

## SOME WORDS.

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

ONLY some words about the dear old times,  
Spoken amid the clamour of the street,  
But they were like the music of the chimes  
Drifting across the meadows, faintly sweet.

Only some words from one who knew the past,  
Whose eyes had seen the light of suns gone down—  
Such simple words! and yet a spell was cast  
Upon the tumult of the noisy town.

I saw once more the home among the hills,  
The lights and shadows on the quiet way,  
The budding boughs, the gold of daffodils,  
The long, soft grasses waving all the day

The shades grew deeper, and, behold, I dreamed  
A dream of summer woods in gloom and glow.  
Leaves changed and fell, and scarlet berries gleamed,  
Dropping, like coral beads, on heaps of snow.

Only some words; but neither brush nor pen  
Could paint such pictures for my weary eyes.  
Beyond the crowd—beyond the strife of men—  
I looked, and saw those lovely visions rise.

Such simple words! But words are mighty things;  
They cast us down, or lift us up to rest;  
They charm and strengthen, till our angel sings  
The last of all the life-songs, and the best.

## EASTER IN LITTLE RUSSIA.

By ERICA GLENTON.



HALL we go?"  
"Certainly."  
"I was so afraid something would prevent us."  
"You will find it very unlike an English Easter."  
"I am sure, but very interesting."  
M a d a m e

D—and I were sitting upon the balcony just after luncheon enjoying the warm spring sunshine when the above conversation took place. Some months previously I had been engaged by M. and Madame D—as English governess to their one little girl, Olga. Their estate, known as Féderofka, was in that part of Russia taken by Catherine the Great. It is now called New Russia, and M. D—'s estate was in the government of Ekaterinoslav, which, translated into literal English, means "Catherine's glory."

Madame D— had a married daughter living at Kurulka, a village some versts away, and it was at her house we were to spend my first Easter in Russia.

Wednesday morning dawned bright and clear.

"Come along, Miss Glenton," called Olga outside my door. "The carriage is given; we are going to drive troika."

"Troika. I am glad. How I like to see the centre horse step out with his great strides, shaking his bells, while the side horses gallop so lightly with gracefully curved necks."

Five minutes later we were seated in the equipage, driving over the vast "steppe" as only a Russian coachman can drive. On we went, six inches from a ravine, through pools of water, through a river—a Russian coachman would drive you through a stone wall if you would let him—until, delightfully bespattered with mud, ornamented with lumps of earth, we arrived at the station Losovaya. The Russian trains are constructed upon the American fashion, and are far more comfortable than our English ones, but they have one great drawback, they are remarkably like snails in their movements, one feels one must get out to push behind.

It was dark when we arrived at Stavrakova, where horses awaited us, this time "four-in-hand," and to judge from the size of the coachman and footman, I secretly thought they were needed. Again we started through the mud and water, while a man with a droskhi followed behind with the luggage. Presently we stopped.

"What is the matter?" I asked.  
"We are only going to take out two horses in order to cross this bridge," replied our host who had met us at the station.

"No, no!" from Madame as the droskhi driver banged into us from behind.

"Doorak—idiot!" screamed the coachman.  
"Why on earth can't you look where you are going?"

"As if anyone could see in this darkness," grumbled the driver.

"Then feel," retorted our Jehu, "only be good enough to keep well behind."

And keep behind he did, for he lost his way, tumbled himself and belongings into a ravine, and then lustily shouted for help. Again we stopped. The coachman's fat companion got down from the box and went to the help of the unfortunate droskhi driver.

After waiting some twenty minutes our host said:

"Drive on, Ivan, we cannot wait here all night."

After being several times threatened with a complete turn-out we reached our destination, to my great relief; for the roads in Russia are simply lanes through the fields, and after rain greatly resemble the bottom of a pond.

We were met with a very warm welcome. The gentlemen kissed each other as heartily as did the ladies. I stared in bewildered surprise, for although I had seen our men at home pale with suppressed feeling, had seen them almost shake each other's hands off, yet never had I seen two men kiss in this way. I followed them into the dining-room, where the steaming samovar awaited us—tea is deliciously made in Russia—feeling somewhat shy, but the delicate kindness and warmhearted ways soon put this feeling far away.

There are no people so simply frank, so generously hospitable as the Russians. They do not treat a governess as a machine, but as one of the family; English girls being specially liked.

The next day—Thursday—Madame said:

"We are going to church this evening, Miss Glenton. Would you like to come?"

"Oh, yes please."  
"But there are no seats as in an English church."

"And no carpeted, cushioned pews in which to take a nap," added our host slyly.

"Take a nap!" exclaimed Olga. "Do English people sleep in church? Have they no beds at home?"

"Any amount," I replied laughing, "but they do sleep in church sometimes."

