeon—a noble fellow.

"That's not one of the largest," said the man, quietly; and then he dipped the net, turned it over with a twist of his wrist, released the fish, and struck out for another. Then began again the turmoil amid the seething water. "That's a good one," he exclaimed, as one bigger than the last rose to the surface, and after a savage rush and struggle was captured in the bellying net. "That's about a hundred and twenty," said the man, "and in good season too."

What a splendid fellow he was!—bright and shining, and of beautiful proportions. What play that fish would give one on a good line down stream, methought! It would be an hour or two's work to land him, and here he comes up in his prison in two turns of the wrist. He seemed all too grand for his narrow dungeon. Then we had another well opened, and the delight of gourmands, the sterlet, was fished up in the same way. Of all sizes these were, from five and ten pounds up to fifty. Mr. P—— told us a story of a fine sturgeon caught in the Volga some few

years back, on the occasion of the visit of the Crown Prince to Nijni, and presented to him. The Prince requested that he might not be killed, but turned back into the river. This was done, a gold ring with an inscription being run through his gill. Three or four years afterwards a peasant caught the fish with the ring in his gill, and the Governor of Nijni, hearing of the capture, sent off to save the fish's life. "The Prince had spared his life—no one must kill him." So the Governor decided, and he gave the peasant five hundred roubles for it, added a second ring with a fresh inscription in the gill of the fish, and gave him his liberty.

"That fish," said Mr. P——, "has a fair chance of dying in his bed of old age, a rare case for a sturgeon within reach of Nijni."

We drove from thence across the point of land through endless rows of bazaars, till we got beyond the regular buildings. Here were the low suburbs of the fair. Rude cottages, large halls for dancing of the roughest materials and spreading dimensions, solitary sheds, straggling houses, and tumble-down vodka shops, were scattered irregularly on both sides of the broad, deep, muddy track. We struggled on, for the great tea-stores were in front. At last the roadway

became so bad, with great holes and heaps of broken brick, long pieces of timber lying about pell-mell, compelling perpetual windings in and out and round about, and much steering between pools and precipices, with an occasional forced climb over a rugged Scylla and a dip down into a quagmiry Charybdis, that we were compelled to come to a halt. The track was ceasing to be anything but a general slough of despond. However, there were the tea-stores in our front. In long lines and high, fifty yards in length and twenty feet in height, were piles of tea-chests. For the most part these were covered with mattings or sailcloths to keep the rain from them, but some were exposed at the sides, and here we could see the usual yellow tea-chest, about two feet square, handy for moving, so well known in our London shops, sealed with the large black Chinese characters and adorned with the familiar persons of our Celestial friends. There must have been acres of ground covered with these piles of chests; but as all Russia drinks tea morning, noon, and night, the supply was probably only a portion of what is required.

But it was getting dark, so we escaped from the quagmire as well as we could, and entering the fair again, were set down at the doorway of the

building where the Governor resides—the centre of the place, and the only considerable and lofty building in it. Below were bazaars and coffee-houses, and above were the dwelling-house and offices of the Governor. This was all lit up, and here along the many and crossing and winding passages of the bazaar, the shops displaying all their gayest colours and most attractive articles, were crowds of people of all countries, lounging away the evening in the essential enjoyments of shopping or doing nothing. Here in the several shops were Armenians, Persians, Turks, men from Bokhara, Tahtars, and Cossacks. A young lad in white and a boy in scarlet trowsers, their whole dress gorgeous with gold lace and glittering arms—sons of some chief of the Caucasus—were bargaining for a richly-finished and ornamented revolver. Poor young fellows, methought, there is not much for you to do with a revolver now. You can put it in your gorgeous girdle as an ornament for display, but when you get home to your mountains you must not fire it at any one without permission from some gentleman in a plain green coat in your neighbourhood.

My two companions bargained with some Persians for some silk for their wives at Moscow. How they fought over it! Mr. P—— named his price and steadily

stuck to it; while the Persians tried every calculation and every argument to shew that they must lose money greatly at that price. But the Moscow merchant knew better than that. How quiet and dogged the Englishman was, and how the eyes of the Persians gleamed and shot out sparks of fire with the earnestness of the combat! But their manner never lost the smooth polish of supple well-bred men in spite of all their eagerness. Of course the end of the fight was that the silks were folded beautifully by the Persians, and were borne off by the servant of the Briton. The Bokhara men had brought stones, brown and white, from the Bokhara mountains, and bracelets of one of these stones, serdalik—the penultimate syllable bearing the long accent—changed hands, as had done the silks.

There were men, too, from Tashkend selling smart kerchiefs which would make the eyes of our young ladies dance with their brilliant colouring.

But the time was arriving for the train back to Moscow; so turning our backs on the men of Bokhara and Tashkend, on the Persians and the boy chieftain from the Caucasus, we drove to the station, and after many shakings of the hand of Mr. P—— and hearty thanks, I started again for Moscow.

But I did not travel alone. Besides various persons in my carriage there was a lady, my opposite neighbour, who was committed to my care for the journey. She was the wife of the young Russian, the student in commercial matters under Mr. P——. Both the lady and her husband were of high Russian family, but in the transition state of things in that country young members of old families are casting about for a more active and useful existence than the old and idle one of the nobles of the past; and so this young gentleman was ardent in the pursuit of commercial knowledge. He was tall and handsome, with well-bred manners; and his young wife was a beautiful person, tall and with delicate features, and a countenance expressive of goodness and amiability. She had gone down for a day to see her husband at Nijni, and as even loving young wives cannot stay there she was on her way home again to Moscow. She was pale, thoroughly Russian, with no Tahtar blood in her veins, and she did not smoke. When I parted from her on the following morning at Moscow, and saw her into the hands of her liveried servants and step into her carriage, I thought I had rarely seen or spoken to a more unaffected or more charming person.

A day or two afterwards, when relating to our Con-

sul, Mr. R——, my visit to Nijni, and all the many acts of kindness and hospitality on the part of his friend Mr. P——, not the least of which was the sacrifice of his own time, he said,

"How glad I am you have seen Nijni as it is, in something of its old splendour, for this will not last very much longer. It was a very convenient position, central and come-at-able, on the two rivers, for trade between east and west under the old tedious modes of communication. People arrived there by water, and this was a matter of great moment, for as there was no kind of convenience in the way of transport for the mass of Eastern goods in this direction, Nijni was a good meeting-place. But now all this is changing. New conditions of transport are upsetting all the old arrangements. Steam and railway are revolutionising this trade. Merchants of Moscow are beginning to ask why should they go to the goods at Nijni, when the goods can come on as well to Moscow by rail? Even now some merchants refuse to go, and they send down orders to agents. The numbers of the people at the fair are diminishing already, and there are said to be three hundred thousand now instead of four and even five hundred thousand a few years back. The trade, too, is taking advantage of

other channels, so that in the course of a few more years—ten or twenty—the Nijni fair will dwindle, and by degrees become a thing of the past, except for the commoner and coarser goods."

As the Egyptian boat song has it, "Everything passes but God." Even the Nijni fair.

CHAPTER XVI.

Profligacy of Russian Nobles—Extenuating Circumstances—Benevolence of the Higher Orders—The Galitzin and Foundling Hospitals—Visit to Hospital founded by the Sheremaytieff Family—The Building, Apartments, and Gardens—Noble Endowment—The Dining Hall—Inmates—The Sick, Maimed, and Blind—Friendless Old Men—The Women's Apartments—Anecdotes and Portraits—Apartments for the Sick—General Hospital—The Governor's Room—Distribution of Money to Pensioners—Conversation with the Governor—Sum annually expended by the Hospital—*Société Fraternelle*—Noble Side of the Russian Character.

ALTHOUGH there is much said in Russia in blame of the class of noble their extravagances, their gambling, their profligacy, their bad example as landlords and as rulers over their serfs, yet there is a reverse side to this picture. I heard it even claimed by some Russians at a dinner-table that in profligacy some members of this class could compare with advantage —an evil advantage—with those of any other country. One or two of the company stood up manfully for the French nation as possessing those who would bear

away the bell in a contest of profligacy; but as the argument proceeded opinions wavered, and in the end the dark prize was awarded to Russia. In such a question it is always fair to admit circumstances—extenuating circumstances. In the present case it must be borne in mind that in the Russian blood there is an admixture of the utterly lawless Tahtar, reckless of any result but the gratification of his own passions, inheritor of violence and of absence of all scruple. Moreover, the position of the noble was exceptional; for not only was he lord of wide domains and almost unlimited wealth, but he was a ruler of serfs—of slaves—with a power tantamount to a power of life and death, a power over their property, a power over their persons; and there was no law to restrain him but one he virtually administered himself, and could evade at pleasure. What could possibly be expected from such a combination of blood and position? What but the exercise of every profligacy varnished over with the glitter of civilization. The French nation has no ingredients of this kind. Happily for them circumstances are against them in the contest of evil. But as there are in the world only a limited number of very great criminals, so in Russia we must consider that there were many degrees of

social criminality in the reckless upper class, and that the principal offenders were but few.

But there is a reverse of the picture. In no country are there evidences of a higher and purer spirit of benevolence and charity than among those very nobles. In and around Moscow there are many of the most splendid institutions, founded by men of family and flourishing to this hour, that can be found in any capital of Europe. Among these may be cited the Galitzin Hospital on the banks of the Moskwa on the road to the Sparrow Hills, founded and endowed by a Prince Galitzin; the Foundling, endowed by Prince Demidoff; and others of a similar character.

