

come ; used to talk all day of her plans, — how they would live near us in some quiet little house. Her trouble seemed all forgotten.

But one day she went out and saw the camp. The sight of the armed men and the uniforms seemed to bring back all she had suffered in Virginia. She was uneasy and silent that night, — said once or twice that she must go on, go on, — got her basket and packed it again. The next morning she went across the field without it, as if to take a walk. When an hour passed we searched for her, and found she had gone into town and taken passage on the Western Railroad.

My story ends here. We never could trace her, though no effort was left untried. I confess that this is one, though almost hopeless. Yet I thought that some chance reader might be able to finish the story for me.

Whether Joe fell in his country's service or yet lives in some "little house" for Ellen, or whether she has found a longer, surer rest, in a house made ready for her long ago by other hands than his, I may never know ; but I am sure, that, living or dead, He who is loving and over all has the poor "natural" in His tenderest keeping, and that some day she will go home to Him and to Joe.

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#### WINTER-LIFE IN ST. PETERSBURG.

AS September drew to an end, with only here and there a suggestion of autumn in chrome-colored leaves on the ends of birch-branches, we were told that any day might suddenly bring forth winter. I remember, that, five years before, in precisely the same season, I had travelled from Upsala to Stockholm in a violent snow-storm, and therefore accepted the announcement as a part of the regular programme of the year. But the days came and went ; fashionable equipages forsook their summer ground of the Islands, and crowded the Nevskoi Prospekt ; the nights were cold and raw ; the sun's lessening declination was visible from day to day, and still Winter delayed to make his appearance.

The Island drive was our favorite resort of an afternoon ; and we continued to haunt it long after every summer guest had disappeared, and when the *datchas* and palaces showed plank and matting in place of balcony and window. In the very heart of St. Petersburg the one full stream of the Neva splits into three main arms, which afterwards subdivide, each seeking the

Gulf of Finland at its own swift, wild will. The nearest of these islands, Vassili Ostrow, is a part of the solid city : on Kammenoi and Aptekarskoi you reach the commencement of gardens and groves ; and beyond these the rapid waters mirror only palace, park, and summer theatre. The widening streams continually disclose the horizon-line of the Gulf ; and at the farthest point of the drive, where the road turns sharply back again from the freedom of the shore into mixed woods of birch and pine, the shipping at Cronstadt — and sometimes the phantoms of fortresses — detach themselves from the watery haze, and the hill of Pargola, in Finland, rises to break the dreary level of the Ingrian marshes.

During the sunny evenings and the never-ending twilights of mid-summer, all St. Petersburg pours itself upon these islands. A league-long wall of dust rises from the carriages and droschki in the main highway ; and the branching Neva-arms are crowded with skiffs and diminutive steamers bound for pleasure-gardens where gypsies sing and Tyrolese *yodel* and jugglers toss their

knives and balls, and private rooms may be had for gambling and other cryptic diversions. Although with shortened days and cool evenings the tide suddenly took a reflux and the Nevskoi became a suggestion of Broadway, (which, of all individual streets, it most nearly resembles,) we found an indescribable charm in the solitude of the fading groves and the waves whose lamenting murmur foretold their speedy imprisonment. We had the whole superb drive to ourselves. It is true that Ivan, upon the box, lifted his brows in amazement, and sighed that his jaunty cap of green velvet should be wasted upon the desert air, whenever I said, "*Na Ostrowa*," but he was too genuine a Russian to utter a word of remonstrance.

Thus, day by day, unfashionable, but highly satisfied, we repeated the lonely drive, until the last day came, as it always will. I don't think I shall ever forget it. It was the first day of November. For a fortnight the temperature had been a little below the freezing-point, and the leaves of the alder-thickets, frozen suddenly and preserved as in a great out-door refrigerator, maintained their green. A pale-blue mist rose from the Gulf and hung over the islands, the low sun showing an orange disk, which touched the shores with the loveliest color, but gave no warmth to the windless air. The parks and gardens were wholly deserted, and came and went, on either side, phantom-like in their soft, gray, faded tints. Under every bridge flashed and foamed the clear beryl-green waters. And nobody in St. Petersburg, except ourselves, saw this last and sunniest flicker of the dying season!

The very next day was cold and dark, and so the weather remained, with brief interruptions, for months. On the evening of the 6th, as we drove over the Nikolai Bridge to dine with a friend on Vassili Ostrow, we noticed fragments of ice floating down the *Nova*. Looking up the stream, we were struck by the fact that the remaining bridges had been detached from the St. Petersburg

side, floated over, and anchored along the opposite shore. This seemed a needless precaution, for the pieces of drift-ice were hardly large enough to have crushed a skiff. How surprised were we, then, on returning home, four hours later, to find the noble river gone, not a green wave to be seen, and, as far as the eye could reach, a solid floor of ice, over which people were already crossing to and fro!

Winter, having thus suddenly taken possession of the world, lost no time in setting up the signs of his rule. The leaves, whether green or brown, disappeared at one swoop; snow-gusts obscured the little remaining sunshine; the inhabitants came forth in furs and bulky wrappings; oysters and French pears became unreasonably dear; and sledges of frozen fish and game crowded down from the northern forests. In a few days the physiognomy of the capital was completely changed. All its life and stir withdrew from the extremities and gathered into a few central thoroughfares, as if huddling together for mutual warmth and encouragement in the cold air and under the gloomy sky.

