

up to the North-west, and started a school. They started a school in a tent which I loaned them. The children squatted on the grass. I would like to read a few extracts from a letter written by the young lady to me shortly before I came down here. She says:

But here were the children, all as ignorant of the English language as I of the Russian, waiting to be taught. We had not expected such a prompt response to our project. So my first experience as a teacher began under decidedly unique conditions, teacher and taught being without a single word in common. By signs and motions I got them seated in rows on the prairie grass of the tent floor—later we had plank benches—and holding up a pencil said 'one.' I could detect no apparent comprehension; then taking up another pencil said 'two,' and adding a third, 'three'; still no response, and my heart sank somewhat. However, I decided to repeat the method, and as I said 'one,' I noticed a look on a boy's face that told me he knew I was counting, and I saw him turn and speak to the others. Almost instantly they understood, and soon repeating after me, counted up to ten. Then making the figures on a large sheet of paper—that had to serve as a blackboard—they soon knew perfectly the English numerals. . . .

All were very attentive and eager to learn. Some of these children came regularly from the village, Dshenje, five long miles in all weathers. They came early, too. So I opened school at half-past eight daily, and when closing time came at four, I often thought I was the only tired one. So much of the teaching was of necessity oral that the six and a half hours a day for five and a half days each week I found rather trying.

At the first the school was visited by several of the older Doukhobor men, who, I apprehend, were present to satisfy themselves as to the nature and probable influence of the undertaking. Later this critical attitude gave way to a feeling of hearty approval and confidence. . . .

As to writing, which was done on slates in school and in 'scribblers' for homework—of which seemingly they could not get too much—I must confess that it was often at least as good as my headlines. This shows that the Doukhobor has a strong eye for form, and certainly in the scrupulously artistic power in the handling of strong colour effects. . . .

The manliness and independence of the Doukhobor character was shown when these poor villagers found that the school was entirely non-official, and my work wholly voluntary; a committee of the men offered me remuneration, which, being declined, they expressed their gratitude, and told me through their spokesman, Constantine Plaxton, that they 'thanked me all the day and all the night.' . . .

The importance of some knowledge of English to the Doukhobors is apparent when it is shown that one who cannot understand is only able to get half wages, but apart from this there is a general desire to learn our tongue and to become Canadians. This view, formed in my visits to the villages near Good Spirit Lake, was confirmed when later I visited many villages to the south and north colony. . . .

When Mr. Barcroft came to the tent school at Good Spirit Lake, he was accompanied by M. Nicholas de Struve, the Russian consul to Canada at Montreal, and these gentlemen were good enough to express their gratification at finding in my school a 'going concern' of considerable

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experimental importance, which, it was said, would throw practical light on the subject in hand. . . .

It does not require a very keen perception on the part of one who has had a welcome into hundreds of their homes to be assured that this is a community living up to high moral standard, and holding tenaciously to the simple tenets of Christian faith.

That is good enough evidence for me to believe, besides that which my own eyes taught me in four years, that these people are good people. At one time I made up my mind that I would visit these people in their own homes. I was brought up in this country amongst the pioneer settlers on the Upper Ottawa, and I know what pioneer life is. I know what it is to build log houses, and I am in a position to judge as to what kind of a settler is necessary for a new country. I decided that I would not take any provisions with me, but that I would live with them as they lived. I made a trip to Swan river, over to Fort Pelly, and down to Yorkton, and slept five nights in their homes. I was surprised and astonished at the cleanliness of their places. I was surprised at the kind of log houses that they built. I have seen very good log houses built in the early days here, and I have seen what were called first-class 'corner' men, but I had never seen any log houses of which the corners were as neatly made, and in which the plastering was so neatly done, and on which the roofs were so well put on. I have never seen any log houses built by any Canadian builder equal to these houses. They had blended the clays used in the decoration of these houses in such a way as to almost make you think that they were actually painted. There was another prejudice that they had at first. They would not have stoves in their houses, but they had large clay ovens, which they placed next the doors. When I said to them that they should have stoves, they at first said that they would burn out, but they quickly overcame that prejudice, and in two or three months there were a great many box stoves in use. As to their food, it is true there was no meat, but they had vegetables, onions, &c., and they made a very nice salad. They had soup of rice and barley, which they took with bread, well baked. I found them most polite people, and the best things in the house they gave me. Their style of living was a little different from ours; they did not use the ordinary bedsteads but they had pillows made of down and feathers which were taken out every day to be exposed to the fresh air, and in that they gave us a lesson in hygiene. I was as comfortable as I would be in a hotel. It is true that twenty or thirty occupied the same house. Their beds were arranged on platforms at the end of the wall, but they had neat curtains and hangers and you were just as private as you would be in a Pullman car. These people are most religious as regards their