Among these was named to me one day by the Count L—— the hospital founded by the Sheremaytieff family.

"If you will call on the principal medical man, who lives in the garden, and use my name," said he, "Dr. C—— will show you over everything willingly."

Accordingly I presented myself one day at the doctor's door. He received me cordially, speaking the French language with ease and fluency; and this day being a committee day, and he occupied with business, he engaged me to call on him on the morning following.

"Are you a doctor?" said he, as we parted.

"Not at all," said I, "only a traveller, interested in the details of a noble charity."

"I think it will please you—you shall see everything," said he.

At the hour named on the subsequent day I found Dr. C—— ready and smiling.

I will first give a short description of the building and circumstances of this remarkable institution before we enter it. The situation is good. It stands on one of the high grounds of Moscow, on the north side of the great Boulevard which runs in a circle through the centre of the city. As it stands a little back from the Boulevard, there is a wide space of perhaps forty yards breadth in front of it to the south and west; and as on this there is one of the city fountains always playing, and beyond it are the usual low cottages with their gardens, while behind it to the north are extensive gardens belonging to the Hospice, nothing can well be more airy or sunny than the situation. The building is of course low, only one storey in height, and is in the form of a half moon, a deeply embayed crescent. The cord of the arc is about two hundred yards in length, and consists of an open iron railing with gilded spear points, and within this a

grass plot and garden fill the whole space. Frequent staircases descend from the first floor to the basement, and many doors issue on this sunny and spacious garden. One half of the buildings of this immense half circle are occupied by the apartments of those inmates of the Hospice who are in health, and the other half is set apart for the sick, for baths, for offices, for committee rooms, for officer's apartments, and all the general purposes of the establishment. In the centre of the half moon rises the Church, plain in exterior, neat and not gaudy within.

In this place are maintained by funds left by the Prince Sheremaytieff—one hundred old men and one hundred old women. One of the family Sheremaytieff—one of the highest in the Empire—Prince Michael, some years ago built this Hospice and endowed it with a landed estate producing fifty thousand roubles a year, with villages on it and eight thousand serfs. These estates now, under the altered circumstances of the country, produce forty-three thousand roubles, equal to about six thousand pounds of our money. This is a princely donation to the impoverished and the unfortunate and the sick of one's fellow countrymen. Besides this, there is a sum of money left in Russian funds the interest of which is ten thou-

sand roubles a year. Thus, in all, this nobleman has endowed his Hospice with a fortune of fifty-three thousand roubles per annum. This and other similar endowments are grand acts worthy of all honour, and should redeem in the eyes of those sitting in judgment on Russia many faults and shortcomings. A class which could produce many men of this stamp could not be altogether bad.

On entering the building we were joined by the manager of the Hospice, a Russian gentleman. He first led us into the dining hall. This was a fine room, eighty feet long by thirty in breadth, and lofty. It terminated the edifice at one end of the half moon, the length of it being the depth of the building, eighty feet, while its height was that of the ground floor and the storey above it. A fine full length portrait of the prince, the founder, was at one end of this hall, which was simply but well furnished. In this all the inmates have their meals, *i.e.*, those who are strong enough to walk there. Many are too old and weak for this, and these have their meals taken to them in their rooms by servants of the establishment. Of these servants there are one hundred and two.

We were then conducted into the rooms of the men, which are on the ground-floor. These were

large, lofty, and airy. Four or five beds were in one room, and six or seven in another—the arrangement being that the rooms were in pairs, one room in the front and one behind, and opening into each other by a wide archway in the centre. Those at the back, to the north, were always the largest, being in the long outer side of the half circle. The walls were of immense thickness, keeping the rooms cool in summer and warm in winter. Against these walls were clothes presses, and chests of drawers, and washing places. Every man had his separate bed, all the component parts of it being of the best, clean thick soft beds, fit for anyone. At each bed head was a neat little low cupboard for the man's tea-things, books, or any small object of affection or fancy. All the men wore a large grey wrapping coat as a kind of uniform. In the first room was a man with a countenance and manners, when spoken to, above the common, and not above sixty years of age. The chief told me that this man was of French extraction, born in Russia. He had been a priest of the Greek Church, but having become unable from illness to do any service in the church he had fallen into utter destitution. Sometimes this would happen even to a native priest, and this man being a foreigner he had no friends, and

being married he could not enter any convent. The parish priests marry, but the monks do not. This man's wife was in the Hospice too, but as a servant. I asked him about his friends in France, and he said he had none. Poor fellow!—not a friend in the world but these kind foreigners. In another room was a thin old man, who had been a schoolmaster with a good middle-class school once. His health had given way, his school fell off, his friends could not keep him, and so he came into the Hospice. What a life of disappointment, and care, and hard struggle with circumstances, was summed up in those few words! One soldierly man in uniform spoke French well. He had attained the rank of major, but ill-health had driven him out of the service; his family were poor, and he could turn his hand to nothing. I asked him if he had been in the Crimea.

No, he said, but many of his friends had, and some had been there in the Hospice, but they were all dead.

"All dead!" said I—"it is not many years ago."

"They had all suffered much," said the doctor; "there were five of them—all had been wounded, and were in weak condition, and they soon died. The men," he continued, "die much faster than the women. The women seem to make themselves more

at home here with their needle-work, and their talk, and their little ways, and they live much longer; but the men are without any occupation, and they cannot make a life out of nothing as the women do, and so they pine and die soon. Two or three men, on an average, die every week, and sometimes four or five, but there are some weeks when we do not lose one woman."

As we turned away, and the soldier sat down—for each stood up as he was addressed, if he could, which all could not—and then crawled on to his bed, the manager whispered to me—

"He is going; in a day or two he will be removed into another room, and then he will go into the sick ward, and will be dead in a month, perhaps. They soon go when they once give way. They have wine and everything they can want or require, but they have no stamina and soon go."

In one room the men were nearly all blind. There appeared to be a great consideration for the sick fancies of these old men. Some of them were gentlemen, and most of them of decent middle-class. They all had their tobacco, and in all their little cupboards were plates and tea-things, with something to eat or drink in them.

"Many of them," said the manager, "cannot get into the big hall, or they have no appetite at the regular hours, and so we give them whatever they like here, and they manage to pick a bit here and there, but they don't eat much."

What struck me as rather odd was that all the men who were ill were at once transferred from the sunny front rooms to the back north ones. I suggested that this was likely to tell on them, the room being more dull and the air less healthy; but the doctor only shrugged his shoulders—"it was the custom."

There was an old soldier to each pair of rooms, and by applying to him any man could go out into the town for three or four hours; and by application to the manager any man could go away for three or four days into the country and see his friends—"If he had any," observed the manager, in a whisper, "and many of them have none." No wonder, methought, these poor old men die off quickly; alone in the world, without a friend, or a hope, or a stimulus of life, what can a broken and forsaken man do, except what Hezekiah did—turn his face to the wall and die. In one room all the men were very aged and weak, seven or eight, most of them on their beds, or

in them. It appeared that there were different rooms for stages of debility. When a man became too weakly for a front room, he was moved into the back one. If this weakness went off, which it rarely did, he was restored to the front; but if it increased he was moved on to another room—the one we were in—and he never went back again. What a death-knell, methought, was this move! Poor fellows! what a stillness there was in this room! They were all slowly dying, not of old age, but of weariness of spirit and vacancy of purpose. Many of them had pulled the coverlet over their heads and faces, and the only thing you saw were the outlines of the forms beneath their neat grey bedding, motionless.

From thence we went upstairs, a broad flight, with easy shallow steps for the old women to get up and down. The apartments upstairs were arranged precisely as those below, and the same order as regarded health and sickness was carried out. These rooms were more light and cheerful than those below, as is generally the case in similar circumstances, and so the ladies had the pleasantest part of the house, as is but right and becoming towards ladies. The only drawback was the stairs, if any of them wished to go out, and this was a serious set-off in many cases; but then

in this life there always will be some drawback to every advantageous position. The rooms were furnished in the same way as those of the men, except that in addition to the small cupboard to each bed, there was a handy little table for needlework, and the small inevitable littery odds and ends which seem everywhere to form an appendage to the female presence—a kind of material atmosphere which envelops the woman and woman's arrangements, and in which she lives and moves and has her being. Here were sometimes two or three women round one table, with needle-work on part of it and tea-cups on another. There was no such small sociable world to be seen in the men's rooms below. In those rooms the man appeared to be a wild animal, solitary and uncouth; while the woman was the sociable being—the one was dying for want of the outer life, the other made all her life within. No wonder the latter lived the longer lives. To each pair of rooms, as among the men, there was a superior to keep order and quiet.