At 8.30 P.M. we entered the church, which was already crowded, and pushed our way to the altar steps. Beyond the steps, from wall to wall, were beautiful paintings of our Lord, the Virgin, and various saints. In the centre of this wall of pictures was a door, through which only a priest can pass. There were also two other doors through which a man may pass, but no woman, unless she has built the church. The centre door when opened revealed an inner altar and more paintings. Before each picture numberless candles were burning, also every worshipper held a lighted taper during the reading of our Saviour's sufferings from the four Gospels.

"Why do you hold candles?" I asked.  
"As an emblem of the light to which we are listening," was the reply.

It was an impressive service although I did not understand a word, for it was read in the Slav language. The priest in his robes of black, silver, and gold, the breathless attention of the mighty crowd, the wild plaintive singing, all served to deepen the impression. About the middle of the service someone brought me a chair, for although a Russian would consider it an insult to God if he sat in church, yet he will never force his views upon others. When the service was over, everyone tried to reach home with lighted candles, but the night being very windy, only Madame succeeded. With this candle she lit all the lamps hanging before the images in every room, and they remained burning until Sunday.

At midday on Good Friday we again went to church, taking our candles with us. An image of our Lord in His grave was placed under a canopy. A procession was formed, headed by the priest repeating prayers and swinging incense. This procession, formed by the entire congregation, walked round the outside of the church several times at a funeral



march, while from time to time the bell tolled solemnly. It was quite touching to see how eagerly each one tried to help in the carrying of the canopy, if only with one finger. It was so real in its effect that our thoughts instinctively went back to the day when Joseph of Arimathea carried our Lord's torn body to its rocky grave. Tears were falling from many eyes, even my cheeks were wet, in spite of my English nature.

A grave had been prepared in the centre of the church, in which the image was now laid; after this, the procession walked round it, kissing the image as they went.

"Well, Miss Glenton, did our service please you?" asked Madame as we returned home, by a long route of twenty versts.

"I think the ceremonies strange," I replied, "but their meaning beautiful."

"I suppose," said she, "if we only understand our Lord's great love, it matters little how we commemorate it."

"I think Miss Glenton will like our last Easter service," said our hostess, Anna Daniela, "if she is not too tired to go."

"Not at all too tired; I am much too interested for that."

"You can always have a chair, you know."

"Thank you; but I am quite ashamed to sit when I see little children standing so reverentially for hours."

"But they are accustomed. Ah! here we are at home."

"And now, Miss Glenton, good-night—I mean, good-morning; for it is after two o'clock. Go to bed. We shall want your help later in our many preparations for tomorrow—the greatest of all our church holidays. You look tired-out by our long drive."

I went to bed—but not to sleep. I lay thinking of what I had seen. I could not understand, while the church was crowded with peasants, there were so few people of the higher class there; nor why the priests seemed of such low caste.

About 10 A.M. we descended to the dining-room for coffee and bread. The Russians are horrified at the English manner of eating meat at their first meal. A doctor once called me a cannibal for so doing.

"And now," said our host—Constantine Michaelovitch—"we will teach you to colour eggs."

"Why do you colour eggs?" I asked.

"There is a legend, which says that when Mary visited our Lord's empty grave, and when He met her in the garden, she carried a basket of eggs! and to convince her of His identity He changed them into red ones. That is why we colour eggs."

The table was cleared, and a pan containing some two hundred eggs, still in hot water, brought in. We placed them in wine-glasses, then painted them all colours. Some were boiled in coloured rags; some painted with flowers; while others were ornamented by gold and silver. While we were so occupied, there went on a great baking and roasting in the kitchen, and a general turn-out of the rooms in the house. In the evening, a great table was laid out from end to end of the dining-room. It was covered with a fine white cloth, and with beautiful flowering plants. In the centre three high Easter-breads—Pascha—were placed. They were covered with sugar and flowers; while upon the centre one was a white lamb. Then came boned turkeys, roasted pigs, boiled hams, roasted lambs, ducks and hens, jellies, fruits, various kinds of cheese, wines, and certainly the famous Russian brandy known as "Vodka." When the coloured eggs were added the effect was exceedingly pretty. When finished, the priest came to bless the food and to sprinkle holy water upon it. Then came a distribution of eggs and bread amongst the people.

At 11 P.M. the same evening we went to church, which was crowded to excess. The singing was very sweet and plaintive—even sad. The image still lay in the centre of the church, but at twelve o'clock the entire congregation formed a procession and walked slowly round the outside of the church, during which time the image was removed. Then the bells pealed out joyfully, the singers burst out into a grand chant—"Christ has risen," cannons were fired, while each person kissed his neighbour three times, saying: "Christus Voskres"—Christ has risen—to which they replied: "Voistenoo Voskres"—Truly He has risen. During the chant we re-entered the church. And now began the "holy kisses." The priest kissed every member of his flock three times, and I could not help thinking if I were the priest I should never want to kiss, or be kissed again, to the end of my natural life. One thing I noticed—he did not kiss one member of the family I was with.

When we came out of church I saw many peasants sitting upon the ground with "Pascha" and meat spread out before them, waiting to receive the priest's blessing before eating. They had been fasting forty days from meat, eggs, cheese, milk, and butter. Many Russians begin to eat directly they reach home; but we were too tired, so gladly went to bed.

