

"Oh, no; not at all," I said, as I kissed her again and again, feeling now for the first time sensible of a smarting pain in one foot.

"You've burnt yourself too, Dick; look at your foot."

It was quite true: the toe of one slipper must have been in contact with the fire; and it was burned completely off.

"But, Dick—dear Dick," she whispered, nestling closer to me, "are you very, very angry with your little wife for being such a girl?"

I could not answer, only thank God that my weak fit of folly was past, as I clasped her closer and closer yet.

"Mattie," I whispered at last, in a very husky voice, "can you forgive me for being so weak?"

I could say no more for the hindrance of two soft lips placed upon mine; and while they rested there, I made a vow I hope I shall have strength to keep; for real troubles are so many, it is folly to invent the false.

At last, when I was free, I took the rose from where it nestled in her hair, and placed it in my pocket-book; while, in answer to the inquiring eyes that were bent on mine, I merely said—

"For a memento of a dreadful dream."

By the way, I never finished that pamphlet.

GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

MR. MACKENZIE WALLACE'S SOJOURN IN RUSSIA.



WHEN we are all talking of "the East," meaning Oriental Europe, it is fair to ask, Is there one in a hundred of us who could give the correct answer to the question, "Which is the easternmost capital of the Continent?" Ninety-nine probably would reply, "Constantinople;" but the one who said, "St. Petersburg," would alone be correct. We have learnt a good deal about Turkey during the last two years; the annals of 1875—76 are crowded with Turkish affairs; but of that great country concerning which it is surely not less important that we should be well informed — of Russia—Englishmen know, as a rule, but very little.

Yet it is certain that, in wasteful conflict or in pacific, useful co-operation, Russia and England must, for good or for evil, pursue their manifest destiny in Asia. The English and the Russian peoples will do well, therefore, to labour to understand each other, and in this intercourse travellers must serve as the channel of introduction.

So far as the railways go—and there are now 11,000 miles of those highways in Russia—there is no difficulty in travelling; the obstacle is the distance which severs this island from the Russian Empire. Our trunk lines would perhaps not have been less advantageous had Parliament displayed something of the simplicity of

method which characterised the action of the Tsar Nicholas, who, it is said, with his own hand, settled the route of the railway which connects the new and the old capitals of Russia. From St. Petersburg to Moscow a crow cannot take a course more direct than does the railway. When the preliminary surveys were made, Nicholas heard that the line was zigzagged in English fashion—here in deference to some great proprietor, and there to touch or to avoid some insignificant town. The Tsar interfered, ordered a map to be laid before him, took a ruler and pencil, drew a straight line across the interval between the two great cities, and simply ordered: "You will construct the line so."

Travelling in Russia is not everywhere so easy as in the well-warmed carriages of the Moscow Railway. What Mr. Mackenzie Wallace says of the roads in his valuable and interesting volumes on Russia* is most true. "Roads are nearly all of the unmade, natural kind, and are so conservative in their nature that they have at the present day precisely the same appearance as they had centuries ago. The only perceptible change that takes place in them during a series of generations is that the ruts shift their position. When these become so deep that fore-wheels can no longer fathom them, it becomes necessary to begin making a new pair of ruts to the right or left of the old ones; and as the roads are commonly of gigantic breadth, there is no difficulty in finding a place for the operation. How the old ones get filled up I cannot explain."

On Russian seas I have surreptitiously burnt candles for many a night, knowing that darkness would bring strange bedfellows. On the Sea of Azof, Mr. Wallace received and ill-treated these nocturnal visitors. It seemed to him, he says, that by seizing the proper moment he "might kick the rat up to the ceiling with such force as to produce concussion of the brain and instant death;" and when the "significant shaking" suggested an arrival, he "lay perfectly still, quite interested in the sport." The rat, "anxious to play his part creditably in the experiment," stepped into the berth and took up his position on Mr. Wallace's foot. "In an instant he was shot upwards." The rat had, how-

* "Russia." By D. Mackenzie Wallace. 2 vols. London, 1877.

ever, sufficient strength and presence of mind to escape, and the only protest was heard from "the gentleman opposite," who "objected to having other people's rats kicked into his berth." When Mr. Wallace carried his complaint to the captain, that functionary coolly observed, "Ah, I did better than that this morning: I let my rat get under the blanket and then smothered him!"