In the first room was a neat old person. The manager whispered to me that "she was a member of one of the highest families of Russia, born a princess. She had married a medical man, in spite of the

remonstrances of her relatives, and her family had given her up in consequence. Misfortunes came, the doctor died, she had no children, and was penniless. Though old she was capable of acting as the superior of the two rooms, and was installed in that office." Her face was pale and pleasing, her figure small and slight. The smile and the expression and the manner all told of a different class of person from those around her. In the plain dress of the Hospice she was not remarkable till you spoke to her, and then the pretty manner and quiet unembarrassed demeanour were very engaging. Poor lady! she must have gone through much trouble to make her look so contented and cheerful in her present position. Anyhow it was a rest after a struggle of life in which all pride of blood and all romantic happiness and personal comfort had gone down in the fight and left her a mere waif and stray, a wreck on a barren shore. What a blessing to her this Hospice, with its healthy spacious rooms and good food, and, moreover, an office of confidence. In another room was a small delicate person. She too was of the better class, a niece of one of the present imperial ministers at St. Petersburg. When I expressed my surprise at a gentleman so high allowing his niece to remain there, the manager said, "It was

droll; but," he added, "he is not rich, and if he removed this person, and some day lost his appointment, she would be as badly off as ever; besides, she is well here, and she can go out and see her friends when she likes." She had never married. I thought she seemed to feel her situation, for she kept her seat at her little table with her back to us, and never looked up. One woman was a German from Saxony. We talked about her old home near Dresden, a village which I knew, and she was full of reminiscences of the place. She had married a Russian, a tradesman, and settled in Moscow. He had failed, and left her penniless. When I asked her why she had not gone back to Saxony after losing her husband, "Ah! no," she said, tearfully, "I could not go away; my husband is buried here, and then my children too—I had four—they are all dead, and they all lie near Moscow—how could I go away and leave them all behind me? You see I am in the midst of them here!" What a solace to the old affections! In Saxony she would have been lost—in the Hospice of Moscow she was "in the midst of her children."

In the rooms appropriated to those women who were failing there were fewer than in those of the men, and these did not take to their bed as the latter did.

They managed to find occupation with their tea and talk, and in small employments suited to their nature, and kept up longer. These small occupations, what a blessing they are to poor humanity, and what a loss it is to men that they have few or none such for their old age or illness! Happy the man who can turn his mind to small things as well as large ones. The day comes when he finds an interest in the former for his health and enjoyment of life, when his powers of study, of teaching, of mental activity are waning—when his day of great things is past. How much of simple happiness, I often think, could men find in their old age, if in their youth they were taught some manual work—some small operation requiring care in detail, such as carpentering, or book-binding, or shoemaking, or netting! Women have their unfailing needlework—what have men? Smoking! What a stupid resource!

Our way from this part of the building led through the church into the hospital half of the establishment. It was empty at that hour, but every morning there is service in it, and all of the old people who can attend do so, but there is no compulsion. Very many are not able to hobble so far.

In the hospital part the doctor was in his own par-

ticular element. Here the same order was observed —the men downstairs and the women on the upper floor. The detail of this part of the Hospice was more elaborate than the other, for here every modern requisite was supplied in the promotion of cleanliness and comfort for the dying persons who were removed here at the last. Evidently this part of the institution was very carefully looked after, and the bath-rooms were particularly cheerful, as were those in which the poor old people were to end their days. There were nurses moving about with that noiseless step and composed manner so peculiar to the genus, and which tell so clearly of a thorough knowledge of their business. In various rooms were small kitchen stoves for the easy and rapid preparation of restoratives of the sinking strength of the sick and the dying. In one room were three or four beds, all occupied by old men too ill to remain in the larger rooms. Here, with the coverlets drawn over their heads, they lay still, awaiting the final hour, and a few days more would see them all carried away to their last home in the cemetery.

In this part of the building were some apartments used as a general hospital for the sick of the better classes in the city. There were some ladies in the female departments; and in one room for men were three persons in bed, young men, all of them members of noble families of Moscow. The manager whispered to me "that there were many noble families very poor." After what the Count L—— had told me of the subdivision of property this was not difficult to understand. There were beds for one hundred men, and the same number of women in this general hospital, but there were only a few occupied.

This happened to be the first day of September, and this being the day of distribution of money to poor pensioners, I entered the room of the governor of the institution at the moment that this was going on. This was the public and official apartment, one of noble proportions on the ground-floor. Full-length portraits of the Czars Alexander, Nicholas, and the second Alexander, were on the walls; and the usual long "board of green cloth" stretched down the centre of the room for the uses of the "council of administration." In a corner was the private table of the Governor of the institution, a fine old man, tall and soldierly—a general officer. He invited me in a cordial and frank way to a seat, and we sat and talked over the Hospice, while his secretary at a far-off door received and despatched the claimants of the pensions.

These were principally women, in number about two hundred; and among them, in the course of the year, is distributed the sum of ten thousand silver roubles—equal to about one thousand five hundred pounds sterling. On my asking the Governor what were the qualifications for entrance into the Hospice as well as for the pension list, he said,

"The applications for both are not very numerous, so many people of the decent class being disinclined to tell the tale of their distress. Indeed, we keep a man whose business it is to seek out deserving persons in want, and this man, too, makes all inquiries about those who do apply to us of their own accord. None under a certain age can come into the Hospice, and helplessness and poverty are the principal claims advanced. Of course a certain respectability of character is requisite; but," said the General, "misfortune is the principal qualification for both, and of that we have plenty in our country to fill many such institutions."

The general expenses of the Hospice, he said, were about thirty thousand roubles per annum. There was also an expenditure of ten thousand roubles on the pensions, and in addition another fund was provided of ten thousand roubles for marriage portions

to meritorious young persons, and for donations to deserving individuals who were impoverished by misfortune. Thus the whole sum expended annually through the Hospice Sheremaytieff was about fifty thousand roubles; and as the estates and funds left for this munificent purpose produced about fifty-three thousand roubles a year there was a sum left over for repairs of buildings. There were about forty marriage gifts to girls in each year, of one hundred roubles each.

On my referring to what the general had said of the Hospice keeping a man to search out respectable persons in want, he observed,

"There is in Moscow a body of men who may be called a 'Société Fraternelle,' and who make it their business to search out poor families, and aid them by advice, by money, by medical attendance, by better food. These persons even rent houses in different parts of Moscow, and place in them some of the sick and destitute," and the fine old soldier's eyes gleamed as he related these proofs of the warm-heartedness and the active benevolence of his countrymen. "You see," he said, "out in the country, in wild villages, our common people are not much looked after; but

in the towns, and especially in Moscow, we try to do something to make up for this."

I could only offer all my homage of praise to such noble acts of benevolence as that Hospice, and its admirable and considerate detail towards the aged and the helpless, a credit to any people and any country. Methought, as I walked home, that this Hospice, and what I had seen to-day, and what I had heard of the "Société Fraternelle" of Moscow, spoke volumes in favour of the kindly nature of the Russian people, and showed that there is a fine and noble side, as well as a vicious one, to the Russian character.

CHAPTER XVII.

Visit to the Convent of Troitsa—Its Foundation, Destruction and Re-establishment—Historical Reminiscences connected with the Convent—Napoleon's Attempt to seize the Building and its Treasures—The Patriarch Philarete's First Railway Journey—The Town, the Valley, and the Convent—Agricultural Labour done by Women—The College and Churches of Vefania—Residence of the Metropolitan Platon—Old Church—Representation of the Mount of Olives—Valuable Paintings—The Tomb of Platon—The Church of Gethsemane—An Ecclesiastical Diversion or Feint—Appearance of the Metropolitan—A Singular Monastery—Fanaticism in the Russo-Greek Church—Recluses in Underground Cells—Religion and Usefulness.

NO one can go to Moscow without going to Troitsa. This is an imperative duty on a traveller, for Troitsa is a part of Moscow story, as it is the Holy of Holies of religious Russia. It lies at a distance of forty wersts, near thirty miles, due north of the city. This celebrated place is a fortress as well as a convent, and has fought its battles, stood its sieges, beaten off its besiegers, and unfurled its flag of victory. It dates from the year 1342, and was founded by St. Sergius, as were so many other convents.

Sacked in 1408 by the Tahtars, underthe Khan Edigei, it was re-established in 1423, since which time its sacred precincts have been dishonoured by no hostile foot. In 1608 it was besieged by a force of thirty thousand Poles, but it beat off all attacks for sixteen months, and was then relieved; and even so late as since the election of the Romanoff family to the Imperial throne Troitsa beat off a body of Poles. On two occasions its strong walls were the refuge and defence of Peter the Great and of his half-brother, John, when boys, and when their sister Sophia, in her intrigues to maintain her influence and her hold on the throne, roused the Pretorian Streltsi in her favour; and here Natalia, the mother of Peter, retained him in secret until the ambitious and able Sophia was put down and incapacitated from further mischief by imprisonment for her life. In 1812 the Emperor Napoleon sent out from Moscow on more than one occasion a body of his troops with orders to seize Troitsa and its treasures, but something always prevented the troops from reaching it. The priests and the devotees declare that it was the Virgin and St. Sergius combined who threw obstacles in the way of the expedition, and rendered it futile, before the troops got half way. Of course this is the true explanation of the matter; but there are some foolish people who say that, as there was a heavy body of Russians placed by the commander-in-chief on the Twer road to the north-west, and another on the Vladimir road to the north-east, and as these two joined hands across the Troitsa road, which ran due north half-way between them, Napoleon's men found it not convenient to pass the line of these Russian bodies, as they might not have got back again. So the Troitsa treasures remained untouched. As the convent once possessed over one hundred thousand serfs it may be imagined the treasures were worth an effort on the part of Napoleon; they are, in fact, something astounding in gold and silver and jewels; but thirty miles are a long road for weakened and disheartened troops, with the Virgin and St. Sergius very angry in front, and two armies of highly-fed and fierce undaunted soldiery shaking hands across it.