For darkness, rather than cold, is the characteristic of the St. Petersburg winter. The temperature, which at Montreal or St. Paul would not be thought remarkably low, seems to be more severely felt here, owing to the absence of pure daylight. Although both Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland are frozen, the air always retains a damp, raw, penetrating quality, and the snow is more frequently sticky and clammy than dry and crystalline. Few, indeed, are the days which are not cheerless and depressing. In December, when the sky is overcast for weeks together, the sun, rising after nine o'clock, and sliding along just above the horizon, enables you to dispense with lamplight somewhere between ten and eleven; but by two in the afternoon you must call for lights again. Even when a clear day comes, the yellow, level sunshine is a combination of sunrise and sunset, and neither tempers the air nor miti-

gates the general expression of gloom, almost of despair, upon the face of Nature.

The preparations for the season, of course, have been made long before. In most houses the double windows are allowed to remain through the summer, but they must be carefully examined, the layer of cotton between them, at the bottom, replenished, a small vessel of salt added to absorb the moisture and prevent it from freezing on the panes, and strips of paper pasted over every possible crack. The outer doors are covered with wadded leather, overlapping the frames on all sides. The habitations being thus almost hermetically sealed, they are easily warmed by the huge porcelain stoves, which retain warmth so tenaciously that one fire per day is sufficient for the most sensitive constitutions. In my own room, I found that one armful of birch-wood reduced to coal, every alternate morning, created a steady temperature of  $64^{\circ}$ . Although the rooms are always spacious, and arranged in suites of from three to a dozen, according to the extent and splendor of the residence, the atmosphere soon becomes close and characterized by an unpleasant odor, suggesting its diminished vitality; for which reason pastilles are burned, or *eau de Cologne* reduced to vapor in a heated censer, whenever visits are anticipated. It was a question with me, whether or not the advantage of a thoroughly equable temperature was counterbalanced by the lack of circulation. The physical depression we all felt seemed to result chiefly from the absence of daylight.

One winter picture remains clearly outlined upon my memory. In the beginning of December we happened once to drive across the Admiralty Square in the early evening twilight, — three o'clock in the afternoon. The temperature was about  $10^{\circ}$  below zero, the sky a low roof of moveless clouds, which seemed to be frozen in their places. The pillars of St. Isaac's Cathedral — splendid monoliths of granite, sixty feet high — had precipitated the moisture of the air, and stood silvered with rime

from base to capital. The Column of Alexander, the bronze statue of Peter, with his horse poised in air on the edge of the rock, and the trees on the long esplanade in front of the Admiralty, were all similarly coated, every twig rising as rigid as iron in the dark air. Only the huge golden hemisphere of the Cathedral dome, and the tall, pointed golden spire of the Admiralty, rose above the gloom, and half shone with a muffled, sullen glare. A few people, swaddled from head to foot, passed rapidly to and fro, or a droschky, drawn by a frosted horse, sped away to the entrance of the Nevskoi Prospekt. Even these appeared rather like wintry phantoms than creatures filled with warm blood and breathing the breath of life. The vast spaces of the capital, the magnitude of its principal edifices, and the display of gold and colors strengthened the general aspect of unreality, by introducing so many inharmonious elements into the picture. A bleak moor, with the light of a single cottage-window shining across it, would have been less cold, dead, and desolate.

The temperature, I may here mention, was never very severe. There were three days when the mercury fluctuated between  $15^{\circ}$  and  $20^{\circ}$  below zero, five days when it reached  $10^{\circ}$  below, and perhaps twenty when it fell to zero, or a degree or two on either side. The mean of the five winter months was certainly not lower than  $+12^{\circ}$ . Quite as much rain fell as snow. After two or three days of sharp cold, there was almost invariably a day of rain or fog, and for many weeks walking was so difficult that we were obliged to give up all out-door exercise except skating or sliding. The streets were either coated with glassy ice or they were a foot deep in slush. There was more and better sleighing in the vicinity of Boston last winter than in St. Petersburg during the winter of 1862-3. In our trips to the Observatory of Pulkova, twelve miles distant, we were frequently obliged to leave the highway and put our sled-runners upon the frosted grass of the mead-

ows. The rapid and continual changes of temperature were more trying than any amount of steady cold. *Grippe* became prevalent, and therefore fashionable, and all the endemic diseases of St. Petersburg showed themselves in force. The city, it is well known, is built upon piles, and most of the inhabitants suffer from them. Children look pale and wilted, in the absence of the sun, and special care must be taken of those under five years of age. Some little relatives of mine, living in the country, had their daily tumble in the snow, and thus kept ruddy; but in the city this is not possible, and we had many anxious days before the long darkness was over.

As soon as snow had fallen and freezing weather set in, the rough, broken ice of the Neva was flooded in various places for skating-ponds, and the work of erecting ice-hills commenced. There were speedily a number of the latter in full play, in the various suburbs,—a space of level ground, at least a furlong in length, being necessary. They are supported by subscription, and I had paid ten rubles for permission to use a very fine one on the farther island, when an obliging card of admission came for the gardens of the Taurida Palace, where the younger members of the Imperial family skate and slide. My initiation, however, took place at the first-named locality, whither we were conducted by an old American resident of St. Petersburg.

