

RUSSIA.—PETERSBURGH.

FROM A LETTER BY A LADY OF NEW YORK.

The first sight of the Kremlin disappointed me much, as I had formed the same exaggerated idea of it, as most people do who have never seen it; but on a more detailed examination of its curious component parts, I found much to admire, and the interest increases at every succeeding visit. When viewed *en masse* from any exterior point, it has a fine effect, particularly when the sun shines bright on its gilded domes and crosses. Its architecture is of a mixed Asiatic and European character. Its numerous domes are pear-shaped, like those seen in the representations of Indian pagodas; they are covered with gilt copper. On driving in at the first gate, we had the arsenal on our right, and the Treasury building in front, with 900 pieces of brass cannon taken from the French army in the memorable campaign of 1812. It is the intention of the Emperor to compose a column of these cannon, as an offset to the one in the Place Vendôme at Paris, made from 1200 pieces of cannon, taken by Napoleon in his German campaigns.

In front of the Emperor's palace is a large square, from which is an extensive prospect beyond the Moskwa. The river is now frozen over, and covered with snow. I there observed a singular process going on. The washwomen of the city were busy at their occupation, around holes cut in the ice, when the thermometer was at 42 degrees below the freezing point of Fahrenheit. It was a marvel to me how they could keep the surface liquid; with such an intense degree of cold. Another peculiarity, I observed, which never struck me in any other country. Although the atmosphere was perfectly clear and free from moisture, the white smoke that curled from the thousand chimnies, instead of rising perpendicularly, as in our climate in still, clear, cold weather, fell immediately to the roofs, and appeared to run down their slopes like water or heavy gases.

On one side of the square is a wooden trap door in the pavement, which opens upon a flight of steps, down which persons descend and find themselves on a level with the top of the celebrated *Great Bell*. Another flight of stairs leads to the bottom of the pit, where one gets a full view of this colossus, in its entire height and breadth. It is 21 feet in height, and over 22 feet in diameter at the bottom. The sounding ring is two feet thick. The clapper is fourteen feet long. The weight of the bell is inscribed on it, and is 300,000 lbs. It is said to have been suspended over the pit in which it now lies, but the building taking fire, it fell, and was broken. This is the second bell of this enormous size; the first was destroyed by fire. The Emperor intends to raise it from the pit, and place it on a granite pedestal in the square. Another extraordinary brass casting is a large cannon, sixteen feet long, with a calibre of three feet! There are several others also, nearly as large.

The next object which attracted our attention was the Treasury. On entering the first room, my sight was so dazzled with the blaze of gold and silver vessels ranged in glass cases along the walls, from the floor to the ceiling, that I stood wrapt in mute astonishment. I fancied myself in the temple of Solomon, amidst the gold of Ophir, and the silver of Tarshish. The antique forms of the different vessels added to the illusion, for most of them are the fac-similes of the pitchers, bowls, cups, and dishes, one sees in ancient paintings, as well as those engraved on more ancient monuments. Many of these vessels are almost cotemporary with the foundation of the Empire, and no doubt are of Greek Byzantine manufacture; for Russia, at that period, could not have had artists sufficiently skilled in the art of chasing in metals, to produce such works as are seen here. It is a custom in Moscow, that whenever the Emperor visits the capital, the city authorities present him with bread and salt, upon gold dishes, richly embossed—several suites of these dishes are here shown. The ancient vessels are all used on great festival occasions, when the Emperor assists in person. I saw an officer of the household looking over the treasurer's accounts, and taking an inventory of this treasure. He was seated in the middle of the room, with a table, paper, and pen before him. On one side were persons weighing each vessel, while others were labelling and replacing them in the glass cases. I was informed that this ceremony is always performed when the Emperor is expected here, as he now is every moment. Passing on from this room to another, I saw several pedestals ranged around, supporting glass cases, under which were the regalia of the five conquered nations, *Siberia, Tartary, (Cuzin,) Georgia, Astrakhan, and Poland*—all in massive gold, and loaded with rare and precious stones. Each consisted of a crown, sceptre, and ball. Besides the above, were all the ancient crowns of the Czars of Russia, from that of Vladimir the Second, and worn by him at the old capital, Keoff, 900 years ago. It was made at Byzantium, and presented to him by the Greek Emperor. In another apartment are the thrones of the conquered nations. It would be very difficult for me to give you a correct idea of these curious antiques. Their general form is that of a large arm chair, elevated on a platform, with a velvet canopy over the whole. The chair, or thrones, are each of various materials, gold silver, ivory, &c. and all richly studded with precious stones.