One day in conversation with the English Consul he very kindly proposed that his son, a very intelligent young man, and a capital Russian scholar, should be my companion to Troitsa for a day. Could anything be more well-timed and advantageous? So one morning my young friend and I started by an early train, and at ten o'clock we were at Troitsa. As we

went my companion said that this railway was at first strongly objected to by the Church party, as the Pope at Rome had done at first in the case of his railway; and when it was completed the Patriarch Philarete, an old gentleman imbued with anti-railway ideas, as being anti-Church, and convinced that this iron road was a very levelling invention, had declared he would not travel by it. But at last, finding that the sovereign and nobles travelled by it, and that even priests did so without any open demonstration of displeasure on the part of the Virgin or St. Sergius, he was coaxed into trying it too. A small favoured few went with him from Moscow to Troitsa; and when he found how very easy and smooth and swift he moved along through the country, his face, at first serious and troubled, as if he were undertaking a very doubtful matter which might bring on him a judgment and a punishment, gradually relaxed and brightened. After a time one of his companions, observing the effect on him, ventured to ask him what he thought of it? This was a posing question to a man in a state of mind half way from objection to satisfaction; but being, as he was, a man of ability and not narrowed beyond a certain legitimate point by prejudices, not blind to realities, he shook his head kindly and re-

plied, "It is very clever." From this time he travelled by it always.

Troitsa is a large village, or small town. A steep-sided winding valley runs through the country, and on one side of this is the little straggling town, on the other the convent. The valley, with a small stream at the bottom, winds round three sides of a hill, and on this height the lofty walls of the convent, thirty feet high, with many towers, rise grandly and well-defined into the air. The valley forms a natural broad deep ditch to the fortress on the three sides, and on the fourth the ponderous wall runs over an open level space, long and broad. On this open space are many carriages and droschkies for hire, numerous booths of small commodities for sale, and some considerable buildings, consisting of hotels, stables, and a few shops and common houses, the whole dependent on the convent for existence. The convent is the life of the place.

On arriving at the station we found a considerable collection of people, and heard that by good fortune this was a day of some importance, a day on which a certain church or shrine in the immediate vicinity of the convent was open to the entrance of women—the only day in the whole year on which they were not

excluded. My companion and I agreed that we would take a carriage and drive to the unlocked-for-a-day shrine, and also to one or two other sacred spots in the neighbourhood, and finish with the convent. "For," said my companion, "when once we are in the convent we shall never get out again in time for anything else."

So we drove to a small village called Vefania, in Russian—Bethany, in English. This is about two miles from Troitsa. The country was picturesque with woods and hills, and as we approached Vefania there were long sheets of water in wooded hollows, a pretty succession of small lakes. The people in numbers were in the fields, heavy with the ripe corn; but I observed that all these labourers were women, reapers and gatherers into sheaves, a sight which wounds the eyes. It is a bad sign of a country and its civilized condition when women do the hard work in the fields, and the men idle in the villages with brandy and tobacco.

Vefania stood on a high bank, at the extremity of the lakes, and consisted but of a few buildings, which might almost be summed up in these—a college, two churches, and a diminutive dwelling-house. The college was a considerable white building, now empty.

It had been once occupied by students for the church in the days of the former and famous Metropolitan, Platon. Passing this we arrived at a pretty gateway with a quaint tower above it, beyond which, in a grass inclosure, stood the two churches, a new one and an old one, and a dwelling-house. This house was of the most modest dimensions, consisting of but two or three rooms on one storey. What a quiet and retired and pretty spot it was! The gateway, the iron railings painted and gilded, the quaint old church, the bright new one, the little house with a fountain in its front—all encircling the grass plot. This had been the favourite place of residence of the once famous Platon. In these few rooms he had lived, in this rural spot, with his books, his windows looking over his small garden to the lakes and the woods and the towers of Troitsa, with his little church beside him and the college which he had built close at hand, and in which the education of young men gave him, the learned man, a daily interest. By the fountain was an inscription to the effect "that here the Emperor Paul,"—eccentric and unhappy Paul—"with his Empress and children had one day come and paid a visit to Platon, and had dined with him in the room upstairs."

How happy and how peaceful seemed the picture,

as one imagined the monarch and the bishop talking as men, with the prattle of children around them—the quiet meeting and sociable hour—and then contrasted it with the troubled life and end full of horror of the erratic and unfortunate Czar, only a man, and not a monarch! We went up into the rooms. They were exquisitely neat and bright and sunny, long and rather narrow, the drawing-room within the dining-room. They looked like a pretty French apartment in the suburb of Passy or St. Germain. The carpet and chairs were all of light cottage patterns, the latter with chintz-covered cushions. Water-coloured paintings of French scenery by French pencils, in the style of Watteau, were numerous on the walls. The walls were hung with paper, also of cottage patterns. The view from the windows, of wood, and water, and wavy fields, was charming, and the rooms had a feeling of home and repose about them which gave one a happy idea of the great Metropolitan, a man of bright and genial mind and refined tastes. To be sure the sleeping-room was a curiously small closet at one end of the drawing-room, just big enough for a pallet bed and a diminutive table and a chair. It looked as if the great ecclesiastic had wished to keep often around him what would remind him of the first and early

days of his career, when he was but a simple servitor of the church. At one end of the eating-room was the door into the drawing-room, and at the other was one opening on to a gallery or small corridor looking into the church. The library was a small room from the dining apartment, and here were still his famous theses in Latin on a table. The whole had the air of being only left for a day or two, and Platon expected back.

The old church within the precincts of Platon's residence was a small quaint building, now rarely used. There was no flight of steps to it. You entered at once on the ground into a corridor running all round and enclosing a circular hall, and fully half this hall, right across in front from side to side, was occupied by a fanciful construction representing the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem. This was the Bethany of the place. Here were all the usual and appropriate indentations of the ground, small hills and valleys, corn-fields and grass, with olive-trees and shrubs, and over which cattle and sheep were scattered, and shepherds, and a procession of people on a pathway. There were very few figures now remaining, but the priest said that there had once been hundreds, but that people had stolen them one by one, carrying them

off as something sacred. The "Mount" was full twenty feet long and twelve feet high, rising from the floor to the level of a gallery which ran round the church over the corridor below, and must once have been a very elaborate and clever production of the devout artist. It was done by a Greek monk who had been in the convent at Jerusalem. Now the whole thing was faded, dilapidated, and dirty, and the new and larger church hard by, with its fresh gilding and brilliant priests, was taking away all worshippers from the old decaying one which was now but a relic of the past. In the corridor below there was a "Descent from the Cross," by Rubens, presented by a Count Souwaroff; and a "Holy Family" of Correggio, given by the Prince Potemkin; but these were scarcely visible in the dingy, ill-lighted passage, and were fading with the rest of the building. In the crypt at the back of the "Mount of Olives" was the tomb of Platon, his effigy in marble, his robes in cases. The face was declared to be an exact likeness. The head and forehead were fine, broad, and massive, and the mouth full and genial, realizing the man of profound religious theses in the morning in the study, and of easy bright companionship at dinner time in the afternoon in the pretty rooms of St. Germain with

Watteau pictures and chintz cushions. So the name of Bethany remains, but the spirit of the place is gone, and Platon's tomb and robes are in dust and dirt.

We drove from this to "Gethsemane"—from the past to the present. This is a church founded in 1845 by Philarete, then the Metropolitan of Moscow, and was in all its glory. Women are only admitted on one day, the 29th of August, which is dedicated to the ascent of the Virgin into heaven. Now "Bethany" was still and sleeping, and "Gethsemane" was all alive and awake. At the gates of the enclosure were crowds of carriages and people, and a small impromptu town of vendors of fruit, wine, and kvas, and vodka and tea, formed a small fair for a busy trade. Within the gate was a grass enclosure, with two churches and other pretty buildings and gardens, and these stretched down to a shrubbery and a shaded valley, with fine trees and a stream of water with rustic bridges and seats, a pleasant ecclesiastic retreat from Moscow and Troitsa. Clearly the Gethsemane of to-day was a rival of Bethany of yesterday. The enclosure was filled with people, principally women; the sex had taken advantage of its one day of admission and mustered strong.

My companion and I at once went into the church,

in which the service was going on. We found it full to overflowing, and could hardly make our way in. It was curiously built. We entered on a raised platform, with an exit at either extremity, and from this platform two staircases, of about twenty steps each, descended by the walls down into the body of the church below, having its Ikonostas on that lower level. There was a gallery and another Ikonostas above, so that there was in fact a kind of double church—one above, one below. The lower church was now in use. We found all the platform crowded, both staircases crammed with people, and also the body of the place below and the gallery above. The gates of the Ikonostas were closed, incense was rising from within it, and the fine deep tones of the priests rose and fell as the service proceeded. Occasionally the body of rich sound ceased, and then a thin, weak, but rather musical voice chanted a few sentences, and was again succeeded by the powerful voices of the priests in a mass of sound like that of an organ. Many of the people had books, and were very attentive. The weak, thin voice—was it that of the Metropolitan Philarete? my companion inquired; but some said "Yes," and some said "No." At last the service came to an end, and then commenced a scene of ex-

traordinary confusion. The moment the gates of the Ikonostas opened, an elderly priest came out, and there was a general movement to kiss his hand. The crush was so great that we thought it better to get out and see the Metropolitan go by out of doors from the one church to the other, as we were informed he would do. So we went out, and in a few minutes he appeared at the head of a procession of priests, the people forming a lane. But as he was not very old, and was rather strong and sturdy, we came to the conclusion that after all this was not the Metropolitan, particularly as we heard a service still going on in the church. So we went back again.

