

EXILES OF THE CZAR

The Ninsky post station stands upon a small barren stretch of land on the banks of the river Lena. The river just there is narrow, swift and gloomy. Miserable huts cling to the bare rocks as if terrified at the turbulent stream. The rocks upon the opposite side rise straight out of the water, and here, if anywhere, the Lena deserves its name of "accursed ravine." The fogs hang for long in the ravine; it is filled with a chilly dampness, and a gray, mournful twilight reigns there almost unceasingly. The inhabitants of the Ninsky post station are noticeable, even among the other dwellers on the banks of the Lena, for their pale and meager appearance, their languor, their state of hopeless apathy.

I had arrived at the station on the preceding night, exhausted and half frozen. Next morning when I awoke it seemed to be still quite early.

Lying in my bed I could see, through a chink in the partition, into the room on the other side. There was a table with a lamp upon it, and at the table was sitting an old man. He had rather a handsome face, but its color was of a disagreeable pallor and unhealthiness, and his eyes seemed very dim.

Near the old man sat a little boy of some eight years of age. I was only able to see his bowed head, with its downy flaxen hair. The old man was peering through his glasses with his dull eyes, and was gazing to the lines of a book lying upon the table. The boy with strained attention was spelling out the words, letter by letter. When he stumbled, the old man set him right with gentle patience.

"I-n in, g-a-l-e g-a-l-e." The boy stopped short. The unknown word was evidently too much for him. The old man came to his help.

"Night-in-gale"—he read. "Night-in-gale"—carefully repeated the pupil, and lifting doubtful eyes to his teacher's face, he inquired:

"Night-in-gale—what is that?" "A bird"—replied the old man. "A bird" . . . and the lesson continued:

"The night-in-gale s-a-t sat o-n on the c-h, the c-h-e-r, on the ch-er-ry tree."

"What's that?" again inquired "he on passive voice of the child. "On the cherry tree. It's a tree. The bird was sitting on the tree."

"Sitting? What for? Was he a big bird?" "A tiny one. He sings well."

"Sings well?" . . . The boy ceased to read and became thoughtful. It was very silent in the hut; only the ticking of the pendulum was heard. Outside the window the mist was drifting by in clouds. What a pitiful child!—I thought involuntarily at the sound of the monotonous childish voice—without the song of the nightingale, without the budding spring! Nothing but water, and stone to block out the sight of God's free world. For birds—perhaps a solitary raven; for trees—the barren larch, or a rare pine.

The boy read another sentence in the same dull uncomprehending tone, then suddenly stopped:

"But, grandfather," he asked, isn't it time yet? Look at the clock." In his voice was now a living, agitated note, and his eyes brightened until they shone in the lamplight, as he gazed eagerly into his grandfather's face.

The old man looked at the clock. "Dress quietly," he whispered. The boy applied himself to his dressing in eager haste, and soon both figures—grandfather and grandchild—passed out through the dusk of the room.

I arose in my turn, and resolved to discover what had called them from the hut into the cold and fog without. I had slept in my clothes, and it did not take me long to put on my boots and overcoat and to leave the hut.

I had not far to go. Both the old man and the child were standing on the step, their hands buried in their sleeves. They were evidently awaiting something.

The surroundings seemed to me now even more forbidding than they had appeared from the window. The mist clinging to the crevices of the mountains were now only long fleecy ribbons, but below everything was still buried in the dark wet fog. The cold morning wind, driving the remains of the night fog before it, folded the shivering watchers on the steps for an instant in its icy embrace, then angrily hurried on further. Everything looked dismal and dejected.

"What are you waiting for?" I asked the old man.

"Why, you see, my little grandchild wants to see the sun," he answered.

At that moment the child began to fidget impatiently and to pluck at his grandfather's sleeve. His eyes were wide open, and his face wore an eager, animated expression. I involuntarily looked in the direction on which his gaze was fixed on the summit of the cliff at our side rising at the bend of the Lena.

Up till now this spot had looked like a great dark jaw, and clouds of mist were still crawling out of it. Suddenly, high above them, the sharp-pointed summit of the stone rock seemed to flush, and the top of a pine tree and a few larches sprang up into soft rosy light. From somewhere behind the mountain on the opposite side of the river the warm rays of the still invisible sun had kindled the stony heights, revealing to us the little groups of trees growing in their clefts. High above the cold blue shadows of our gorge they stood, quivering and blushing in the warm, radiant, loving embraces of the first rays of the morning.

