

too free living. It is a highly dangerous state, and far from a comfortable one; the blood may be healthy, but it is in excess. It often relieves itself by the bursting of small blood-vessels; this forms a safety-valve if the blood can escape from the body; if otherwise, it means death. A condition like this calls aloud for abstemiousness of every kind, for plenty of exercise, and the total avoidance of fermented liquors or alcohol, and the occasional use of saline aperients.

Poverty of the blood is the very reverse of this. The symptoms are almost too well known to need description. The pale face, the blanched appearance of the gums, the occasional headache, the weakness of digestion, the irregularity of bowels, the nervousness,

the general debility and languor, and the mental depression, all point to an impoverished state of the vital fluid. Here, there must be a careful regulation of diet; excess of every kind must be avoided. The food should be nutritious and easy of digestion. Moderate exercise should be taken, sleep secured, and perfect repose of mind. Tonics, too, should be used. Iron is our usual sheet-anchor, and may be taken in some form for months. If an aperient be necessary, the following pill taken three times a day after meals will be found very useful: it is composed of three grains of aloes-and-myrrh pill and two grains of the granulated sulphate of iron. As a blood-purifier and nutrient I cannot speak too highly of MILK.



RUSSIAN PEASANTS AT SUPPER.

A RUSSIAN HOME.

BY A VISITOR.



NE bright July morning I landed at the very rough port of a Russian town. On the wharf stood a number of official-looking people in grey uniforms, who proceeded to search our boxes. Once free from their tender mercies, my companion and I found ourselves joined by our Russian relative whom we had come to visit, and whose carriage was waiting to take us up to the citadel where he lived. We jolted along at an alarming pace, over hilly streets paved with great cobble-stones—not wood, the usual pavement for streets in Russia—till we arrived at the door of a lofty house, with the family escutcheon emblazoned in colour on the door-posts.

Here we were greeted with a warm welcome by our Muscovite connections, who led us into a large apartment, with an inlaid floor of polished wood; it was singularly bare and dreary-looking to our English eyes, for the only furniture it contained stood in little encampments in the corners of the room, and consisted of a large rug, or piece of carpet, on which were placed

a small table, a sofa, and two or three chairs. The bed-rooms, to which we were afterwards conducted, were in like manner equally destitute of furniture other than what was absolutely necessary, and looked rather prison-like, except for their immense size, with their bare, plastered walls.

Having arrived at such an early hour, we were quite ready for the breakfast which we were soon told was awaiting us. Our friends took us into another room, where we found it laid on a long table, headed by a large brass urn—this was our first acquaintance with a Russian samovar; it rather resembled our English urns, with the exception that it is made of brass, and heated by burning charcoal, and the tea-pot is placed on the top to be kept warm by the steam; the result is splendid tea.

The Russians are an essentially tea-drinking nation, and few houses are so poor as not to possess a samovar. They pride themselves also on the quality of their tea, which, being brought over-land, is certainly very finely flavoured; it is supposed that tea brought over-sea is always more or less affected in flavour.

Breakfast consisted of all kinds of fancy bread and butter, and when over we were told to be ready in an hour, as our relatives intended taking us to their country house, where, it being summer time, they were then residing.

We started in a cavalcade of three carriages, our luggage accompanying us; to each carriage were attached six little dejected-looking horses about the size of English ponies, all harnessed abreast.

Our drive was a curious one, and gave a vivid idea

slash of the reins—which serve as a whip—on the backs of the dejected horses, he urged them to a break-neck speed, till with a bump and a bound, which nearly flung us out of our seats, we found that we had crossed the bridge, over which our wretched little animals scrambled like cats, though it was impossible for them to help displacing the logs.

These Government post-horses are a race in themselves; they seem burdened with weighty cares of State, for nothing could exceed their miserable expres-



A VILLAGE FÊTE IN RUSSIA.

of the uncivilised state of the country. We travelled along bare, sandy roads, with nothing but telegraph posts and dark fir-trees to mark our way, till we suddenly turned off into the forest, where there seemed no path nor road, and the trees grew so thickly that it was with difficulty we could have light sufficient or enough space to pass between them; and thus, sometimes almost in darkness, then out again into broad daylight, we jolted along till before us I descried a brook with a most dangerously fragile-looking bridge, merely made of round, loose logs, laid crosswise on each other.

Our *isvostchik* (coachman), however, apparently anticipated nothing dreadful, for with a great shout and

even when pushed to a temporary speed, they only subsided the deeper into their "doleful dumps" afterwards. The first on the off side carried a cracked bell, whose perpetual "tink! tink!" but added to the general melancholy effect. This is worn partly as a badge to show they are Government property, and partly to keep away the wolves in winter time, which, unless immensely pressed by hunger, will not approach any musical sound; even a man whistling is sufficient to send them away.