On our re-entering the church, we found that the Papa and the procession had been only a kind of feint—a diversion of the throng from the Metropolitan. He was still within the Ikonostas, as we were quietly informed by an attendant. Only a few people were in the church, on the platform, on the stairs, and in the galleries. As the time and occasion seemed propitious, there was now an attempt to get the Metropolitan out. But now commenced a more extraordinary scene than the former one. The moment that the gilded doors were opened and the old man with his white hair and thin face appeared, there was

a rush from all quarters towards him. The smoke of the incense still filled the Ikonostas, and in the midst of this cloud appeared five or six men, the old man in front, erect and noble-looking, clad in white, with a crozier of silver with precious stones projecting from a blue velvet case in his hand, and priests around him. Four men in a rich blue and silver livery now approached, one supporting him on either side, and two in front to clear the way. But the first step the Metropolitan made down into the church was the signal for a fight. The people fairly dashed at the old man to seize his hands and kiss them, and had it not been for the two supporting servants he must have been thrown down in the rush. The two men in front were fairly overpowered and hurled back on the others, and the whole party looked as if they would come in the *melée* to the ground. Then the two leaders, savage at this discomfiture, caught hold of the people, men and women, indiscriminately, and threw them one on the other, breaking out into loud abuse of these zealous devotees. In the midst of this the old man struggled on, or rather the liveried attendants bore him along, passive in their hands, his thin white hands every now and then appearing above the heads of the throng, and rapidly making

crosses till seized and dragged down again into the crowd of bending heads. When the women had succeeded, in spite of furious men and raging attendants, in kissing the white hands, they fell back in a dishevelled condition, caps and garments all awry, and, breathless and happy, went off in knots into corners, put each other to rights, and told of their victories. The men walked grandly off, shook their shock heads, and gave themselves a general convulsion after the fight, like Newfoundland dogs on emerging from water. How the old man got up the stairs I do not know, for an attendant piteously begged us to go off the platform, and let the Metropolitan come up and get out. My companion and I of course went out, that is, we suffered ourselves to be carried hither and thither by the swaying mass of outsiders, who had found out what was going on inside, and were resolved on getting in to share in the blessings their friends were receiving from the aged chief's hands. We gained with difficulty a corner on a staircase by the outer porch leading up to the collegiate rooms above, and here we waited until the old man came by. Presently he appeared, a wreck, helplessly borne along by the two men in livery, surging masses before and behind, while the two attendants

who cleared the way were by this time red and streaming with perspiration from their exertions, savage with the difficulties they had to encounter, and utterly reckless of all decorum or consideration towards men or women. How they fought!—off the platform, through the porch, down the steps, and out at last into the open air. It was exactly like a *rouge* at football under the playing-fields wall at Eton. The scene at the Simonoff Convent on the day of the fair, when the Superior walked along the paved way from his lodgings to the church, was one of violent devotion strange to witness; but this scene at "Gethsemane" left it far in the rear in its fanatical fury.

Poor old gentleman! this was among his last earthly triumphs—if so it can be called—a triumph of his popularity—an occasion for the ardent expression of the people's love towards him. He is now gone to his rest. Philarete was an amiable and an able and devoted man, a good scholar, a man of a liberal tone of thought, given to enjoy the literature of other countries and the conversation of foreigners. Like a patriarch of old he has been gathered to his fathers, full of years and of honours.

My companion and I took a quiet way across the

grassy enclosure to the shrubby valley, and the murmuring stream, and the shady fir-trees. How quiet it all was after the savage religious drama enacted in the church! As we went, we met various little groups of persons sauntering about in the valley and on the lawns, some of them acquaintances of my companion. Among the latter was one lady, small, still youthful, neatly dressed, and with a cheerful countenance, pleasing from the expression of goodness on it. As we strolled along I asked him who this lady was.

"That lady," said he, "is a very remarkable person. She is the Florence Nightingale of Moscow—the life and soul of many of the best charities of the city; she is always occupied, and whatever she undertakes she does well. She spends her fortune and her time in these things."

On my expressing a wish to have known her and seen her in Moscow, he said she was only here for a day on a holiday—the Women's Day at Gethsemane. I could not help a regret at thus missing an opportunity of being acquainted with a lady so excellent and so estimable. In the midst of all the corruption and the gambling in high places, and the depravity and fanaticism of the lower classes in

Moscow, it was evident there was also a warm and lofty spirit of benevolence, a refining and large-hearted tenderness for others in the Russian, not surpassed in any people or in cities of more civilized countries. There must be a tone of mind worthy of a great nation where such things are done, and where such persons live and use their time and means as this lady, and the Sheremaytieff, and the Galitzin, and many others of their class.

Across the wooded valley was a singular place —a kind of monastery, part of it above ground and part underground. We purchased each of us a taper of a man at the head of a flight of steps, many other persons doing the same, and descended, headed by an attendant, into a cavernous place, reminding one of the catacombs at Rome on a small scale. In this we followed corridor after corridor, narrow and low, now emerging into a small chapel, then into a cavern with a fountain, and then into a cave where was a well. As we went we passed many a door in the rocky side. These doors were the entrances into small caves or cells inhabited by monks, recluses from the world. Fanaticism is so fostered in the Greek Church that it results in some cases in the production of hermits and anchorites, as

in the days of St. Anthony. Here, in this nineteenth century, were men who had shut themselves up from the world in dark caves underground for years, thinking they were doing God service. They were voluntary recluses. On passing one closed door, the attendant said,

"The man in there has been shut up for eight years without going out."

On coming to another door, we found it open.

"Ah!" said the attendant, "that man has been in there for thirteen years, but he is gone out to-day to the *fête*."

We went in, and found that the place consisted of an outer cell and two inner ones. Both doors were open, and in one of these was nothing but a pallet bedstead and a chair.

"The man who was in there died," said the attendant; "he was in there a good many years, and a little time since he died."

The other cell was furnished. These cells were about ten feet long by eight broad, and six in height. There was a chimney to each and a small stove. The furniture consisted of a wooden pallet bedstead, with a straw mattress and a coverlet. There was a chair, a small stock of wood in a corner, two or three

earthenware pots for cooking—in one of them some scraps of fish—and a few stained and worn books of prayer on a shelf. In a corner was the never-omitted little picture, or image, as it is called in Russia, of the Virgin. What a den for a human being to occupy voluntarily during thirteen years! What an empty and unproductive life, dragging vacantly on from day to day by the charity of others, and giving back not one single act of usefulness! What is religion, if it be not useful? What a contrast, methought, between this man breathing away his days in darkness and idle dreaming, voluntarily shutting out the bright sun which God has given so beneficently to his creatures, and letting the powers of a Godlike reason and all the wealth of human sympathies run to waste, and that little lady on the lawn by the church, so abounding in active goodness to the poor and the desolate, so bright an example of the capability which even one fragile but earnest human being possesses of lighting up the hearths and warming the hearts of the unfortunate and the unhappy many!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A New Investment for the Money of Monks—The Walls of the Monastery—Spacious Promenade—Interesting Serving Monk—Interior of the Church—Gaudy Paintings—Restoration of Frescoes by an Enthusiastic Merchant—An Ill-advised Monk—Sale of Holy Water—The Day of St. Serge—The Baker's Shop—The Cathedral—Sale of Candles, Images, and Oil—Rich Display of Pictures, Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones—The Treasury—Dining Hall of the Monks—Primitive Hospitality—The Hospital—The Dying Monks—The Greek Monk—Differences in Monkish Life—The Bloodstained Tower—A Monk's Cell—Ecclesiastical Academy—The Troitsa Convent a Microcosm.

MY companion and I drove back to the convent. It is to be feared that the monks of Troitsa are not altogether spiritually-minded, but that a certain amount of worldly leaven has leavened the whole establishment. At all events there are some men among them who possess what are called practical minds. Perhaps great wealth and long-continued prosperity have had their usual effect even on these recluses, and have tarnished a little the purity of their nature. Anyhow there is a large hotel on the broad

square or place immediately outside the convent walls, which hotel has been built by the monks for the benefit of visitors to Troitsa, and as a good investment of a portion of their abounding treasure. My companion and I found a good native cuisine at the hostelry, and then went to see the interior of this famous monastery.

The walls have a circuit of one mile, minus only two hundred and sixty yards. These are battlemented, and are a grand and striking feature of the place. In some places, for instance where they traverse the public square, they reach a height of over thirty feet, and with the ditch below, form a noble and warlike barrier. On other sides, where they hang over the narrow, steep valley, their height has a still more imposing effect. On the inside there is a raised covered way, which runs round the entire wall. It is neatly paved with brick, and raised so high that those on it can look out through the openings of the battlements. It is about twenty feet in breadth, and enclosed on its inner side by a low wall, and thus there is always a spacious promenade of nearly one mile in length, protected by its heavy tiled roof from the heats of summer and the snows of winter. There are commanding views from it over all the

surrounding country; and beneath it are the many extensive offices for summer and winter stores, stabling, and other purposes of the convent.