And then, suddenly, with a faint tremor, another peak, which had till now been hidden in the blue background of the mountains, stood forth, and took its place in the illuminated group. Now, more and more hitherto undistinguishable shapes arose in the light, and as they boldly crowded forward the dark mountain slopes in the background seemed to recede still further, seemed still mistier, still more shadowy.

The boy again plucked at his grandfather's sleeve. His face was transfigured. His eyes sparkled, his lips smiled, and it seemed as if some bright rosy hue were reflected in the yellow-whiteness of his cheeks.

On the opposite side of the river a change had also come to pass. The mountains still hid the risen sun from our sight, but the heavens above them were bright, and the dips in the lines of the mountain chain were sharply and clearly defined. In the dark slopes facing us peaks of milk white mist were descending as if seeking some resting place darker and damper. . . . But above, the heavens were now ablaze with brilliant gold, and the rows of larches on the mountain summits formed clear-cut violet silhouettes against the radiant background.

Behind them one felt there was some living, moving joyousness. Through the dips in the mountain chain a fleecy cloudlet of fire came floating, to disappear behind the neighboring summit. It was followed by another, a third, a long shining host. The mountains were rejoicing, were alive with a passionate exultation.

The living radiance crept lower and lower down into the gorge. Surely the sun was mounting the towering summits that he might glance down into our gloomy ravine, that he might beam upon the sulky river, upon the miserable huts, upon the old man, and the little child awaiting his coming!

And now he appears! Long golden rays stream in glorious disorder from behind the dip in the mountain line, and pierce their way through the black depths of the forest. Bands of fiery sparks are strewn about the dark bow of the ravine, redeeming now a solitary tree, now a slaty crag, now a tender grassy slope, from the blighting clutches of the icy fog. Everything stirs and breathes at their approach.

And for a few moments even the morose river smiles brightly. The crests of the waves running toward our bank glisten in the light. Sunbeams play upon the squalid huts, sparkle gleefully in the windows, and tenderly kiss the pale, exalted face of the little child.

And now, from behind the dip in the mountain chain a part of the sun's fiery circle emerges, and our side of the bank is also gladdened. It glows and flashes in delighted agitation. The sun beams upon the different bright-hued layers of the mountains, upon the bushy green pine trees.

But the warm caresses of the morning were not to be ours for long. A few more seconds and the Lottom of the ravine had become cold and blue again. The light died away upon the river, and the waters again rushed savagely forward, seething and foaming in their narrow bed. Twilight reigned again in the ravine.

"That's all," murmured the boy. And a moment later, lifting sorrowful eyes to the old man's face, he said inquiringly:

"Will there be any more?" "Nothing more," answered the old man. "You saw for yourself. Only a little edge of the sun appeared. Tomorrow nothing will be seen."

"And that will be for months!" The old man told me that in summer the sun circles for a time each day just above their mountain peaks; but in the autumn he does not rise so high, and is not seen above the broad chain. At first he passes from summit to summit, but later his passage is lower in the heavens, and he is lost to sight behind the mountains. At last his rays reach the lowest depths of the ravine only for a few seconds. So it had been to-day.

The sun had taken leave of the Ninsky station for the whole winter. The drivers would, of course, meet him on their travels, but the old people and the children would wait for him till the spring, or rather the summer.—Translated from the Russian of Vladimir Korolenko by Mrs. David Soskice for Temple Bar.

Wonderful Doll Collection. Princess Clementine of Belgium, youngest daughter of Leopold, is credited with having the most wonderful collection of dolls in the world. Among them are specimens from Babylon, bone dolls from Greenland, a wooden one from Peru, a paper doll from India, Greek dolls with wardrobes, even dolls' houses, with furniture and dishes in them.

NAPOLEON'S GENERALS.

Story of Marshal Lefebvre—Lannes Challenge to His Men.

Probably no men who ever bore arms faced greater or more frequently recurring personal perils than the children of the French Republic, who, by the will of their old comrade Napoleon Bonaparte, were transformed into bulwarks of his Empire as Marshals of France.

