

"If one wants to know what sort of man an Anglo-Saxon villain was, it is more to the point to talk to a Russian peasant than to rummage in libraries. The pidgeons, dressed like Tannhauser in the third act, with staves in their hands and wallets at their sides, who wander through Russia on their way to pray at the Holy Sepulchre, belong to the age of the Crusades. The ascetic who spends his life in prayer and fasting and wears chains about his body seems to have found his way into modern Russia from the Egyptian Thebaid of the fourth century.

"A country lad tells me that all Russians who are not orthodox are wicked persons, that Poles must be Catholics and Englishmen members of the English Church, and I realize that I am speaking to a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth. I spent a week in Livland with people of the eighteenth century. There were orators who harangued the peasants on the rights of man, and shouted 'Down with the aristocrats!' There was a proud noble who received me in a salon copied from one at Versailles, a menacing hag who demanded whether I was a baron or a dragoon, and there were several great ladies who had fled from burning chateaux to seek the charity of their friends in the towns."

Mr. Reynolds is greatly impressed, as other travellers have been, by the volume and the many colors of the street traffic in Russia's gayest city. As to certain picturesque features:

The Always-Present Cup of Tea

The fact that an invitation to an evening party in Russia is usually couched in the form of a request to come to tea is of social interest.

"The British workman cannot live without his beer, and the Russian cannot live without tea. In the post office the young woman who sells one stamp has probably a glass of tea at her side. In Government offices, banks and newspaper offices tea is perpetually going. At railway stations boys come into the train with glasses of tea. At night cabmen and dyorniks buy tea from the men who come around with great samovars swathed in cloths and tumblers stuck into little pockets on their belts. Na tchai, for tea, is the Russian for back-sheesh. Always, everywhere, golden tea."

Writing of "Food and Fashion" in Russia, our author comes to the 'zakouska' or snack, a leisurely prelude to dinner, through which one takes off the edge of his appetite.

"If you happen to be a person to whom the size of a butcher's bill is a matter of moment," we are advised, "introduce the custom at once. Do not give your ravenous children lobster salad and caviare before the leg of mutton and trimmings, but copy the ordinary Russian housewife. When they come trooping home from school for midday dinner, give them, for example, a great bowl of salad made of haricot beans, potatoes and onion, to take off the edge of their appetites. Then let them have soup, with plenty of little pies, made of the most substantial kind of pastry and stuffed with mince-meat, cabbage, egg or fish. When the leg of mutton appears they will not want more than a mouthful."

And still speaking of dinner, the story is recalled of a Russian Ambassador who had heard that foreigners believe Russians eat candles, and, accordingly, had a course of tallow candles served at a dinner party. His own candle was made of almond paste, and he ate it, wick and all, while his guests were politely trying to nibble the genuine article.

French Cooking for Princes in Russia

"In point of fact, the cooking in a good Russian house is French, perfected by the influence of the higher culinary thought of the country. A variety of wines is served at a dinner party and sweet champagne comes with the ice. When the hostess rises it is the custom for the guests to thank her for her hospitality; she gives her hand to the men to kiss, and often embraces the women. Men and women go to the drawing-room together, and later in the evening tea is served."

In reference to an amazing prodigality of Russian titles: "In Russia all the descendants of a hereditary nobleman are noble, and all the descendants of princes, counts and barons enjoy the right to use those titles. Hence there are rich princes and poor princes, princes with distinguished manners and princes with no manners, elegant princes in palaces and princes in garrets, princes who are desirable parties and princes who advertise in the newspapers for wives with money.

"A glance at the St. Petersburg directory and a rough calculation show that there are some two hundred men, women and children to the same princely men and children in the capital alone who all belong to the same princely family and bear the same name and exalted title.

"The first prince I met in St. Petersburg was the head waiter of the Hotel de France. He had an incontestable right to the title and was an excellent servant. His case, however, ought not to be cited as an instance of the decay of the Russian nobility, for he was a Tartar from a part of the Caucasus where princes were so abundant that when Russia acquired it only those who could produce a certain number of sheep were granted the legal right to preserve the title. Many borrowed sheep for the purpose, and princes are so common at the present day that beggar boys in Tiflis give the title to each other.

"Russian nobles do not have blue blood; they have white bones. Common people have black bones. In spite of the levelling of society by the debase-

ment of the nobility great importance is attached to the possession of the white bones."

In quoting from Mr. Reynolds's book, for the purposes of its review, the lighter passages have been preferred. Darker Russia is too well and too truly known to general readers. Of the works and penalties of revolution, our author has many things to tell. The prison experience is so common in St. Petersburg that there was laughter when a woman lecturer, speaking of the arrested suffragettes in London, explained that hitherto it has not been common for men and women of education to be confined in English prisons.

Thought of Death and the Prison

Mr. Reynolds's observations and stories of Russian prison life reveal, with alternate tragedy and comedy, the con-



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