A fine arched gateway opens from the public square into the outer courts, and entering you find yourself in the sacred precincts—large grassy places, shady trees, paved pathways, broad and orderly, churches, offices, halls—a picturesque carelessness of arrangement, a rich and beautiful seclusion, a place of repose and rest, of study and meditation. That peculiar charm pervades it which one experiences on entering a cathedral. You feel inclined to sit down and be silent, and let your spirit partake of the beauty and the sentiment of the *genius loci.*

My companion and I followed a broad paved way leading into the centre of the enclosure, where were scattered about the principal buildings. As we were passing a large church—The Assumption of the Virgin—an old man in a monkish dress stood on the top of a flight of steps beneath the usual projecting porch, in which there was a mixture of Italian and Byzantine styles with a Norman arch, rich, coloured, gilded, bizarre. There was something more than usually pleasing in the old man's face, and while we stopped for a moment hesitating whether we should go on at once

to the church of the Trinity—the cathedral—the shrine of St. Serge—the place of gold and silver, of diamonds and of jewelled lamps—the old man bowed and addressed us in French. This of course attracted us. In reply to our questions he said he had once been a soldier, and having gone to Paris in 1815 with the Russian army and the Czar Alexander, he had while there picked up a few French phrases. On retiring from the army on account of a wound, he had entered Troitsa as a serving monk, and had been there ever since. Now he took care of this church, the largest in the monastery, though not the cathedral. A Greek cathedral is not an imposing structure such as are ours in England, but usually is only a church rather larger than others. No Latin or Teuton would call the cathedral of the Kremlin by that title. The old man was now seventy-five years of age. He was hale, hearty, and genial, and in his limited and broken French voluble about Paris and his military days. Evidently, in spite of his many quiet years of ecclesiastical life as a monkish servitor in Troitsa, the stirring portion of his youth stood out in his memory in strong relief. The simple monotony of his latter years seemed to have but little interest for him when I questioned him on them and their occupation, but

his eyes lighted up with animation and his manner was full of vivacity when the French days and the army were alluded to. As is often the case with elderly persons the long-gone days and their events—and such events too !—had the strongest hold on him.

The whole interior of the church was brilliant with Greek painting. Evidently there had been lately a grand restoration and a general re-painting of pictures on a great scale, an unusual thing in the Russian churches, which, as a rule, it must be said, are dingy and dirty in their interior, though smart enough outside. The huge and massive square pillars in the centre of the church, which supported the cupolas above, were gaudy with masses of strong colour; but the extremity, the great wall at the end facing the Ikonostas, was a marvel. On this lofty, broad, and unbroken face from pavement to roof, and from side to side, were two monstrous pictures, frescoes. A perpendicular line in the centre divided them. One represented Salvation; and here were gigantic and impossible figures of human beings, defying all proportions, but intended to express the enjoyment of ease and happiness, and all going upwards to heaven. The other represented Condemnation; and here were scenes of torment and woe unutterable, and figures of hapless

beings all plunging desperately into Hades. But the colouring and the drawing! The monstrosity of the whole was an outrage on Art. These alarming frescoes are said to be of the seventeenth century. It appeared that a Moscow merchant lately on a visit to Troitsa had remarked the condition of the convent generally, the state of exterior dilapidation of many of its buildings, and the dirty and faded interiors of all. Seized with a religious fervor he declared his intention to spend a large sum of money in the restoration of Troitsa generally; he would repair—he would paint—he would spend one hundred thousand roubles! It was a grand resolution. It was true that the convent, being very rich, enormously wealthy in jewels, and receiving large sums of money every year from devotees, and having, besides, landed estates, might have accomplished these repairs itself, or, indeed, might have prevented the necessity for them; but the money had gone in other directions, and not in repairs and paint. There were four hundred monks in Troitsa, and these were not fed for nothing. Besides there were whispers that some of the money went at times towards St. Petersburg. After all, why should wealthy devo-

tees at Moscow be deprived, by such common virtues as monkish care and prudence, of a grand opportunity of an act of soul-saving goodness? The merchant set about his work in good earnest. Artists from Moscow were sent down to Troitsa, and this church was repaired and repainted, inside and out, and these two huge frescoes were restored, by the liberality of the merchant and the genius of his artists. The former spent eight thousand five hundred roubles on this church. There was a grand re-opening, and a gorgeous ceremony, and everybody was happy. And now the merchant, in the fulness of his satisfaction, was meditating on a second work of restoration worthy of his great intentions, when, lo! some malevolent spirit one night, prompted by Satan, whispered one of the monks to hint to him that what he was doing was admirable—most admirable; but still there was "a small something" to be done about the convent which was even more important than the restoration of the churches, if he would allow him just to suggest it. "A small something!" How very impertinent! And this to a man ardent with grand ideas! The merchant was very wroth, and took it as a great offence that

when he was undertaking such a high and necessary work a monk should suggest a diversion of his money to something else; it was an unpardonable interference with his intention, and he would do no more for ungrateful Troitsa. Miserable ill-inspired monk! By a few words he had brushed away over ninety thousand roubles. The merchant paid the eight thousand five hundred roubles for the work of the one church, and refused to spend another kopeck on the place.

Immediately outside this church was a small and graceful building, like a diminutive chapel. It was circular, of red brick, with white stone framing of the windows, white arches, supported by slender twisted columns, and with fretted ornaments—a composite and fanciful structure. Going round to the door, we found the interior occupied by a monk keeping a little shop. Here were photographs of people and buildings, crosses, rosaries, pictures of the Virgin, carvings in wood, and other wares of a like kind, all in neat glass cases on two counters. But the chief and principal stock in trade of the monk was water. This was the cause of all the rest. At the far side of the little apartment—the two counters on either hand—there was a well with a three foot wall enclosing it,

and a silver bucket with rope and chain resting on it. The well was only about ten feet deep, and the bucket would hold about two gallons. This was the holy water of Troitsa.

The monk was a cheerful talking man, and gave us a smiling welcome as we stepped into his little circular room. He said that people came in every day, and most of these purchased something, either an image, or a photograph, or some beads, or a locket with portraits of two saints—all of which he recommended to us in turn with quite an engaging, smiling way, and a turn for business worthy of the Rows in the Kitai Gorod at Moscow, adding in a hearty way,

"And then everybody drank some of the water, that they did of course, even if they bought nothing, and some would carry it away in little bottles; of course the water was free of all charge—and we would drink some, it was so pure, and so healthy."

And with this he dropped the silver bucket down to the water, and with two or three smooth easy pulls at the rope, hand over hand, he had it up on the wall, full and bright with its sparkling contents. It certainly was delicious—a sweet clear water, and most grateful on that hot summer day. We asked him about the day of St. Serge—that must be a busy day for him.

"Ah! yes," he replied, "that is a great day, and they all come here for the water, and it has happened more than once that the well has been drunk dry—every drop used—and the bucket at last only brought up wet mud; but the people would have it, even that."

We carried off some photographs—"done in the convent," said the monk; "one of our brothers is very clever at it."

From this we went on to another small picturesque building, "where," said my companion, "the monks sell loaves of a beautifully fine white bread, made from wheat of their own growing and grinding; lots of people come here almost every day and buy these, and then take them into the church of St. Serge and have them blessed by the priest, who picks off a little scrap as a toll." The baker's shop was neatness itself. A long counter ran from end to end of the room, some fourteen or fifteen feet, and beyond this was a high long range of closets, with shelves and drawers. In these were the loaves. Two or three monks were standing about by the door and the counter, but the seller was a young and handsome lad, scarcely out of his teens, with long glistening hair parted in front and waving and curling down over his shoulders. He had fine

eyes and a delicate complexion, and in his long plain black dress he looked like a woman, his face was so effeminate, and his throat so round and bare and white. At our request the pretty grave bread-seller produced various small loaves from different drawers in a quick business style, perfect specimens of cottage and, what one might call, toy loaves in shape, colour, and material. The roundness and proportion of form and delicacy of colouring were as a work of art. The sense of the beautiful was stronger in the baker's shop than in the frescoes of the large church. As we did not look like buyers for a family circle the discerning young monk did not offer us any of the paterfamilias loaves, fair two pounders, and even larger. We were contented with toy specimens.

Going on from this we arrived at the cathedral—the famous church of the Trinity—the Church of St. Serge. Here were no steps, no twisted Byzantine columns, no projecting canopy, no raised corridor; the entrance was level with the ground. But a long closed portico, with a door at either end, was in front of the entrance.

On entering one of the doors I found to my surprise that all along the side of the portico opposite to the entrance into the church was a high broad coun-

ter, and on this were piles of wax tapers, and jars and cans of oil, while behind it were three or four monks. Here was another shop, and evidently doing a very considerable business. Really, methought, these Troitsa monks are wise in their generation; they not only have a large hotel on the Place outside the gate, but they have a number of active trading establishments inside. At the great gateway I now remembered a notice in black letters on a white board to this effect:—"In the Convent are sold candles, images, bread, and oil." There were several small lay traders with their stalls out on the Place offering the same wares for sale; and this notice of the monks appeared to be intended as a warning to pilgrims to St. Serge, "Don't buy out there; all these things are better in our shop inside." It did look a little grasping, and not considerate to the small outsiders. Now in this portico were people coming and going in and out of the church, a perpetual movement, and as they passed through it many of them stopped to buy something, a taper or two, or some oil, which they carried away in little bottles brought for the purpose. The oil-buyers, I observed, were invariably females. There was a brisk trade, for two monks, fine large men, were kept hard at work handing over the goods

across the counter, and receiving the kopecks in payment, while another had a desk and kept account. The monk who served out the oil was a remarkably fine, tall, and handsome man; but the perpetual going about with a huge can of lamp-oil, filling it from large jars, and then dispensing the contents into numerous small-mouthed bottles, is a service not conducive to coolness on a hot summer day, nor to cleanliness of dress and person. The monk was steaming with heat, and glistening with oil over his head and hands and dress. In reply to my inquiry of what the women and girls did with the oil, I was told that they buy it to feed the lamps always burning in the churches and before certain shrines and images; and that the priests teach their young devotees that it is a very meritorious act to aid in keeping a lamp alight. What a very ingenious little lesson for the youthful female mind!—Thus—my dear little girl, you can do your soul good and please the Virgin by making an offering of holy oil to keep the lamp burning before her image, or the shrine of St. Serge or St. Nicholas, as the case may be. Imagine how many children would grow up with that idea strong in their minds, and how they would treasure up a kopeck or two continually, and spend it in oil in the portico, and go to

the priest inside and have it blessed, and then hand over the contents of the little bottle to the oil-keeper with an entire confidence in having done a good action. What a life-long sentiment or superstition to the child, and what a life-long gain of money to the monk and his fellows! I could not help thinking that one of those oil-jars might be like the widow's cruse, never failing,—for St. Serge must have a quantity of oil offered to him which his lamp can never consume, and what so natural as that the superfluity of the morning oil should flow back steadily into that jar in an evening stream?