Under other glass cases are preserved magnificent horse trappings of the ancient feudal times, then used on great State occasions, such as coronations, triumphal entries, tournaments, &c. Many of them were presents from Oriental sovereigns to their "cousins" of the North. Besides saddles and bridles entirely cov-

ered with turquoises, pearls and other precious jewels, there are housings large enough to cover entirely the largest horses, made of heavy crimson Genoa velvet, and wrought all over in arabesques, with the most beautiful Indian pearls, of the largest and fairest description to be found. Some of the rosettes are nearly a foot in diameter, and raised high above the cloth foundation, the pearls increasing in size and perfection as they approach the centre. In the basement story of this building, are preserved the ancient carriages used at coronations. They are something in the old Spanish style, enormously large, heavily carved, and entirely covered with gilding; some of them would require many spans of horses to draw them. One in particular has the front and hind wheels upwards of 16 feet apart.

Here, also, is the celebrated *house sleigh*, in which the Empress Catherine came from St. Petersburg to Moscow to be crowned. It is about sixteen feet long, by eight feet broad, with sash windows, divans and tables. It was drawn by sixteen horses.

That ambitious Empress, desirous of eclipsing all other sovereigns that ever reigned, not even excepting Solomon himself, conceived a plan for covering the whole area of the Kremlin with one magnificent palace, whose outer *façade* should rise from the edge of the hill, and extend around its whole circuit, which is about two miles. I saw the complete model on a large scale of this projected wonder: it is finished in every minute particular, the painting on the walls, and the different coloured marbles intended to be used in the construction and interior ornament of the palace. It was to have had columns of all the five orders. The present cathedrals and churches were to form part of the interior arrangement of the palace. A large theatre also is seen in the model, which is made to take to pieces, in order to disclose every part of its interior. This palace was actually commenced, but part of the foundation falling in, the Empress abandoned the work, perhaps through some superstitious fear. The book says—"Had the work been completed, it would have been the wonder of the world—it would have surpassed the Temple of Solomon, the Propylæum of Amasis, the Villa of Adrian, or the Forum of Trajan."

From Bremner's Travels.

FAIR OF NOVOGOROD.

Across the Okka—on a low almost inundated flat, exposed to the waters of both these rivers, lies a scene of bustle and activity unparalleled in Europe. A vast town of shops, laid out in regular streets, with churches, hospitals, barracks, and theatres, now tenanted by more than a hundred thousand souls, but in a few weeks to be as dead and silent as the forests we have been surveying: for when the fair is over, not a creature will be seen out of town, on the spot which is now swarming with human beings. Yet these shops are not the frail structures of canvas and rope with which the idea of a fair is associated in other countries. They are regular houses, built of the most substantial materials, and are generally one story high, with large shops in the front part, and sleeping-rooms for the merchant and his servants behind. Sewers, and other means of maintaining cleanliness and health, are provided more extensively even than in the regular towns of Russia. The business of the fair is of such importance that the governor of the province, the representative of the emperor himself, takes up his residence in it during the greater part of the autumn. There is a large and handsome palace built for him in the centre, accommodating a train of secretaries and clerks numerous enough to manage the revenue of a kingdom. * * * The fair may be about a mile from the centre of the city, but much less from the outskirts, to which, in fact, it is united by a long wide bridge of boats across the two arms of the Okka, and a line of good houses along the steep and difficult slope leading to the bank of that river. This slanting street is filled with a countless throng from morning to night—carriages, waggons, droshkies, pedestrians. * * * Immediately on leaving the bridge, the fair-ground begins. This part is always crowded with labourers looking out for employment, and cossacks planted among them to maintain order. Then come lines of temporary booths, displaying objects of inferior value for the lower classes, such as beads, trinkets, and some articles of dress, especially caps. Of these last, a great variety is displayed—round turbans of short curly wool from Astracan (here called *crimmels*, because the best is furnished by the lamb of the large-tailed sheep imported from Crim Tartar)—high black Kirghis bonnets made of wool resembling hair—and flat gold-figured cowls from Kasan. These booths stand in front of coffee, or rather tea-rooms, laid out with little tables, and eating-houses large enough for two or three hundred to dine in with comfort, and at any price, from two pence to two pounds. The crowd, however, does not present the gaudy look of an ordinary fair. The ribbons and the lace, the gay bonnets and the red cheeks are not here. The mirth, the dance, and the brawl, too, are wanting, as well as the drums and the showmen. For this not an idle, holiday meeting, but a place of business. The Nisbnei buyers are not country bumpkins with only a few shillings in their pockets, but rich merchants and grave bankers, who have their whole fortunes at stake. First advances a white-faced, flat-nosed merchant from Archangel, come here with his furs. He is followed by a bronzed long-eared Chinese, who has got rid of his tea, and is now moving towards the city, to learn something of European life before setting out on his many months' journey home. Next come a pair of Tartars from the