The construction of these ice-hills is very simple. They are rude towers of timber, twenty to thirty feet in height, the summit of which is reached by a staircase at the back, while in front descends a steep concave of planking upon which water is poured until it is covered with a six-inch coating of solid ice. Raised planks at the side keep the sled in its place until it reaches the foot, where it enters upon an icy plain two to four hundred yards in length, (in proportion to the height of the hill,) at the extremity of which rises a similar hill, facing towards the first, but a little on one side, so that the sleds from

the opposite ends may pass without collision.

The first experience of this diversion is fearful to a person of delicate nerves. The pitch of the descent is so sheer, the height so great, (apparently,) the motion of the sled so swift, and its course so easily changed,—even the lifting of a hand is sufficient,—that the novice is almost sure to make immediate shipwreck. The sleds are small and low, with smooth iron runners, and a plush cushion, upon which the navigator sits bolt upright with his legs close together, projecting over the front. The runners must be exactly parallel to the lines of the course at starting, and the least tendency to sway to either side must be instantly corrected by the slightest motion of the hand.

I engaged one of the *mujiks* in attendance to pilot me on my first voyage. The man having taken his position well forward on the little sled, I knelt upon the rear end, where there was barely space enough for my knees, placed my hands upon his shoulders, and awaited the result. He shoved the sled with his hands, very gently and carefully, to the brink of the icy steep: then there was a moment's adjustment: then a poise: then—sinking of the heart, cessation of breath, giddy roaring and whistling of the air, and I found myself scudding along the level with the speed of an express train. I never happened to fall out of a fourth-story window, but I immediately understood the sensations of the unfortunate persons who do. It was so frightful that I shuddered when we reached the end of the course and the man coolly began ascending the steps of the opposite hill, with the sled under his arm. But my companions were waiting to see me return, so I mounted after him, knelt again, and held my breath. This time, knowing what was coming, I caught a glimpse of our descent, and found that only the first plunge from the brink was threatening. The lower part of the curve, which is nearly a parabolic line, is more gradual, and the seeming headlong fall does not last more than the tenth part.

of a second. The sensation, nevertheless, is very powerful, having all the attraction, without the reality, of danger.

The ice-hills in the Taurida Gardens were not so high, and the descent was less abrupt: the course was the smooth floor of an intervening lake, which was kept clear for skating. Here I borrowed a sled, and was so elated at performing the feat successfully, on the first attempt, that I offered my services as charioteer to a lady rash enough to accept them. The increased weight gave so much additional impetus to the sled, and thus rendered its guidance a more delicate matter. Finding that it began to turn even before reaching the bottom, I put down my hand suddenly upon the ice. The effect was like an explosion; we struck the edge of a snow-bank, and were thrown entirely over it and deeply buried in the opposite side. The attendants picked us up without relaxing a muscle of their grave, respectful faces, and quietly swept the ice for another trial. But after that I preferred descending alone.

Good skaters will go up and down these ice-hills on their skates. The feat has a hazardous look, but I have seen it performed by boys of twelve. The young Grand-Dukes who visited the Gardens generally contented themselves with skating around the lake at not too violent a speed. Some ladies of the court circle also timidly ventured to try the amusement, but its introduction was too recent for them to show much proficiency. On the Neva, in fact, the English were the best skaters. During the winter, one of them crossed the Gulf to Cronstadt, a distance of twenty-two miles, in about two hours.

Before Christmas, the Lapps came down from the North with their reindeer, and pitched their tents on the river, in front of the Winter Palace. Instead of the canoe-shaped *pulk*, drawn by a single deer, they hitched four abreast to an ordinary sled, and took half a dozen passengers at a time, on a course of a mile, for a small fee. I tried it once, for a child's sake, but found that

the romance of reindeer travel was lost without the pulk. The Russian sleighs are very similar to our own for driving about the city: in very cold weather, or for trips into the country, the *kibitka*, a heavy closed carriage on runners, is used. To my eye, the most dashing team in the world is the *troika*, or three-span, the thill-horse being trained to trot rapidly, while the other two, very lightly and loosely harnessed, canter on either side of him. From the ends of the thills springs a wooden arch, called the *duga*, rising eighteen inches above the horse's shoulder, and usually emblazoned with gilding and brilliant colors. There was one magnificent *troika* on the Nevskoi Prospekt, the horses of which were full-blooded, jet-black matches, and their harness formed of overlapping silver scales. The Russians being the best coachmen in the world, these teams dash past each other at furious speed, often escaping collision by the breadth of a hair, but never coming in violent contact.

With the approach of winter the nobility returned from their estates, the diplomatists from their long summer vacation, and the Imperial Court from Moscow, and the previous social desolation of the capital came speedily to an end. There were dinners and routs in abundance, but the season of balls was not fairly inaugurated until invitations had been issued for the first at the Winter Palace. This is usually a grand affair, the guests numbering from fifteen hundred to two thousand. We were agreeably surprised at finding half-past nine fixed as the hour of arrival, and took pains to be punctual; but there were already a hundred yards of carriages in advance. The toilet, of course, must be made at home, and the huge pelisses of fur so adjusted as not to disarrange head-dresses, lace, crinoline, or uniform: the footmen must be prompt, on reaching the covered portal, to promote speedy alighting and unwrapping, which being accomplished, each sits guard for the night over his own special pile of pelisses and furred boots.