Whatever was the variety of their merit as scientific soldiers, whatever may have been their individual failings, unscrupulousness, jealousy and rapacity, there has never been any question, says the Cornhill Magazine, that they were fighting men to the backbone, that their courage was at all times without stain, and that they had no faintest hesitation in placing themselves in extremity of danger whenever it was necessary to lead and show an example of resolution to the men under their command. If their master loaded them with wealth and honors it was because he knew that they were above and beyond all other men in at least one priceless characteristic, which, in its most consummate form, is certainly a gift bestowed upon few.

A story is told of Marshal Lefebvre, Duke of Dantzic, which illustrates his own consciousness of the qualities that had made him what he was. He was vexed at the tone of envy and unkindness with which a companion of his childhood, who met him in his prosperity, spoke of his riches, titles and luxury, and said in reply: "Well now you shall have it all but at the price which I have paid for it. We will go into the garden and I will fire a musket at you 60 times, and then if you are not killed everything shall be yours."

Indeed, the trial which Lefebvre proposed to his friend was not in the least an exaggeration of the circumstances which every marshal had passed through in his early days, when he was a subaltern and was bringing himself to notice; circumstances, too, which might well again present themselves to him in any campaign, even after he had attained the highest rank.

At Eylau Augereau escaped death by a marvelous turn of fortune, for his corps, though it held its ground, was reduced from 15,000 to 3,000, all his staff were either killed or wounded and he himself, wounded more than once, had his uniform rent with bullets.

At Zurich Massena was in the hottest part of the fight keeping his hand upon the pulse of the battle where it throbbed with greatest emphasis. Every one knows of Marshal Ney's heroic conduct during the retreat from Moscow, how he took a musket in his hand and fought as the last man in the rear guard saving as was acknowledged, 40,000 lives.

At Ratisbon, after the first and second attacks on the fortifications had failed with scathing loss, and to attempt the task again seemed to involve such certain destruction to the stormers that the men would not undertake it, Marshal Lannes cried: "Come I am going to show you that I was a grenadier before I became a Marshal, and that I am one still," seized a scaling ladder and began to carry it to the breach, thereby stirring up a wave of enthusiasm which at once carried the French columns forward to a great success.

Where It is Hottest.

Perhaps the hottest region on earth is that along the Persian Gulf. Little or no rain falls there, and the scorching sun, which beats down from early morning to late in the evening, makes living almost a torture.

At Bahrein the arid shore has no fresh water, and the people who live there have a novel means of obtaining drinking water. At the bottom of the sea near the shore are many fresh springs. The water is got by diving. The diver winds a large goat skin bag round his left arm, the hand keeping the mouth of the bag closed. Then he takes in his right hand a heavy stone, to which is fastened a long rope. Thus equipped, he plunges in, and, sinking to the bottom, fills the bag with fresh water. He then releases his hold on the stone and returns to the surface. The stone is hauled up by the rope, and after the water has settled again he dives and fills another bag.

The source of the springs is supposed to be the hills of Oman, which are several hundred miles away.

When Debtors Were Imprisoned.

In nearly every country, until comparatively recent times, debtors have been subject to imprisonment. After the panic of 1825, one hundred and one thousand writs for debt were issued in England. In 1830 seven thousand persons were sent to London prisons for debt, and on January 1, 1840, seventeen hundred persons were held for debt in England and Wales, one thousand in Ireland, and less than one hundred in Scotland. From time to time modifications in the laws governing the imprisonment of debtors have been made, so that fewer debtors are imprisoned for this crime each year.

In 1829 there were three thousand debtors in prison in Massachusetts, ten thousand in New York, seven thousand in Pennsylvania, three thousand in Maryland, and a like proportion in other states.

If you think you are in hard luck, think of the humans who live on the west side of New York.

Superintendent Schaeffer's Report.

The annual report of Superintendent of Public Instruction N. C. Schaeffer to Governor Stuart is filled with jubilation over the improvement in the schools of Pennsylvania as the result of better treatment by the Legislature, and Dr. Schaeffer gives the Governor some especially loving pats because he vetoed other appropriations and let the school's have their full share.

Under the stimulus of increased appropriations, the number of the township schools has increased to 300, and general increases are reported as follows:

Increase in male teachers' pay, average per month, \$1.30; female teachers', 50 cents; number of pupils, 3658; school districts, 1; schools, 561; male teachers, 57; number of pupils, 3658; school increase in teachers' wages, \$655,301 57.

