

Nevskoi Prospect has nothing very striking in it, except its breadth and length. The shop-windows are small, owing, I presume, to the necessities of winter; the show of goods commonplace; the pavement is wretched and uncomfortable, made up of round, flinty stones, or blocks of wooden pavement; the equipages are mean; the passengers, on the whole, poor-looking; while every street seems to end at last in wretched houses, dreary spaces, with horses, carts, and all sorts of rubbish; and, finally, to be lost in "nowhere," unless in the primeval forest or morass.

The very unintelligible mystery of the Russian signs, which seem made up of all our old letters having become deranged, some turning back to back, and others standing on their heads, diminishes from the interest by denying information, and is hardly made up by the panoramic views of the contents of the shop, painted for the sake of the great majority of its customers who cannot read. Who, for example, in examining the name on a statue, and seeing *Cyhopob* inscribed upon it, would detect in these symbols the name of the old General "Suwarrow?" Then there is the absence of all historic interest. No doubt, to the native of Russia, many "vitches," and "ditches," and "offs," are full of patriotic remembrances. But most travellers, like myself, have never heard of these names, or the deeds which have made them illustrious, performed beyond the Caucasus. The Czars are, in fact, the nation to a stranger. One knows and hears only of them,—the great, the mad, the bad, the murdered, from Peter down to our late enemy Nicholas, who combined not a few of these characteristics. The associations which chiefly fill the mind are connected with immense armies, distant conquests, Cossacks, the knout, serfs, political criminals, Siberia, with a Czar over all, and a background of bribery, and of political and moral corruption, which darkens the whole Russian sky.

The finest sights in St. Petersburg are the great bazaars and the islands. The former are thoroughly Russian and oriental, and there is no stroll so interesting as through these interminable narrow arcades, perfectly sheltered from the rain, and admitting as much daylight from above as is desirable, with the open warehouses, containing every article bought and sold over a counter in Russia, and swarming with the most motley assemblage of buyers and sellers to be anywhere seen. In the great city bazaars alone (or *Gostinoi Dvor*), there are 2000 shops, lining I know not how many lanes with plank-floors crossing each other at right angles.

The drive through the islands was to me peculiarly interesting from its endless extent, the presence of uncultivated, untouched nature, with her Neva streams and quiet Baltic inlets, and primeval trees, and peasant-houses, as rude as if in a distant forest; while everywhere are as unexpectedly met with, the

country seats and beautiful cottages of wealthy citizens, and here and there cafes and theatres, and scenes of gay amusement, as false and gaudy as in the Champ-Elysees. On the whole, wild nature has the best of it.

But perhaps the finest feature of St. Petersburg is the noble Neva! The hotels are filthy, the police villains, the droshkies tortures, the palaces shams, the natives ugly; but the Neva seems to redeem all! It flows on, deep, pure, rapid, proud, and majestic; whether one gazes on its waters flowing beneath sun-set, crosses them in the light and painted ferry boats, quaffs them, or bathes in them, they are in no case disappointed.

But why should we express our astonishment that this great capital should in any respect disappoint us? The wonder rather is that such a city has risen in such a country in so short a time. Old General Wilson told me that he had, when a child, been spoken to by "Catherine the Great," whom he distinctly remembered, and she was married to Peter the third, the grandson of Peter the first, who founded St. Petersburg.—*Good Words.*

—o—

The following short article has been selected from the papers of the late Rev. John Livingston, a native of Pictou, settled for a brief space over a congregation in Canada. His short life was one of great promise, but was cut short at the very threshold of his usefulness.

#### ON THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

The ministry may be defined as implying all that is generally comprehended in the term, "care of souls," whether that care be exerted through pastoral visits or public preaching.

The importance of this office it is impossible to overestimate. The value of a single soul is beyond all calculation, much more is the value of a multitude of souls. That fit and competent persons, then, should fill this office, will be at once admitted by all. But what constitutes this fitness? We answer—There can be no fitness, properly speaking, without a call to the ministry. There are two kinds of calls, viz., the internal and external; and the one legitimate call may be considered as made up of both. We shall first briefly consider the internal call. We generally find that persons excel in that profession for which they have a natural taste. The painter who has no taste for colors can never excel in his profession; neither can the person in whose ears the sweetest music sounds but as discord, and creates no sympathizing emotion for harmony in his soul, be even an ordinary musician. Hence we thus find that a certain aptitude or taste is always necessary to success and celebrity in