At last we emerged from the forest on a wide expanse of unhedged fields of corn, dotted with rough-looking barns, and further on a large wooden red-tiled house; this was our destination, and very glad we

were to be at our journey's end, also to find that our country bed-room was smaller and more comfortable than the town one had been, in spite of the same funny little encampments of furniture.

Having rested for a little time, dinner was announced; but before we were allowed to go into the dining-room, servants entered with the "sakourski," or little meal that precedes all Russian dinners, consisting of bread and butter, poached eggs, little squares of cheese, and fish; one had hardly time to demolish more than a mouthful before we proceeded to the dining-room. Dinner commenced by every one taking a liqueur-glass of "kummel," or spirit of caraway-seeds, which is supposed to enhance the appetite; then came soup, and we were given little pâtés of minced meat to put into it; this was followed by a sweet vegetable pudding, then meat, then fish, succeeded by chicken dressed with cherry jam, and pickles. Cakes and preserved fruits completed the repast, and then long, ornamented pipes and cigars were brought in for the gentlemen, whilst the ladies retired to the drawing-rooms for coffee and fruit.

The fine summer evening tempted us to stroll out, and we walked round what in England would have been called the farm buildings, but here everything was most primitive and rough; the cows were just being driven home by wild-looking, bare-footed girls, and we wondered to see the kine so small—poor, skinny little things, hardly any exceeding the size of an English donkey. We then peeped into some of the barns as we wandered into the corn-fields, where the peasants were busy reaping, and saw how the wheat was threshed. Six or seven little horses were set running round and round amongst the sheaves which were thrown down and spread over the floor, and in this manner it was trodden out.

Being so far north, the summer nights were wonderfully light—in fact, there was really only about two hours' entire darkness at midnight; and the nightingales sang so loudly and incessantly, that it was rather difficult to sleep; however, we soon got used to it.

The next morning we assembled in the dining-room between eight and nine o'clock for breakfast, which consisted as before of tea, coffee, and all sorts of fancy bread, including a light-coloured brown kind, called "seppik." Pipes were then brought in, as they are after every Russian meal, and we left the gentlemen and proceeded to amuse and employ ourselves as best we might.

Our hostess most kindly admitted us into the secrets of her housekeeping, and opened enormous cupboards of homespun linen to show us, for in the country the people are still so primitive as to have all their house-linen spun at home. She also showed us her beautiful preserves, which indeed excelled any we had ever seen in England, for the fruit was so perfectly cooked that it looked as if but just plucked and laid in the clear, white syrup; we were much surprised as well at the very small kitchen accommodation the house possessed, after the elaborate dinners that proceeded from it, everything being cooked by a few small stoves.

The time passed pleasantly away till at twelve o'clock we were summoned to luncheon; this was a "cold collation," a prominent feature being a small tub in the middle of the table, full of sour milk in curds, which was served in soup-plates, and eaten with cream.

During the afternoon we went a little walk to the borders of the forest, where the wolves live in winter, but our friends told us that they retire to the marshes during the summer time, and there would be no fear of our meeting any; but our hostess went on to say that once when an English lady friend was visiting them in winter, they had, like us, wandered out into the woods alone, having thoughtlessly neglected to take one of the great cattle-dogs with them, when suddenly turning her head, the English lady exclaimed, "Oh, what a handsome dog! Is he yours?" and began calling the animal. To our hostess's horror, she immediately perceived that what her friend had mistaken for a large dog was neither more nor less than a great shaggy grey wolf. Fortunately, it took no notice of them, and slowly trotted away, when, as may be imagined, they lost no time in making the best of their way back to the house.

As we returned we passed the children's gardens; a few straggling flowers were growing in them, and there, as elsewhere, we remarked the entire absence of all wild flowers; also the general unkempt air of the whole place, including even the grass plot in front of the house, gave all a very melancholy appearance.

Five o'clock brought dinner, the sakourski being served first as before, and the evening passed in pleasant chat, the gentlemen smoking, the ladies doing their needlework or playing on the piano, at which the Russians are great adepts.

The following day we were promised a gala or fête for the villagers, and our hostess was greatly busied with her preparations. Towards the afternoon very long rough tables, with equally rough seats, were erected on the grass before the house, and after awhile talégas (carts) began to arrive with strange eerie-looking folk in them, the men wearing long dark brown coats, with red belts, short breeches, and the coarsest woollen stockings, also shoes of only a piece of untanned cow-skin, drawn round their feet by a string; flat caps covered their heads, from which the lanky hair hung down, bleached white by the sun, in striking contrast to their dirty, bronzed faces.

The women were scarcely more attractive. The married ones wore the picturesque helmet-shaped head-dress of the country, of printed calico or silk, whilst nearly all had a white cloth thrown over their heads to keep away the dust as they drove along. The rest of their costume consisted of a coarse, striped petticoat, with a dark blue woollen jacket body.