This famous church was, it must be said, very dirty, but very rich in pictures, in gold, in silver, in precious stones, in lamps. What splendid diamonds, real, and of immense size, on the picture of the Virgin, and what costly lamps before the tomb of St. Serge! In front of this latter, which is composed entirely of silver, a chaste and graceful canopied projection from the wall at one end of the Ikonostas, hang in a half-circle a row of lamps. These are of the most fanciful, varied, and elegant forms. There are perhaps ten or a dozen, and each is an offering to St. Serge by a personage. There is the lamp of the Emperor Nicholas, and one presented by his Empress, one

by the Grand Duchess Marie, their daughter, one by the present Emperor, and one by the present Empress; then there is one of the little Grand Duke Serge, named after the Saint, and so on. They are suspended from a bow-shaped bar by gold chains, and are of chased gold, set with precious stones, each one an exquisite work of art. One of the most rich and of most delicate workmanship was sent anonymously. No one can guess who was the sender. The church was half full of people. It was small for a cathedral, and, with the exception of the Ikonostas and its riches, the whole interior was one of faded finery and worn-out furniture. The Moscow merchant!—what an opportunity for him, if that foolish monk had but known that unasked-for advice is a device of Satan. We heard part of a service, the noble voices of the priests pealing grandly through the building.

From this we went to the Treasury. This is a marvellous collection of valuables. Here are many rooms filled with cases of garments, ornaments, arms, curious works of art, stuffs heavy with gold, pearls, or precious stones. These arms and garments have each a story, the wearers of them having been some Russian sovereign, potent noble, or captured enemy in the olden time. More than one

of the cloaks and coats were thick with rows and masses of pearls, and in one case these almost concealed the cloth on which they were sewn. This treasury is, however, of course, a modern collection. There is nothing in it that can be correctly termed antique.

On leaving the Treasury, we found a monk idling about in one of the courts, so we enlisted him in our service as explorers of the non-religious life of the convent. Near the Trinity Church there was an extensive building, long and moderately lofty. It might be a large hall, or it might be a fine library. The chief and principal part of it appeared to be a *bel piano*, first floor, with numerous lofty windows, and without any attic above it. Moreover, it was painted all over on its outside in a most bizarre style, resembling nothing so much as the dress of a harlequin or that of the Pope's guard at the Vatican. Mounting a long flight of steps to this we found ourselves in a noble hall—the dining hall of the monks. It was empty now. It was a grand apartment, with painted walls and an arched ceiling, and the far end was fitted up as a chapel, railed off with a low pretty gilt iron railing. The hall could not have been less than eighty feet in length exclusive of the chapel, and its

breadth about thirty-five. Three long tables with benches extended the entire length. The chapel end was clean and bright with gilding, but the rest of the hall, ceiling, and walls would have benefited much by the roubles of the Moscow merchant. They were thoroughly dirty and faded, a marked contrast with the chapel, and also with the smart and fanciful exterior. However, when one considers that some four hundred monks sit down to a steaming dinner on most days in that rather low-ceilinged hall, the condition of the walls is not surprising. In a small square room opening into the hall by a side door, and having a back staircase, were a few tables and stools. This was the room for late comers to dinner. These were not allowed to disturb those in the great hall when once grace had been sung and the monks were seated. Going down the back staircase, we came to the offices—kitchen, bakery, and other places. These were all arranged under the great hall. But it was a pain to see the utter dirt and disorder of all this part. We seemed to be at once carried back to some rude, long-gone time, when Rurik reigned at Moscow and Poles beleaguered Troitsa. The broken stair, the grass-grown courts, the blackened walls, the crumbling brickwork, the neglect and the ruin, the

soot-smeared kitchen, black and gloomy, the uncouth and greasy monks, begrimed of face and hands and dress—oh for the Moscow merchant!

However, it was evident that the recluses did not live badly. There were huge coppers for the daily soup of fish and vegetables, and there was an extensive hot plate, which told a tale of ingenious cookery. Immense circular loaves of rye bread, brown and wholesome, stood in ranges on mighty shelves, two hundred of which were the daily consumption. "But," said one of the cooks, "there are others of wheat, quite white, for the hospital and the sick." It was the employment of eight monks, besides the cooks, every day to make this rye bread for the general use. Near the kitchen was the bakery, with its vault-like ovens, and beyond this was a dark and desolate place, a rude outhouse. From the centre of it rose substantial and blackened posts, on which, at seven or eight feet from the ground, was placed a rough-hewn platform of wood. Leaning against this was a ladder, the only method of reaching it. The platform was a bed-room. When any way-worn pilgrims arrived at Troitsa, they were invited to sit down on some rude benches by the wall outside of the outhouse, and here, beneath a plain shelter of

boards, they were furnished with soup and rye bread from the kitchen. If they desired to stay for a night or two to rest, or were unwell, they could climb up the ladder, and pass the night on the platform, where were some sacks. It was a primitive hospitality; but then beggars must not be choosers. If the pilgrim was really ill, he was put into the hospital. One poor fellow was sitting by the wall, waiting for his soup, and was going to pass the night up on the platform. However rough this bedroom might be it was not inferior, methought, to the general and much sought-for bedrooms for the "casuals" in our London refuges. Anyhow, at Troitsa the "casual" had good food and fresh air.

A little farther on was the hospital. There were two or three rooms, all clean and fresh, and but few sick in them. As we looked into the lower room, on the ground-floor, the monk said—"The people here are all dying; when they get very bad upstairs, and there is nothing more to be done for them, they are brought down here, and they never go out again."

There were no curtains to the low pallet beds, which were ranged along the wall, clean and tidy. In two or three of these were distinguishable the human forms beneath the grey coverlets, still and

composed, the heads covered, preparing for death. The silent chamber, empty of everything except these beds and their voiceless tenants, struck one's mind painfully as the very impersonation of abandonment. Here were no kindly nurses hovering about with cordials, as in the Sheremaytieff Hospice in Moscow. Belonging to no one, without a tie to any of those among whom he had passed his life, the monk, a solitary being, his inner life and its sorrows a secret to all but his Maker, he comes here at last, to this still chamber and this pallet bed, and without one word of sympathy for his ear, without a claim on any one for affection, he shuts out the world, and conceals the eyes which no one cares to close, beneath the coverlet, and passes away.

"They are often found dead in the morning," said the monk with us. "A brother comes round at intervals and lifts the coverlet during the day, and finds them gone, but they usually die at night."

We asked to see some of the rooms or cells of the brothers. These appeared to be scattered all over the enclosure in the numerous buildings. Passing the hospital we went up a broad flight of steps on to the paved and covered walk by the outer wall. What a grand promenade it was! We entered it at an angle,

and here on one hand it stretched away for two or three hundred yards, level and orderly, and shaded and cool, and then on the other hand was a similar fine and imposing length of way.

"In the worst winters," said the monk, "when the whole country is white and deep in snow, this is always as it is now; a little snow blows in sometimes through the battlements, but it is soon swept away."

As we walked along it some windows of buildings beyond the grassy enclosure were open, and in one of these was a canary in a cage. There were books, too, on shelves, and a cheerful coloured paper on the walls. I pointed these out to the monk.

"Oh! yes," he said, "some of the brethren are fond of having birds, and they furnish their rooms comfortably if they choose to do so."

The Greek monk is not devoted to absolute poverty and self-denial. This man, with his books, and his canary, and his Moscow furniture, and with a certain liberty to come and go, no doubt found in this life a charm, as do their Roman brethren, those holy Sybarites, the Benedictines, at La Cava near Naples, in their luxurious monastery. There is a difference in monk life—a difference between the fanatic in his subterranean cell at Gethsemane, two miles off, and

this man fond of books and the music and companionship of a canary. What friends, methought, that man and the bird must be, for between them there can be sympathy and affection.

There was a tower in the angle of the broad walk. We went up the winding stair and found at the top storey a wide circular space, from the centre of which rose some massive brickwork, the summit of the round tower.

"That is closed up now," said the monk, pointing to a door, "it is nailed up; there is a room in there, and all below it to the bottom is hollow. John the Terrible used to condemn some of those who offended him to be sent to Troitsa, and they were kept here as in a prison. Sometimes one would be brought and put into that room, and the door locked—presently the floor would sink, and then the man went down to his death."

It was an *oubliette.* So that Troitsa, the Holy Troitsa, was not sacred in the eyes of the Terrible Ivan. Around this bloodstained central place, this wall, were rooms of the monks, a broad passage running between the brickwork and the cells. Most of the doors, five or six, were closed; their tenants were in them, and we could not disturb their privacy. But

one was ajar, and our guide, peeping in, beckoned us to enter, as the monk was gone out. It was a considerable room, perhaps sixteen feet long, but of irregular shape, being narrow at the doorway, and broad by the window, which looked out over the country from a considerable height—a cheerful airy room. The furniture was plain and neat—a pallet bed, a couple of chairs, a picture or two of saints, a table, and some books. It had a homely habitable look. These rooms, however, were not built for telling secrets, for they were, in fact, only thin wooden compartments, occupying the outer side of the large circular platform, and as the wooden partitions were only about eight feet high, there was no lack of circulation of air, nor of cold in a Russian winter, while every slightest movement—the rustle of a cloak, the creak of a chair, or the turning of the page of a book—could be heard by the neighbours through the thin boarding or over the top. Secrets! Probably every poor monk has a secret—down in his heart—the secret of his life, which he never tells and never wishes to tell to anyone, whether the boundaries of his cell are wooden boards or brick walls.