When the dresses are shaken out and

the gloves smoothed, at the foot of the grand staircase, an usher, in a short, bedizened red tunic and white knee-breeches, with a cap surmounted by three colossal white plumes upon his head, steps before you and leads the way onward through the spacious halls, ablaze with light from thousands of wax candles. I always admired the silent gravity of these ushers, and their slow, majestic, almost mysterious march, — until one morning, at home, when I was visited by four common-looking Russians, in blue caftans, who bowed nearly to the floor and muttered congratulations. It was a deputation of the ushers, making their rounds for New-Year's gifts!

Although the streets of St. Petersburg are lighted with gas, the palaces and private residences are still illuminated only with wax candles. Gas is considered plebeian, but it has probably also been found to be disagreeable in the close air of the hermetically sealed apartments. Candles are used in such profusion that I am told thirty thousand are required to light up an Imperial ball. The quadruple rows of columns which support the Hall of St. George are spirally entwined with garlands of wax-lights, and immense chandeliers are suspended from the ceiling. The wicks of each column are connected with threads dipped in some inflammable mixture, and each thread, being kindled at the bottom at the same instant, the light is carried in a few seconds to every candle in the hall. This instantaneous kindling of so many thousand wicks has a magical effect.

At the door of the great hall the usher steps aside, bows gravely, and returns, and one of the deputy masters of ceremonies receives you. These gentlemen are chosen from among the most distinguished families of Russia, and are, without exception, so remarkable for tact, kindness, and discretion, that the multitude falls, almost unconsciously, into the necessary observances; and the perfection of ceremony, which hides its own external indications, is attained. Violations of eti-

quette are most rare, yet no court in the world appears more simple and unconstrained in its forms.

In less than fifteen minutes after the appointed time the hall is filled, and a blast from the orchestra announces the entrance of the Imperial family. The ministers and chief personages of the court are already in their proper places, and the representatives of foreign nations stand on one side of the doorway, in their established order of precedence, (determined by length of residence near the court,) with the ladies of their body on the opposite side. The Duke de Montebello and Lord Napier, being the only ambassadors, head the ranks, the ministers plenipotentiary succeeding.

Alexander II. is much brighter and more cheerful than during the past summer. His care-worn, preoccupied air is gone: the dangers which then encompassed him have subsided; the nobility, although still chafing fiercely against the decree of emancipation, are slowly coming to the conclusion that its consummation is inevitable; and the Emperor begins to feel that his great work will be safely accomplished. His dark-green uniform well becomes his stately figure and clearly chiselled, symmetrical head. He is Nicholas recast in a softer mould, wherein tenacity of purpose is substituted for rigid, inflexible will, and the development of the nation at home supplants the ambition for predominant political influence abroad. This difference is expressed, despite the strong personal resemblance to his father, in the more frank and gentle eye, the fuller and more sensitive mouth, and the rounder lines of jaw and forehead. A frank, natural directness of manner and speech is his principal characteristic. He wears easily, almost playfully, the yoke of court ceremonial, temporarily casting it aside when troublesome. In two respects he differs from most of the other European rulers whom I have seen: he looks the sovereign, and he unbends as gracefully and unostentatiously as a man risen from the ranks of the people. There is evidently bet-

ter stuff than kings are generally made of in the Románoff line.

Grace and refinement, rather than beauty, distinguish the Empress, though her eyes and hair deserve the latter epithet. She is an invalid, and appears pale and somewhat worn; but there is no finer group of children in Europe than those to whom she has given birth. Six sons and one daughter are her jewels; and of these, the third son, Vladimir, is almost ideally handsome. Her dress was at once simple and superb,—a cloud of snowy *tulle*, with a scarf of pale-blue velvet, twisted with a chain of the largest diamonds and tied with a knot and tassel of pearls, resting half-way down the skirt, as if it had slipped from her waist. On another occasion, I remember her wearing a crown of five stars, the centres of which were single enormous rubies and the rays of diamonds, so set on invisible wires that they burned in the air over her head. The splendor which was a part of her *rôle* was always made subordinate to rigid taste, and herein prominently distinguished her from many of the Russian ladies, who carried great fortunes upon their heads, necks, and bosoms. I had several opportunities of conversing with her, generally upon Art and Literature, and was glad to find that she had both read and thought, as well as seen. You may tell the honored author of "Evangeline" that he numbers her among his appreciative readers.

After their Majesties have made the circle of the diplomatic corps, the *Polonaise*, which always opens a Court ball, commences. The Grand-Dukes Nicholas and Michael, (brothers of the Emperor,) and the younger members of the Imperial family, take part in it, the latter evidently impatient for the succeeding quadrilles and waltzes. When this is finished, all palpable, obtrusive ceremony is at an end. Dancing, conversation, cards, strolls through the sumptuous halls, fill the hours. The Emperor wanders freely through the crowd, saluting here and there a friend, exchanging badinage with the wittiest ladies, (which they all seem at liberty

to give back, without the least embarrassment,) or seeking out the scarred and gray-haired officers who have come hither from all parts of the vast empire. He does not scrutinize whether or not your back is turned towards him as he passes. Once, on entering a door rather hastily, I came within an ace of a personal collision; whereupon he laughed good-humoredly, caught me by the hands, and saying, "It would have been a shock, *n'est ce pas?*" hurried on.