Dr. Schaeffer emphatically recommends the teaching of hygiene and morals in the schools, as well as the "three R's." The schools in cities, he says, should lay stress upon domestic science, manual training and commercial education, and the country schools should give instruction suitable to rural pursuits. He also advocates instruction in husbandry in the township high schools.

On the subject of the minimum salary act, Dr. Schaeffer says:

No other legislation has reached the remotest districts of the State like the minimum salary act. It will take away from the general school appropriation \$856,000. The effect has been to raise the compensation of teachers more nearly to a living basis. Said a farmer to the county superintendent: "Now that the teachers are getting increased wages, we shall, of course, have much better schools." To this sarcasm the superintendent replied:

"You used to sell me oats at 35 cents per bushel; for the last oats you charged me 70 cents a bushel. I suppose the latter oats were twice as good as the former." It helped the cavalier to realize that the price of good teaching has gone up like the price of cereals and other marketable products.

It is possible that some schools will not be better taught by reason of the advance of teachers' salaries, but the tonic effect of the increase will be felt throughout the entire school system. It will necessitate an advance in districts in which domestics were earning better wages than those in charge of the schools.

The Legislatures of all the States have assumed that education is primarily an affair not of the municipality, but of the Commonwealth, and hence have never hesitated to enact any legislation which seemed to improve the public schools. Salaries are the last to advance, and those who live on a salary see hard times when the cost of living advances with the general prosperity of the country. Wages always rise before salaries, and the State has a right to say how its appropriations shall be used. If the schools do not improve under the minimum salary law the blame must be laid at the door of those who select the teachers. The districts which send an expert in the person of the superintendent, or principal, to select new teachers invariably have the best schools and get the best return for the money spent upon the schools.

HARD TO COMPEL ATTENDANCE.

The Courts of Philadelphia have declared the most essential features of the present Child Labor law unconstitutional, and the Factory Inspector now issues a working certificate which does not require of applicant ability to read and write. It is, therefore, important that the attendance officers avail themselves of the new power vested in them by the amendments to the compulsory school law. The amendment in the act of May 29, 1907, authorized the attendance officer to enter any place, wherein any gainful occupation is carried on, to ascertain whether any children who should legally be at school are employed therein, and prescribes methods of procedure and penalties in case of violation of the law. The amendment contained in the act of May 29, 1907, raises the age at which a pupil may quit school and go to work to 14 years. This new power has been used with good effect in Philadelphia, and the attendance officers throughout the State are urged to use this power of entering mines and factories to find the children who go to work before attaining the legal age.

The failure to reconcile the vaccination law with the compulsory school law leaves the attendance officer powerless whenever the parents refuse to have their children vaccinated. Either vaccination should be made compulsory, or the State should make provision for the hundreds of children who are growing up in ignorance and ill-

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eracy because their parents neglect or refuse to have them vaccinated.

AMERICANS ABROAD.
Every year we hear that Paris is being "Americanized." To judge from the correspondence cabled or mailed to this country the American colony is the most influential and numerically the most considerable in that capital of civilization. The literal fact, however, as disclosed in the figures printed by the "Matin" is that the American colony is the smallest among all the alien colonies. Out of 1,033,871 foreigners in France only 6,155 are citizens of the United States, where 330,465 are Italians, 323,360 Belgians, 89,772 Germans and 36,948 English. Even the South Americans exceed us in numbers and, as we suspect, in importance, for the permanent American colony in Paris has practically no men who have borne a constructive part in affairs, while the South Americans include politicians of the first rank.

What is true of France is true of every other foreign country except Canada and Mexico. We hear much of the American colony in England, but it is very small, and so are the American colonies in Germany and Italy. A few artists, a goodly number of students, an occasional woman seeking a title for her daughter or the opportunity of presentation at court offered by the less exclusive of the German monarchies, a considerable number of "smart people"—these constitute the bulk of our expatriate population in Europe. There are also the consuls and their family connection in the capitals, the representatives of the Standard Oil, the Westinghouse interests, the harvester companies, perhaps the shoe companies; but these constitute the merest outline of a foreign quarter.

The fact remains that there is small economic attraction for Americans in Europe. Not yet do their merchants look outward. As a place of residence and business the old world draws only the exceptional few from this country—the student, the laureate, the social butterfly. It knows the American chiefly as the ubiquitous tourist who spends in a few hurried weeks the surpluses of gains made in business here.

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