We went along the covered walk; and here and there we met persons—now some solitary papa walk-

ing slowly and absorbed in his book, his long hair curling down over his brown silk dress; and then a monk, sauntering idly along by the embattled wall, now and then leaning in one of the embrasures and gazing long and fixedly out into the country—perhaps with mind and heart far away. Then we came by the palace, built by Peter, now occupied by the Ecclesiastical Academy, and the principal seat of priestly instruction in Russia. This large and handsome building stands just within the great wall, and so here were knots of two and three students, young men of the upper classes, in eager conversation as they walked along the shaded way. More than once we came upon a solitary student, doubled up in an embrasure with book in hand—his place of study for the nonce. Then we met little parties of visitors to Troitsa like ourselves, and also monks enjoying, apparently, a constitutional walk.

Thus the Troitsa convent is a little world in itself. There are gorgeous buildings and decaying offices; there are splendours of hoarded wealth and the plainness of poverty; imposing ceremonies of religion, and careful money-making; treasuries and shops; students and idlers; learning and ignorance; men of grand presence, noble stature, and abounding health, glori-

ous in youth and beauty; and there are poor decrepit creatures, without hope or object in this world, dying, alone and uncared for, without a friend to close their eyes.

CHAPTER XIX.

Administration of Justice—Bribery in some cases Discountenanced—The Bureaucracy—Causes of the Low Morale of Public Officials—Insufficient Salaries—No Public Opinion—Frequenters of the Hôtel Dusaux—A Sign of the Times—The Levelling Process—Language of the Upper Classes—Intolerance at the Opera—Native Literature—The Works of Lermontoff, Pouchkine, &c—Growth of National Sentiment—Serfdom and Freedom—New State of Things—Rise of a National History, Drama, Fiction, and Music.

ONE day I was sitting at dinner in one of the public rooms of my hotel with a party of Russian gentlemen. The subject of conversation was the administration of justice in the courts of law. I observed that I had that day visited the public courts in the Kremlin, but unfortunately had found them closed, as it was holiday-time. One of those present said he should have been glad if I could have witnessed some of their procedure, "for," said he, "we are but beginners in anything like law, whereas you English are a people of law. We are but children, and have everything to learn."

I said I had heard that there was a great desire on the part of the magistracy at Moscow to act impartially in their office, and that one proof was they were refusing all bribes.

"We are getting on," he said; "some of our new magistrates are really good men;" and he related a case within his own knowledge where a gentleman, thinking he could bribe the magistrates as in the olden times, had been himself heavily fined for the offence of offering the bribe, and kept under durance till the fine was paid, immensely to his astonishment.

Another of the party observed on this, that though there were cases where this might be true, they were exceptional; the old state of things hanging about our people and offices too much yet. And he went on to say, "My opinion is that if a man were to kill another here in the open daylight in the middle of this street there would be a tremendous hubbub about it for a time, but if he had a clever lawyer and plenty of money he would escape all punishment."

On my subsequently mentioning this to an acquaintance, his remark was,

"I have no doubt he was right, for the bureaucracy of this country are so wretchedly paid by the Government, that they must get money somehow inde-

pendently of their office to support their expensive way of living; and they must be more than men who would refuse a heavy sum to let off any man, whatever he had done. Besides," he added, "what public opinion is there to bear on them?—none; and what public spirit in favour of real justice and law can there be in a people hitherto corrupted in an extreme degree by serfdom, by bribery in all the offices of state, by general profligacy, and the all but irresponsible power of the nobles over their serfs? The spirit, the habits of a people cannot change rapidly from bad to good."

Presently the subject of conversation changing at the dinner table, I observed two men enter the room and after much whispering together and looking round in a timid and hesitating manner, seat themselves at a neighbouring table. These rooms of the Hôtel Dusaux were as a rule frequented only by persons of a certain class. They were either officers of the Army, Russian gentlemen and their wives, merchants of the upper grades, or foreigners and travellers, but all of them having the air and manners of people of a certain social standing. But these two men were different. They were of spare and tall figure, with thin faces and pointed features, and their dress was

that of the Russian native of the smaller shopkeeper class, the long black boots, black waistcoat, and long loose upper coat marking them as of that condition. Their manners and appearance were so unusual in these rooms that I pointed them out to one of my neighbours.

"What are those men?" said I.

He turned, looked long and steadily at them, and then said,

"That is a sign of the times we are living in. This is the first time I have ever seen men of that class in these rooms. A short time ago those men would not have dared to come here, but now the citizen class are pushing themselves up where they never were before; and it is very natural, for they are free to do as they like, and many of them are rich."

"You are only beginning to do here," said I, "what we have been doing for years; and levelling is going on in all countries rapidly."

"Well," said Count L——, "I think it is all right that people should be free; and though sometimes there are things which are novel and which rather shock one's old habits, yet I am sure this change is all for the best."

I observed that there was one thing which much

surprised me, that whereas in England we had learned that in the upper Russian society the language of the country was rarely if ever spoken among themselves, and that French and German, but principally the former, were the common languages of the salon, this seemed by no means to be the case, all the Russians, frequenters of these rooms, speaking their native language.

"It is quite true," he replied, "there is a great change within these few years in this respect. Formerly it was considered fashionable to converse in French, and people even pretended not to know much of Russian; it was considered low and common, the language of the serfs; but now we all talk Russ everywhere—in fact, we are becoming national. Hitherto we have been almost like two peoples, masters and serfs, with different languages, different habits, different ideas; but now we are becoming one people in all ways, and in some things we are getting to be intensely national."

I alluded to a new opera being played at the great Moscow theatre, in which much of the action takes place in Poland, and of which the music was Russian, and the performers also natives.

"Ah! yes," said he, "a little time ago, when that

piece first came out, the audience were so enraged at the sight of the Polish costumes on the stage that they hissed and shouted and would not allow the opera to go on; and they positively afterwards insisted that the Polish scenes should be omitted, which of course spoiled the whole thing. Now they have become a little more tolerant, and allow it all to be played through; but a few years ago the whole piece would have been played as a matter of course, the Poles unnoticed. Now there is a new spirit alive."

I said I thought they avenged themselves for this toleration by their national anthem at the end—five times had the people called for that anthem on the previous night when I had been present.

"A furious nationality," said the Count, laughing.

Another of the party alluded to the native literature, which was beginning to be more appreciated generally in the country.

"Till lately," he said, "the common reading in families has been of books from France, England, and Germany, and of these there were so many and so good, that few cared to inquire if there was any native literature. If anyone called attention to Gogol or Lermontoff, people would say, 'Oh! it is only Russian,'—the language and the writers in it

were equally contemned; but now we find that there are writers of fiction in Russ besides the historians Karamzin and Solovieff, that their productions are fully equal, in many respects, in imagination and in power of detail, to those of many French and English writers, though, of course, inferior to your best."

I said that I had found at a library in the town a number of the works of native authors translated into French—works of considerable ability in the world of fiction, by authors such as Tourgueneff and Pouchkine, and others.

"If you have not read a work by Pouchkine," said one of the party, "called 'A Society of Gentlefolks in the Country,' you should get it; it made quite a sensation in Russian society when it appeared, about five or six years ago. No one knew that we had a writer capable of such a production until it appeared."

I had not then read the story mentioned. Various other authors were named—Stcherbina, Kriloff, and Griboyedoff. All this was only further proof of the growing sentiment of nationality among the Russian people—of a growing appreciation of native talent.

So long as there existed the great division of the nation into master and slave, each body using in a manner a different language, and therefore conveying

along two distinct streams different ideas on life and society, there could grow up no real community of feeling or opinion between these two great bodies. Whatever some authors may have written with the attempt to show that the Russian serf was not a slave, and that his dependence secured to him more advantages than would his liberty, yet, of course, in the present condition of thought in the world, it is but waste of words to show that all such argument is a fallacy. It is but waste of words to assert that the few small and merely physical advantages to the person under slavery or serfdom, coupled with degradation of mind, are worth more than all the higher and mental advantages of freedom, with all its inspiring power, its originality of thought, and its energy of action. Again it is but a waste of words to show that a despotic power of man over man is not an injury to the moral nature of the master as of the slave; for as a limited power obliges the master to balance with himself the question of justice and equity, and so allows these higher sentiments to find entrance into his mind and to purify and strengthen it even by their very presence, so an unlimited power appeals by its natural influence to the lower passions, and not to the

higher sentiments—to the passion of fear and the love of dominating, to selfishness and to force, and not to the sentiment of charity, of moderation, and of consideration for others.

But with the new state of things has burst into action a new appreciation of Russian thought, of Russian ability, of Russian nationality. Thus a national drama and a national music are taking their place as parts of the great social life of the country, and works of history, such as those by Solovieff and Polevoi; of drama, such as those of Ozeroff; and of fiction, as by Pouchkine and Lermontoff, are asserting their claim to an honourable place for the Russian language in the literature of Europe.

THE END.

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