To me the most delightful part of the Winter Palace was the garden. It forms one of the suite of thirty halls, some of them three hundred feet long, on the second story. In this garden, which is perhaps a hundred feet square by forty in height, rise clumps of Italian cypress and laurel from beds of emerald turf and blooming hyacinths. In the centre a fountain showers over fern-covered rocks, and the gravel-walks around the border are shaded by tall camellia-trees in white and crimson bloom. Lamps of frosted glass hang among the foliage, and diffuse a mellow golden moonlight over the enchanted ground. The corridor adjoining the garden resembles a bosky alley, so completely are the walls hidden by flowering shrubbery.

Leaving the Imperial family, and the kindred houses of Leuchtenberg, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg, all of which are represented, let us devote a little attention to the ladies, and the crowd of distinguished, though unroyal personages. The former are all *décolletées*, of course,—even the Countess—, who, I am positively assured, is ninety-five years old; but I do not notice much uniformity of taste, except in the matter of head-dresses. "Waterfalls" have not yet made their appearance, but there are huge coils and sweeps of hair,—a mane-like munificence, so disposed as to reveal the art and conceal the artifice. The ornaments are chiefly flowers, though here and there I see jewels, coral, mossy sticks, dead leaves, birds, and birds'-nests. From the blonde locks of yonder princess hang bunches of green brook-grass, and a fringe of the same trails from her bosom and skirt:

she resembles a fished-up and restored Ophelia. Here passes a maiden with a picket-fence of rose coral as a *berthe*, and she seems to have another around the bottom of her dress; but, as the mist of tulle is brushed aside in passing, we can detect that the latter is a clever *chenille* imitation. There is another with small moss-covered twigs (the real article) arranged in the same way; and yet another with fifty black-lace butterflies, of all sizes, clinging to her yellow satin skirt. All this swimming and intermingling mass of color is dotted over with sparkles of jewel-light; and even the grand hall, with its gilded columns and thousands of tapers, seems but a sober frame for so gorgeous a picture.

I can only pick out a few of the notable men present, because there is no space to give biographies as well as portraits. That man of sixty, in rich, civil uniform, who entered with the Emperor, and who at once reminds an American of Edward Everett both in face and in the polished grace and suavity of his manner, is at present the first statesman of Europe,—Prince Alexander Gortchakoff. Of medium height and robust frame, with a keen, alert eye, a broad, thoughtful forehead, and a wonderfully sagacious mouth, the upper lip slightly covering the under one at the corners, he at once arrests your attention, and your eye unconsciously follows him as he makes his way through the crowd, with a friendly word for this man and an elegant rapier-thrust for that. His predominant mood, however, is a cheerful good-nature; his wit and irony belong rather to the diplomatist than to the man. There is no sounder or more prudent head in Russia.

But who is this son of Anak, approaching from the corridor? Towering a full head above the throng, a figure of superb strength and perfect symmetry, we give him that hearty admiration which is due to a man who illustrates and embellishes manhood. In this case we can give it freely: for that finely balanced head holds a clear, vigorous brain,—those large blue eyes look

from the depths of a frank, noble nature,—and in that broad breast beats a heart warm with love for his country, and good-will for his fellow-men, whether high or low. It is Prince Suwóroff, the Military Governor of St. Petersburg. If I were to spell his name “Suwarrow,” you would know who his grandfather was, and what place in Russian history he fills. In a double sense the present Prince is cast in an heroic mould. It speaks well for Russia that his qualities are so truly appreciated. He is beloved by the people, and trusted by the Imperial Government: for, while firm in his administration of affairs, he is humane,—while cautious, energetic,—and while shrewd and skilful, frank and honest. A noble man, whose like I wish were oftener to be found in the world.

Here are two officers, engaged in earnest conversation. The little old man, with white hair, and thin, weather-beaten, wrinkled face, is Admiral Baron Wrangel, whose Arctic explorations on the northern coast of Siberia are known to all geographers. Having read of them as a boy, and then as things of the past, I was greatly delighted at finding the brave old Admiral still alive, and at the privilege of taking his hand and hearing him talk in English as fluent as my own. The young officer, with rosy face, brown moustache, and a profile strikingly like that of General McClellan, has already made his mark. He is General Ignatieff, the most prominent young man of the empire. Although scarcely thirty-five, he has already filled special missions to Bukhara and Peking, and took a leading part in the Treaty of Tien-tsin. He is now Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief of the Asiatic Department. He is, moreover, a good friend of the United States, and was among the first to see the feasibility of the Russian-American telegraph scheme.

I might mention Count Bludoff, the venerable President of the Academy of Sciences; General Todleben; Admiral Lüttke; and the distinguished members of the Galitzin, Narischkin, Apraxin,



Dolgorouky, and Scheremetieff families, who are present, — but by this time the interminable *mazourka* is drawing to a close, and a master of ceremonies suggests that we shall step into an adjoining hall to await the signal for supper. The refreshments previously furnished consisted simply of tea, orgeat, and cooling drinks made of cranberries, Arctic raspberries, and other fruits; it is two hours past midnight, and we may frankly confess hunger.