When we came downstairs on Sunday morning I was amazed to see the men and maids kiss their masters and mistresses three times, as they offered the Easter salutation. I myself was saluted on the cheek three times by the man-cook; but it was given with such evident *naïveté*, that I took it as a matter of course. For six weeks after Easter the usual salutation—"Ydravstvooyte"—is changed for the Easter greeting. Everyone was in elegant costume—and good humour. Presents were exchanged, and I was kindly remembered by everyone. Also, every servant received a present. No meats were prepared this day; everyone took what he liked from the great table, thus leaving the servants entirely free.

We took our ease the whole day. In the afternoon it is the custom for the gentlemen to pay visits to their lady acquaintances, so of course every lady remains at home. From time to time the bells rang merry peals; all seemed so gaily happy. The "Svyetlie Prazdnik"—Great Holiday—lasts for three days—days spent in feasting, dancing, and general rejoicing. The peasant girls sang their national songs, which were quite different from anything I ever heard—so plaintive, so wild. They danced, at my request, their national dance, looking so picturesque in their native costume. This costume is quite different from the one worn in Great Russia. A chemise, richly embroidered in cross-stitch; a scarlet petticoat; a worked apron, edged by deep lace; rows upon rows of beads tied by many coloured ribbons, is the fashion worn in Little Russia. The hair is worn in a plait, and tied by a long ribbon.

On Monday we went out to a dinner-party. It was May 16th, and yet, hot as it was, there were heaps of snow to be seen in the woods as we drove along. The house, which was only one storey, and built on the edge of a beautiful forest, then covered with lilies-of-the-valley, consisted of some twelve rooms. The great *salle* had twenty-four windows, while the floor was of polished oak, laid in pattern. One end was furnished in crimson, the other in amber, while the great palms placed about added greatly to its artistic appearance. The cabinet of Ivan Michialovitch—what an Englishman styles his "den"—was quite a curiosity. Upon the walls, tastefully arranged on huge shields of black cloth, hung all kinds of old armour, belonging to various nations "long ago." Cases of old

coins and antique vases were all over the room.

The dinner was a sumptuous one and beautifully served. Not one low dress was to be seen, and it would be well if English ladies were to show as much good sense at the dinner-table in this respect. Another thing pleased me very much. The gentlemen took very little wine and left the table with the ladies. English men might, with profit, take a leaf from this book. Then again the mother of the host sat at the head of the table, the father of the hostess facing her. It struck me as being such a delicate attention—indeed the whole behaviour of Russian children, of course there are exceptions, towards their parents is delicate and reverential.

To an English person their want of conventionality and manner of eating is a little trying. They make a noise while taking their soup, put their knives into their mouths, spit upon the floor, and a few other trifles. I saw one lady take a pin from her hair and use it as a toothpick, while another lady took her pickles from the jar as she wanted them instead of putting a spoonful on her plate.

I greatly enjoyed the drive home, for we raced with another carriage at full gallop and won.

On our way home to Féderofika the next day we met the mother of Madame Olga Novikoff. Olga Novikoff spends much of her time in England. She is a personal friend of Mr. Gladstone and a well-known writer of English subjects in Russian journals.

That evening as we sat together taking tea Madame asked, "Well, Miss Glenton, what do you think of Easter in Russia?"

"I think some of your ceremonies a little strange, Madame, but very interesting, though there are some things I don't quite understand?"

"What things?"

"Why so few high-born people were at church, and why your priests are of such humble birth and seem so little educated?"

"Ah," she replied, "our higher classes are contaminated by the Continental indifference to religion, and another reason is, that out of a parish containing two thousand people, only two families are of the nobility, the rest are peasants."

"And the priests?"

"Their position in the social scale is historical, and must be carefully touched. We ourselves are speaking and writing upon this subject. It is the same with the peasantry; their position is also historical. That they need to be raised morally and intellectually we all know, but our civilisation must be a Russian one. We do not want a European dress—it would not fit us. We are a young nation, and as all growing people, we need a new dress sometimes, but we prefer to make it at home in our own way. The longer you live with us the more you will understand this."

"And I do. I have lived in Russia four years—I am living there now; and I firmly believe that Russia will one day be second to no nation in civilisation or anything else, but it will be a Russian one."

At present there is no nation so little understood by Englishmen. How is it possible to be otherwise when one of our leading authors writes about a Russian prince driving in a talaga with six horses; and about two lovers sitting under a century-old "clukva." A talaga is an ordinary peasant's cart to which six horses could not by any means be harnessed, while a clukva is a tiny bush, never more than two feet high, bearing sour berries, and growing in a marsh. The maddest of lovers would scarcely be mad enough to sit in a marsh under a bush two feet high.

If we only took the trouble to know more about Russia we should write less nonsense, but as long as we believe all sorts of foolish reports we shall never know her—as she is.