No one who knows them will say that the Russians are a cleanly people; and perhaps this fault, if admitted by themselves, would to some extent be charged to their climate, in which they suffer extremes of heat and cold unknown in the more temperate atmosphere of England. The severity of the Russian winter leads to the use of sheepskin coats, which after one or two seasons of daily wear are not agreeably odoriferous. Their owners have probably smeared these overcoats every day with fingers reeking with oleaginous food, and for months these peasants or fishermen have perhaps slept in their overcoats upon the top of the domestic oven—a favourite resting-place in a Russian home of the lowest class. Mr. Wallace—who, from his long residence in Russia, is an excellent authority—declares that they sometimes get inside the oven; but then they have left the sheepskins outside, and are taking a bath! He says: "Many villages possess a public or communal bath of the most primitive construction; but in some parts of the country—I am not sure how far the practice extends—the peasants take their vapour-bath in the household oven in which the bread is baked!"

Though the peasants who form the bulk of the Russian population are illiterate and uncleanly, though it is not yet twenty years since the Russian peasant was a serf, unable to move from the land he tilled without the permission of his master, and who, without trial or appeal, or even public accusation of offence, could be sent off to Siberia merely upon the complaint of his master to the authorities that he was unruly—in spite of all this, there is one aspect in which the Russian peasant seems to me an example worthy of study by the people of more favoured lands. There is a strength and power, and a spirit of independence in the local associations of the Russian people, at which many travellers have glanced, but which Mr. Wallace has photographed from a long study of the Russian *mir* and *artél*. To take the latter first as the least important—the Russian *artél* is an association of workmen generally found in departments of labour which in England have no union or association. The two *artéls* best known in Russia are, perhaps, that of the Bank Porters of the capital, and that of the Custom House of Odessa. There is a good and a bad side to these associations. They are protective and obstructive. The good is displayed strongly in the case of the Bank Porters. It has been said of these men that they have unlimited opportunities of stealing, and are often entrusted with the guarding or transporting of enormous sums; but the banker has no cause for anxiety, because he knows that if any defalcations occur they will be made good to him by the *artél*. Such accidents, however, rarely if ever

happen; and the fact is by no means so extraordinary as many people suppose. The *artél*, being responsible for the individuals of which it is composed, is very careful in admitting new members, and a man when admitted is closely watched, not only by the regularly constituted office-bearers, but also by all his fellow-members who have an opportunity of observing him. If he begins to spend money too freely, or to neglect his duties, though his employer may know nothing of the fact, suspicions are at once aroused among his fellow-members, and an investigation ensues, ending in summary expulsion if the suspicions prove to have been well-founded. Mutual responsibility, in short, creates naturally a very effective system of mutual supervision.

The other, the obstructive side of the *artél*, is seen at Odessa, where there is some dismay because the corn trade is not increasing. The Odessa Committee of Trade and Manufactures have lately reported to the Council for Trade and Manufactures in St. Petersburg that the commerce of their town, by far the most important in South Russia, "is 'not only undergoing a temporary crisis, but is actually entering a period of absolute decline;" and among the allegations touching the causes of this calamity, one is laid against the *artél*. This association has a monopoly of Custom House work, and the Committee find "that the cost of the necessary Custom House formalities is, on the average, seven times, and for some classes of goods eleven times more than before the association was formed." It is estimated that the annual sum paid to the *artél* of Odessa amounts to 400,000 roubles, "and this for no service rendered, as the *artél* in no way dispenses with the necessity of employing the workmen who were employed before the institution of the *artél*." These are the words of the Committee; they display an obstructive form of association in conjunction with the dilatory and vexatious bureaucracy of Russia, which in the Custom House of Odessa maintains so troublesome a system, that "the declarations required for the formalities of clearing goods pass through twenty-nine different hands."

We turn now to the Village Communes—to the larger and general form of association in the *mir*. None will bear witness more readily than those who, like the present writer, have travelled in Russia, to the great value of Mr. Wallace's contribution to our knowledge of the local institutions of that country. "In order," as he says, "to understand the Russian village system, the reader must bear in mind these two important facts: the arable land and the pasturage belong, not to the individual houses, but to the Commune; and all the households are collectively and individually responsible for the entire sum which the Commune has to pay annually into the Imperial Treasury. . . . The system of allotment adopted depends entirely on the will of the particular Commune. . . . No peasant ever dreams of appealing against a Communal decree. . . . and in spite of the systematic and persistent efforts of the centralised bureaucracy to regulate minutely all departments of the national life, the rural Communes, which contain

about five-sixths of the population, remain in many respects entirely beyond its influence, and even beyond its sphere of vision!"

This is how the Village Elder—the Speaker of the Village Parliament—is elected:—

"Whom shall we choose?"

"As soon as this question is asked several peasants look down to the ground, or try in some other way to avoid attracting attention, lest their names should be suggested. When the silence has continued a minute or two, a greybeard says, 'There is Alexei Ivánof; he has not served yet.'