Five Mountains followed by a youth whose regular features speak of Circassian blood. Those with muslins on their arms, and bundles on their backs are Tartar pedlars. Cossacks who have brought hides from the Ukraine, are gazing in wonder on their brethren who have come with caviar from the Akhtuba. Those who follow, by their flowing robes and dark hair must be from Persia: to them the Russians owe their perfumes. The man in difficulty about his passport is a Kujur from Astrabad, applying for aid to the Turkoman from the bank of the Gourgau. The wild-looking Bashkir from the Ural has his thoughts among the hives of his cottage, to which he would fain be back; and the stalwart Kuzzilbash from Orenburg looks as if he would gladly bear him company, for he would rather be listening to the scream of his eagle in the chase than to the roar of this sea of tongues. Glancing in another direction, yonder Greek from Moldavia, with the rosary in his fingers, is in treaty with a Kalmuck as wild as the horses he was bred amongst. Here comes a Truchman craving payment from his neighbour Ghilan (of Western Persia), and a thoughtless Bucharian is greeting some Agriskhan acquaintance (sprung of the mixed blood of Hindoos and Tartars.) Nogais are mingling with Kirghisians, and drapers from Paris are bargaining for the shawls of Cashmere with a member of some Asiatic tribe of unpronounceable name. Jews from Brody are settling accounts with the Turks from Trebizond; and a costume-painter from Berlin is walking arm-in-arm with the player from St. Petersburg who is to perform Hamlet in the evening. In short, cotton merchants from Manchester, jewellers from Augsburg, watchmakers from Neufchatel, wine merchants from Frankfurt, leech-buyers from Hamburg, grocers from Konisborg, amber-dealers from Memel, pipe-makers from Dresden, and furriers from Warsaw, help to make up a crowd the most motley and most singular that the wonder-working genius of commerce ever drew together."

The following facts will enable the reader to judge of the commercial importance of this fair:

"Schnitzlen and the other authorities state the annual value of goods sold here at 125,000,000 roubles, or £5,000,000 sterling; but we were assured by a gentleman filling a high situation that this is only the official value given to government by the merchants, which always falls short of the real value sold. 'It is notorious,' he says, 'that in order to escape the payment of part of the duties, the merchants never give the true value of their stock.' There has also been a great increase since the time to which this statement relates; so that the real amount of money turned over in the place may now be fairly estimated at 300,000,000 roubles, or Twelve Millions Sterling!"

HUNGARIAN CHARACTERISTICS.—The Magyar peasant has a strong feeling of self-respect, at times bordering perhaps on foolish pride. It is very rarely he will consent to exhibit himself as an actor; and in consequence the country is filled with German players, Bohemian riders, and Gipsy musicians; for, however much he may dislike amusing others, he has not the least objection that others should amuse him.

The Magyar has a passionate love of country, united to a conviction that no one is so happy and prosperous as himself. The Swiss does not feel a more devoted attachment to his mountains than the Magyar to his plains. Csaplovics tells us that a young girl of Debreczen, who was taken for the first time into the mountains of Liptau and Arva, regarded the villages with the utmost astonishment; and on seeing what to her eyes appeared the barrenness and poverty of the scenery, burst out in exclamation, "What! do men live here too?"—From *Paget's Travels*.

THE WOOL SACK.—In the reign of Queen Elizabeth an act of Parliament was passed to prevent the exportation of English wool; and the more effectually to secure this source of national wealth, the wool-sacks on which the judges sit in the House of Lords were placed there to remind them, that in their judicial capacity they ought to have a constant eye to the preservation of the staple commodity of the kingdom.

The great rule of moral conduct is, next to God, to respect time.

RECIPE TO CURE HAMS.—To cure a dozen hams of ordinary size and weight, take 12 pounds of common packingsalt, one pound of saltpetre, and one gallon of molasses; rub the hams thoroughly with this composition, and pack them down closely as possible in a cask. Let them remain one week, then take one ounce of salaratus, make of it a strong ley, add to it a pickle which will bear an egg, pour the pickle so as to cover them, and let them remain in three weeks.

In the summer season after the hams are smoked, put them in a cask in layers, with layers of perfectly dried tan bark between them.

EASY MODE OF EDGING RAZORS.—On the rough side of a strap of leather, or an undressed calfskin binding of a book, rub a piece of tin, or a common pewter spoon for half a minute, or till the leather becomes glossy with the metal. If the razor be passed over this leather about half a dozen of times it will acquire a finer edge than by any other method.—*Mechanics' Magazine*.