While certain other guests are being gathered together, I will mention another decoration of the halls, peculiar to St. Petersburg. On either side of all the doors of communication in the long range of halls, stands a negro in rich Oriental costume, reminding one of the mute palace-guards in the Arabian tales. Happening to meet one of these men in the Summer Garden, I addressed him in Arabic; but he knew only enough of the language to inform me that he was born in Dar-Fur. I presume, therefore, they were obtained in Constantinople. In the large halls, which are illustrated with paintings of battles, in all the Russian campaigns from Pultowa to Sebastopol, are posted companies of soldiers at the farther end, — a different regiment to each hall. For six hours these men and their officers stand motionless as statues. Not a movement, except now and then of the eyelid, can be detected: even their respiration seems to be suspended. There is something weird and uncanny in such a preternatural silence and apparent death-in-life. I became impressed with the idea that some form of catalepsy had seized and bound them in strong trance. The eyeballs were fixed: they stared at me and saw me not: the hands were glued to the weapons, and the feet to the floor. I suspect there must have been some stolen relief when no guest happened to be present, yet, come when I might, I found them unchanged. When I reflected that the men were undoubtedly very proud of the distinction they enjoyed, and that their case demanded no sympathy, I could inspect and admire them with an easy mind.

The Grand Chamberlain now advances, followed by the Imperial family, behind which, in a certain order of precedence, the guests fall into place, and we presently reach a supper-hall, gleaming with silver and crystal. There are five others, I am told, and each of the two thousand guests has his chair and plate. In the centre stands the Imperial table, on a low platform: between wonderful *épergues* of gold spreads a bed of hyacinths and crocuses. Hundreds of other *épergues*, of massive silver, flash from the tables around. The forks and spoons are gold, the decanters of frosted crystal, covered with silver vine-leaves; even the salt-cellars are works of Art. It is quite proper that the supper should be substantial; and as one such entertainment is a pattern for all that succeed, I may be allowed to mention the principal dishes: *crème de l'orge*, *paté de foie gras*, cutlets of fowl, game, asparagus, and salad, followed by fruits, ices, and bon-bons, and moistened with claret, Sauterne, and Champagne. I confess, however, that the superb silver chasing, and the balmy hyacinths which almost leaved over my plate, feasted my senses quite as much as the delicate viands.

After supper, the company returns to the Hall of St. George, a quadrille or two is danced to promote digestion, and the members of the Imperial family, bowing first to the diplomatic corps, and then to the other guests, retire to the private apartments of the palace. Now we are at liberty to leave, — not sooner, — and rapidly, yet not with undignified haste, seek the main staircase. Cloaking and booting (Ivan being on hand, with eyes like a lynx) are performed without regard to head-dress or uniform, and we wait while the carriages are being called, until the proper *pozlannik* turns up. If we envied those who got off sooner, we are now envied by those who still must wait, bulky in black satin or cloth, in sable or raccoon skin. It is half-past three when we reach home, and there are still six hours until sunrise.

The succeeding balls, whether given

by the Grand Dukes, the principal members of the Russian nobility, or the heads of foreign legations, were conducted on the same plan, except that, in the latter instances, the guests were not so punctual in arriving. The pleasantest of the season was one given by the Emperor in the Hermitage Palace. The guests, only two hundred in number, were bidden to come in ordinary evening-dress, and their Imperial Majesties moved about among them as simply and unostentatiously as any well-bred American host and hostess. On a staircase at one side of the Moorish Hall sat a distinguished Hungarian artist, sketching the scene, with its principal figures, for a picture.

I was surprised to find how much true social culture exists in St. Petersburg. Aristocratic manners, in their perfection, are simply democratic: but this is a truth which is scarcely recognized by the nobility of Germany, and only partially by that of England. The habits of refined society are very much the same everywhere. The man or woman of real culture recognizes certain forms as necessary, that social intercourse may be *ordered* instead of being arbitrary and chaotic; but these forms must not be allowed to limit the free, expansive contact of mind with mind and character with character, which is the charm and blessing of society. Those who meet within the same walls meet upon an equal footing, and all accidental distinctions cease for the time. I found these principles acted upon to quite as full an extent as (perhaps even more so than) they are at home. One of the members of the Imperial family, even, expressed to me the intense weariness occasioned by the observance of the necessary forms of court life, and the wish that they might be made as simple as possible.

I was interested in extending my acquaintance among the Russian nobility, as they, to a certain extent, represent the national culture. So far as my observations reached, I found that the women were better read, and had more general knowledge of Art, literature,

and even politics, than the men. My most instructive intercourse was with the former. It seemed that most men (here I am not speaking of the members of the Imperial Government) had each his specialty, beyond which he showed but a limited interest. There was one distinguished circle, however, where the intellectual level of the conversation was as high as I have ever found it anywhere, and where the only title to admission prescribed by the noble host was the capacity to take part in it. In that circle I heard not only the Polish Question discussed, but the Unity or Diversity of Races, Modern and Classic Art, Strauss, Emerson, and Victor Hugo, the ladies contributing their share. At a *soirée* given by the Princess Lvoff, I met Richard Wagner, the composer, Rubinstein, the pianist, and a number of artists and literary men.