"Yes, yes! Alexei Ivánof!' shout half a dozen voices, belonging probably to peasants who fear they may be elected.

"Alexei protests in the strongest terms. He cannot say that he is ill, because his big ruddy face would give him the lie direct; but he finds half a dozen other reasons why he should not be chosen, and accordingly requests to be excused. But his protestations are not listened to, and the proceedings terminate. A new Village Elder has been duly elected."

There are many such village scenes in Mr. Wallace's volumes, but this is one of an election almost ideally perfect in its simplicity and purity.

We have space only for a few remarks upon the higher classes of Russia, including the noblesse, and the civil and military officials. The Russian priests do not belong to these classes. I have seen Russian priests in every stage of poverty, performing with their own hands the menial work of their houses; shouldering their corn to the mill, and doing scullery work at home; but all this implies poverty rather than inferiority. Mr. Wallace appears to me to have traced to its root their inferiority to the priesthood of other Protestant lands—for the Russo-Greek Church is a Protestant Church, though in regard to superstitious observances it does not show itself far superior to the Church of Rome. Mr. Wallace says that the Russian priest is what he is "because he is expected merely to conform to certain observances, and to perform punctiliously the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Church. If he does this without practising extortion, his parishioners are quite satisfied. He rarely preaches or exhorts, and neither has nor seeks to have moral influence over his flock."

The official class in Russia, drawn chiefly from the noblesse and the clergy, form a peculiar social body called *Tchinovniks*, or men with "*Tchins*." All offices, civil and military, are arranged in fourteen ranks or grades, and to each rank a particular name is attached. Promotion leads from grade to grade, and the step on which a man is for the moment standing—or, in other words, the official rank or *Tchin* which he possesses—determines what offices he is competent to hold: and it appears that Russians of the higher classes not seldom assume—at least on their visiting cards—the office to which their *Tchin* would permit of their being appointed—which is much as if a briefless barrister of the requisite "seven years' standing" were to call himself a "Judge of County Courts." This projection of personal possibilities on pasteboard accounts for the

number of "*Conseillers de Cour*," "*Conseillers d'État*," and "*Conseillers privés de S.M. L'Empereur de toutes les Russies*," that may be met with from Naples to Baden-Baden.

The extreme centralisation of the Russian Imperial Government, and the secrecy with which affairs are conducted, produce inevitable consequences. "The whole of the vast region," says Mr. Wallace, "stretching from the Polar Ocean to the Caspian, and from the shores of the Baltic to the confines of the Celestial Empire, is administered from St. Petersburg;" and "besides the unavoidable evils of excessive centralisation, Russia has had much to suffer from the jobbery, venality, and extortion of the officials." The Russian bureaucracy is possibly not the only one in which bribes are received with favour, but the name by which these illicit gratifications are known is certainly quite unique; and we are told—so much is there in a name!—that "many an official who received regularly 'sinless revenues' (*bezgreshniye dokhodi*) would have been very indignant had he been stigmatised as a dishonest man." Beyond the lowness of salaries, the difficulty of course lies in the fact that the official class is the sole critic and sole judge of its own conduct. A free press, such as can only pertain to a free people long practised in self-government, is the true corrective for these evils. The Tsar is himself the first official in the realm; he knows that the abuse of power by a subordinate has a tendency to produce hostility towards the fountain of all official power; and, as Mr. Wallace most truly says, "the severity of autocrats is reserved for political offenders, against whom they naturally harbour a feeling of personal resentment. A man who sins against public morality may bring personal influences to soften the anger of the Tsar, and illustrious scapegoats are not allowed to die in the wilderness—the wilderness being generally Paris or Baden-Baden." Into the mouth of a good specimen of the rural noblesse, Mr. Wallace has put an opinion of *Tchinovniks* which bears the unmistakable stamp of truth, and is not very different from language which might be heard from a country gentleman in lands to the west of Russia. "These *Tchinovniks*," he [Alexander Ivan'itch] is wont to say in moments of excitement, 'who live in St. Petersburg and govern the country, know as much of Russia as they do of China. They live in a world of official documents, and know nothing of the real wants and interests of the people. So long as all the required formalities are duly observed they are perfectly satisfied. The people may be allowed to die of starvation if only the fact do not appear in the official reports. . . . They are afraid of the press, because they fear above all things a healthy public opinion, which the press alone can create. Everything that disturbs the habitual routine alarms them. Russia cannot make any real progress so long as she is ruled by these cursed *Tchinovniks*.'"