At last, being assembled, in all about three hundred, besides children of all ages, and queer little brown babies, mere bundles of coarse clothes, our host made them a speech, which seemed to please them very much, and then the servants carried round large pots of (to us) disgusting-looking boiled meat, but they all appeared very eager to get it, and when once obtained, they behaved like savages, for they tore it in pieces

with hands and teeth, gnawing and gobbling it up more like their neighbours the wolves than human beings.

Some rough games followed, such as running races, climbing a greasy pole, and scrambling for kopéks (Russian farthings), the elder women joining in the latter in spite of their age. It seemed as if they could hardly resist the sight of money, for they would toss their babies over to some friend to hold, whilst they rushed in amongst the breathless crowd; sometimes baby and all went, at which we could not help laughing; they also seemed to think it fine fun, and joined heartily in the laugh against themselves.

The talégas were now harnessed, and little by little different groups formed ready to depart; but one and all first came to bid farewell to their lord, our host, which they did by kissing his hands and embracing his knees. We came in for some of these adieus, as when they were informed that we were his relations they rushed round us, and kneeling, dragged our dresses in all directions to be kissed and embraced, till we ran a narrow chance of being thrown down, and my companion was not a little frightened.

So passed the gala-day, and afterwards we settled down into the quiet monotony of a Russian home.

A. A. STRANGE BUTSON.

A LESSON IN HOUSEHOLD COOKERY.



WE are poor; that is to say, we have to provide all the necessaries of life for ourselves, two children and two servants, with an income of two hundred a year.

I am a notable woman! For the first time in my life I have *written* the confession, although I have known my capabilities ever since I was ten years old. Let other women pride themselves upon beauty, fascination, or accomplishments—I am contented when Mr. Archdall says, “Mary, what a capital manager you are!”

I ask all the readers of this paper whether a higher compliment can be paid to any woman, especially in these hard times? We never have a quarrel, and this happy circumstance I attribute simply to my having studied cookery.

“My dear,” said Mr. Archdall a few days ago, “I think it might be a kindness to the world at large if you were to publish some of your recipes; this soup, for instance, deserves to be known.”

“I am glad you like it. This is fish soup, and very economical. I kept two pounds of the fish we had yesterday, and all the heads, tails, fins, and bones. These, with two quarts of stock, a blade of mace, two onions, two cloves, one carrot, a handful of parsley, a little celery-seed, salt and pepper, a dessert-spoonful of corn-flour, and half a pint of milk, made the soup. Shall I tell you the process of making it out of these ingredients?”

“If you like,” he replied.

“It is a kind of rehearsal before appearing in print, and besides that, will be useful to Nancy, whom I am training to be our cook.”

The little country girl who waited upon us blushed. She was only fifteen, and her wages were six pounds a year; but she showed some aptitude for learning my favourite art, and I was teaching her carefully.

“I went to the kitchen at ten o'clock, and began by breaking up the fish-bones. I then put them with the stock and vegetables into a stewpan, and let the mixture simmer until a quarter before two o'clock, when I strained it, returned it to the stewpan, put in

the fish, cut up in pieces about the size of dice, and added the corn-flour, blended with the milk. I let it simmer gently until two o'clock, when I added the chopped parsley, and it was ready; but you were not quite ready: you had that last sentence to write, you know; however, the soup has not suffered by the delay.”

“The result is excellent, Mary; this next dish also deserves to be chronicled.”

“Beefsteak pudding? Next time we have it Nancy must tell you how it was made; but for this time I merely require her to listen.

“I provided one pound of beefsteak, six ounces of suet, twelve ounces of flour, half a tea-spoonful of salt, a salt-spoonful of pepper, a gill of water or stock, two sheep's kidneys, and a very small piece of onion, about the size of a quarter of a marble. I proceeded to chop up the suet with the flour as fine as possible, rubbing it in my hands until it was almost as small and fine as bread-crumbs. I then added enough cold water to make it into a stiff paste. American flour requires more water than English flour. I next cut up the meat into inch pieces, skinning the kidneys and cutting them also into small pieces; and having floured the board, rolled out the paste, cutting off one-third of it to be laid aside for covering over the top of the pudding basin. Having greased the said pudding basin and lined it with the paste, I put the meat into it, adding a little bit of fat from time to time. The kidneys make the gravy richer, and if you happen to have any liquid in which meat has been boiled, it will be of advantage to pour a small quantity over the meat in the basin. I had not any at hand, yet I flatter myself the pudding is very good without.”

“Excellent, Mary! Just write down the history of the beefsteak pudding as you have told it to me, and many a housewife will read it with profit.”

“It is not quite finished. I next wetted the edges of the paste, and pressed the paste covering down upon it. I dipped the pudding-cloth in boiling water, floured the centre, and tying the pudding up in it, plunged it into the pot, and let it boil for three hours, looking from time to time to make sure that it was