

Dexterity is conspicuous in almost all that a Russian does; even the meanest of them has a freedom, lightness, and ease in his walk—an unconstrainedness, and even grace, in his motions: without ever being deficient in respect towards his superiors, he addresses himself, even to those of the highest rank, with perfect self-possession, and without manifesting a *mauvaise honte*. A singular intrepidity and confidence are displayed in the ease with which he climbs the most dreadful precipices without becoming giddy. Yet this fearlessness often becomes rashness: to save a few steps, he will cross over rotten plank, or still more rotten ice; in the midst of a crowd of carriages, he sees as little cause for apprehension as if walking in a room. This apathy of, or rather predilection for, danger, mixes itself even in his very amusements, which would otherwise appear to him insipid. A striking instance of this is to be found in their fondness for their precipitous ice-slides.

This dexterity is not merely corporal or manual; it displays itself in their mental exertions. It is well known that the Russian acquires every foreign language with particular facility; an advantage for which he is in some degree indebted to the difficulties of his own; this renders his organs so pliant, and breaks them in so well, that he can imitate any sound with facility, while the German is never able wholly to acquire the sound of the English *th*, the Bohemian *r*, or the Polish *l*. The Russian also possesses a decided and remarkable capacity for the mathematics.

Another trait in their national character is kindness. Among no other people does this truly amiable virtue appear to be cultivated to a greater extent. Whether in an unknown part of the city, or in the deserts of Siberia, one is equally sure of being directed aright; and even of being accompanied until he is certain of his way. Blind beggars sit in the most crowded streets with the money they have collected in their hats; to these, persons even of the lowest classes will give alms, and should any one have a larger piece of money than he can well spare, will put it down and take out as much change as he thinks proper; nor is the opportunity for being dishonest on such occasions ever known to mislead them. This is a piece of confidence that in some other capitals would soon be repented of by whoever should think of displaying it. It must not, however, be supposed that the Russians are absolutely immaculate in this respect; on the contrary, they make small scruple of appropriating to themselves any little article of value. But robbery, or any thing like violence, very rarely occurs; little care, therefore, is taken to secure doors and windows. Travelling is also perfectly safe, except, indeed, among the Nomadic tribes of the Caucasus, &c.

Whether it arises from the disposition of the people, or from the character of the government, no where does a more unlimited religious toleration prevail than in Russia. Another remarkable trait among the Russians is their extreme disinterested hospitality. A stranger, or a young man of moderate circumstances in any of the larger cities, is sure of obtaining access to tables which he may consider as his own, and can avail himself of the general information given, without the least reserve or constraint.