In the days of serfdom, the black sheep of the Russian nobility oppressed their serfs to the verge of revolt. Mr. Wallace tells of "one who organised his house on Mahometan rather than on Christian prin-

ciples, and ruled his servants and peasants as he had been accustomed to rule his soldiers—using corporal punishment in merciless fashion. His wife did not venture to protest against the Mahometan arrangements, and any peasant who stood in the way of their realisation was at once given as a recruit, or transported to Siberia, in accordance with his master's demand." And in times more remote, when the nobles of Russia entered the presence of the Tsar, they prostrated themselves in Oriental fashion—occasionally as many as thirty times; and when they incurred his displeasure they were themselves summarily flogged or executed, according to the Tsar's good pleasure. In succeeding to the power of the Mahometan Khans, the Tsars adopted, and the nobles occasionally followed, a good deal of the Tartar system of government. There is a well-known anecdote which explains many things in Russia. The present writer has himself fallen into the error, which Mr. Wallace corrects, of attributing the words of the Tsar Paul to Nicholas. "Understand, monsieur," said Tsar Paul to Dumouriez, who had spoken of some one attached to the Court as "distinguished"—"Understand that there is no one distinguished here, except the person to whom I am speaking, and while I am speaking to him."

The nobles take the lead in the new form of local self-government—the Zemstwo, as the district assembly is named. These local bodies were called into existence by ukase about ten years ago, and now, from north to south of Russia, the traveller will rarely meet with a Russian of the higher classes who is unready to speak against these petty parliaments, in which landed proprietors and those who were formerly their serfs meet for the moment on a footing of equality.

Mr. Wallace, who has been present at many of the Zemstwo meetings, and whose rare acquaintance with the Russian language has enabled him to follow the debates, says: "The discussions were always carried on by the nobles, but on more than one occasion peasant members rose to speak; and their remarks, always clear, practical, and to the point, were invariably listened to with respectful attention by all present." Those who know Russia well are disposed to say that the representation of the people in the Zemstwo is a farce, and there must be truth in the opinion which is so common. But for my own part, I am slow to believe that assemblies in which noblesse and peasants meet to discuss—and do debate—the affairs of their neighbourhoods can be unproductive and unimproving. Local self-government has been firmly fixed to the soil of Russia by the action, through past ages, of the Communes. These, however, must undergo a salutary change. At present, in many parts of Russia, the peasant feels that he has but exchanged one proprietor for another, and that the Commune is a harder master than the landlord of the time of Tsar Nicholas. The probability is that, as the value of land and the number of population increases, his tenure of the soil will harden; and when Russia is no longer outside the pale of constitutional Powers, the peasant, backward as he is in what the Western world calls education, will surely be found to have had, in the local government of his village and district, a training which will conduce to a wise and temperate exercise of power. Russia, though naturally poor, and for the most part infertile, is by slow but sure advances attaining a position in which the maintenance of semi-barbaric forms of government must be for ever abandoned.

ARTHUR ARNOLD.

A NIGHT ON A MORNING PAPER.

HOW we all enjoy our morning paper! What a gap in our existence its few crisp sheets seem to fill up daily! How many of us are there who look upon it as a regular companion at our breakfast-table—a fit accompaniment to coffee and toast!

How many more of us, too, who, in these days of high-pressure, never dream of being hurried away to our places of business, whether it be by rail or road, unless we have our morning paper to demand our attention, to amuse and instruct us during the time occupied in transit! At what a loss, too, we should often be, in the course of our daily commercial undertakings, if we had no morning paper lying ready to hand to show us the state of our markets and trade, to tell us the events of the present, the probabilities of the future! Most of us have, in fact, come to look upon our daily paper as a regular thing; and yet in all probability how few ever stop to think of the immense amount of labour, of the toil of hand and head during the still hours of the

night, when most of us are asleep, that is involved in its production! But come, let us do more than pause to consider the magnitude of the work; let us watch for ourselves the gradual progress and development of the paper, from the time when the first type is set until the perfect sheets are brought from the machine-room.

It is early afternoon as we enter the composing-room. Ranged on either side are rows of wooden frames for holding the compositors' cases. These frames, or desks, stand about as high as the waist. On the frame is placed, at an angle about the same as that of an ordinary writing-desk, two so-named cases. These cases resemble the shallow drawers, or shelves, of a cabinet for the reception of geological or other specimens. One case, the upper, leans back at a slight angle, and within easy reach of the fingers, and is about a yard long, a foot wide, and an inch deep. This is divided into nearly 100 square boxes an inch deep. These boxes hold about 100 various kinds of types, consisting of capital letters, figures, small capital