A society the head of which is a court, and where externals, of necessity, must be first considered, is not the place to seek for true and lasting intimacies; but one may find what is next best, in a social sense, — cheerful and cordial intercourse. The circle of agreeable and friendly acquaintance continually enlarged; and I learned to know *one* friend (and perhaps one should hardly expect more than that in any year) whom I shall not forget, nor he me, though we never meet again. The Russians have been unjustly accused of a lack of that steady, tender, faithful depth of character upon which friendship must rest. Let us not forget that one of Washington Irving's dearest friends was Prince Dolgorouki.

Nevertheless, the constant succession of entertainments, agreeable as they were, became in the end fatiguing to quiet persons like ourselves. The routs and *soirées*, it is true, were more informal and unceremonious: one was not obliged to spend more than an hour at each, but then one was not expected to arrive before eleven o'clock. We fell, perforce, into the habits of the place, — of sleeping two or three hours after dinner, then rising, and, after a cup of strong tea, dressing for the evening.

After Carnival, the balls ceased; but there were still frequent routs, until Easter Week closed the season.

I was indebted to Admiral Lüttke, President of the Imperial Geographical Society, for an invitation to attend its sessions, some of which were of the most interesting character. My great regret was, that a very imperfect knowledge of the language prevented me from understanding much of the proceedings. On one occasion, while a paper on the survey of the Caspian Sea was being read, a tall, stately gentleman, sitting at the table beside me, obligingly translated all the principal facts into French, as they were stated. I afterwards found that he was Count Panin, Minister of Justice. In the Transactions of the various literary and scientific societies the Russian language has now entirely supplanted the French, although the latter keeps its place in the *salons*, chiefly on account of the foreign element. The Empress has weekly *conversazioni*, at which only Russian is spoken, and to which no foreigners are admitted. It is becoming fashionable to have visiting-cards in both languages.

Of all the ceremonies which occurred during the winter, that of New-Year's Day (January 13th, N. S.) was most interesting. After the members of the different legations had called in a body to pay their respects to the Emperor and Empress, the latter received the ladies of the Court, who, on this occasion, wore the national costume, in the grand hall. We were permitted to witness the spectacle, which is unique of its kind and wonderfully beautiful. The Empress, having taken her place alone near one end of the hall, with the Emperor and his family at a little distance on her right, the doors at the other end—three hundred feet distant—were thrown open, and a gorgeous procession approached, sweeping past the gilded columns, and growing with every step in color and splendor. The ladies walked in single file, about eight feet apart, each holding the train of the one preceding her. The costume consists of a high, crescent-shaped head-dress

of velvet covered with jewels; a short, embroidered corsage of silk or velvet, with open sleeves; a full skirt and sweeping train of velvet or satin or *moiré*, with a deep border of point-lace. As the first lady approached the Empress, her successor dropped the train, spreading it, by a dexterous movement, to its full breadth on the polished floor. The lady, thus released, bent her knee, and took the Empress's hand to kiss it, which the latter prevented by gracefully lifting her and saluting her on the forehead. After a few words of congratulation, she passed across the hall, making a profound obeisance to the Emperor on the way.

This was the most trying part of the ceremony. She was alone and unsupported, with all eyes upon her, and it required no slight amount of skill and self-possession to cross the hall, bow, and carry her superb train to the opposite side, without turning her back on the Imperial presence. At the end of an hour the dazzling group gathered on the right equalled in numbers the long line marching up on the left,—and still they came. It was a luxury of color, scarcely to be described,—all flowery and dewy tints, in a setting of white and gold. There were crimson, maroon, blue, lilac, salmon, peach-blossom, mauve, Magenta, silver-gray, pearl-rose, daffodil, pale orange, purple, pea-green, sea-green, scarlet, violet, drab, and pink,—and, whether by accident or design, the succession of colors never shocked by too violent contrast. This was the perfection of scenic effect; and we lingered, enjoying it exquisitely, until the last of several hundred ladies closed the wonderful spectacle.

The festival of Epiphany is celebrated by the blessing of the waters of the Neva, followed by a grand military review on the Admiralty Square. We were invited to witness both ceremonies from the windows of the Winter Palace, where, through the kindness of Prince Dolgorouki, we obtained favorable points of view. As the ceremonies last two or three hours, an elegant breakfast was served to the guests in the Moor-

ish Hall. The blessing of the Neva is a religious festival, with the accompaniment of tapers, incense, and chanting choirs, and we could only see that the Emperor performed his part unclad and bare-headed in the freezing air, finishing by descending the steps of an improvised chapel and well, (the building answered both purposes,) and drinking the water from a hole in the ice. Far and wide over the frozen surface similar holes were cut, where, during the remainder of the day, priests officiated, and thousands of the common people were baptized by immersion. As they generally came out covered with ice, warm booths were provided for them on the banks, where they thawed themselves out, rejoicing that they would now escape sickness or misfortune for a year to come.

The review requires a practised military pen to do it justice, and I fear I must give up the attempt. It was a "small review," only about twenty-five thousand troops being under arms. In the uniformity of size and build of the men, exactness of equipment, and precision of movement, it would be difficult to imagine anything more perfect. All sense of the individual soldier was lost in the grand sweep and wheel and march of the columns. The Circassian chiefs, in their steel skull-caps and shirts of chain-mail, seemed to have ridden into their places direct from the Crusades. The Cossacks of the Don, the Ukraine, and the Ural managed their little brown or black horses (each regiment having its own color) so wonderfully, that, as we looked down upon them, each line resembled a giant caterpillar, moving sidewise with its thousand legs creeping as one. These novel and picturesque elements constituted the principal charm of the spectacle.

The passing away of winter was signaled by an increase of daylight rather than a decrease of cold. The rivers were still locked, the ice-hills frequented, the landscape dull and dead; but by the beginning of February we could detect signs of the returning sun. When the sky was clear, (a thing of rarest

occurrence,) there was *white* light at noonday, instead of the mournful yellow or orange gloom of the previous two months. After the change had fairly set in, it proceeded more and more rapidly, until our sunshine was increased at the rate of seven or eight minutes per day. When the vernal equinox came, and we could sit down to dinner at sunset, the spell of death seemed to be at last broken. The fashionable drive, of an afternoon, changed from the Nevskoi Prospekt to the Palace Quay on the Neva; the Summer Garden was cleared of snow, and its statues one by one unboxed; in fine days we could walk there, and there coax back the faded color to a child's face. There, too, walked Alexander II., one of the crowd, leading his little daughter by the hand; and thither, in a plain little *calèche*, drove the Empress, with her youngest baby on her lap.

But when the first ten days of April had passed and there was still no sign of spring, we began to grow impatient. How often I watched the hedges around the Michailoffsky Palace, knowing that the buds would there first swell! How we longed for a shimmer of green under the brown grass, an alder tassel, a flush of yellow on the willow wands, a sight of rushing green water! One day, a week or so later, we were engaged to dine on Vassili Ostrow. I had been busily occupied until late in the afternoon, and when we drove out upon the square, I glanced, as usual, towards Peter the Great. Lo! behind him flashed and glittered the free, the rejoicing Neva! Here and there floated a cake of sullen ice, but the great river had bared his breast to the sun, which welcomed him after six months of absence. The upper pontoon-bridges were already spanned and crowded with travel, but the lower one, carried away before it could be secured, had been borne down by the stream and jammed against and under the solid granite and iron of the Nikolaï Bridge. There was a terrible crowd and confusion at the latter place; all travel was stopped, and we could get neither forward nor back-

ward. Presently, however, the Emperor appeared upon the scene ; order was the instant result ; the slow officials worked with a will ; and we finally reached our host's residence half an hour behind the time. As we returned, at night, there was twilight along the northern sky, and the stars sparkled on the crystal bosom of the river.

This was the snapping of winter's toughest fetter, but it was not yet spring. Before I could detect any sign of returning life in Nature, May had come. Then, little by little, the twigs in the marshy thickets began to show yellow and purple and brown, the lilac-buds to swell, and some blades of fresh grass to peep forth in sheltered places. This, although we had sixteen hours of sunshine, with an evening twilight which shifted into dusky dawn under the North Star ! I think it was on the 13th of May that I first realized that the season had changed, and for the last time saw the noble-hearted Ruler who is the central figure of these memories. The People's Festival—a sort of Russian May-day—took place at Catharinenhof, a park and palace of the famous Empress, near the shore of the Finnish Gulf. The festival, that year, had an unusual significance. On the 3d of March the edict of Emancipation was finally consummated, and twenty-two millions of serfs became forever free : the Polish troubles and the menace of the Western powers had consolidated the restless nobles, the patient people, and the plotting revolutionists, the orthodox and dissenting sects, into one great national party, resolved to support the Emperor and maintain the integrity of the Russian territory : and thus the nation was marvellously strengthened by the very blow intended to cripple it.

At least a hundred thousand of the common people (possibly, twice that number) were gathered together in the park of Catharinenhof. There were booths, shows, flying-horses, refreshment saloons, jugglers, circuses, balloons, and

exhibitions of all kinds : the sky was fair, the turf green and elastic, and the swelling birch-buds scented the air. I wandered about for hours, watching the lazy, contented people, as they leaped and ran, rolled on the grass, pulled off their big boots and aired their naked legs, or laughed and sang in jolly chorus. About three in the afternoon there was a movement in the main avenue of the park. Hundreds of young *mujiks* appeared, running at full speed, shouting out, tossing their caps high in the air, and giving their long blonde locks to the wind. Instantly the crowd collected on each side, many springing like cats into the trees ; booths and shows were deserted, and an immense multitude hedged the avenue. Behind the leaping, shouting, cap-tossing *avant-garde* came the Emperor, with three sons and a dozen generals, on horseback, cantering lightly. One cheer went up from scores of thousands ; hats darkened the air ; eyes blazing with filial veneration followed the stately figure of the monarch, as he passed by, gratefully smiling and greeting on either hand. I stood among the people and watched their faces. I saw the phlegmatic Slavonic features transformed with a sudden and powerful expression of love, of devotion, of gratitude, and then I knew that the throne of Alexander II. rested on a better basis than tradition or force. I saw therein another side of this shrewd, cunning, patient, and childlike race, whom no other European race yet understands and appreciates,—a race yet in the germ, but with qualities out of which a people, in the best sense of the word, may be developed.

The month of May was dark, rainy, and cold ; and when I left St. Petersburg, at its close, everybody said that a few days would bring the summer. The leaves were opening, almost visibly, from hour to hour. Winter was really over, and summer was just at the door ; but I found, upon reflection, that I had not had the slightest experience of spring.